

Fitness testing

Version 3

1. Policy statement

The Police Federation of England and Wales believes that every officer should be sufficiently fit and healthy to undertake the role that they are required to perform by their Chief Officer. This means that they will be safe, their colleagues will be able to depend on them and the public will be protected.

2. Responsibility

The INB is responsible for all policy formation.

3. Summary

PFEW believes that only those police officers who are required to undertake personal safety training should be subject to the annual fitness test. We agree with the Fitness Test Working Group assessment that the JRFT standard, level 5.4 shuttle run, is likely to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim; however, this justification covers only those roles that require personal safety training. Any derogation from this standard carries a risk of legal challenge from an officer disadvantaged by the implementation of a higher or a lower standard, any additional standards or a different method of assessment.

PFEW believes that fitness standards in the police service should be appropriate and necessary to the job. There should be evidence based national standards that all forces are required to adopt so that when officers work together from different parts of the country they all have at least the same level of fitness standard.

While it is essential that police officers are fit, both mentally and physically, to complete the roles that they are required to perform by their chief officer, PFEW believes that job-related fitness tests (JRFTs), whether for the purposes of recruitment or in-service testing, must reflect the diverse nature of the police service and be appropriate for each individual role officers may undertake.

The Equality Act 2010 requires public sector employers, including the police service, to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. A fitness test has the potential to discriminate unlawfully both indirectly and directly on the grounds of sex, age and disability. PFEW expects Chief Officers to consider if any potential discrimination can be justified as being a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim and to conduct diversity monitoring of all those required to undertake the test.

PFEW also expects Chief Officers to consider the positive action provisions under the Equality Act 2010, where it is shown that there are groups of officers with a protected characteristic and such groups may experience a disadvantage for example a force could run a mentoring programme or assistance with training and preparation for the test.

We welcome the decision of the College of Policing in 2016 to endorse the Chester Treadmill Police Walk Test as a validated alternative to the 15-metre shuttle run.

PFEW believes that the job-related fitness tests for 13 specialist posts including firearms, dog handlers and police cyclists that were developed by the Police Advisory Board for England and Wales Fitness Working Group and adopted by Chief Officers in 2012 are appropriate and necessary to ensure the proper and effective performance of each specialist role. The fitness standards were set following a rigorous scientific assessment of the physical requirements of each role. The tests reflect the job and competence levels required in each role. Any derogation from these standards carries a risk of legal challenge from an officer disadvantaged by the implementation of a higher or a lower standard, any additional standards or a different method of assessment.

Officers who fail a fitness test should not be subject to disciplinary procedures but should instead be provided with supportive action or offered an alternative test to assist them in passing the JRFT. The PFEW believes that Chief Officers should only use the unsatisfactory performance procedures where an officer is unable to achieve the required standard and only when all appropriate support measures and alternatives have been delivered.

PFEW expects Chief Officers to ensure that specific health and safety risk assessment for each fitness test is conducted by a suitably experienced person and reviewed on a regular basis. Staff delivering the fitness tests must also be competent to do so as well as being first aid certified.

4. Procedures/implementation

PFEW will continue to work with the College of Policing in the Fitness Testing Working Group to ensure that job-related fitness tests are developed that are appropriate and necessary for the roles officers are required to perform.

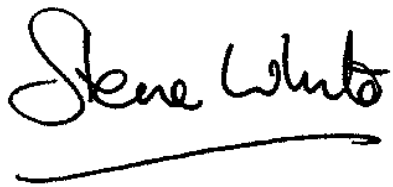
PFEW will monitor the implementation of in-service fitness tests to ensure that the standards remain relevant and can continue to be justified as being a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

PFEW will press Chief Constables to offer the approved alternative test and to develop clear and consistent policy regarding the use of the alternative test based on medical grounds or as a reasonable adjustment, following a decision from occupational health.

Responsibility is delegated to the General Secretary and/or the appropriate sub-committee.

	Author	Date	Date to be reviewed	Change
Version 1	EP-KP	August 2015	August 2016	
Version 2	EP-KP	August 2016	August 2017	No change
Version 3	KP-EP	August 2017	August 2018	Added references to the alternative fitness tests endorsed by the College of Policing 2016

Signed by:



Chairman



General Secretary