



College of  
Policing

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# Police rejoiners

## Guidance on changes to Police Regulations

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## Introduction

In order to provide more flexible re-entry to the service, as per recommendation 4 of the College of Policing Leadership Review, changes were proposed to the legislation that governs rejoiner members to police forces in England and Wales as set out in Regulation 10b, Police Regulations 2003. Following consultation with staff associations, the Home Office and other key stakeholders, these regulatory changes will be enacted on 22 February 2019. The changes remove the requirement that former officers must rejoin a police force within five years if they wish to retain their previous rank. Instead, former officers may now rejoin a force even if their previous service ended more than five years before rejoining, and they may be appointed to a higher, lower or the same rank, subject to a decision by the chief officer making the appointment.

Previously, a person could only be appointed at the rank in which they last served. If more than five years had elapsed since the person last served, a chief officer might only make the appointment if he/she was of the opinion that there were exceptional circumstances. Regulation 10b was originally introduced in 2013 to improve re-entry to policing. These changes build on the original, providing increased flexibility and broadening the scope for former officers to return.

In simple terms, a rejoiner member is a person who is to be appointed as a member of a police force and who:

- i. satisfactorily completed the period of probationary service in the rank of constable required under Regulation 12
- ii. resigned or retired from that force and immediately prior to the appointment was not a member of a police force.

## The guidance

This guidance provides information for forces and rejoiner members. The 10 Rejoiner Principles set minimum standards to guide recruitment and assessment of those rejoining the service. The aim of these principles is twofold: firstly, to ensure that rejoiner members are appointed in accordance with established best practice (that there is no right to return, that a suitable vacancy must exist with clear eligibility criteria to guide the appointment of the most suitable candidate, and that candidates are rigorously interviewed and subject to a probationary period); and secondly, to ensure that rejoiner members are provided with the appropriate level of support and guidance to help them back into policing and provide confidence in their competence. In all cases, rejoiner members are subject to the same regulations and determinations as any other police officer.

Police officers leave policing for various reasons and develop different skills and experiences while outside of the service. These changes enable forces to advertise vacancies to a wider pool of potential applicants and attract those who previously served as police officers, regardless of length of absence from policing or rank previously held. The chief officer retains ultimate responsibility for who should be appointed, subject to suitability and the Rejoiner Principles outlined in this guidance.

This document is intended as guidance only, the prevailing law will be authoritative.

## Further information

The changes to Regulation 10b have been made by The Police (Amendment) Regulations 2018. The text of the new Regulations can be found here:

[legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/1191/contents/made](https://legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/1191/contents/made)

In addition to the changes to Regulation 10b, amendments have also been made to Regulations 12, 13, 17 and 19a and associated Annexes (Annex C and Annex OO to Regulation 33) to provide further detail and clarity.

## Rejoiner Principles

1. Selection, recruitment and appointment of rejoiner members must adhere to the College's **Code of Ethics** and the policing principles therein.
2. Recruiters should evidence a rejoiner member's suitability for appointment against the **Competency and Values Framework** at the appropriate level for the rank or role.
3. Selection, recruitment and appointment of rejoiner members should include a rigorous interview process and comprehensive evaluation of a rejoiner's professional development needs against the role profile for the vacancy. Rejoiner members will only pass probation upon successful completion of all identified training and assessment components within the probationary period specified in Annex C to Regulation 10b.
4. Recruiters should provide appropriate and adequate support and guidance to rejoiner members with regard to training, development and assessment.
5. Rejoiner members entering the service at any rank, including a higher or lower rank than that at which they last served, will hold that rank from point of re-entry.
6. Three new entry routes into the policing profession at the rank of constable have been developed as part of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF). New starters to policing will be required to attain specified educational qualifications prior to completion of probation when entering via these new regulated routes. Rejoiner members at any rank are not currently required to attain these educational qualifications during their probation. Further regulatory change is required to limit entry at the rank of constable to the three new entry routes, and this guidance for rejoiners will be reviewed once this change has been agreed.
7. Rejoiner members returning at a rank that requires the **National Police Promotion Framework** (NPPF) legislative exam (sergeant or inspector) must sit the respective exam at the earliest opportunity. This applies to all rejoiner members who have not already successfully achieved a pass at the required level, or if the currency of such a pass has lapsed.
8. Rejoiner members returning to a role that requires the **National Investigators' Examination** (NIE) (any detective role) must sit the exam at the earliest opportunity. This applies to all rejoiner members who have not already successfully achieved a pass at the required level, or if the currency of such a pass has lapsed.
9. Rejoiner members must complete a period of work-based assessment (WBA) appropriate for the rank or role. Those rejoining at a higher rank than which they previously served must complete any **existing established WBA for that rank**. Those rejoining in a detective role must complete any **existing established WBA for that role** unless this is already completed and remains current.
10. Exit from the service as a result of failing to meet the required standard for any assessment component shall not preclude a rejoiner member from reapplying to rejoin the service at a later date. Upon re-entry, a rejoiner member, as with any other police officer, can seek to undertake promotion through the established promotion framework.

# Frequently asked questions

## Eligibility

### What is a rejoiner?

A rejoiner is a person who is to be appointed as a member of a police force having previously served as a member of a police force, having satisfactorily completed the period of probationary service in the rank of constable required under **Regulation 12** and resigned or retired from that force. A rejoiner is not a person participating in the Direct Entry Inspector or Superintendent programmes; a transferee from another force; someone on secondment; someone on a career break or a member of a police force.

### Can a rejoiner member who left as a uniform officer rejoin in a detective post?

Yes. A rejoiner member can re-enter into a detective role subject to the Rejoiner Principles. The Rejoiner Principles provide guidance for how to ensure the rejoiner member has the appropriate skills available to them in whichever role they undertake upon rejoining.

### Can a serving officer leave the service and apply as a rejoiner member at a higher rank, therefore circumventing existing promotion mechanisms?

Any serving officer wishing to apply as a rejoiner member to a higher rank would be required to resign from the police to be defined as a rejoiner member. They would then be subject to the Rejoiner Principles, the recruitment standards set down by the recruiting force and a probationary period during which assessments must be successfully completed ahead of passing probation.

## Terms and conditions<sup>1</sup>

### What will a rejoiner member be paid at point of re-entry?

**Regulation 24 of The Police Regulations 2003** provides for the pay of police officers. Regulation 24 states that reckonable service for the purposes of pay takes into account all service in that rank and/or at a higher rank (on temporary promotion or otherwise). A rejoiner member would not be expected to restart the pay scale if re-entering at the same or lower rank as on departure. Instead they will re-enter at the pay point commensurate to length of service previously completed in that rank as per governing regulations for police pay.

<sup>1</sup>Police terms and conditions are set out in the relevant police legislation and regulations, including but not limited to **The Police Act 1996**, **The Police Regulations 2003** and determinations thereunder, **The Police (Performance) Regulations 2012** and **The Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012**. This document does not replace legislation in respect of rejoiners, but sets out the position of rejoiners in relation to legislation.

## What about pensions?

When someone leaves the police (rather than retiring) their pension becomes deferred, in some cases not payable until state pension age. Since 2015, those returning within 5 years of leaving have enjoyed protection of certain pension rights, such as the ability to have the previously earned pension at the scheme's pension age rather than the deferred pension age.

How an individual rejoiner is treated for pensions purposes will depend on which police pension the rejoiner was formerly a part of, the length of time away from the police service, and if any of the time away has been spent in public service. The majority of people are likely to join the 2015 police pension scheme, but we recommend that rejoiners (and prospective rejoiners) contact their pension administrator (ie, for the last force they served in) to understand what applies in their circumstances.

## How are other conditions of employment affected?

Rejoiner members are treated in the same manner as any other police officer. This includes conditions on full and part-time working, maternity leave, testing for substance misuse, restrictions on private life, dismissal and personal records. Rejoiner members wanting to take a career break must have completed their rejoiner probationary period before applying. Regulations on career breaks are set out in Annex OO to **Regulation 33 of The Police Regulations 2003**.

## Support for rejoiner members

### What if rejoiners require additional flexibility?

Rejoiners may have ongoing care-giving responsibilities or other reasons for flexible working requirements. Changes to regulations give chief officers discretion to extend probationary periods where appropriate. The Rejoiner Principles allow rejoiners at least six months to study for an exam, with the opportunity to resit an exam should they not meet the required standard on the first attempt, and allow flexibility on when training should be completed. In addition, rejoiner members working part-time are subject to probationary periods calculated in relation to their agreed weekly period of duty.

### What support will be available to help rejoiners?

Police procedures, technology and demands change over time. Rejoiners will need to become familiar and comfortable with these changes. In addition to completing the formal requirements for a role, forces will conduct a comprehensive assessment of rejoiner members' development needs. This will include a period of WBA, additional training and formal assessment. Forces have a duty under the Rejoiner Principles to provide appropriate and adequate support and guidance to rejoiner members with regard to training, development and assessment.

## Assessment and probation

### **Who decides what a rejoiner member is required to complete in terms of training and assessment?**

A comprehensive evaluation of a rejoiner's professional development needs against the role profile for the vacancy will be completed by a suitably qualified person as determined by the recruiting force. This person will be able to identify the appropriate WBA, training needs and other essential requirements for the role.

### **Do rejoiners have to be on probation?**

Rejoiners are subject to different probationary periods depending on the time out of force. Those who left policing less than one year before their reappointment as a police officer are subject to a six-month probationary period. Those who left policing more than one year before their reappointment, or who rejoin at a different rank to that which they previously served at are subject to a 12-month probationary period. In all instances, chief officers have the discretion to extend probation as they see fit.

### **What is required of those returning at a higher rank?**

Those who rejoin at a higher rank than the one they previously served at are required to sit, and pass, all of the required exams for that rank. In addition, rejoiner members will be required to complete WBA and other identified requirements deemed appropriate. Rejoiner members who return at a higher rank serve at that rank from the point they are appointed and complete the requirements for that rank while on probation.

### **When will a rejoiner member know what is expected of them in terms of training and assessment?**

The comprehensive evaluation of a rejoiner's professional development needs against the role profile will be completed by the recruiting force ahead of attestation which takes place on appointment.

### **What happens if a rejoiner member fails to meet the required standard of one or more of the training or assessment components?**

It is imperative that a rejoiner member can evidence their competence in rank/role and the purpose of any identified training or assessment is to provide this assurance. **Regulation 13 of the Police Regulations 2003** states that during his period of probation in the force, the services of a constable may be dispensed with at any time if the chief officer considers that he is not fitted, physically or mentally, to perform the duties of his office, or that he is not likely to become an efficient or well conducted constable. Dismissal through Regulation 13 would also be the preferred course of action if a rejoiner member's performance during their probationary period does not meet the required standard, according to police regulations.

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**If a rejoiner member re-enters at a higher rank but fails to pass probation and leaves the service, can they reapply to rejoin the service at a later date?**

Yes. Failure to achieve the required standard upon re-entry at a higher rank does not preclude a rejoiner member from applying to rejoin the service at a later date. This will be subject to the recruitment and forces' requirements at point of reapplication.

**How much time should a rejoiner member be given to study between rejoining and taking the sergeant or inspector exam, if this is a requirement of re-entry?**

To enable a rejoiner sufficient time to study for the sergeant or inspector exam, a period of at least six months should be afforded ahead of the exam date. Should a period of at least six months between rejoining and exam not be possible, the rejoining member must sit the exam at the first opportunity after an initial period of six months has passed. Rejoiner members would be expected to study for the exam in the same manner as a non-rejoiner member.

**How much time should a rejoiner member be given to study between rejoining and taking the NIE, if this is a requirement of re-entry?**

To enable a rejoiner sufficient time to study for the NIE, a period of at least 14 weeks should be afforded ahead of the exam date. Should a period of at least 14 weeks between rejoining and exam not be possible, the rejoining member must sit the exam at the first opportunity after an initial period of 14 weeks has passed. Rejoiner members would be expected to study for the exam in the same manner as a non-rejoiner member.

**What happens if a rejoiner requiring the sergeant or inspector exam fails to meet the required standard at the first attempt?**

Rejoining members should be afforded one opportunity to resit any required exam should they not meet the required standard at the first attempt. Should a rejoiner fail to meet the required standard for the exam at the second attempt, it will be for the chief officer to determine the resulting course of action.

**What happens if a rejoiner requiring the NIE fails to meet the required standard at the first attempt?**

Rejoining members should be afforded one opportunity to resit any required exam should they not meet the required standard at the first attempt. Should a rejoiner fail to meet the required standard for the exam at the second attempt, it will be for the chief officer to determine the resulting course of action.

### **What happens if a rejoiner member fails to reach the required standard for WBA?**

Should the WBA component not be successfully completed within the probationary period, the chief officer retains the ability to extend probation. Should a rejoiner fail to complete the WBA within their probation (or extended probation), it will be for the chief officer to determine the resulting course of action.

### **If a rejoiner member left the service and seeks to rejoin at a rank that does not have an existing established WBA or legislative exam, how will they be assessed?**

The recruiting force will undertake a comprehensive evaluation of a rejoiner member's professional development needs. The recruiting force will dictate the additional assessment requirements for a rejoiner member, which will always involve WBA. It could also include assessment, such as a bespoke exam at superintendent level. It will be for the recruiting force to determine the most appropriate way to assess suitability to enter at that rank, and determine the assessment during probation.

### **What impact does the PEQF have on those rejoining the service?**

Three new entry routes into the policing profession at the rank of constable have been developed as part of the PEQF. New starters to policing will be required to attain specified educational qualifications prior to completion of probation when entering via these new regulated routes.

Rejoiner members at any rank are not currently required to attain these educational qualifications during their probation. Further regulatory change is required to limit entry at the rank of constable to the three new entry routes, and this guidance for rejoiners will be reviewed once this change has been agreed. At this point, it is likely that those rejoiner members who have been out of policing for more than five years will be required to complete an appropriate qualification if it is not already held.

This guidance will be updated to clarify exactly what the requirement will be and will include how recognition of prior learning processes will be incorporated. Assessments for ranks of sergeant and above are under review and therefore subject to change. Following the introduction of any new requirements, it is likely that there will be associated requirements placed on rejoiner members at those ranks.

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## About the College

We're the professional body for everyone who works for the police service in England and Wales. Our purpose is to provide those working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public and secure public trust.

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