



Comments on P Factor

This note provides comments on the planned approach to the P Factor – the Descriptors and how they will be used - at the request of the NPCC National Reward Team.

Background

Reviews of remuneration in the armed forces have taken account of an 'X factor' since 1970: a set of criteria intended to recognise the special conditions of military life, as compared with most civilian employment. The X factor criteria have since been reviewed and the weighting adjusted, as agreed by the Armed Forces Pay Review Body.

The P factor in policing is similar in concept. Benchmarking against jobs of similar professional level or job weight in the rest of the economy can provide a starting point for review of remuneration for police officers, but it must also take account of the environment in which the job is done and the distinctive demands which result. Part 2 of the Winsor Review put forward a view about those distinctive demands. The issue has now been taken up by the NPCC National Reward Team, in discussion with the negotiating parties. The current draft Descriptors are attached as an appendix.

The P Factor Descriptors do not carry individual weighting. They are intended to describe distinctive aspects of police work which will be experienced differently by officers, depending on their role, rank and the events and activities in which they are involved at any one time. They add up to an overall picture and will carry a total weighting which, like the X factor in the armed forces, can be reviewed in later years.

Assessment of Descriptors

It is important that the Descriptors:

- Address issues which are additional to and do not duplicate methods which are used in standard benchmarking, in particular job evaluation.
- Are distinct from each other. If they overlap, the same issues will be taken into account twice, leading to an overstatement of the demands of police officer jobs.
- Can be used to assess changing demands and can be reviewed.

Are they additional?

The Descriptors cover several different types of demand, including restrictions or disruption which are part of police officers' lives, emotional/psychological challenges and various kinds of risk. If we compare these with the job evaluation factors used in Korn Ferry's benchmarking of police officer roles from 2018 to 2020 – Know How, Problem Solving and Accountability – they are describing something different.

The main area of potential overlap is training. Job evaluation takes account of all learning which is required for fully satisfactory job performance. It also assumes that employers should and do provide training and equipment to enable their staff to do the job and keep them protected as far as possible.



It is therefore helpful that the Descriptors do not refer to the need for or absence of training (e.g. that officers are more at risk if not properly trained).

Do they overlap?

In our view, the Descriptors as currently drafted do identify 12 distinct areas of demand, clustered under 4 headings. We note that the armed forces X factor definitions have been revised over the years and that might happen here too, but these look like a reasonable starting point.

However, it is essential that anyone using the Descriptors to test the demands of police officer roles interprets them in the right way, to avoid:

- Confusion between clusters. An example is the word 'risk', which is highlighted in the Legal cluster but is used or implied elsewhere, for example under Physical. The only risk being described and assessed under the Legal Descriptor 'Exposure to risk' is the possibility of legal challenge if something goes wrong. The only risk being described under 'High risk of physical harm' is of physical assault or damage. This means that the two forms of risk are different, but also that cluster and Descriptor headings are important in keeping them distinct.
- Confusion within clusters. An example is the cluster headed 'Physical'. One Descriptor in the cluster is about the impact on officers of confrontation – the emotional challenge, the requirement for self control etc. The wording covers situations which fall short of physical violence. The other Descriptor concerns the risk of actual physical harm. Again, the two are different, but care is needed to ensure they don't blur into each other.

How should they be applied and reviewed?

The Descriptors do not constitute a job evaluation scheme, but they have features in common with extended evaluation frameworks which Korn Ferry designs for organisations which agree to pay both for the job and the circumstances in which it is done - for example, an engineer on an oil rig compared to one working in an office. In these frameworks, we often look at physical, environmental, mental and emotional demands.

The Descriptors cover a wider range than this, but the guidance we offer to understand the level of each demand might still be helpful. Relevant questions are:

- How often the features are experienced
- How long the situations last
- How intense or extreme the features can be
- How severe the risks and consequences (and therefore potential impacts) are, and
- Whether or not the individual can predict and/or control situations to the extent that they can change their frequency, duration, intensity and impacts.

Such questions could also guide later review, if the Review Body or the parties want to test whether the average level of demand under the Descriptors has increased over time.

Weighting & plans for use

Value of the P Factor

We understand that the weighting of the P Factor is to be agreed by NPCC and the parties at 13%.



All those involved will know that there is no right answer to weighting, particularly as it has an impact on all officer roles at all ranks. However, a figure at around this level accords with our experience of assessing remuneration factors beyond core job evaluation in the UK and elsewhere. In addition, we note that it is below the X Factor weighting for the armed forces but above the notional figure of 8% proposed by Winsor. We have conducted successive benchmarking projects in policing from 2011 through to 2020, backed up by interviews and study of survey evidence, and feel that the increase in demand on officers during the past decade is very clear. The proposed weighting therefore seems reasonable.

The NPCC National Reward Team intends to apply the 13% by reducing police remuneration by that amount before conducting comparisons. This again seems reasonable. The important point is to be clear and consistent in the method of application.

Benchmarking

An advantage of the P Factor is that it can provide a corrective to generalised benchmarking, for example a comparison between the pay of a police constable and the salary of a job of similar weight in the public or private sectors. However, the NPCC and other parties will also want to conduct more specific comparisons, for example with the pay of nurses, paramedics or social workers. Some of these jobs would be able to point to distinctive characteristics of their own – confrontation and emotional strain, exposure to harm etc. Those targeted comparisons will have to recognise that some aspects of the P Factor may be less of a differentiator in those cases.

Conclusion

The P Factor descriptors are all additional to job evaluation and therefore standard benchmarking; they do not overlap if properly understood and used; and they can be both applied now and reviewed at a later date if interpreted using the right questions.

The intended weighting and proposal for applying it appear reasonable, though care will be needed in interpreting comparisons with some other professions.

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Appendix: P Factor Descriptors

Physical
<u>Uniquely confrontational.</u> Officers are frequently dealing with people who are angry, aggressive or upset. They face challenge and confrontation in volatile situations where it is hugely demanding to remain calm and professional. There has also been a shift from dealing with crime in the public arena to more private spaces (e.g. mental health, domestic abuse). Policing in this private space is more invasive of privacy and this can increase the strain caused by each encounter.
<u>High risk of physical harm and expectation of assault</u> Every year thousands of police officers are assaulted and, in rare cases, an officer is killed.¹ In addition to this ongoing risk of physical harm, officers now face a greater threat of a targeted attack on or off duty by criminals and extremists. Officers are also exposed to injury dealing with; vehicle pursuits; public disorder and searching in hazardous conditions with exposure to biohazards such as blood and saliva.
Psychological
<u>Trauma of exposure to distressing incidents and materials.</u> Exposure to death and disturbing events is a regular occurrence for officers and this can take an emotional toll. Post-traumatic stress and vicarious trauma is not uncommon. The wide spectrum of police work can also see officers deployed from an extremely distressing incident to a more routine matter without time to adjust. The changing nature of crime also requires both regular and specialist officers to continually develop, maintain and apply new skills to face the new challenges associated with increasingly complex and distressing cases. e.g. indecency with children; rape; sexual exploitation and, more recently, acid attacks. This often means that some officers face continual exposure to distress and often have to deal with serious cases in rapid succession.
<u>Level of scrutiny</u> The advent of social media, a shift in public attitudes towards the actions of authority figures and the nature of media reporting has all served to intensify the need for immediate answers to any incident or event that attracts publicity and is perceived to have had an adverse outcome. This is often before the facts are known and can involve the instant 'naming and shaming' of officers, particularly at senior rank. Anxiety levels when responding to calls are now heightened with the knowledge that every action is likely to be filmed and potentially uploaded to social media and/or attract misconduct proceedings.
Legal
<u>Nonfeasance - the failure to perform an act that is required by law</u> As a matter of criminal law, officers are obliged to act to prevent crime and intervene in situations whether on or off duty. It can be argued that an officer is never really 'off duty'. This inevitably poses a risk to an officer's safety and affects their ability to enjoy and behave in their private life as a normal member of the public would. When off duty, an officer will likely need to act when not in uniform, without protective equipment or radio communication and in unfamiliar surroundings. Intervention could also expose family or friends to danger.
<u>Exposure to risk</u> Increasingly officers are responders across a range of incidents hitherto not seen as core police business. These include, 'out of hours' social services cases, medical emergencies and patient transport. Apart from putting additional pressure on officers and deflecting them from their core role, moving into this space has

¹ In year-ending June 2020, there were 11,241 assaults on officers involving injury (ONS data published October 2020). This is a 5.75% increase on the previous year. In addition, there 22,161 non-injury assaults on police officer. The total number of recorded assaults on other emergency workers over the same 2019/20 period was 400.



exposed them to greater risk. They might be unfamiliar with case histories and may also lack the necessary specialist skill set and/or experience to provide the best service. This is particularly relevant when dealing with medical emergencies, helping the mentally ill and other vulnerable adults and children. They carry ultimate responsibility for their decision making in these increasingly testing situations.

Accountability and scrutiny

Disciplinary hearings are now in public and thus, regardless whether or not a case is ultimately proven, an officer can expect a greater intrusion on their private life when disciplinary proceedings are brought. Cases involving death or serious injury require referral to the Independent Office for Police Conduct where there has been any form of police contact. Investigations can become protracted and reports are made public. Personal liability for historic action extends well into retirement and this risk escalates with rank. On conviction, even post retirement, officers could forfeit their pensions and, if dismissed for gross misconduct under the Police and Crime Act 2017, will have this information placed on a publicly-searchable database.

Membership of trade unions and limited political activity

Officers are prohibited from joining a trade union and from taking part in industrial action. The ability of staff associations to conduct meaningful negotiation on behalf of officers is also limited. These restrictions remove many of the usual options available to regular employees for resolving disputes in relation to terms and conditions such as pay. Officers are also restricted from participation in political activity and are expected to be apolitical. As a result, they must be cautious about airing certain opinions and this limits freedom of expression; particularly in a modern on-line era.

Social/Economic

Use of social media

The use of social media is restricted by virtue of an officer's profession and this also extends to use of certain applications. For personal security and safety reasons it is necessary for most officers to guard against sharing personal details, including their profession and/or disguise their true identity. In a time when social media plays such a prevalent part in modern life, this inability to behave and to interact freely online can result in an appreciable level of social separation.

Victimisation based on profession

Where no respect for the authority of law exists and normal standards of acceptable social behaviour do not apply, officers and their families can be targeted and harassed, solely because of their police status. Personal property can be damaged, children bullied or threats made by those they arrest to an officer's personal safety whilst 'off duty'. This may involve active attempts to trace an officer's home address and, in some cases, families may need to be re-housed to avoid victimisation or retaliation.

Disruption to family life

Being a police officer has an inevitable impact upon working arrangements, such as; flexibility of working patterns; requirements to work extended hours; being on-call during leave; taking of rest day(s). What distinguishes police officers further is they can be recalled to duty and/or have leave day(s) cancelled whenever operational need dictates. This level of disruption may have a negative effect on family life. It can impinge on childcare arrangements, have an adverse economic impact by inhibiting a partner's ability to hold down a job and/or limit the ability to develop aspects of a private life such as friendships and hobbies. Officers are intrusively vetted and must, as a matter of regulation, disclose and manage their associations in such a way that may not apply to an ordinary member of the public. This could also have an effect on an officer's private, family and social life.

Associates and business activity

All business interests, such as secondary employment or renting a property must be disclosed and approved by the Force in order to ensure there is no conflict of interest. Disclosure of business-related associates will involve the release of their personal information and, if such an associate is deemed unacceptable, this may inhibit an officer's ability to earn money in a way that would not apply to an ordinary member of the public.