

Written evidence submitted by Police Now (MAC0032)

About Police Now

1. Police Now is an independent national charity (registered number: 1168427). Our mission is to transform communities by recruiting, developing and inspiring leaders in policing.
2. We do this by recruiting, training and developing graduates via one of our two leadership programmes, with a focus on attracting into the police service those who might not otherwise have considered a career in policing. Our National Graduate Leadership Programme places programme participants in police forces throughout England and Wales. As uniformed neighbourhood constables, they focus on reducing crime, increasing public confidence and solving entrenched problems in some of the country's most deprived communities. The National Detective Programme sees participants enter the police service as trainee detective constables, working across a range of investigative disciplines and functions, with a focus on protecting and supporting the most vulnerable victims of crime.
3. Police Now was created six years ago by a small group of frontline police officers, with the support of a group of early adopter police forces and the Home Office, who believed that there was value for the police service and the communities policing serves to recruit, train and develop police officers in alternative ways to the traditional approach. Police Now has recruited, trained and developed over 1,000 police officers since 2015, many of whom would have not otherwise considered a career in policing.
4. As an organisation that is part of policing, but is independent of police forces, we provide a unique lens through which to observe how police forces approach diversity and inclusion, particularly in relation to the recruitment, training and development, inclusion, retention and progression of police officers.

Executive summary

5. We are proud of the contribution that Police Now has made to communities and to the police service over the last six years. But we believe that we, and policing more broadly, can do more to advance diversity and inclusion within policing and wider society.
6. In particular, we and the wider policing sector can do more to build a truly representative police workforce able to serve all communities equally and effectively, and to realise the wider crime reduction, public confidence, efficiency and effectiveness benefits that will flow from it.
7. One of our core aims is to attract individuals who would not otherwise have considered a career in policing, and who display a genuine commitment to our mission and to wider public service.
8. While diversity and inclusion is a complex area with few easy answers, our learning and experience indicates that by drawing on best practice and evidence of what works beyond traditional police recruitment and training approaches, there are opportunities to make swift and significant progress towards greater workforce representation, especially in the areas of recruitment, training and development, inclusion, retention and progression.

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9. The attraction of genuine difference into police officer roles requires concerted effort across a wide range of connected activities, from programme design and structure, through initial attraction, marketing, candidate assessment, and pre-employment checks, to foundation training, continuation training, cultural inclusion, continuous professional development, promotion and lateral development.
10. Our attraction and recruitment campaigns have contributed to some success in recruiting more women and individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, and results continue to improve as our programmes become more established.
11. Nevertheless, Police Now's learning and experience shows that attracting, recruiting and retaining large numbers of individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds remains a considerable challenge for the police service.
12. Police Now is working with 31 forces across England and Wales to support innovation and help speed up progress towards a more diverse and representative workforce.
13. The design of attraction campaigns, with a focus on engaging a broad network of influencers and those individuals and communities with less positive perceptions of policing, can contribute to more diverse recruitment.
14. Support for candidates at all stages of the recruitment process, ensuring the process is as fast as possible and tackling challenges around post-offer checks can all help reduce the attrition rates among applicants from diverse backgrounds.
15. Supporting police officers once they join the service is vital to both retention and progression in policing: in the long run, no recruitment drive can deliver sustainable growth in the diversity of the policing workforce if officers from under-represented groups do not stay in the police service at least beyond the completion of their probationary period.
16. A lack of reliable data about police diversity and inclusion, from recruitment onward, hampers ongoing efforts to make progress in this space. The absence of data in respect of police officer experience is particularly lacking, despite this being a key driver of retention, wellbeing and performance.
17. We would be more than happy to provide further evidence to the Committee if this would assist with its inquiry.

Police Now's commitment to diversity and inclusion

18. Recent events in the United States and the killing of George Floyd have caused shock around the world and highlighted the depth of concern about the work which still needs to be done in the UK as well as elsewhere. The National Police Chiefs' Council and other policing bodies recently said:

"Policing is complex and challenging and sometimes we fall short. When we do, we are not afraid to shine a light on injustices or to be held to account."

"The relationship between the police and the public in the UK is strong but there is always more to do. Every day, up and down the country, officers and staff are working to strengthen

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those relationships and address concerns. Only by working closely with our communities do we build trust and help keep people safe.”

19. This is a welcome and important statement, as is the NPCC’s pledge to consult on an action plan by the end of July.
20. At Police Now, we recognise that progress has been made over the last two decades, but it has been neither as comprehensive nor as swift as many had hoped. We are committed to playing our part in delivering a representative policing workforce able to serve all communities equally and effectively. This requires us to consider what more we can do ourselves, and to use our experience and our learning to help policing to change for the better, where this change is required.
21. We will be further increasing our focus on diversity and inclusion activities to support policing, and consider the following areas to represent both priorities for action and opportunities for significant progress:
 - recruitment
 - training and development
 - inclusion
 - retention
 - progression.

Barriers to achieving a representative workforce

22. Police Now’s learning and the wider evidence base highlights the scale of the challenge facing police forces in terms of attracting, recruiting and retaining a representative number of officers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds compared to both the demographics of a police area as a whole, and particular localities within that area. For example, a recent study by Trendence Research showed that:
 - 18% of White students would consider a policing career when they graduate
 - only 10% of students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds would consider a policing career, falling to 7% for Black students.
23. In 2014, High Fliers Research showed that only 2% of university finalists from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds had or were planning to apply to pursue a career in policing. As a national programme with a strong and growing presence in the UK graduate recruitment market, Police Now has worked to increase this number over the last five years. Research now shows that graduate applications to a policing career (using Police Now applications as a proxy for policing as a whole) increased by almost a third in 2019, the highest increase of any career sector. Police Now is also listed as number 47 in *The Times* Top 100 graduate employers, the highest-climbing entrant of 2019.
24. Our data also suggests that, having entered the police service, officers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds feel less supported and accepted, particularly by their immediate supervisors and managers, than their White colleagues. This is clearly a matter of serious concern, and provides some evidence to suggest that there remain some areas of policing that, perhaps unconsciously, suppress difference, discount new ideas, and require new joiners to fit in

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with an established approach. Increasing diversity in the police is not just about recruitment, even sustained recruitment: without tackling inclusion and therefore retention, diversity will be hard to maintain or increase over the long run.

25. We actively explore innovative ways to help police forces overcome potential barriers and identify best practice to support the recruitment, training and development of officers from diverse backgrounds. This is crucial to the British model of policing by consent and building the public's confidence in policing.
26. Police Now has been working to recruit more officers from Minority Ethnic backgrounds for several years. Our recruitment trends – significantly higher than for the policing sector as a whole – suggest the graduate market has the potential to help increase the proportion of women and police officers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds:
 - in 2019, 50% of participants on the National Graduate Leadership Programme identified as female (compared to 35% for new police officer recruits nationally in 2019) and 17% identified as being from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background. (compared to 11% for new police officer recruits nationally in 2019)
 - our data suggests that multi-year partnership with Police Now can help police forces achieve an increase in BAME applicants and joiners at a force level – this is linked to the development of local brand trust and recognition and holds true not only across urban areas where the proportion of potential recruits from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds is high, but also in less diverse areas
 - in 2019, 18% of Police Now officers were eligible for free school meals, compared with 15% of the population – showing that a focus on recruiting graduates need not negatively impact on social mobility, something policing has always promoted
 - the proportion of officers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds recruited for Police Now's 2015 intake was double that of previous policing graduate schemes, resulting in Police Now winning the 2016 MPS Commissioner's Excellence in Policing Award for Diversity
 - Police Now was awarded the Institute of Student Employers Diversity and Inclusion Award in 2018, and both the TARGETjobs National Graduate Recruitment Award for the Best Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the Employer Brand Management Award for Best Diversity Brand, in 2019.

Recruitment

Attraction campaigns

27. 58% of Police Now's 2018 cohort of participants told us that they were not planning to join the police before hearing about Police Now, and 60% of our 2019 cohort identified Police Now's mission as the primary factor motivating them to join.

"Police Now's mission really resonated with me and it was only due to finding out about the programme that I considered policing." (2019 National Graduate Leadership Programme participant)

28. We also place a strong emphasis on diversity in our recruitment process. To help attract individuals from under-represented groups and those who have not previously considered a career in policing, Police Now does not use images of uniformed officers in the initial stages of

recruitment campaigns. Instead:

- our attraction and recruitment campaigns emphasise the community and transformational potential of police work
- we present policing as a career full of intellectual challenge, excitement, leadership, development and problem-solving
- Police Now's campaigns ensure a good representation of diversity to provide positive role models for potential applicants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

29. Police Now's attraction campaigns are targeted not only at applicants themselves but also at their network of influencers, such as parents, family and friends. Influencers, and especially family influencers, are often instrumental in a potential candidate's decision to apply to pursue a career in policing and, having applied, to remain in the recruitment process – particularly, in our experience, for candidates from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Police Now's research, in partnership with the Transform Society, found that 24% of students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds would stop an application process if their parents were against their career choice, compared to 19% of White students. This requires a more holistic approach to attraction, focusing not just on university campuses but also on broader media approaches.

Supporting candidates during and after the process

30. To ensure that police forces better reflect and represent the communities they serve, it is crucial that candidates from under-represented groups are supported at every step of the hiring process and beyond.
31. Police Now provides all prospective candidates with digital and face-to-face mentoring, as well as access to high-performing police officers that are currently serving in our partner forces to help them understand the nature of the police constable role, with the aim of reducing the likelihood of attrition during the process.
32. Regardless of the outcome of their application to Police Now, all applicants receive feedback and follow up. This helps ensure that unsuccessful applicants leave with a positive experience of policing and are therefore both more inclined to re-apply for opportunities within the police service and less likely to dissuade their friends and family members from making their own application.
33. Since November 2018, we have applied the full extent of positive action permitted by the Equality Act 2010. We have also replaced existing online tests to try to eliminate any potential adverse impact on applicants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, and scrutinise all our data to identify, and then work to eliminate, any adverse impact wherever it is found.

Unconscious bias and working to design it out

34. It has been well-documented that unconscious (or unintentional) bias can hinder recruitment, retention and the development of ethnic, gender and wider cultural diversity. With this in mind, all of Police Now's assessors receive unconscious bias training.
35. Police Now carefully considers the images used in recruitment campaigns to ensure they reflect the diversity of the modern police service and the communities they serve. This imagery helps to

challenge stereotypes about the policing workforce and attract diverse applicants from all backgrounds.

Inclusion, retention and progression

Supporting officers

36. Police Now's programmes are deliberately intensive because this reflects both graduate expectations of a high quality development programme and the nature of police officer roles, but making sure that officers joining the police service through Police Now are supported to develop and thrive is vital to our mission, and to their performance and positive impact in communities.
37. The six-week National Graduate Leadership Programme Academy is based on a high-intensity learning model, priming participants for the challenges of frontline policing. Exceptional officers are seconded from frontline posts in our partner police forces for eight-weeks as Syndicate Leads and Stream Managers. We also ensure participants are supported by high-performing officers for between six and ten weeks following the Academy. The National Detective Programme Academy follows a similar model but is extended to 12 weeks to incorporate additional advanced investigation content.
38. Supporting participants to succeed is a vital priority for us throughout the programme. Each Police Now participant receives coaching from a Police Now Leadership Development Officer, whose function is to enable the participant deliver impact in their community and policing team, and to develop as a police officer and a leader. Participants undertake regular, structured quarterly development reviews and share problem-solving case studies via the Police Now Impact Library, enabling knowledge sharing and reflection across forces. They also attend skills sessions covering topics such as evidence-based policing, communication and cyber-investigation, and are regularly required to demonstrate what they have achieved on behalf of their community in that period of time.
39. Our data suggests that after 18 months' service, wellbeing is the strongest predictor of recruits' satisfaction with policing as a career choice. Recruits' assessment of their force as a 'good place to work' is also strongly associated with their career satisfaction. These findings suggest that wellbeing should be central to discussions about police recruitment and retention in the context of the Police Uplift Programme, as well as the development of our programmes.
40. These findings also suggest that Police Now participants' decision on whether to remain in policing after their two-year probationary period is linked to their policing and force experience rather than satisfaction with the programme delivery per se.

Progression and retention can support each other

41. Supporting the retention and progression of officers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds will be key to promoting long-term positive cultural change in policing. Police Now's learning suggests providing officers with a range of professional development opportunities, and access to support and mentoring can yield positive results in terms of retention. Based on those who joined the Police Now programme in 2016, the proportion of officers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds retained at the two-year point was higher than the proportion of White officers retained.

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42. Police Now offers participants the opportunity to attend a mock fast-track assessment centre which includes a competency-based interview, role play scenarios and presentations. All attendees receive comprehensive feedback. These have supported alumni to be promoted and also to move laterally, especially into investigative roles.
43. Of the 148 police officers that collectively comprise Police Now's 2015 and 2016 cohorts, 16 officers (11%) have been promoted to sergeant rank via traditional recruitment processes. A further 12 officers, spanning the 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 cohorts, have secured a place on the constable to inspector fast-track programme run by the College of Policing. Please note that only those officers from the 2015 and 2016 cohorts have, at the time of writing, been eligible to sit the National Police Promotions Framework Step 2 legal exam without being members of the constable to inspector fast-track programme.

Reverse mentoring can help

44. Reverse mentoring – when more senior employees are mentored by more junior employees – can have a positive impact on equality and diversity. According to a national overview of police leadership developed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS, 2017), reverse mentoring can elevate senior leaders' understanding of the challenges facing under-represented groups, barriers to their progression and in turn provide insights to support positive action.
45. Within the Police Now programme, Action Learning Sets – where a senior officer in force interacts regularly with a group of Police Now participants – allows for a two-way exchange of information and provides learning for senior officers on how frontline officers, and in particular those who would not otherwise have joined the police service, experience their role.

What we have learned

46. It is clear from our experience that encouraging diverse candidates to apply for a career in policing and retaining them throughout and beyond the recruitment process remains a considerable challenge. It is also critical to the future of policing and Police Now is committed to supporting police forces to recruit high-quality officers who represent the full diversity of the communities they serve.

Candidate care is crucial

47. Police Now places an emphasis on supporting candidates throughout the recruitment process – from mentoring, through access to officers for support and advice, through to providing feedback to all applicants for the future. We believe this is the right thing to do and is also vital to maximising the chances of candidates accepting offers once made. Given that our data suggests participants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are twice as likely to decline a conditional offer once made and that longer recruitment processes can also affect attrition rates, our learning has implications for policing as a whole.

Faster recruitment matters

48. Our experience and learning suggests that faster recruitment processes are key to attracting diverse individuals to pursue a career in policing. Requiring candidates to attend multiple appointments followed by a series of independent medical, fitness, national security and biometric vetting processes, lengthens the process and puts forces at a disadvantage in a competitive job market for all candidates. Our experience suggests that police forces that provide candidate support with an element of personal connection actively manage candidate

expectations and reduce the time taken to process medical, fitness and vetting assessments are likely to do better in retaining candidates from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds throughout the recruitment process.

Post-offer checks can have an impact

49. Police Now's experience suggests there are still inconsistencies in the length, standards and delivery of forces' post-offer pre-employment checks (for example vetting, medical testing and fitness assessment). Particular attention should be paid to areas that may adversely impact some candidates, such as accessibility of candidates' medical records, periods of overseas residence and inconsistencies in vetting approaches. More consistent and speedy processes could yield more positive workforce representation outcomes.

Retention is vital to a sustained increase in police diversity

50. To sustainably increase police diversity, it is just as important to ensure officers from all backgrounds are supported to stay in, and progress in, policing once they join. Emerging findings from our own data suggests that officers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds feel less supported, on average, than their White counterparts once they join the police service:

- 74% said they were made to feel welcome by colleagues (compared to 86% of White officers)
- 68% said they were adequately supported by their colleagues (compared to 85% of White officers).

51. Our data also suggests that female participants and participants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are slightly more likely than average to leave policing within two years, but this data should be treated with caution given the small sample sizes involved.

There is not enough data about police diversity and inclusion

52. Police Now has found that there is a lack of nationally available data on the key 'pinch points' in relation to the recruitment, retention and progression of candidates from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and other candidates, although as a result of the Police Uplift Programme this is improving. The College of Policing and Police Now may be able to offer insights if such data were more commonly collected and shared to generate positive outcomes.

53. Data is, in particular, lacking for officers' experiences in the police: more consistent and reliable tracking across the service on police officers' role experience, wellbeing, perceptions of organisational fairness, diversity and inclusion would be extremely welcome. This would help to ensure a consistent positive experience for officers from under-represented groups and advance knowledge about the potential barriers to their progression and retention within the service.

54. We would be more than happy to provide further evidence to the Committee if this would assist with its inquiry.