FEMALE police officers had less success in the new job-related fitness testing than their male counterparts, newly published figures have shown.

The results of more than 30,000 police fitness tests taken nationwide have been published. In those, women had a national average pass rate of 92 per cent, compared to 97 per cent for male officers.

The tests are being assessed by the College of Policing as forces prepare to introduce annual assessments for all officers. Figures from tests taken between September 2013 and March this year were submitted to the College of Policing from 39 forces.

In five forces, 100 per cent of female applicants passed: Avon and Somerset, Hertfordshire, Humberside, Northamptonshire and Northumbria.

Debbie Wood, who represents Sussex Police and BAWP on the National Fitness Working Group, says many forces run practice sessions for women (and men) who need help passing the fitness tests.

The sessions provide a test environment without the pressure and allow officers to gain expertise and coaching from other officers and staff. Her force and others also provide training plans for those who need extra support, she said.

Mrs Wood added: “Qualitative data suggests that supportive practice sessions, most of which are run by women’s support groups within individual forces, help officers that are finding the job-related fitness tests challenging. While these sessions appear to be mainly attended by women, many forces have an open-to-all policy.

“[The opportunity to have a go in single gender sessions and with pacemakers are two examples of ways that confidence can be built. BAWP would encourage the continuation of such sessions and will be sharing best practice in due course.”

The 15m shuttle run is based on scientific research to match the aerobic demands of officer safety training. There is no obstacle course or upper-body strength testing. The standard is the same as that used when recruiting officers.

In September 2013, the College issued interim guidance on how police forces should implement the fitness test. Fitness testing is in an interim phase to allow data to be examined so it can be understood how specific groups of individuals are performing.

The College will use this data to carry out an equality impact assessment and make any necessary revisions to national guidance before all forces begin annual fitness testing in September following recommendations in the Winsor Review.

HM chief inspector of constabulary and former police pay and conditions reviewer Tom Winsor recommended that all officers who “may be” deployed to the front line – including chief officers and those on secondments and federation representatives – take the test.

The review recommended that any officer who fails the test be penalised in their pay packet. Failure to pass the test three times will result in dismissal for unsatisfactory performance.

Assistant Chief Constable Rob Price, National Fitness Working Group Lead, said: “The results to date are encouraging and show the vast majority of officers tested are fit. New guidance will be issued to forces later this year with a strong emphasis on providing supportive measures to help officers pass the test.”

Steve White, chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said: “Fitness tests need to reflect the diverse nature of the police force and be appropriate for each role officers may undertake.”

A TWO-minute silence was held to remember police officer Yvonne Fletcher, on the 30th anniversary of her murder.

Metropolitan Police commissioner, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, said the force is “determined to catch the person responsible” for the murder. The officer, who was just 25 when she died, was gunned down on 17 April 1984 outside the Libyan embassy. No-one has been prosecuted for her death.

Members of her family joined friends and colleagues in remembering her on 17 April. Floral tributes were left at her memorial in London (pictured).

Sir Bernard said: “At the end of the day, Yvonne Fletcher’s parents lost their daughter.

“Her sister lost a sister. We lost a colleague, and we’re determined to make sure we catch the person responsible.”

He said the investigation had “never stopped”, adding: “We’re determined to make progress, and I’m confident we’re making good progress.”
Farewell to old friends as BAWP looks forward to new challenges

THE BAWP Annual General Meeting was held on 10th June, where we officially said goodbye to two of our long-standing members, Assistant Editor of Grapevine Nicky Phillipson and Treasurers Pippa Taylor.

A huge thanks to both of them for their outstanding dedication and contribution over the years; they will be missed. It is my pleasure to announce the appointment of our new Treasurer, Anne Sanlon.

The committee has given honorary life time membership to the following: Judith Gillespie, Jackie Roberts and Julie Grocutt, for the continued contribution and support to women within the Police Service.

Next year we are celebrating 100 years of women in policing and currently there are regional discussions taking place to talk through the events taking place. Do make contact with our National Coordinator Parwinder if you have an idea to mark the occasion.

It was good to see so many of you at the Senior Women in Policing Conference in Belfast in March. It was an extremely successful and well-attended event. Of course, the next big event for the calendar is the International Association of Women in Policing Annual training Conference being held in Winnipeg, Canada. The IAWP ‘Cardiff 2015’ Committee is busy preparing an exhibition to showcase in Winnipeg so if you are attending this year please do drop by and show them your support.

Here in the UK, our Annual BAWP Awards are taking place on 11th November at Stratford Upon Avon. I look forward to meeting you all at the awards.

The Gender Agenda 3 has evolved over the past few months and we look forward to celebrating its official launch in September. We hope to mark this occasion with the presence of guest speakers. Thank you to all who have contributed so far, and continue to provide feedback on this important piece of work.

Fitness tests continue to be part of regular discussions here at BAWP and we will continue to work closely with the College of Policing, making sure that it is fair for all. There have been a number practice sessions organised by Women’s networks, which all had positive feedback and have been well attended.

BAWP wishes you a very good summer, hopefully full of sunshine.

See you in our next edition of Grapevine.

Cressida Dick, BAWP President

Gender is still at the top of the agenda

WELCOME to our new look Grapevine newsletter! We hope you all like it! I am sorry say goodbye to Nicky Phillipson, who will no longer will be Assistant Editor for Grapevine. But we are also equally pleased to inform you that we will be working with Martis Media from now on in producing Grapevine together. There will now be four editions a year. If you have feedback back please let us know.

Gender Agenda 3

I have been busy with Gender Agenda 3 document, which was informed by Manchester Metropolitan University’s Dr Wendy Laverick and her research, Policing reform: consequences for the gender agenda and the female police workforce.

The Gender Agenda 3 is now near completion and we are going to be launching in the Autumn.

W e know there have been delays launching, but we are nearly there, so thank you everyone for your patience. An exact date will be announced shortly. I shall keep you all posted.

National Coordinator Parwinder Dale has been busy with BAWP.

Other news

We are currently working on a joint survey on sexual harassment in policing with Unison, the Superintendents’ Association, the Police Federation and Prof Jennifer Brown, Deputy Chair of the Independent Police Commission [the Lord Stevens Review into policing] and Co-Director of the Mannheim Centre for Criminology. We are looking to send out the survey in September. More details to follow.

Vice-President Fay Tennet, Secretary Carolyn Williamson and I attended the Senior Women in Policing Conference in Northern Ireland in March, which you will read about later in this edition (see page 5).

Enjoy reading your new newsletter!
Badly fitting uniforms cause pain to officers

FEMALE officers are in pain and discomfort at work because they are still wearing men’s police uniforms, a study has found.

The research, conducted by the University of Dundee, found that female officers are coming to work in uniforms that “do not meet their personal or operational needs”, and that more needs to be done to ensure women have clothes with appropriate cut and design.

Six in 10 respondents to the study said they had suffered “pain or injury” as a result of their uniform and 28 per cent said that their uniform had made existing injuries worse or delayed recuperation.

Ill-fitting stab-proof vests and body armour, utility belts and shoulder harnesses were to blame for back and hip injuries, neck and shoulder pain, sciatica, skin rashes, excessive sweating, stomach pain and muscle spasms, the survey heard.

More than half of officers – male and female – said that they felt their uniform hindered their ability to do a proper job.

They complained that their movement was restricted, making it hard to run, restrain and apprehend suspects. They added that driving and getting out of vehicles quickly was difficult, and that radios and personal protective equipment got caught on seat belts, doors, furniture and fences.

Many officers said that poor uniform led to them being cold, wet, sweaty, uncomfortable, fatigued and unhappy.

Ch Insp Fay Tennet, Vice-President of the British Association for Women in Policing, said: “Police officers, whatever their gender, need to have the kit and equipment and uniform that enables them to do their job.

“Having things that do not fit or do not work or even make people feel excluded is not acceptable. If you are given a kit and are told - ‘look this isn’t made for you but you can wear it’, it makes you feel like you don’t belong. People can feel excluded.”

The report also recommended that gender-specific summer and winter uniforms should be introduced, as women are more susceptible to monthly body temperature changes as well as symptoms of the menopause.

It said: “Many officers appear genuinely concerned about long-term health issues through wearing the current uniform.

Many described personal hygiene as being very important to them and the service provided. Some officers suggest that a quality designed uniform may actually assist with personal hygiene, reduce absence rates and in real terms save money.”

It added: “It is clear from the general response to this survey that officers feel passionate and are concerned about their uniform. They want to look professional and also maintain a sensible degree of protection from both suspects and the prevailing weather conditions.”

The study was carried out on behalf of Tayside Police, which is now a policing area of Police Scotland.

New shift patterns put women off policing

THE police service is becoming less attractive as a career option for female officers as shift changes and new promotion frameworks freeze women out, the Police Federation of England and Wales’ annual conference has heard.

The service, which has been trying to become more accessible to female and minority ethnic officers in recent years, is becoming more young, white and male, according to the organisation’s equality adviser.

Jayne Monkhouse told the conference’s women’s reserve session: “There is a very real possibility that the service will become younger, whiter and more male with the cumulative impact of the current changes that are being implemented by forces. The equality impact assessments show a lack of appreciation of the value of having a diverse workforce.”

There are fewer than 700 women officers in the police service with more than 27 years’ service, the conference heard, compared to nearly 5,000 men. Women are generally leaving the service at around eight years, when they begin to have children.

According to Home Office figures published last year, of the 129,956 police officers in England and Wales, 35,471 (or 27.3 per cent) were women, up from 26.8 per cent in March 2012.

The proportion of women in the more senior ranks of chief inspector and above was 18 per cent (up from 16.3 per cent), while there were 29.7 per cent of women at constable rank (up from 29.4 per cent).

Allow holidays during term time

OFFICERS should be given the flexibility to take their children out of school during term time to go on holiday, the president of the Association of Chief Police Officers has said.

Sir Hugh Orde has written to Education Secretary Michael Gove asking if he will grant officers “exceptional circumstances” and allow them to go on holidays during term time if they are unable to do so during the regular holidays “due to their policing duties”.

Parents whose children do not attend school are liable for a £60-£120 fixed penalty notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Officers must tell their force’s Professional Standards Department if they are fined for taking children out of school, which could lead to them being disciplined for misconduct.
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Senior women keep talking about Twitter

TWITTER and communication were on the agenda at this year’s Senior Women in Policing conference held in Belfast.

The theme of the conference was ‘Communication and Connection’, exploring the emerging opportunities and challenges for policing in the 21st Century.

Sinead McSweeney, Twitter’s Director of Public Policy for Europe, spoke to delegates about international social media, launching a debate about the sometimes difficult line between freedom of expression and privacy for Twitter users and the policing of social media.

Other speakers included Jessica Grounds, Director of the Women’s Office at Ready for Hillary, the committee campaigning for Hillary Clinton to become the next US President. Ms Grounds spoke about how young women of the future need to be supported.

The conference also heard from Rosy Cave, Conflict and Gender Adviser at the UK Stabilisation Unit, which works towards establishing peace and security in countries affected by conflict and instability.

Cressida Dick, BAWP President and Assistant Commissioner at the Metropolitan Police, spoke about the importance of building good relationships professionally, personally and within the community to prepare for times of pressure and challenge. “It’s too late to learn to dance half an hour before the ball,” she told delegates.

Baroness May Blood also talked about her life story, which led her to the House of Lords.

Ch Insp Fay Tennet, Vice-President of BAWP, described the conference, which took place from 11 to 13 March, as “an incredible success”. She said: “The team from the Police Service of Northern Ireland gave delegates the warmest of welcomes and everyone enjoyed the fantastic Irish hospitality. Every speaker inspired, motivated and left the 250-strong audience informed.”

PSNI Deputy Chief Constable Judith Gillespie, the first woman to hold a chief officer rank in the force, has been recognised with a CBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours list. Former DCC Judith joined the Royal Ulster Constabulary in the early 1980s.

Wales gets set to mark 100 years of IAWP

IT IS just over a year until the International Association of Women Police celebrates its centenary – with its 53rd annual conference in Cardiff.

The International Association of Women Police was founded in America in 1915 as an international organisation for women in criminal justice professions.

Today, the association has members in 60 countries and counting.

The Annual Training Conference is the biggest event in the association’s calendar, and next year’s event in Wales will be particularly special, marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the IAWP.

BAWP Secretary Carolyn Williamson says: “If it were not for IAWP, the BAWP would not exist, as the experience of attending an IAWP conference in 1986 inspired Tina Martin to form a sister organisation in the UK the following year, and we have been going ever since.

“So what makes IAWP conferences so special? Mainly the comradeship of colleagues from around the world and the range and quality of the training that is available.

“In Cardiff we will be running a total of 144 seminars and workshops over the four days, covering as wide a range of operational and developmental topics as we can. Consider paying for yourself if the force won’t support you, and become part of a truly international group.”

The conference runs between Sunday 23 and Thursday 27 August 2015. The BAWP will also be celebrating 100 years of police women in Britain. Visit the website www.iawp2015.org or email Carolyn@iawp2015.org for more information or sponsorship queries.

GPS helps track elderly residents

ELDERLY and vulnerable people in the south are being kept safe by tracking technology thanks to a scheme dreamt up by a Chichester sergeant.

Sgt Sozze Mitchell, of Sussex Police, has introduced ‘MindMé’ GPS devices for those suffering from dementia on her patch – enabling them to be quickly found if they go missing.

The devices, which can be fitted to a set of keys, mean carers and families can keep track of loved ones and find them before they need to be officially reported to the police as missing.

The devices, which can be fitted to a set of keys, mean carers and families can keep track of loved ones and find them before they need to be officially reported to the police as missing.

Sgt Mitchell said: “GPS devices allow the family or carer and the vulnerable adult peace of mind as they can remain independent with the added comfort of being able to be located should they not return home.”

The devices, which are to be introduced to vulnerable adults across Sussex, reduce the amount of distress caused to those who get lost and reduce the risk of potential harm, she said.
Fast track key to retaining female inspectors

PLANS to fast-track talented officers through the promotions process could be used to recruit and retain more women in the inspecting ranks, according to the British Association for Women in Policing.

Ch Insp Fay Tennet, Vice-President, said that too many women are leaving the service as they get to the inspecting ranks because they want to have children.

But the fast-track programme, under which candidates undergo three years’ training to qualify as an inspector, could encourage women to join, she said.

Ch Insp Tennet said: “We would like to think that it will help bring more diversity into the service. When a woman comes in as a PC, by the time they start looking at the higher ranks, they make other life choices, that is having children, and we lose them.

“If you can get them to the inspector rank within a few years, they may well be more likely to stay on that career trajectory, even if there are interruptions.”

On the graduate fast-track scheme, recruits can expect to earn £47,000 after three years when they become an inspector. Only 26 of 44 forces in England and Wales are involved in the scheme, on which there are 80 places offered. Officers will start in their posts later this year.

Ch Insp Tennet also said the direct entry programme, which will recruit 20 candidates straight into the superintendent rank, could also be used to enhance diversity, but that the service must ensure the programme is suitable for women.

She issued a warning about the programme’s residential courses, saying, “We have 80 places, but we have to make sure that they are all suitable for women.”

She said that the service must ensure that women can take candidates away from home for extended periods of time.

“You will be able to study, and you will be able to work,” she said. “You are going to be away for an 18 month probation and learning period, similar to police constables. And Ch Insp Tennet also warned that more needs to be done to attract candidates from a variety of organisations, rather than just the military.

She added: “The general view is that the service is trying to attract from the military or similar large corporations. We know that the make up of these organisations is largely white and male, so would that really move us forward?”

Prime Minister David Cameron welcomed the schemes when they were launched earlier this year.

He said: “It is vital that police forces reflect the hard-working communities which they serve. This is about opening up policing culture by making the workforce more diverse. I want to see all forces in England and Wales rolling out these schemes.”

Andrea Waterson, President of BAWP, said: “We have been running the graduate fast-track programme for a number of years now, but we are very pleased to see it being extended.”

She added: “The general view is that the service is trying to attract from the military or similar large corporations. We know that the make up of these organisations is largely white and male, so would that really move us forward?”

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Federation proud to help women

THE exiting General Secretary of the Police Federation of England and Wales has spoken of his pride about improving working conditions for women in policing.

Ian Rennie, who stepped down at the end of May, reported a number of positive changes to terms and conditions that came about through the Police Negotiating Board Gender Equality and Work Life Balance working group.

He said he was “especially proud” of instigating the group, which focused on issues particularly relevant to women, ensuring that they are not disadvantaged when they have a baby or reduce their hours.

Reforms included simplifying Police Regulations on part-time working and issuing guidance on managing maternity and flexible working.

FEMALE officers at the Metropolitan Police were invited to attend a firearms event to boost interest in firearms roles at the force.

The event was held to raise awareness of the opportunities for female officers across all firearms commands, where women are currently under-represented.

Attendees had the opportunity to try the bleep test for firearms officers, to practise shooting on a range and to handle some of the weapons used in the section.

A physical training instructor was on hand to offer advice and guidance about the fitness levels required. Attendees also had the opportunity to talk informally to female officers already working in firearms commands to find out about the realities of the role.

More than 60 officers, the majority of which were constables, attended over the two days, 25 and 26 March.

On the first day, Assistant Commissioner Cressida Dick, also President of BAWP, spoke to attendees, thanking the Specialist Firearms Command branch SCO19 for arranging the event.

The feedback provided was overwhelmingly positive with every single respondent agreeing or strongly agreeing that the presentations were effective.

Four out of five respondents said they felt “encouraged” to apply for a firearms role, with nobody “discouraged”.

Nearly half of the attendees said that the most useful part of the day was to spend time on the range, shooting a firearm and handling the weapons. Others valued the experience of speaking to officers currently in the role and listening to presentations from various Operational Command Units.

Among suggestions for future events was to try on the kit and test its weight, as well as hear more information about the procedure and support offered if a firearms officer ever has to shoot.

One attendee described it as a “really great day”. She added: “It informed me about departments I had no knowledge about and showed me that firearms is not as male dominated as I thought it was.”
**Handbag-sized truncheons: force celebrates the first female officers**

FEMALE officers have met at Surrey Police Headquarters in Guildford to celebrate 70 years since women were permitted to join the force.

Sixty retired officers, Special constables and serving bobbies were invited to the ceremony at Mount Browne, where their achievements were celebrated. Women were invited to join in 1944 – but as long as they were unmarried.

Among the entry requirements for female officers in 1944 were that they must be of “average intelligence and single” – although they did permit widows to join. They also had to be between the ages of 22 and 35 and no shorter than 5’ 4”.

They were issued shorter truncheons than their male colleagues, which were designed to be kept inside their handbags, along with their police notebook. Their uniforms were notably different too – they were issued with knee-length skirts and nylon tights.

Female detectives were introduced at the force in 1974. In 1989, WPC Nicole Smith (pictured) became the first woman to head the force in 2012, praised notable figures from the force’s history for their work during a difficult period for women after they were granted equal status in 1944.

“She said: “It’s because of some of the sacrifices you made that we’re able to be here today. We operate in a very different world now.”

**Hampshire debates fitness and flexibility**

FITNESS testing and flexible working were among the hot topics at the latest regional Women’s Network event at Hampshire Constabulary.

Police officers from across the South East gathered at Netley to discuss issues affecting women (pictured).

Delegates had the opportunity to attend workshops on career development, menopause, fitness testing, flexible working, maternity, and managing change.

Best practices were discussed, with plans to implement new polices such as mentoring for better career development, women-only sessions for fitness training, and buddy schemes, e-learning and coffee mornings for police officers on maternity leave.

**Sgt Success**

FEMALE PCs were more likely to pass the exam to become a sergeant than their male counterparts, figures have revealed. As many as 4,536 PCs from England and Wales took the OSPRE Part I exam in March and 1,730 candidates passed. The pass rate among female candidates was 42 per cent (476 candidates), compared with 37 per cent (1,244 candidates) for men.

**Custody woes**

FOUR in 10 custody sergeants have suffered anxiety or depression as a result of their job, a survey has revealed. And nearly 70 per cent say they want to leave the role – with a further half saying the custody sergeant job makes them want to quit policing. The figures were revealed in a two-year survey of officers by the University of Nottingham which saw 1,677 officers from around the country quizzed on their role over a two-year period.

**Bobby off beat**

THE number of people who have seen a Bobby on the beat at least once a week has fallen. Figures from the Office of National Statistics show that police visibility fell during 2012-13. This is the first recorded fall since 2009-10. According to the ONS: “The proportion of adults who reported seeing a police officer on foot patrol in their local area at least once a week recorded a decrease of four percentage points from 38 per cent to 34 per cent.”

**Overtime saved**

OVERTIME payments to PCs and sergeants could have disappeared entirely had a proposal by Tom Winsor been pushed through, it has emerged. Police officials spent a “highly-charged” six-hour meeting debating proposed changes, during which Mr Winsor had to be “convinced of the need for overtime”, according to a chief negotiator, Graham Cassidy, former Secretary of the Superintendents’ Association.
In the firing line

Ch Insp Debbie Marsden is responsible for making sure surveillance and firearms roles are more accessible to female officers. She tells Grapevine about her work.

You hold the lead on behalf of ACPO Interoperability for Inclusion. What does this mean?

ACPO Interoperability covers a variety of policing activity, but currently our work is focused on inclusion within surveillance and firearms.

The work started in the world of surveillance where particular challenges were being faced by our staff remaining covert when working in some of our communities. In that discipline there is a very clear business case that our surveillance teams need to reflect the communities in which they work so that they can be operationally effective and not compromised.

Daily, firearms officers have to adapt to work in a covert way alongside their surveillance colleagues. We recognise, however, this is just one of their roles, and only a small number of firearms officers in any department will do this. If we reflect our communities we can be more effective in conflict management.

What is your day job?

I am one of the force incident commanders in Dorset Police, working 24/7 within the force control room. The role is a bit different than some other forces, as we are the firearms and pursuit commanders as well as being in overall charge of all force assets. We are also responsible for managing all incidents and crimes where significant risk is present.

The inclusion work is a legacy from one of my previous roles as a covert manager but I have stayed with it, as I strongly believe in what we are trying to deliver.

As a firearms commander, I now have the benefit of seeing both elements. We are all wrestling with the issue of inclusion in our teams and I genuinely believe that by taking a step-by-step approach we can begin to make the changes required.

What are the issues for female officers in surveillance? Why do we see fewer women in specialist roles?

Inclusion is about building a working environment where people are given the opportunity to achieve their full potential. It includes all the considerations of diversity, but in my view it is more.

A considerable barrier for females in a specialist discipline is the perception about what the job is rather than knowing what it actually is. Over time these myths can get reinforced by their immediate supervision, colleagues or through their own observations. For some there are caring responsibilities and a belief that there is a lack of flexibility in the roles.

The caring profile in this country will change over the years to come with a significant part of our elder community needing family care. Caring is not gender specific although many carers are female and this has an impact. If there is no flexibility when performing the role then it excludes a group of our talented staff.

What are the issues facing women in firearms roles?

For those, mainly females, aspiring to become firearms officers the fitness test can be seen as a challenge too far. We know that many individuals fail at this first point. It can be overcome by a big proportion of these candidates building a realistic training plan. Specialist trainers in forces can help with this.

The initial work of my team is to identify the issues and provide guidance and support to ensure we are all doing our bit to deconstruct the barriers. I have an aspiration to take it further so that these teams lead the way in providing inclusive environments in which to work.

I also know that these careers are just not for some of our staff. I cannot accept it where these career choices are not made from a position where a choice is really there.

What hurdles have you experienced at work because of your gender?

It has depended where I am and what role I have been in. Now there are no issues or hurdles, but I have often been the only female in a room of officers in covert policing, or it has been assumed in among a group that I was the lowest ranking officer. When the opposite is pointed out then the question is posed “But is she any good?” The fact that my male colleagues laugh when this is asked reflects well on them.

What are the next steps for the service to become more inclusive?

Our work focuses on changing culture through challenging why we have always done things in a certain way. We have focused on the policies, processes and people involved.

Practitioners working within, and those who are no part of current teams have told us what affects them and what they want to experience in the future.

From that we have created some really straightforward guidance about how to raise awareness and marketing for the posts. Our favourite question is ‘why?’. Why are we doing it like that?