

Inspectors' exam statement

Deputy Chief Constable Bernie O'Reilly, from the College of Policing said:

"We sincerely apologise to all candidates affected by the issues with today's Inspectors' exam.

"We have been working with our supplier to understand and address connectivity issues experienced by a large number of the candidates. We initially thought this issue could be overcome by extending server capacity. However, we have subsequently been informed that the issue is broader than the College exam and is affecting delivery across a number of organisations.

"As we are unable to provide candidates with assurance around the functionality of the system, we have decided to suspend the exam sitting. If you have experienced issues or are currently experiencing disruption please log off and do not try to complete the exam. If you have not yet started the exam please do not attempt to access the system today. If you are currently sitting the exam, without any issues, the system should allow you to complete it.

"We understand that candidates have put in an extraordinary amount of work in preparation for today's exam, sacrificing their time during what is an already challenging and demanding time for policing. We apologise for the stress and anxiety caused by this delay and we will work hard to make sure that those who have been unable to sit the exam without disruption are able to do so fairly as soon as possible. We will ensure all candidates are provided with further information specific to their experience today and we will be exploring other support in respect of the wider impact on candidates' personal circumstances.

"Further updates will be made available on our social media and on our website as they become available."

FAQs

Why did you decide to suspend the Inspectors' exam?

The Inspectors' NPPF Step Two Legal Examination was scheduled to take place between 0800 and 2000 on the 13th October 2020. We opened the exam to candidates at 0800 and just after 1000, we were made aware that a significant number of candidates were encountering technical issues accessing the exam. This included many candidates encountering extremely slow functionality and questions taking a significant time to buffer.

As soon as we were alerted to the issues, we worked with our exam platform supplier, PSI, to understand and address the issues experienced by candidates. Our supplier initially thought this issue could be overcome by extending the platform server capacity and that the exam could continue as planned. However, we were subsequently informed that there was a wider issue, which was not specific to the College exam and was affecting exam delivery across a number of organisations, including exams being run across the Civil Service.

Despite assurances, we were unable to be fully confident that candidates would not continue to be adversely affected. Due to the impact on colleagues, we took the decision to suspend the exam sitting. We apologise for the stress and anxiety caused by this and are working hard to minimise further impact on colleagues.

What happens now...?

We are attempting to reduce further impact on candidates as much as possible. There are different scenarios based on the candidate's level of completion. See [this PDF diagram](#) for further details.

I have managed to complete the exam, when will I get my result?

We recognise that some candidates were able to complete the exam despite the adverse conditions. All sufficiently completed exams will be marked and results reviewed by the debrief panel in the normal way. We intend to accelerate this process in order to advise candidates of the outcome early next week (w/c 19th October).

Colleagues who completed the exam but who have not passed will have the option to sit the examination again when it is rescheduled in the coming weeks.

I didn't complete the exam, what does this mean for me?

For those candidates who managed to log out of the system, all progress up to that point will have been saved.

We will mark the exams of all candidates who partially completed the exam and answered enough questions to make it possible to pass. On ratification of the results, if you have

completed a sufficient amount of the exam successfully to pass, you will not need to continue with your exam or redo it.

If you were unable to complete the examination sufficiently, you will be able to continue to sit the exam once it is rescheduled. Alternatively, you will be able to restart the exam from the beginning if you prefer.

Once you have completed the exam fully, if you are unsuccessful, you will also get the option to redo the exam again in a second round of rescheduled exams in the coming weeks.

Can I start the rescheduled exam from the point I finished?

Yes, if you logged out during the exam the system will have captured your question number and time and you will be able to log-on and, if you wish, you will be able to resume your exam at that point on the rescheduled date.

I didn't start the exam, what does this mean for me?

You will be able to sit the exam when it is rescheduled. If you are unsuccessful in this attempt, you will also have the option to sit the examination again in a second round of rescheduled exams in the coming weeks.

When will the Inspectors' exam be rescheduled?

We recognise the urgency of rescheduling the exam to avoid any loss of knowledge or further disruption. We are working with our supplier and forces to identify a range of suitable dates in the coming weeks. We will be offering a number of dates to allow candidates options to fit the rescheduled exam around work and other commitments.

We are intending to confirm these dates early next week (w/c 19th October).

Can anyone attend the rescheduled exam?

Only candidates who were registered for the Inspectors' NPPF Step Two Legal Examination scheduled for Tuesday the 13th October 2020 will be eligible to sit on the rescheduled dates.

I've spent money to prepare for the Inspectors' exam, will the College reimburse me for this?

We understand that candidates have put in an extraordinary amount of work in preparation for the exam and will have unique and individual considerations that the suspension of the exam will have caused.

We are extremely sorry for the stress and anxiety this has caused. We are exploring other support in respect of the wider impact on candidates' personal circumstances. We will provide further information on this as soon as possible.

My pass in the Inspectors' exam was due to expire this year. Is my previous pass in the NPPF Inspectors' exam still valid even though I took the exam?

The College and the NPPF Governance Board appreciate the challenges that forces have faced this year in regards to their promotion processes. All candidates who sat the 2015 Inspectors' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam had their validity period extended until 31st December 2020. We advised that if a candidate holding a pass in the 2015 Inspectors' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam took the 2020 Inspectors' exam they would forfeit this validity extension at the time of taking the exam and would not be eligible to take part in a Step Three process until they had received their results and were successful in the 2020 Inspectors' exam. We would like to reassure you that we will take this into account when exploring what action to take next and ensure that candidates are not unfairly penalised.

How will you provide candidates with updates about the exam?

We will continue to update this Q&A as further information becomes available. We will also continue to contact candidates directly by email, update forces and provide information via our website and social media.

How will you ensure this does not happen again?

We are conducting a full review with our exam platform supplier, PSI, to ensure we understand the exact problems they have experienced and fully assure ourselves that candidates will not experience these issues again in future online exams.