SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY
ÙGHDARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

Agenda Item 6.1

Meeting	**People Committee**
Date	**28 February 2024**
Location	**Video Conference**
Title of Paper	**Recruitment and Protected Characteristic Impact Report**
Presented By	**Katy Miller, Director of People and Development**
Recommendation to Members	**For Discussion**
Appendix Attached	**No**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to provide data, insight and highlight current actions in relation to police officer recruitment. This paper has a primary focus on protected characteristic impact, however, also looks at data in relation to recruitment more broadly.

This paper is presented to address People Committee action PEOPLE-20230531-004:

This paper is submitted for discussion.

2.1 Overview of Police Officer Recruitment

The table below summarises police officer intakes across 2021/22 and 2022/23 YTD. These intakes delivered an average of 214 recruits, with an overall diversity profile of **62%** male, **38%** female and **8.3%** black minority ethnic (BME) and white minority ethnic (WME). Though data is limited to 2 intakes, 25 recruits were part of the LGBT community (**6.4%**) and 6 had declared a disability to Police Scotland (1.5%).

Intake Date	Total No of Recruits	Male	Female	BME/WME	LGB	Disability Declared
28 June 2021	180	90 (50%)	90 (50%)	18 (10%)	N/A	N/A
27 Sept 2021	142	80 (56%)	62 (44%)	13 (9%)	N/A	N/A
22 Nov 2021	120	70 (58%)	50 (42%)	14 (12%)	N/A	N/A
18 April 2022	300	169 (56%)	131 (44%)	29 (10%)	N/A	N/A
25 July 2022	300	195 (65%)	105 (35%)	19 (6%)	N/A	N/A
7 Nov 2022	305	188 (62%)	117 (38%)	27 (9%)	N/A	N/A
20 Feb 2023	191	126 (66%)	65 (34%)	15 (8%)	N/A	N/A
29 May 2023	189	133 (70%)	56 (30%)	11 (6%)	10 (5%)	0 (0%)
18 Sept 2023	197	146 (74%)	51 (26%)	15 (8%)	15 (8%)	6 (3%)
	1924	**1197 (62%)**	**727 (38%)**	**161 (8.3%)**	**25 (6.4%)** **May 23 and Sept 23 only**	**6 (1.5%)** **May 23 and Sept 23 only**

2.1.1 Summary of Findings – Intake Demographics

Intakes remain predominantly male, with this ratio increasing steadily over time to the most recent Sept 23 intake in which **74%** of recruits were **male**. The Positive Action Team continues to host events tailored to attract applicants from underrepresented groups including female and BME/WME applicants.

Numbers of BME/WME recruits have varied over time but remains higher that the proportion of those identifying as BME/WME in Scotland through 2011 census data (**4.1%** of the Scottish population is **BME/WME** compared with **8.3%** of those on intake).

Data on the number of recruits from the LGB community is limited, but a 2017 study by the Office of National Statistics indicates that around **1.9%** of the UK population identify as **LGB** compared with **6.4%** of those on recent intakes. Similarly, data on recruits who have declared a disability is only available for the most recent 2 intakes, but the ratio of recruits declaring a **disability** is markedly smaller than the Scottish population (**1.5%** vs **20%** in 2011 census).

Analysis indicates that focus should remain on increasing the proportion of female recruits, but that the demographic of intakes in relation to sexual orientation and ethnic origin are tracking more favourably.

2.2 Application Levels, Attrition Rates and Candidate Pipeline

The key metrics which are used to monitor recruitment activity and identify any potential risks for additional steps required to deliver the necessary application levels, and to maximise diversity of applicants, are:

- **application levels (2.2.1)**
- **attrition rates across the selection process at various stages (2.2.2)**
- **attrition across protected characteristics (2.2.3)**

2.2.1 Application levels

PERIOD	TOTAL PER YEAR / MONTHLY AVG	IDENTITY	ETHNIC ORIGIN	SEXUAL ORIENTATION	DISABILITY STATUS
2019/20	4228 / 352 (No Advertising)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2020/21	5611 / 468 (No Advertising)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2021/22	2597 / 216 (No Advertising)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022/23	3848 / 321 (National Advertising Campaign)	Male 2651 (69%) Female 1197 (31%)	White Scottish 3050 (79%) Other White British 388 (10%) WME 208 (5%) BME 189 (5%) Chose not to disclose 13 (<1%)	Heterosexual 3498 (91%) Gay/Lesbian 182 (5%) Bisexual 127 (3%) Chose not to disclose 37 (1%) Other 4 (<1%)	No Disability 3696 (96%) Disability Declared 106 (3%) Chose not to disclose 46 (1%)
Current 2023/24 (YTD as of 03/10/2023	1587 / 226 currently	Male 1106 (70%) Female 481 (30%)	White Scottish 1224 (77%) Other White British 163 (10%) WME 105 (7%) BME 91 (6%) Chose not to disclose 4 (<1%)	Heterosexual 1418 (89%) Gay/Lesbian 67 (4%) Bisexual 68 (4%) Chose not to disclose 32 (2%) Other 2 (<1%)	No Disability Declared 1518 (96%) Disability Declared 57 (4%) Chose not to disclose 11 (1%) Unknown 1 (<1%)

The significant drop in application numbers in 2021/2022 were attributed to a challenging labour market and reduced opportunity for traditional attraction activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. A Corporate Communications led national recruitment campaign launched in August 2022 delivered a relative increase in application levels, although numbers remain generally low compared to previous years.

The ratio of WME and BME candidates has risen slightly in 2023-24 from **5%** to **7%** and **6%** respectively. Latest Census data (2011) reports that **91.8%** of the **Scottish population report to be White British** compared with **89% of the 2022-23 applicant pool** and **87%** of the 2023-2024 applicant pool. This suggests that Police Scotland are attracting a slightly greater number of BME/WME candidates as compared with the Scottish population.

2017 UK study by the Office of National Statistics indicates that **1.9%** of the UK population identify as LGB compared with **8%** of our applicant pool in both 2022-23 and 2023-24.

Around **3-4 %** of our applicant pool declare a disability, significantly lower than population data at **20%.**

2.2.2 Attrition Rates

The following tables capture the known attrition rates at each stage of the recruitment journey, which represents a key consideration when projecting future intake delivery risks.

The information below shows a comparison between rates in May 2022 and April 2023.

AVERAGE ATTRITION RATE	MAY 2022	APRIL 2023
Shortlist	9%	9%
Fitness/PSET	17%	25%
Assessment Day	20%	38%
Vetting Refusals	2%	18%
Withdrawals/Other rejections	17%	14%
Medical deferral	30%	47%

The above information clearly shows a significant increase in attrition across the reporting period:

- For May 2022 1,000 applicants with the above attrition rates would result in 345 appointable candidates.
- For April 2023, 1,000 applicants with the above attrition rates would result in 160 appointable candidates.

The most noticeable increases in attrition are within the stages of Assessment Day, Vetting and Medical which supports the position that recruitment teams are experiencing a drop in candidate standard.

Against the above challenging backdrop, it is however reassuring to evidence a clear and non-negotiable maintenance of recruitment standards.

Further data and insight are provided into attrition (2.2.3) and vetting (2.3).

2.2.3 Attrition Snapshot Prior to May and September 2023 Intakes

The data provided shows a snapshot of attrition in the lead up to the May 2023 Police Officer intake and the September 2023. This data describes the characteristics of those who have left the recruitment process for any reason in the periods 1st Feb – 30th April 2023 and 1st May – 31st August 2023.

The following tables shows attrition by protected characteristic:

Identity	Prior to May 23 intake	Prior to Sept 23 intake
Male	483 (66.9%)	590 (72.6%)
Female	239 (33.1%)	223 (27.4%)
Total	722	813

Ethnicity	Prior to May 23 intake	Prior to Sept 23 intake
White Scottish	570 (78.9%)	624 (76.8%)
Any Other White British	85 (11.8%)	86 (10.6%)
White Minority Ethnic	38 (5.3%)	53 (6.5%)
Black Minority Ethnic	25 (3.5%)	49 (6%)
Choose Not to Disclose	4 (0.6%)	1 (0.1%)
Total	722	813

Sexual Orientation	Prior to May 23 intake	Prior to Sept 23 intake
Heterosexual	660 (91.4%)	731 (89.9%)
LGB	53 (7.3%)	69 (8.5%)
Choose Not to Disclose	9 (1.2%)	11 (1.4%)
Other	0 (0%)	2 (0.2%)
Total	722	813

Disability	Prior to May 23 intake	Prior to Sept 23 intake
No	695 (96.3%)	780 (95.5%)
Yes	21 (2.9%)	22 (2.7%)
Choose Not to Disclose	6 (0.8%)	11 (1.4%)
Total	722	813

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Reason	Identity Male / Female		Ethnic Origin White Scottish / AOWB / WME/BME		LGB Heterosexual / LGB		Disability No / Yes	
	May 23	Sept 23	May 23	Sept 23	May 23	Sept 23	May 23	Sept 23
Profile	**67% / 23%**	**73% / 27%**	**79% / 12% / 9%**	**77% / 11% / 12%**	**91% / 7%**	**90% / 9%**	**96% / 3%**	**96% / 3%**
Shortlisting	52 / 17 75% / 25%	102 / 16 86% / 14%	47 / 8 / 11 68% / 12% / 19%	80 / 13 / 25 68% / 11% / 21%	61 / 5 88% / 7%	107 / 13 91% / 6%	64 / 4 93% / 6%	114 / 4 97% / 3%
Fitness / PSET	148 / 98 60% / 40%	137 / 89 61% / 39%	188 / 29 / 27 77% / 11% / 11%	166 / 21 / 39 73% / 9% / 17%	227 / 19 92% / 8%	200 / 25 89% / 11%	240 / 6 98% / 2%	220 / 4 98% / 2%
Assessment Day	129 / 36 78% / 22%	136 / 26 84% / 16%	132 / 22 / 11 80% / 13% / 7%	130 / 15 / 16 80% / 15% / 10%	154 / 9 93% / 5%	152 / 9 94% / 6%	159 / 4 96% / 4%	157 / 2 97% / 1%
Pre-appointment checks	12 / 5 71% / 29%	13 / 6 68% / 32 %	14 / 2 / 1 82% / 12% / 6%	13 / 5 / 1 69% / 26% / 5%	15 / 2 88% / 12%	18 / 1 95% / 5%	17 / 0 100% / 0%	16 / 3 84% / 16%
Vetting - Refusal	36 / 16 69% / 31%	57 / 19 75% / 25%	49 / 3 / 0 94% / 6% / 0%	62 / 10 / 4 82% / 13% / 5%	49 / 3 94% / 6%	72 / 4 95% / 5%	50 / 1 96% / 2%	72 / 2 97% / 3%
Application Withdrawn	72 / 52 58% / 42%	95 / 52 65% / 35%	101 / 14 / 8 82% / 11% / 6%	118 / 15 / 14 80% / 10% / 10%	180 / 12 87% / 10%	130 / 13 88% / 9%	117 / 5 94% / 4%	139 / 6 95% / 4%
Force Withdrawal	12 / 6 78% / 22%	34 / 8 81% / 19%	19 / 6 / 2 70% / 22% / 7%	36 / 4 / 2 86% / 10% / 4%	24 / 3 89% / 11%	35 / 6 83% / 14%	26 / 1 96% / 4%	40 / 1 95% / 2%
Failed to Attend / Book	13 / 9 59% / 41%	16 / 7 70% / 30 %	20 / 1 / 1 91% / 5% / 4%	19 / 3 / 1 83% / 13% / 4%	22 / 0 100% / 0%	22 / 2 92% / 8%	22 / 0 100% / 0%	22 / 0 100% / 0%

*Pre-Appointment checks refer to candidates that have been placed on medical deferral.

The table above initially outlines the demographic profile of the candidate pipeline on the lead up to the May 2023 and September 2023 intakes (same time periods as described in 2.2.3). Attrition data is then broken down by protected characteristic and by stage in the process. For example, in the lead up to May 2023, **67%** of those in the pipeline were male. Of those who left the process at shortlisting, **75%** were male. It is expected that broadly similar ratios should leave the process at each stage as is present in the profile. Where a clear variance is seen (**10%** or greater) this is highlighted in red.

Gender Identity

From the table above it can be seen that disproportionately more males were unsuccessful at shortlisting as compared with the profile in September 2023 (**73%** of the profile were male but **86%** of those shortlisted out were male). This is also seen in the May 2023 shortlisting data though to a lesser extent.

PSET / Fitness appears to sift out disproportionately more female candidates than expected and this is seen in both the May and September data sets. Conversely, male candidates are less successful than expected at assessment day. Further analysis of the PSET indicates no adverse impact here, suggesting that the fitness assessment accounts for much of the difference seen in this stage of selection.

		Overall		PSET 1		PSET 2		PSET 4	
		Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail
Sex	Male	79.2%	20.8%	78.7%	21.3%	79.8%	20.2%	80.2%	19.8%
	Female	75.8%	24.2%	79.1%	20.9%	74.2%	25.8%	78.7%	21.3%

More female candidate than anticipated withdraw their applications or fail to book, and this could be examined further to understand potential barriers. For example, female candidates may be more likely to undertake caring responsibilities and may be finding it more difficult to find assessment slots that suit them.

Ethnicity

More WME/BME candidates left the process at shortlisting than expected, and consideration should be given to better understand

why this may be happening. Those identified as 'All Other White British' are also more likely to be impacted by being deferred due to pre-employment checks.

Sexual Orientation and Disability Status

No clear patterns were noted in relation to sexual orientation or disability status.

2.3   VETTING REVIEW

Vetting fails have risen from around **2-5%** in 2019-2021 to around **18-24%** in the lead up to the May 2023 Police Officer intake. As a result of this increase, vetting fails have been proactively reviewed as part of business-as-usual governance and assurance.

The below data shows comparison trends in the lead up to Police Officer intakes in July 2022 and May 2023

May 2022 to July 2022

	Total		Male	%	Female	%	White Scottish	%	AOWB	%	WME	%	BME	%
Candidates by characteristic	234		135	58%	99	42%	188	80%	21	9%	15	6%	10	4%
Vetting Fails	47	20%	36	77%	11	23%	36	77%	6	13%	2	4%	3	6%

February 2023 to May 2023

	Total		Male	%	Female	%	White Scottish	%	AOWB	%	WME	%	BME	%
Candidates by characteristic	281		207	74%	74	26%	243	86%	21	7%	8	3%	9	3%
Vetting Fails	69	25%	50	72%	19	28%	63	91%	3	4%	0	0%	3	4%

The above table outlines candidates passed to vetting in the lead up to July 2022 intake and May 2023 intake. The first row shows the number and percentage of candidates by characteristic (for example 207 candidates in 2023 were male which is **74%** of those progressed to vetting). The second row outlines the

number and percentage of vetting fails (for example 50 of the 69 vetting fails were male, **72%** vetting fails).

Whilst vetting fails as a percentage by gender have remained similar over the two periods examined, in 2022 the proportion of vetting fails for males was higher than expected. **58%** of candidates were male vs **77%** of vetting fails. In 2023 these ratios are much closer, though this is largely because of the increase in male candidates.

Vetting fails for WME/BME candidates has fallen between 2022 and 2023 with **10%** of vetting fails from WME/BME candidates in 2022 vs **4%** in 2023, though it should be noted that the number of candidates remains small.

2.4   Steps taken to continue to attract diverse candidates, improve candidate experience, maintain the numbers of candidates required and to provide oversight, insight and assurance of recruitment processes and practices.

Despite the challenges outlined above, the Recruitment and Selection Team have continued to meet each probationer intake requirement as a result of continuous attraction and selection activity, along with additional measures outlined below:

i.   To ensure clear commitments relating to resourcing are included in the organisations new People Strategy, together with the creations of a strategic dashboard relating to 'resourcing' metrics, insight and evaluation.

ii.   A national campaign to position Police Scotland as an employer of choice together with a sustained national marketing activity developed to improve the diversity and quantity of application levels. A recent external review of recruitment was done (MOT) and learning from that will be shared with Corporate Comms to ensure they work with us to achieve the desired outcome.

iii.   The Police Officer recruitment journey was fully redesigned and implemented by expert in-house Business Psychologists to maximise resource efficiencies and modernise/streamline the candidate experience to remove logistical barriers to make the recruitment process more accessible to all candidates.

iv. The Recruitment team will continue to work with wider strategic projects including Policing Together and work on tackling sexism and misogyny to ensure policies and practices continue to be scrutinised appropriately.

v. An Island and Rural attraction campaign to focus police recruitment attraction in the areas causing concern. Again, with reference to the recent external review, the diversity of applications in rural areas will be limited and this needs to be acknowledged.

vi. Work with Professional Standards Division to agree service level agreements in respect of vetting timeframes to support internal planning and to manage candidate expectations in respect of timeframes. Additionally, to ensure that candidates are clear as to the extent of vetting which is undertaken and that specific details relating to failure during vetting cannot be disclosed to them.

vii. Funding has been approved for Home Office Guidelines to be reviewed in respect of medical standards as it is accepted that any guidelines from 2004 are now out of date. A medical doctor has been recruited and the review commenced in December 2023. It is expected the review will be completed in 6 months and that a report will be brought to People Committee.

viii. They will review all medical guidelines including Psychological. Some early research carried out in this space shows that within UK police forces, there are variances in the timeframe that candidates are required to be free of medication before being considered "fit". We need to look into this further and understand better if our Home Office Guidelines and the 2013 Police Regulations in regard to medical standards, are still fit for purpose.

ix. Continued targeted work undertaken by the Positive Action Team to ensure Police Scotland maximise our opportunity to have visibility, and provide support to, candidates with protected characteristics. Additionally, this team offer individual exit interviews for probationers who resign from the organisation within their first 12 months.

x.   E-Recruitment Implementation:

i.   Police officer candidates now apply via a new electronic Oleeo System which enhances candidate experience and provides far greater reporting and feedback opportunities to inform activity and attraction strategies.

ii.   The introduction of Diversity Insights functionality also ensures all processes maximise inclusivity, remove barriers and are fully aligned to Policing Together Aims and Outcomes.

2.5   CONCLUSION

The data and insight do demonstrate that there is a significant increase in the number of candidates which are required to be sourced in order to achieve the probationer intake numbers. This is due to an overall upward trend of candidates who are failing assessment, medicals and vetting.

We acknowledge that intake data shows a trend of fewer females joining Police Scotland, but the latest proportions of females on intake is broadly in line with the number of female applications.

We attract proportionately more WME/BME and LGB candidates than latest census and Office for National Statistics data indicate that we should, and these candidates progress through each recruitment stage without evidence of adverse impact.

Female applicants appear to leave the selection process at fitness stage more than expected, and work is ongoing to examine the suitability of the current fitness assessment and any adverse impact present.

We are currently introducing female only fitness days (where we can accommodate) and looking at fitness evenings to encourage people to improve their overall fitness.

There is also a less pronounced but still present theme around female candidates self-selecting out of the process by withdrawing or failing to book assessment more than their male counterparts. The Positive Action Team host events and information sessions specifically for female applicants, and this trend may be present as the extra insight gained at these sessions may mean some female

candidates opt out of the process. It may be worth considering whether the Recruitment and Selection team could provide a base level insight into the realities of the role of Police Officer to all candidates, in the knowledge that more may voluntarily leave the process.

That said, as with all organisations, Police Scotland commits to continuing to collate and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data and insight, including the lived experience of candidates and colleagues, to ensure we eliminate any potential for conscious and unconscious bias and discrimination.

Whilst work continues to diversify all probationer intakes, it is important to note that the NHS has **89%** female registered nurses and only **11%** of UK registered nurses are male. Our research into barriers for underrepresented groups presented that people were worried about their safety as a police officer and that caused concerns for them and their family. They told us they were concerned about being in dangerous situations, and they were not sure they could handle the pressure of the role. Concerns raised about having to deal with the public in that pressurised environment of policing. Many of these concerns are reality of everyday policing and we can't ignore that. Policing may not be a career females want to pursue just as nursing is not a career males choose. Our role here is to ensure we have an open, fair and transparent process that holds no barriers to those from underrepresented groups to be able to pursue a career in policing.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1   There are no financial implications.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

4.1   Implications are the rising demand on resource within People & Development and Vetting to attract and undertake the vetting of an increasing pipeline of candidates to ensure appointments made meet the needs of the organisation.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   There are no legal implications.

6.   REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1   There are no reputational implications.

7.   SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1   There are no social implications.

8.   COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1   There is no community impact.

9.   EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1   There are no equalities implications.

10.   ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1   There are no environment implications.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to discuss the information contained within this report.