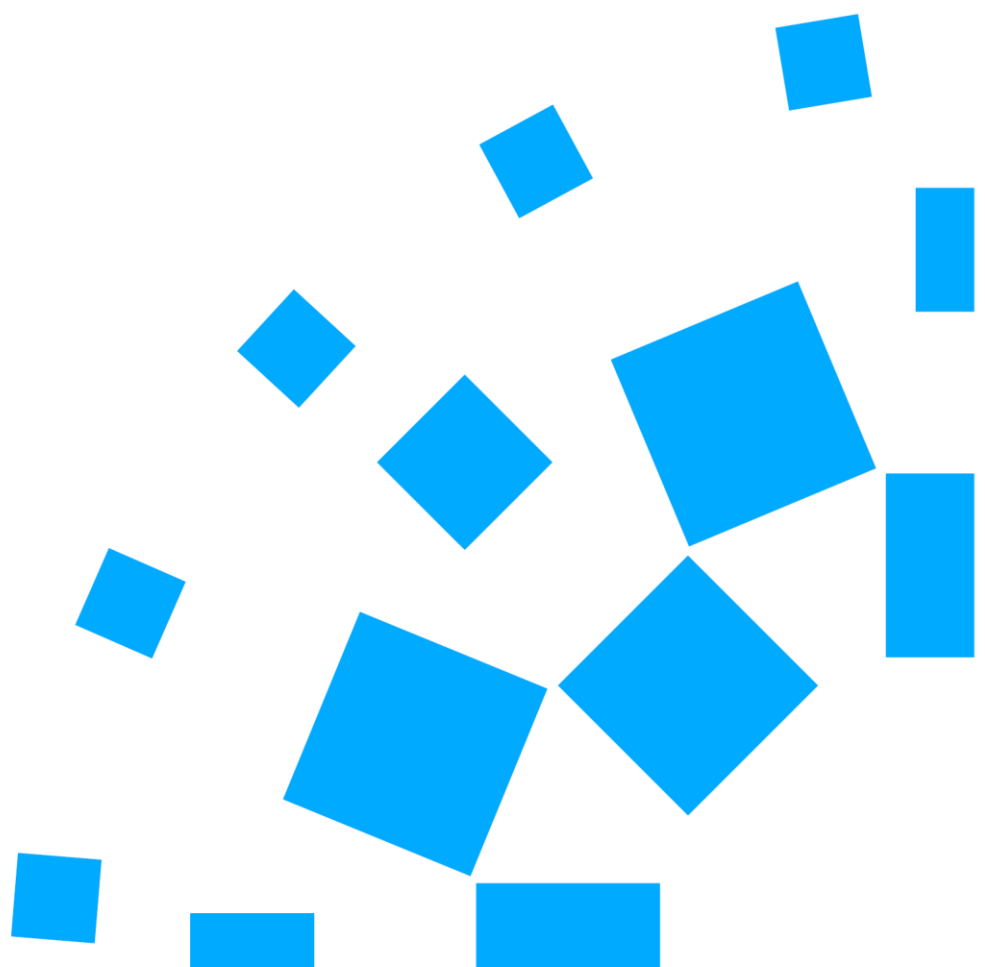




National sift

Candidate guidance

April 2025



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Introduction

This guidance contains information about the national sift process for those who have been invited to take part and for those wanting to find out more. This guide sets out:

- what the national sift involves
- technical guidance for the exercises
- how you will be scored
- how you can prepare for the national sift

We recommend that you take the time to read this guide before starting the national sift to help you prepare. We suggest reading this guide in a quiet environment away from distractions to enhance your preparation and understanding of the assessments.

We wish you the best of luck with your assessment.

The national sift has been designed to allow you to demonstrate your suitability for entry to the next stage of the recruitment process. The national sift consists of two exercises:

- the situational judgement test (SJT)
- a behavioural styles questionnaire (BSQ)

These exercises are used to assess capabilities, strengths and behaviours that are important within the role you have applied for.

The competency and values framework (CVF) sets out the behaviours expected in policing. For the national sift, the competencies review criteria is set at level 1. You can find out more about the [competency and values framework](#) on our website.

No prior policing knowledge is required to complete the national sift exercises.

Situational judgement test (SJT)

The SJT assesses your judgement and decision-making skills in job-relevant situations. In the exercise, you will be presented with scenarios that reflect challenging situations you may face when working in the role. For each scenario, you will be presented with four possible actions that could be taken. You will be asked to rate each of the four actions on its effectiveness in addressing the scenario. The scale that you will use to rate the actions is shown below.

- Counterproductive: An inappropriate action that will have a negative impact or make the situation worse.
- Ineffective: A poor action which will not help to resolve the situation.
- Slightly effective: An action that will have a small positive impact on the situation.
- Effective: A reasonable action that will help to resolve the situation.
- Very effective: One of the best actions that could be taken to resolve the situation.

Your responses should be based solely on the information presented in each scenario. You should consider the effectiveness of each action as your first response to the scenario presented. You should rate each action independently of the other actions presented. You may feel that you would take a different action to those presented. However, you should concentrate on rating the effectiveness of the four actions that are provided.

How long the SJT will take

This exercise is untimed. However, it is expected to take approximately 45 minutes to complete. Please note that you will be given full instructions about the exercise on the assessment platform before you begin.

Competencies assessed in the SJT

In this exercise, you will be assessed on the following competencies from the CVF:

- we analyse critically
- we are innovative and open-minded
- we take ownership

- we are emotionally aware
- we collaborate
- we support and inspire

Preparing for the SJT

We encourage you to do the following:

- Make sure you are in a quiet location and are free from distractions.
- Ensure you have sufficient time to complete the exercise. While the exercise is untimed, we recommend that you complete it in one sitting if possible.
- Think about what the important decision-making criteria are in relation to the specific scenario. What is the main priority? What will a successful outcome look like?
- Consider the likely consequences of each action in relation to the situation. What will the impact be? Who will be affected? How are they likely to react?
- Take time to familiarise yourself with the rating scale descriptions. These will be accessible at any point during the exercise.
- Remember that you should rate each action independently of the other actions presented. You can allocate the same rating to more than one action within a scenario, if you feel this is appropriate. You do not have to use the full range of the rating scale for actions relating to a scenario.

Below, you will find two example scenarios similar to those you will be asked to complete when you take the SJT. This will help you understand the format of the scenarios and actions.

Example scenario one

Read the scenario and rate each of the four actions as one of the following:

- counterproductive
- ineffective
- slightly effective
- effective
- very effective

If you wish to remind yourself of the full description of the rating scale, this can be found at the start of the [Situational judgement test \(SJT\)](#) section.

You have identified an area on a local estate that is well known for anti-social behaviour. A group of young people has been congregating outside a community centre. They have been intimidating local residents who attend events there. You have spoken with a number of the residents to identify their main concerns and what actions they would like the police to take.

It does not appear that the group of young people are committing a criminal offence. However, the residents want the young people to be moved on and prevented from congregating in this area.

1. Before taking any action, gather more information about the young people from any relevant parties, such as social workers or community groups, and seek their views on what should be done.
2. The young people are not committing a criminal offence. Explain to local residents that you will record and monitor the situation for now, in case it worsens.
3. Disperse the young people and prevent them from congregating outside the community centre – for example, through more regular patrols.
4. Speak to the young people directly about why they are congregating outside the community centre and explain that the residents would prefer if they did not congregate in the area.

Example scenario two

Read the scenario and rate each of the four actions as one of the following:

- counterproductive
- ineffective
- slightly effective
- effective
- very effective

If you wish to remind yourself of the full description of the rating scale, this can be found at the start of the [Situational judgement test \(SJT\)](#) section.

You are currently in the office completing some paperwork for a case. While you are working, you are approached by a new team member. He explains to you that he has forgotten to complete the necessary paperwork on a case that you both attended almost a week ago. The case was not particularly high priority, but it is still important that paperwork is completed as soon as possible. Your other colleagues have told you that the team member has done this many times and can be quite forgetful.

1. Stop your work to explain to your team member the implications of not writing up his case notes. Ask him why he forgot this time and whether he needs any help.
2. Tell your team member that he should complete the paperwork as soon as possible because it is his responsibility and a crucial part of his role.
3. Explain to your team member that you will have to inform your supervisor because this kind of behaviour is becoming a habit with him.
4. Reassure your team member that everyone makes mistakes sometimes and offer to write up the case notes yourself as you were also present at the incident.

Behavioural styles questionnaire (BSQ)

The BSQ measures your typical behaviour and preferences at work. The purpose of the questionnaire is to assess whether you have the right behaviours and attitudes to be effective in the role.

You will be presented with statements and asked to decide the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement. You will use the rating scale of:

- 1: Completely disagree.
- 2: Strongly disagree.
- 3: Somewhat disagree.
- 4: Neither agree nor disagree.
- 5: Somewhat agree.
- 6: Strongly agree.
- 7: Completely agree.

Depending on your responses, you may also be asked to rank statements in terms of which is most like you, in relation to your typical behaviour at work.

How long the BSQ will take

This exercise is untimed. However, it is expected to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Please note that you will be given full instructions about the exercise on the assessment platform before you begin.

Competencies and values assessed in the BSQ

The **CVF competencies and values** that you will be assessed on are:

- we analyse critically
- we are innovative and open-minded
- we take ownership
- we are emotionally aware
- we collaborate
- we support and inspire

- respect and empathy
- courage
- public service

Preparing for the BSQ

We encourage you to do the following:

- Make sure you are in a quiet location and free from distractions.
- Ensure you have sufficient time to complete the exercise. While it is untimed, we recommend that you complete the exercise in one sitting if possible.
- Read and think about each statement carefully before responding.
- Be as honest as possible about the extent to which each statement reflects your typical behaviours and attitudes at work.

Below, you will find an example question similar to the kinds of questions asked during the BSQ. This will help you understand the format of the exercise and the types of questions that you will be asked.

Example question

Each statement will be presented for you to rate on the seven-point scale. Respond to all statements in terms of your typical work behaviour.

- I enjoy having to solve complex problems.
 - 1: Completely disagree.
 - 2: Strongly disagree.
 - 3: Somewhat disagree.
 - 4: Neither agree nor disagree.
 - 5: Somewhat agree.
 - 6: Strongly agree.
 - 7: Completely agree.

Depending on your responses throughout the exercise, you may also be asked to rank statements. When ranking statements, you will be asked to select the statement that is most like you.

- Of the following statements, please select the one that is most like you:
 - I am patient when dealing with others.
 - I always set high standards for my work.
 - I stay true to my beliefs, even when it is easier not to.

After selecting the statement that is most like you, you will continue to the next screen, where you will then be asked to select which of the remaining two statements is most like you.

General technical guidance

Both exercises in the national sift can be completed on a laptop, desktop computer, tablet or mobile device. If you have any technical issues or your internet connectivity drops during your assessment, you can access the exercises again by clicking on the assessment link in the invitation email.

For any technical difficulties during the national sift, please contact supportservicesintl@talogy.com. The support hours are Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays, from 9am to 5.30pm. You can expect a response to your query within four support hours.

You may also contact recruit@college.police.uk if your assessment was affected by technical issues. If you have any queries relating specifically to the national sift assessment, please contact your recruiting force.

Being asked for an access code

If you are asked for an access code when you click on the link to sit the national sift, please clear the cache, cookies and temporary files from your internet browser. The way to do this will vary depending on your device and browser. Once you have cleared these, click on the national sift link again and you will no longer require an access code.

Reasonable adjustments and accommodations

Some people taking online assessments require additional help in the form of reasonable adjustments or accommodations.

As both exercises in the national sift are untimed, we do not offer additional time as a reasonable adjustment.

If you have any condition, temporary or otherwise, that might cause you to be disadvantaged during the national sift (for example, pregnancy, injury, medical conditions, disability or neurodiversity) and if you need advice about what kind of support might help you, please contact the force you are applying to directly. They will be able to provide more information.

The following accommodations are supported by the online system and can be managed by you:

- text-to-speech software
- coloured overlay or change screen and text colour
- zoom in up to 300%
- navigate most of the website using just a keyboard

Take self-facilitated breaks between the questions and the exercises. If you require these accommodations, you will need to make these accommodations yourself and are not required to seek permission from the College of Policing or your recruiting force.

If you have concerns about completing the exercises or feel you may have a disadvantage due to a condition, contact your recruiting force. They will be able to advise further. If you wish to find out more information, please refer to the guidance on [reasonable adjustments and accommodations](#).

Further information

National sift scoring

A fair and transparent recruitment process is important to us. The national sift has been designed to ensure we assess each of the competencies and values relevant to the role. For the national sift, you do not need to know about the law or procedures relating to police work to be successful.

The national sift is automatically scored by the assessment platform. Your scores from the SJT and the BSQ are combined to give an overall score. Your overall performance in the national sift is scored against a comparison group of applicants to policing roles displayed as a percentile.

Using these exercises offers a number of benefits. They provide:

- an objective method of assessing people based on job-relevant criteria
- an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their strengths and abilities

National sift results

For the national sift, you will be informed by email whether you have met the national standard or not. You will receive a personalised feedback report with your score. It will contain more information about the kinds of performances that distinguish better-performing candidates from those who did not score as highly.

Please note that the results timeframe will vary depending on your recruiting force and their processing requirements. For specific dates, please contact your recruiting force.

Resitting the national sift

If unsuccessful, you may wish to resit the national sift. You may do so from three months after the date you completed your assessment.

You will be limited to attempt the assessments twice in a 12-month period. You will be required to complete both exercises in the national sift again.

Appeals procedure

We want to ensure you have a positive experience of our online assessments and have the opportunity to perform at your best. If you have a concern about an issue that occurs during the assessment, you should raise it with your recruiting force immediately.

If you feel the matter has not been resolved after initial communication, you must make a written appeal to the force you are applying to. This situation would apply if you believe there are any extenuating circumstances or procedural concerns that may have affected your performance. To support your appeal, you will need to provide evidence.

If you have met the standard required in the assessment, your appeal will not be considered further. Your appeal will only be considered if you have not met the standard. However, procedural issues will still be investigated, as they may have important implications for the assessment as a whole. Please note that you cannot appeal based on an unsuccessful result alone.

Extenuating circumstances

Extenuating circumstances are likely to be a serious event or series of events, such as illness, accident or injury, or the death or serious illness of a family member. We recognise that lack of preparation or a heavy workload prior to completing the online assessment process may not allow you to perform at your best. However, these are not considered to be extenuating circumstances.

Prior to completing your assessment, if you are aware of extenuating circumstances affecting your performance or involvement, you may ask to complete the assessment later. If the assessment window is due to expire, notify your force to explain and request an extension. These will not be grounds for appeal after the assessment. It will be your decision as to whether you continue with the assessment or withdraw and undertake it later.

We provide all candidates with this opportunity. We recognise that it is important for candidates to feel ready and able to take the assessment, so they can perform at their best.

If you have further queries related to the online application process that cannot be answered by technical support or your recruiting force, please contact [**recruit@college.police.uk**](mailto:recruit@college.police.uk). State your recruiting force in the header of the email.

About the College

We're the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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