

This guide explains how Occupational Health (OH) assesses medical fitness during recruitment. Our approach focuses on functional ability—what you can safely and effectively do in the role you have applied for—rather than on the presence or absence of a medical condition.

Assessments consider any health conditions you may have, the potential impact on your health and safety, and how any associated risks can be managed. They also consider the specific requirements and risks of the role, ensuring candidates are assessed fairly and objectively. Each case is considered on an individual basis, and fitness-for-role decisions take into account national policing standards and relevant workplace legal requirements, ensuring a fair and consistent recruitment process.

Section A - Medical Fitness Standards – At a Glance

Further explanation can be found in Section B

Assessment	Summary Standard	What It Means for You
1. Blood Pressure	Target below 140/90 mmHg	A raised reading may lead to further checks or temporary deferral. This is not usually a rejection and is commonly resolved.
2. BMI / Weight	No maximum BMI limit	BMI alone is never used to reject candidates. OH considers whether weight affects safe training, movement, or equipment use.
3. Hearing	Basic and Functional hearing assessed; hearing aids allowed	Focus is on real-life communication, including understanding speech in noise and using the radio effectively.
4. Vision	Distance and near vision standards apply	Glasses or contact lenses are acceptable if standards are met with correction.
5. Colour Vision	Most colour vision deficiencies acceptable	Only complete colour vision loss is incompatible with operational policing roles.
6. Physical Capabilities	Ability to move, train, and work safely is assessed	This includes the ability to walk, stand, move quickly, climb stairs, carry equipment, and manage physical demands during training.
7. Mental Health	Assessed individually	Decisions focus on stability, management, and functional impact, not diagnosis alone. Seeking support is viewed positively.

8. Neurodiversity	Fully accepted	Autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and similar conditions are welcomed. Adjustments may be considered where required to support learning and performance.
9. Other Tests	Not routine	Additional tests may be required from time to time and are only carried out if clinically needed or specific to the role.
10. Possible Outcomes	• Fit • Fit with adjustments • Deferred • Unfit	Adjustments, further evidence, or temporary deferral are common and supportive outcomes, not failures.

Section B - Explanation of the elements of medical assessment.

1. Blood Pressure

Blood pressure is checked as part of the routine medical assessment

- Target clinic blood pressure: below 140/90 mmHg
- Raised readings may lead to further testing or temporary deferral
- Not an automatic rejection unless OH advises otherwise

Raised readings may lead to:

- Repeat measurements
- Further checks (e.g. GP readings or home monitoring)
- Temporary deferral to allow improvement or clarification

Final decisions are made following Occupational Health review

2. Height, Weight & BMI

- No maximum BMI limit for police recruitment
- BMI alone must not be used to reject applicants
- OH will consider whether weight impacts:
 - Safety during training
 - Ability to perform frontline policing tasks
 - Risk of injury or ill-health

The focus is on practical capability.

3. Hearing – Required Standard

Applicants must be able to hear warnings, communicate clearly, and use Airwave radio.

Clinical standards used by OH:

- Hearing loss greater than 20 dB HL at any frequency requires further assessment
- Average hearing threshold of 35 dB HL or more (500–4000 Hz) triggers functional review
- Hearing aids are permitted subject to functional effectiveness and meeting the required standards with hearing aid insitu

Where a hearing impairment is identified, fitness for appointment must be determined by functional assessment, rather than by audiometric thresholds alone. Where appropriate, further assessment may include speech-in-noise testing or other role-related functional assessments. These are used to simulate hearing-critical policing tasks such as radio communications and face-to-face communication in operational settings.

4. Vision (Eyesight)

- Distance vision: 6/12 in each eye and 6/6 binocular (with correction if needed)
- Near vision: 6/9 binocular
- Adequate low-contrast vision and visual field awareness
- Glasses and contact lenses are acceptable

5. Colour Vision

- Most colour vision deficiencies are acceptable
- Only complete colour vision loss is incompatible with policing

6. Physical Capability

Police work is physically demanding and often unpredictable.

Functional ability for policing tasks includes the capacity to walk and stand for prolonged periods, move quickly (including running), climb stairs, carry and wear operational equipment, and manage the physical demands of initial training and operational duties. These requirements reflect the core role of a police constable and are consistent with the National Recruitment Standards – Medical Standards for Police Recruitment and College of Policing fitness guidance.

Occupational Health assessments focus on functional capability rather than diagnosis, considering strength, mobility, endurance, coordination, and the potential risk of injury during training and operational activity. Assessment is undertaken on an individual, case-by-case basis, in line with equality legislation, and there is no automatic exclusion based solely on the presence of a medical condition or past injury.

Previous injuries or surgical history are common among applicants and do not automatically prevent recruitment. The key considerations are the extent of recovery, current stability, functional

performance, and whether the individual can safely and reliably meet the physical demands of police training and duties, including participation in required fitness testing such as the Job-Related Fitness Test.

The overarching aim of the assessment is to ensure that the applicant is medically and functionally fit to perform the full role of a police constable, without posing unacceptable risk to themselves, colleagues, or the public.

7. Mental Health

Policing and public-facing roles can be demanding, fast-moving, and sometimes high risk. Applying to join the police can raise questions about how mental health is viewed during recruitment. We want to be clear and transparent.

Having experienced mental health difficulties, or having a diagnosis, does not automatically stop you from becoming a police officer or joining a public-facing role.

Recruitment decisions are not based on diagnosis alone. Instead, the focus is on:

- How you are functioning now
- How well things are managed and supported
- Whether you can perform the role safely and effectively

Many people successfully join policing with past or ongoing mental health conditions.

What we look at during assessment

When mental health is discussed as part of the application process, consideration is given to:

- Your current wellbeing and stability
- Your insight and understanding of your own health
- How you manage pressure, stress, and decision-making
- Any treatment, support, or coping strategies that help you stay well

The aim is to understand how you manage the demands of policing, not to judge your health history.

Information about your health is treated confidentially and handled sensitively by trained professionals.

Every applicant is assessed as an individual. Decisions take into account:

- The demands of the role you are applying for
- Your overall suitability, strengths, and readiness
- Whether any support or adjustments may help you succeed

If you are unsure whether something is relevant to disclose, or you have concerns about the process, you can ask for advice — doing so will not disadvantage you.

Other Tests

- Urine tests are not routine
- Breathing tests are only used if symptoms are reported or for specialist roles

Possible OH Outcomes

Fit; Fit with adjustments; Temporarily deferred; Further evidence required; Not fit (with justification)

Possible Occupational Health Outcomes

After assessment, one of the following outcomes will be given:

- **Fit** – no restrictions
- **Fit with adjustments** – reasonable workplace or training adjustments advised
- **Temporarily deferred** – more time needed for recovery or clarification
- **Further evidence required** – additional information requested (e.g. GP or specialist report)
- **Not fit** – with clear medical justification provided

The Occupational Health process is designed to be supportive, fair, and evidence-based. Many applicants with medical conditions are successfully recruited, including those requiring adjustments or additional assessment.

If further checks are needed, this does not mean you have failed — it simply means the decision needs to be made safely and correctly.

Following the Occupational Health assessment and any additional actions required, as covered in this document, you will be advised of the final outcome by the Occupational Health clinician.

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