



No. 18 – Service Recruitment &

Platelet article reprinted from: **June 2010**

Title: **Service Recruitment & ITP**

Author: **Shirley Watson**

Military service

From time to time The ITP Support Association is asked if it is possible for people with ITP, in remission from ITP, or without a spleen, to enlist in the services or join the police. We have contacted each of the service recruitment offices in turn and although some accessed their medical requirements more easily than others the bad news is that people with ITP will not be eligible to join the navy, army or RAF. Each of the services has a list of conditions which will not pass their medical assessment which includes bleeding disorders. Unfortunately military recruitment does not discriminate between mild and severe ITP, nor ITP in remission. Being asplenic (not having a spleen) is also on their list.

The Police Service

The police don't have a central recruitment dept, and although there is a police recruitment website one has to find out further information through the recruitment office of each individual force. When researching this we tried the Metropolitan Police first as the largest police force in the UK but after being cut off 3 times then queueing on the phone for 20 minutes we gave up and tried Bedford, the local constabulary to ITP Support Association headquarters.

The recruitment officer recommended that the person should start the application and their suitability would be decided later at the medical. How ridiculous to go through all that procedure with the possibility of being eliminated on medical grounds later! We eventually managed to access their medical department who stated that someone with a bleeding disorder could definitely not be recruited as a front line policeman as they would be more at risk in any combat situation. However, they might be considered for a civilian role within the police. Without contacting every police force in the country we can't be sure, but suspect that this is the situation nationally.

Summary

Bleeding disorders and/or not having a spleen are seen as an extra risk factor by the services, where it is possible to be in a combat situation or taking physical blows. They are also concerned about any such problems putting extra strain on fellow officers. Although many people with ITP go into lifelong remission, the services do not appear to take this into account.

If you are already in the forces and leave early due to ITP you may be eligible for an ill-health pension and lump sum if you have served 2 years reckonable service. Payments are calculated on a three tier structure depending on how seriously the illness impacts on finding a job outside the services.