

**National Police
Wellbeing Service**

Police Leavers' Guide



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Introduction

This booklet has been produced to provide help and advice on a range of topics that are relevant to those who are voluntarily leaving the Police Service. It also may be helpful to those who are hoping to progress within the Police Service. Its aim is to support a successful transition and give those who are leaving, and those who have left, useful information regarding the help that is available, and encourage them to create their own plan of action.

Providing support to those who are leaving or who have left the Service is a key pillar of the Police Covenant (for more information on the Police Covenant, see [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)). The Covenant recognises the unique contribution and sacrifices that both police officers and police staff make as a result of their service.

The National Police Wellbeing Service, Oscar Kilo, has been working with Dr Ceri Jones, a Chartered Psychologist and Stuart Noble, a former Chief Superintendent, to develop this content. Both are experts in their field with over 20 years of experience helping those moving on from policing and other public sector organisations. We are also grateful for the resources from Reed employment.

Please note this guide is not a substitute for the many and varied retirement courses which are offered in forces across England and Wales. We recommend you explore your local force provision and use this as a complimentary resource.

This guide is an uncontrolled version once printed. Please make sure you get the latest information available by visiting the links suggested.



Let's start thinking

People leave policing for a variety of different reasons, perhaps retirement or to change careers. Everyone's circumstances are unique and there is no specific path that must be followed. Here are a few things to think about as you begin to move towards the next chapter:

Take control and plan

Leaving any job can be a challenging, exciting and stressful time. Allow yourself the time and space to plan and do the things that are right for you. The best transitions are those that are planned, to enable you to be in the best position possible as you leave.

The demands of a busy job can mean you don't always put yourself first. Often we are so busy trying to juggle our work and home lives, we forget about ourselves and run out of one of the most valuable commodities – time. There is a big change on the horizon, you are leaving your job! By taking time for yourself to plan and care for your own needs, the chances are this transition will be so much more successful. Longer term, everyone will benefit. You are not being selfish by taking time to plan this transition. It is in everyone's interests that this goes well.

Talk to family, friends & colleagues

Leaving the police – either through retirement or because you want to move on – is a big decision. Talking your plans through with your family and friends really does help, as these are the people who have your best interests at heart. Work colleagues and peers can also provide a valuable listening ear. You may be worried about money, about feeling bored, taking on a new role or that you will miss your social connections and sense of purpose. No matter what you are feeling, having those conversations early really will help. There may be other avenues or hobbies to explore that you have not even thought of, or comfort and advice that can be gained from the experiences of others.

Enjoy and contribute to your role

Being in good quality work is better for your health than not working, so whilst cruising into your departure might seem like a perfectly good strategy, continuing to enjoy and contribute to your job is probably a better one for your longer-term health and wellbeing. Many of those retiring/leaving feel at the peak of their performance having amassed a wealth of knowledge and transferable skills. If you can continue to enjoy working as you build up to and manage your departure, it will feed your sense of purpose and wellbeing, ready for the next chapter.

Take appropriate professional advice

Get advice from the experts. This could be financial advice, career advice, educational advice or even retirement coaching. Talk to people who can help guide your path and make it the best it can possibly be. Get advice from a range of sources to help you make key decisions. Ask friends and family for personal recommendations so that you have a degree of confidence you are talking to people you can trust and who will have your interests at heart.

Enjoy the journey

Whilst having a calendar that counts down to your departure date can be fun, don't forget to enjoy the journey into your next chapter, rather than just seeing it as a destination. All too often we wish time away and this is a very precious thing that we only have so much of.

Take notice of anxiety and stress

It is very common to feel stress and anxiety in the run up to major change, however for some people changing jobs can become extremely stressful. You should not bottle up any emotions and there is support available through Oscar Kilo and/or your force's Occupational Health department if you require it.



Preparing for a new career

I don't know what career I want, what should I do?

A good proportion of those leaving policing for whatever reason may choose to continue to work. For some people, the next steps may be obvious, but for others the path ahead may be unclear. It's not uncommon to feel confused about what you do next, especially when for some officers and staff the job they know so well does not at first glance seem to exist in the outside world.

Be sure to consider your personal strengths, transferable skills, and qualities you've developed in policing. Think about which positions you might enjoy or feel motivated to pursue that will give you a sense of purpose. Think about your technical skills, qualifications and training, passions and interests, life plans, family commitments and priorities. It can be hard to look at yourself and your life like this, particularly if you've been doing a job for a long time, so we've pulled together information and guidance to help you take a step back and reflect.



Finding your purpose

If you are struggling with deciding what do next, it may be worthwhile taking a bit of time to try to understand a little more about yourself and what drives you.

Meaning, motivation and purpose

If you have just spent many years working in a busy police environment, the chances are you have had little time to reflect and set goals so that you can make positive steps towards what is important to you. Leaving policing is a unique opportunity to pause and take stock. We know that having purpose in life improves physical and mental wellbeing and quality of life.

One way to identify your life purpose is by reflecting on your motivation, passions and strengths, and from this develop a plan with step-by-step goals. [Appendix A](#) can help with this

Values

Values are what we believe are important in the way we live and work. These can determine what's important to us and what we prioritise, including in our careers. Over time your values may change. For example, becoming a parent may change what's important to you and in turn what you value. Retirement also offers another opportunity to reflect on what values are important and think about how your future direction can reflect these. Not acting in line with our values can be a source of unhappiness. This is why making a conscious effort to identify our values is important. Living and demonstrating our values should give us a sense of pride, fulfilment and achievement.

If you would like to find out more about the values that are important to you then try completing the values exercise in [Appendix B](#).

Life crafting

Another tool which can be very useful in helping understand what is important to us is 'life crafting'. This is a holistic approach that can help us identify our purpose and future actions*

Life crafting involves reflecting on and writing down personal goals. Setting goals is an important component of finding fulfilment and purpose, as it sets out our intentions as well as helps us plan for how to overcome obstacles. We have included a life crafting exercise in [Appendix C](#) for you to try if you'd like.



Proudest moments

Another useful exercise is to think about and reflect on your policing career and remember your proudest moments. These could have been helping the public or supporting a colleague or someone you managed. Once you have identified your examples you can think about the skills you used in these scenarios. These can be referred to as our strengths. Your strengths can be thought of as your positive characteristics or traits. They can influence how you behave, your motivations and how you act and feel. You can also get feedback from others around you, friends, family and colleagues to help you identify your key strengths and achievements. When going through a transition such as leaving policing, thinking about our key strengths, achievements and proudest moments can help us decide what it is we want to do in the future.

Life crafting is 'a process in which people actively reflect on their present and future life, set goals for important areas of life – social, career, and leisure time – and, if required, make concrete plans and undertake actions to change these areas in a way that is more congruent with their values and wishes'

(Schippers & Ziegler, 2019)

*Ref Schippers, M. C., & Ziegler, N. (2019). Life crafting as a way to find purpose and meaning in life. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 2778.

Networking and job searching

Throughout your career in policing you will have already developed a network both internally and externally. This might include current colleagues, partner organisations or ex colleagues who have already made the transition into another role away from policing.

Now is the time to build this network, using these relationships to learn what roles are available, how your skills and experience might fit the role and their experience of applying for and gaining that position. This is an informal way of beginning to understand what your next steps might be and what you might need to do to secure that role.

Don't underestimate the value of networking as approximately 70% of new roles are found as a result of it. Networking can even be as simple as picking up the phone and arranging to go for a coffee and a chat!

If you're less confident with networking, here are some simple tips for you to consider:

1. Identification

Be clear who you want to meet and why, what organisations or fields interest you.

2. Contact

Email, phone or get in touch through LinkedIn. You may or may not know the person so introduce yourself and ask for something they can easily deliver such as advice, guidance and the benefit of their experience.

3. Meet

Strengthen that relationship, let them know about you and what you offer, as well as listening to their story.

This is not about securing a job from the first contact you make (for some it maybe) but rather expanding your knowledge and becoming clearer about where you want to go. Putting yourself in the shop window will help build your network as often you will be referred from one person to another. Remember the more connections you have, the wider your reach.

What is the purpose of a CV?

It's surprising how many of us, regardless of seniority, length of service or job role, really struggle when it comes to writing a CV. The world of policing is very complex, it is filled with acronyms, jargon and very specific roles.

The challenge will be translating this experience and into a language which is meaningful to the outside world. Don't forget the skills you possess are very marketable and there are employers out there looking for the exact experience you possess.

If you have been in policing for most of your working life, finding the confidence to take the first step and start to write down your experience in a CV in a way that translates to the external job market can feel like a big deal and you are not alone in feeling like this.

Police officers and staff often use a combination of technical and interpersonal skills that allow them to complete their job duties effectively. Below are some of the skills we use across policing that can be transferred to other roles.

1 Interpersonal communication

Interpersonal communication allows you to develop and adapt communication strategies and language to connect with others and help them interpret information. Policing requires you to communicate both authoritatively and compassionately as you deal with a wide range of situations.

2 Adaptability

Police officers and staff meet the challenge of the varying demands of their role and adapt to a variety of different working environments, social climates and working alongside both members of the public and other stakeholders. In addition, officers must adapt to using new technology, systems and processes to provide the best service to the community.

3 Empathy

Empathy and being able to relate to others with compassion is a key part of the role. Empathy enables the provision of emotional support and the skills to better understand often complex situations. Empathy allows a better assessment of the situation and develops a more positive relationship with the person they are dealing with.

4 Patience and calm

An essential part of policing is remaining calm and having patience. Patience and listening skills are developed when dealing with members of the public in order to understand the situation and gain trust. Another skill is the ability to remain calm under pressure. When a situation is extremely stressful, dangerous or pressured, de-escalation skills are required.

5 Active listening

Active listening is paying attention to nonverbal cues and providing small verbal gestures to acknowledge the speaker. Active listening is an important skill which demonstrates that you can engage with members of the public, colleagues, and multi-agency stakeholders effectively.

6 Attention to detail

Attention to detail is the process by which someone can identify minor details, correct errors and notice changing patterns in behaviour. Policing requires attention to detail, often in extremely complex situations, identifying what is most relevant and building upon it if and when necessary.

7 Knowledge of public safety and security

A large part of a police officer's role involves preventing crime. Citizens and other stakeholders look to police officers to have knowledge of public safety and security. Therefore, former police officers are expertly placed to provide safety and security advice and crime prevention to other organisations.

8 Critical thinking

In ever-changing challenging situations a key skill is dynamic, critical decision making. Staff and officers have to demonstrate critical thinking about decisions that affect the health and wellbeing of members of the public.

9 Conflict resolution

A large part of policing involves resolving conflict. It requires individuals to de-escalate situations as quickly and safely as possible. Officers and staff must remain calm under pressure and ensure not to inflame the situation.

10 Build trust

Policing requires building trust amongst colleagues and members of the public. This is done by fostering relationships based on trust and mutual respect. By actively listening to the complaints and concerns of the community, trust is built with members of the public.



Developing your CV

Developing your CV is key in securing your next job. You are likely to be competing against other applicants so this is your opportunity to promote yourself, highlight your skills and experience to the reader and identify your USP (unique selling points).

Read other CVs to get a feel of how they are structured and pick a style that works for you. It is fine to have a skeleton document but always make sure your CV is relevant to the job you are applying for; you may end up writing several depending on the different jobs, roles and sectors you may be applying for.

Regardless of the structure or style you choose, your CV will most likely contain:

1 Your message/personal statement/profile

This is your opportunity to introduce and sell yourself in the opening paragraph. Try to describe yourself, your experience, skills and knowledge in a way that meets the requirements of the job advert. Highlight any relevant achievements in a way that demonstrates your potential for this role and how you can add value going forward.

Use language that is appropriate for the level of job you are applying for, there is no harm if you repeat some of the key words from the candidate specification but make them relevant to your experience and achievements. Do not just repeat buzz words without any substance.

2 Key skills

Look back over the roles you have held in policing. They will all have a job specification and competencies and this can be a really helpful way of refreshing your memory as often they will be directly transferable. Make these statements come to life and describe how you have demonstrated them, don't just present a list of dictionary definitions.

3 Career history

In reverse chronological order provide your last 8-10 years' work experience. Using your job title will help convey your message but add some further context, describe what you delivered in that role and illustrate your skills and key achievements. A few lines using punchy vocabulary can be very impactful.

4 Qualifications

You may well have both internal and external qualifications that you want to highlight. If they are relevant to the role you are applying for, include them. Consider offering more context to any police qualifications to make them more meaningful and show the level which you have attained.

5 Additional information

This can differentiate your application or give common ground, such as hobbies or activities outside of work. Consider how you have added value outside of work.

The following are a couple of example CVs to give you inspiration. The first is for a police officer, the second is for police staff. There are lots of CV templates to be found online, or in word processing programmes.

Paul Robertson

•XXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX• Tel: xxxxx xxx xxx• Email: xxxxxx

Professional Profile

- Over 20 years' experience of working as a Police Officer for the community of Lancashire, most recently seconded to Merseyside Police for the security planning for the Eurovision Song Contest 2023
- Planner of large-scale projects who takes pride in attention to detail and delivering on time and within budget
- Strong all-rounder with the ability to undertake most roles. Keen to continue to challenge myself and explore new opportunities after my time with the Police Service

Skills and Training

Managerial: Relationship building, emotional intelligence, team motivation, work prioritisation, problem solving, resilient organisation and planning, process design, working at scale, leadership, data analysis, stakeholder engagement and management.

Policing Related: Licensed search officer with over 15 years' experience. Trained in: Level 2 public order, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN); Police Criminal Evidence Act (PACE); video interviewing; blue light driving; disaster victim identification; data analysis; first aid.

Career History

xxx – Present: Eurovision Song Contest Planning Team, Merseyside Police (Secondment)

- Planned the Eurovision song contest defensive search activity – the largest and most complex search operation ever undertaken by Merseyside. The search included all venues, hotels, capital build programmes
- Produced several hundred sectorised maps to support the search activity
- Produced CAD-drawn map books for issuing to team leaders to ensure that they had an easily accessible, detailed overview of the search, the locations and the relevant police guidance
- Produced thousands of tasking sheets which are issued to the search officers to confirm activity has been undertaken. This is very precise exacting work which is done on a venue room by room basis
- Problem solved when plans were changed, to ensure that work did not fall behind
- Worked closely with partners including the Eurovision Organising Committee, Liverpool City Council and the venues. Built strong relationships, which ensured that when there were challenges they could be overcome in a calm professional manner, with all parties contributing
- During the operational phase acted as a scribe/ team leader, ensuring that all work got completed to schedule, as timeframes for completion were immovable. The search workstream for Eurovision worked well with no major issues

Xxxx: Force Support Unit, Lancashire Constabulary

- Attended a wide variety of 24/7 policing operations as part of this response unit
- Managed dynamic and challenging situations including high category football matches and violent protests
- Worked with the Bronze and Silver Commanders as a staff officer to record decisions and rationale, providing support and guidance as required

Xxxxx: High Priority Team Blackpool, Lancashire Constabulary

- The focus of this team was right at the heart of local policing and it was trusted to deal with all of the local issues disturbing residents. This included car crime, drug dealing, anti-social behaviour and any other high-volume theft
- Undertook detailed analysis of activity to understand effectiveness and to ensure we achieved our targets for crime reduction
- Engaged extensively with the community as building trust was vital to understanding the scale of the issues and the approaches we should take

xxx – xxxx: Operational Support Unit, Lancashire Constabulary

- Attended a wide variety of 24/7 policing operations as part of this response unit, including high risk sport events, high risk protests, body recovery. This required a significant amount of personal resilience and flexibility

xxx – xxx: Drugs Team, Lancashire Constabulary

- Actioned targeted activity to capture and convict drug dealers
- This included handing out warrants, analysing intelligence and extensive community engagement

xxxx – xxxx: Response Officer, Preston

- Responding to emergency calls

Hobbies and Interests

- Gardening, travel, golf

IT Skills

Experienced in Microsoft packages including Excel, Word, Outlook and PowerPoint

Meera Bansal

•XXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXX • Tel: XXXXX XXX XXX • Email: XXXXXX

Professional Profile

- Dedicated, tenacious and driven team player with the ability to undertake any role to which her skills are suited
- Over 28 years' experience of working in Police Staff roles for West Midlands Police
- Performs well under pressure, with the ability to meet deadlines
- A natural problem solver with the ability to engage and inspire
- Resilient and always happy to do what is required to get the job done

Skills and Qualifications

Managerial: Organisation and planning, security mitigation, risk and issue management, requirement gathering and data analysis, stakeholder engagement and management, team motivation, budget management, diary co-ordination, presentation design and delivery, event planning, skilful use of Microsoft packages, coach and mentor

Policing related: Counter terrorism security mitigation, crime recording and analysis, duty management systems

Career History

2019 – Present: Venue Liaison Officer, Operational Planning Team, West Midlands Police

- Researched, co-ordinated, prepared, distributed, reviewed and updated all key operational, business continuity and emergency planning requirements
- Updated and maintained CAD drawings/plans/maps, including venue secure fence-line and other defensible perimeters, ensuring the integrity of a clean venue
- Planned for the safety of spectators, athletes, paying customers and VIP dignitaries ensuring only ticketed or accredited people have access to venues around the city
- Responsible for communicating to over 90 planners and external partners regarding the security plan
- Delivered meetings, minutes, agendas and authored detailed reports
- Developed impactful presentations which hit the mark
- Presented confidently to senior ranks and partners
- Consulted extensively re key issues and problem solving in a complex, dynamic environment
- Collaborated with key partners to achieve the best outcome for Birmingham and keeping the city safe

2012 – 2019: Crimes Service Team Officer, West Midlands Police

- Responsible for maintaining the standard of crime reporting
- Took calls from officers at the scene to determine whether or not a crime has occurred
- Directly inputted crimes onto police systems ensuring the content, quality and data integrity were in line with national, force and local standards, and the Data Protection Act.
- Completed investigation logs and assessed crimes to determine further action
- Ensured all offences recorded as per Home Office regulations

2011 – 2012: Global Rostering Supervisor, West Midlands Police

- Supervised the management of the Global Rostering System
- Responsible for all elements of inputting and maintaining abstractions of 7,000+ staff and maintaining day-to-day management of the system
- Advised the Senior Management Team of resilience levels and forward planning of major police events
- Supervised six staff
- Devised and implemented a new strategy for handling high volumes of emails and data, and trained staff accordingly, which led to an organised, smooth-running office

1999 – 2011: Finance Officer, West Midlands Police

- Appointed to Finance Officer after successfully completing HNC qualification in Business and Finance
- Provided a financial and administrative service to the Operational Command Unit
- Maintained the local disbursement/reimbursement account
- Responsible for inputting all overtime claims and expense claims in accordance with force policy
- Involved with the preparation of purchase orders and ensured invoices were correctly certified and processed
- Safe keyholder, responsible for securing and accounting of all movements in regards to crime and weekly banking and reconciliation audit returns to be carried out

Education / Professional Development and Memberships

- 2020 – Silver Staff Officer- Major Events trained -West Midlands Police
- 2019 – Counter Terrorism/Security Threat Level trained – West Midlands Police
- 2012 – Crimes trained – West Midlands Police
- 2011 – Global Rostering System – West Midlands Police
- 2009 – Management Foundation Module –West Midlands Police
- 2009 – Finance Procurement Module – West Midlands Police
- 2008 – Juggling Work and Personal Life – West Midlands Police
- 2000 – Major Incident Information Centre Operator – West Midlands Police
- 1995 – 1998 HNC in Business and Finance – Staffordshire University
- 1989 – 8 GCSE's and O Levels – Baylis Court Girls School, Berkshire

IT Skills

- Advanced in Excel, Word, Outlook, PowerPoint

Miscellaneous

- Driving Licence: Full UK driving licence
- Security Clearance: Cleared to work on restricted and confidential government systems
National security vetting clearance of Enhanced SC – valid until xxx

Covering letters

If the advert you are replying to asks for a covering letter, then you should definitely provide one. Keep it short and to the point. Ensure you address the requirements of the role and how you meet these, using headings and bullets to get your point across. Let them know why you have chosen their organisation and what has driven you to apply, linking this to your relevant skills and previous experience.

Application forms

Before you start it's a good idea to do your research. Go on the company website and have it there for reference as you complete your application. Make sure you read any guidance provided on the forms and follow it closely.

There may be a named person on the job application to contact for further information, it is entirely up to you but sometimes there can be value in making contact and sharing some of your relevant experience before completing the application. This is also a useful way to find out more about the role and organisation.

Follow the competencies outlined in the job description and make sure you have met the essential criteria. There is no guarantee that this application will be read by a human so replaying their language, terminology and criteria back to them will put you in a good position to get shortlisted.

Make sure you download and keep a copy of anything you submit. This way you will have all the information to hand for interview and for any future applications. Make you you take a break and re-read your answers with fresh eyes before pressing 'send'.

Completing job applications can be an exhausting process. On paper you can perfect for a role and still not get past application stage. Applications can take practise and you may need to complete a few before you get an interview. Try asking for feedback if you are not successful and don't be disheartened!



The value of social media

Love it or loathe it, we live in a world that is now driven to a large degree by social media. Up to 94% of recruiters use LinkedIn to source or vet job candidates. If you are someone who has always tried to avoid social media either because of your profession (it can be tricky working in the police) or because you have much better ways to spend your time, putting yourself out there can seem a little scary. Ultimately you have to do what is right for you. When it comes to job hunting however, there are a lot of benefits to embracing the online world – here are just a few of them:

- It can widen your network
- You can import and share contacts
- You can use LinkedIn and X (formerly known as Twitter) to find others and learn from them
- You can follow organisations and learn about what the latest trends or developments are in that industry/sector/organisation
- It makes it easier to highlight your skills and experience to a wide audience and let recruiting organisations know when you're available.

Writing a LinkedIn headline

The LinkedIn profile headline is your first chance to tell others what you have to offer. It is your opportunity to make a positive initial impression. This is the first thing that shows up in recruiting organisations' searches. In order to show up in searches these key words are important. By default, LinkedIn makes your current job title and company your headline, for example: "Retired Police Inspector at ABC Force." It is important you edit this to create a more impactful headline. You have 120 characters, so include the default information along with other details that help you stand out and show up in search results. Consider using 'former' instead of 'retired' and emphasising your job role and skills if it's difficult for those outside of policing to know what you do.

Your headline should tell other LinkedIn users what you have to offer and whether you're actively job searching or not.



Here are some top tips for writing an impactful summary.

- Consider the tone, language and key audience. This will depend on who you're trying to reach and impress.
- If you're looking for the next job after policing, your audience can include recruiters using LinkedIn searches, so make sure your summary has the relevant key words.
- If you're considering being self-employed, LinkedIn could be a potential source of new clients.
- If you are an expert in your field, make sure you showcase this to other agencies and sectors.
- Clarifying your goals and audience beforehand helps give you some guidelines before you begin writing.

To make the most out of LinkedIn's tools and services, your first step should be to strengthen your profile page and create what LinkedIn calls an 'All-Star Profile.' Whether you're creating and writing your LinkedIn profile for the very first time or trying to improve the visibility of your existing profile, finishing these steps will increase the likelihood that your profile will appear in LinkedIn search results.



How to write a LinkedIn profile

Next is the 'About' section. With 2,000 characters to work with, the profile summary section gives you plenty of room to convey information, skills and experiences that might not fit elsewhere in your profile. Use future job or industry-specific skills and keywords. This will help you appear higher in LinkedIn searches by recruiters interested in what you have to offer. Analyse relevant job descriptions or the profiles of successful colleagues who have already transitioned into new roles to come up with a list of keywords and phrases that recruiters are likely to search. You can incorporate these into your LinkedIn profile.

Here are some examples that would be relevant to policing:

- Leadership, management, risk-based decision making
- Team working skills and problem solving
- Experience of project management and delivering within time and financial/ budgetary constraints

These keywords and search terminologies will likely be used by recruiters in other sectors and other users searching for your expertise.

Share content

Try to post relevant links and interesting updates, as this is an important way to engage your peers and increase the visibility of your LinkedIn profile.

How to find a job with LinkedIn

At [linkedin.com/jobs](https://www.linkedin.com/jobs) you can search by job title, keyword, company, and/or location. Once you search, several filters are available to help you narrow your search. You can also have LinkedIn display potential jobs for you by selecting the “Career interests” button. Here you can specify a variety of job titles, locations, industries, and other details that are of interest to you in your job search. Saving these preferences will ensure applicable jobs are displayed for you.

Building your professional network

Utilising the LinkedIn platform to grow your professional network has benefits beyond finding a new job or simply keeping in touch with your peers and former colleagues from policing and elsewhere.

The more quality connections you have on LinkedIn, the better. You can benefit from connecting with a diverse group of people including:

- personal friends and acquaintances
- current and former colleagues and business contacts
- industry peers you haven't met yet
- industry influencers and experts

Therefore, taking the time in building and growing a large network on LinkedIn enables you to exponentially link to more LinkedIn users.

Send a personalised note with a connection request to make a good first impression and increase your chances of having it accepted. Mentioning where you met the user or a

mutually beneficial reason why you'd like to connect is a great way to break the ice.

LinkedIn is also a great place to find out what is happening in the world of policing and other industries you are interested in. You can collect new ideas for your line of work and stay current with industry trends. LinkedIn automatically adds relevant articles to your newsfeed based on your industry and location. Engage your peers by posting updates and asking questions or commenting on other users' posts. This will not only help you gain insight into what is and isn't working in your industry, but can put you on the path to becoming known as an active and influential member of your industry.

Allstar Profile

- **Add your industry and location**
- **Add dates to your work experience**
- **Upload a profile photo which should be a professional headshot**
- **Add your most recent position and job description**
- **Add employment dates to your Experience section**
- **Fill out the Education section**
- **Add at least 5 skills to the Skills & Endorsements section and as many as you like**
- **Add your LinkedIn summary as per above**
- **Connect with at least 50 other professionals on LinkedIn**

Your 30-second 'elevator pitch'

Having an elevator pitch can be useful for those moments when you need to get across information quickly and succinctly. It can be used in so many ways whether that be face to face, in an interview or as part of an application process. Imagine the scene, you are at a friend's barbecue, she introduces you to another guest, you get chatting briefly, or perhaps you are at work rushing to your next meeting and you see a friend who is about to retire... let's just say in both of these scenarios, the person you meet has the potential to help you get your next job and you have a short amount of time to get your message across.

Have a think about the following;

You: Who you are in terms of occupational background and experience. Convey your level of seniority, the type of role and level of responsibility you are comfortable with.

Where: Your sector knowledge and experience of different kinds of organisations. Track record and the type of environment in which you have delivered. This will give context.

What: What do you have to offer in terms of experience and skills? What have you done and achieved? How does your unique blend of skills and experience make you attractive or stand out?

Next: What kind of role, organisation, culture and challenges would provide the right next step for you?

Thinking about your values, skills and strengths, what would be your elevator pitch?

Once you have it nailed, practice it, say it out loud, become comfortable with your own story.



The interview

Congratulations, your CV made it through the selection process, and you have been chosen for an interview! The structure and setting of the interview may vary from interview to interview.

Common types of interviews

There are different types of interviews, sometimes depending on the stage you are in within the interview process. Since the pandemic more interviews are being held online but being fully prepared either way will make the whole process less stressful and increases your chance of success.

The telephone interview

The telephone interview is a way to screen candidates before inviting them to a face-to-face interview. It can be informal, however it's still important to do your research and prepare your answers.

In person/face-to-face

This takes place at a mutually agreed venue set beforehand. Again, do your research arrive early and have a list of questions prepared to ask the interviewer about the role and the company.

A panel interview

A panel interview is often for a mid to senior position requiring more specialist skills, experience, qualifications, and training. A panel interview comprises of two or more interviewers and you may be asked to prepare a presentation. Do your research on the panel members and company and have your presentation on a memory stick and if possible, send them a copy prior to your interview. Always have copy on a memory stick and make printouts of your slides that you can give to your panel.



Online interview

The online can take place via Zoom, Skype or MS Teams. This will usually follow the same structure and format as a face-to-face interview. Although they're mostly streamed live, some online interviews require you to pre-record your answers to send to the employer within a set amount of time. They could involve one or more interviewer, and some employers may choose to record the interview.

Surroundings

It is always wise to organise your surroundings appropriately. Going to a quiet room and blurring your screen background will help avoid any potential disruptions and distractions. Dress as if you are attending a face-to-face meeting. Do your research, have some planned questions prepared. Have a copy of your CV and a notepad to take notes. Make sure to test your equipment (e.g. your webcam, internet speed, sound quality) a least a half hour before the scheduled call. Make a note of the meeting telephone number in case you experience internet issues. Make sure to always look at the camera instead of the screen, watch your posture and remember to smile!

Work-based tasks

Some interviews may include work-based tasks or documents to review as part of the process. Sometimes they will send you documents in advance. You may want to consider access to a printer just in case, as working from a small screen under pressure can be challenging.

Group interview or assessment centre day

These usually involve a variety of group interview questions, activities, and assessments – which test your ability to work in a team, communicate effectively, and solve problems. Many activities mimic situations, or you may be asked to participate in role plays, case studies, group work, problem solving exercises, psychometric tests, presentations, and practical tasks. Short one-to-one interviews may also be held on the same day. The length of a group interview is dependent on the format and structure of the day.

For more examples of interview questions please see [Appendix D](#).

Your preparation

By reading the job description and person specification, you should be able to identify the skills and competencies that you may get asked about at interview. Preparing answers in advance will greatly assist you on the day. Using a structured approach can greatly de-stress the interview process and it makes you think how you translate your experience in policing to a new employer. The STAR method detailed below provides an excellent structure that you can use to assist in your preparation. It works well for the vast majority of scenarios and can be used at any job level.

The STAR Method

STAR stands for Situation, Task, Action, and Result. It's a framework structure developed to help people prepare for and answer competency-based questions in interviews. These questions aim to understand how you've dealt with issues and challenges in the past and to forecast and predict how you'll likely react to situations in their workplace in the future. They're also used to assess whether you have the skills and knowledge required to do the role. When you use the STAR Method, you draw from real-life workplace experience



Situation

Start by setting the scene for your example. Here, you outline a specific challenge you faced and give the interviewer some context. For example, you could name a project you worked on, where it took place, and the size of your team.



Task

This is where you explain your role in the situation. Again, give a few brief details. For example, were you the project lead? What was your goal? What were you tasked to do?



Action

Now you explain what you did. Be specific and explain how you overcame the challenge. Outline the steps you took to resolve the situation. Even if it was a team effort, explain what you did and lead with 'I' instead of 'we' to detail your approach.



Result

Summarise the effects of the actions that were taken. Then mention specific results in your answer. Explain the facts, figures and stats that quantified your success. It's also useful to describe what you learned and then share these insights that you can apply to future challenges. Avoid police jargon.

examples to communicate clearly to your interviewer. Take a look at your CV, previous job roles and all of the areas you have worked in; this can provide the inspiration for the examples you will give at interview.

Competency-based interviews ask open-ended questions to reveal how you approach and overcome workplace challenges. Think of the STAR technique as the structure to tell a story that explains and demonstrates your skills.

Interview final considerations

- This is a two-way process!
- Make sure you have a job description and a person specification for the role
- Look up the people who will be interviewing you on LinkedIn
- For a commercial company – understand the market/who are the key competitors/ areas of innovation in the industry etc.
- If it's public sector/not for profit – understand the scope of the organisation and key areas of interest
- If appropriate, read the company accounts/annual report
- Have a positive attitude about the interview and use positive language
- Don't be tempted to improvise an answer
- Prepare strong examples of where you fit the essential skills/competencies, and rehearse and prepare your answers with a friend or family member
- Identify your weaknesses but try to turn them into positives

- Recognise gaps in your skill set and work out how you are going to address them e.g. commerciality
- Your personality is as important as your CV, maintain regular eye contact and smile
- Always ask at the end of the interview if there anything further that they need to know about you? You could ask “Do you feel after meeting me here today, that I have the skills and experience to do this job?” This will enable you to try and gain some feedback before leaving the room.

For more questions you can ask your interviewers, see [Appendix E](#).

Is self-employment right for me?

Are you someone who has always thought about working for yourself? Being your own boss? It is definitely an option when transitioning from one role to another as there are lots of great things about being self-employed. As a starting point if you know anyone who has made the leap it might be worth getting in touch with them to see how they went about it, as there are lots of things to consider:

What is self-employment?

- Self-employment is when an individual works for themselves instead of an employer.
- This could involve anything from running and managing a business, through to selling goods or services regularly (for a profit) as a trader or consulting for an organisation on a consultancy basis.
- Instead of being paid a salary or wage by an organisation, a self-employed person earns their income directly through the profits made by their own business or trades.

What type of business can I run self-employed?

There are many opportunities available for those wanting to become self-employed – but your legal responsibilities will differ depending on the type of business you run.

Here are a few options to consider:

- Sole trader – your business will be owned and managed by you alone. This means that all debts and profits would go directly to you.
- Partnership – this type of business would follow the same format as sole trading but would involve two or more people combining their expertise.



Nick Knight spent 26 years in the police. Retirement from policing has given him a new lease of life – thanks to careful forward planning.

- Limited company – a limited company has its own legal rights and obligations. Whether it's registered as private or public, ownership will be divided into shares and split between shareholders – meaning the actual owners may not be involved in running the business.
- Freelance or consultancy – if you worked as a freelancer or a consultant, you'd be using your expertise to work on a casual basis – usually from home, for a range of companies.
- Franchise – these types of businesses are already established and are owned by a franchisor. They can then sell a franchisee the right to use their business model, meaning they're able to manage a tried and tested business with limited start-up costs.
- Social enterprise – these businesses benefit society or the environment, and their profits contribute towards the economy. Examples include cooperatives, credit unions, development trusts, housing associations, and trading arms of charities
- Charities – income earned through these businesses is made through grants and donations, rather than trade. Its purpose is purely charitable, and although charities get tax breaks and reduced business rates, they must show complete transparency.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself before you make your decision

- Do you know what you want to do – and are you qualified?
- Can you afford to be self-employed?
- What financial options are available (e.g. grants, bank loans, investors, crowd funding)?
- Do you have a business plan?
- How will it affect your personal life, work life-balance or other commitments?
- Are you aware of the legalities?
- Do you need to take out liability insurance?
- Does your home have planning permission from your local council to be used as a registered business address?
- Do you need to let your bank mortgage provider know, that your home will be used as a registered office address?

For more information you can explore what local courses are available. It is a big decision so doing your homework is really important.



**The government website has some important information:
www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-if-youre-self-employed**



Homeworking

The pros and cons of working from home

Working from home can be an appealing career move. It eliminates most of the traditional aspects of going to work, like commuting, formal dress codes, while reducing social interaction and standard means of accountability. Depending on your preferred work style and culture priorities, it could either be a beneficial or detrimental thing for you. Here's some of the most common pros and cons of working from home:



Pros

- Work from virtually anywhere
- Enjoy a flexible work schedule
- Enhance your productivity
- Save time and money
- Increase your motivation
- Prioritise your wellbeing
- Gain distance from office politics
- Customise your workspace
- Provides greater work-life balance
- Less commute
- No office distractions or disruptions



Cons

- Increased isolation
- Increased home office costs
- Risk of working too much
- Less visibility
- Less work interaction and socialisation with colleagues
- You may lose motivation

Professional positive exit

For most people leaving the service, finishing with a real sense of pride and contribution is immensely important. By now you will hopefully be in a position where you are looking forward to the next chapter of your life, whatever that might be.

Leaving on a good note is important for lots of reasons, not least of which is professional pride. It is also worth remembering that the people who you work with can become part of your professional network, provide personal references and could even offer you a job further down the line.

As you enter your final months or weeks here are some final considerations:

Legacy

It is true that none of us are irreplaceable however it is satisfying and meaningful to be remembered in a positive way. Use this time to share your experience with colleagues; you will have gained invaluable experience that others will benefit from. What are the things you know that will help others moving forward? This might be in a formal capacity such as coaching or mentoring, or more informally by investing more time in colleagues within your own team or even your successor. By helping others, we help ourselves.

Control what you can control

Accepting you are moving on has been a big part of your decision to leave. There may be parts of your role that you don't necessarily agree with as things may be moving in a different direction and that won't involve you. By all means share your

opinion and experience but accept that it will be others that will continue after you have gone. Don't let any disagreements, personal or organisational, dominate you as you leave, remember your career in its entirety.

Accountability / jeopardy

Some police staff and officers will finish in a role that requires them to perform on-call duties. Whilst these will vary in terms of responsibility and accountability, they will all be disruptive and can intrude on personal and family time. At a time that feels right to you, you should discuss these responsibilities with your line manager/supervisor and explore your options. This could benefit the organisation as well as you, as you can be involved in a handover and training of your replacement, whilst you step away from the extra responsibility and establish a more routine work pattern.

Final hints and tips

You should be given a list of items you must return, such as identity/warrant cards, uniform etc by your HR department. Remember however that all records and emails will, most likely, remain the property of the police. It is a good idea to form a record of all your training courses and qualifications before you leave. You may need them if you are considering future employment. Make sure to check exactly how you should do this.

Leaving do

Both you and your colleagues will want to celebrate your contribution to policing with a 'leaving do'. This is the perfect opportunity to reflect on your achievements, thank colleagues and, in some cases, say goodbye for the last time. Every celebration demonstrates to employees a sense of value and morale is boosted as a result.

There is no model for the perfect leaving do. This is about you so you should remain in control and do what you want to do. It could be a small gathering with your team, something bigger that includes your family, or even a series of different get togethers with friends and colleagues who have been big parts of your career.

No matter how long you have been in the service, policing is a big family, and people will want to share this time with you. Celebrate the memories and enjoy!



Your finances



For those over pensionable age, you have worked hard over the length of your service and as you approach the next chapter of your life it is important that you understand how much income you are likely to receive from your pension. You may be planning to pay off a mortgage, take a long holiday or simply use your pension to pay the bills and enjoy retirement. Either way, it is important, now, that you understand what financial position you are likely to be in.

As everyone's position will be different, the most accurate way to do this is to contact your force's pension provider. Your HR department will help you with this. However, in the meantime here are some frequently asked questions that we hope will assist you as you consider your choices going forward and prepare yourself for life after policing.

What will my pension look like?

Your pension will be individual to you and so it is important that you contact your pension provider, who should be able to provide you with your projections based upon your personal circumstances. There are several different pension providers and to find out which one covers your force, contact your Force HR department who will be able to provide their details.

Contacts for your force's pension administrator can also be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

For officers there is also a police pension calculator available through the gov.uk website, which will provide you with an illustration of your projected pension benefits. This calculator should be used as guidance only, as it only provides estimates and should not be used as a basis for any financial advice.

How will my police pension affect my state pension?

When you reach state pension age you will still be able to receive your state pension in addition to your police pension. The amount of state pension you are entitled to will depend on the national insurance contributions you have made.

To receive the full state pension, you will need to have made the relevant national insurance contributions over a total of 35 years, giving you the maximum of 35 qualifying years. Don't worry if you haven't as you will still receive a proportion of the pension if you have contributed between 10 and 35 qualifying years.

To understand your own state retirement date you can use the [gov.uk state pension age calculator](https://www.gov.uk/state-pension-age-calculator). This will help you understand when you are entitled to claim the state pension, how much you are projected to receive and show any shortfalls in national insurance contributions you may have.

You may still be able to make up the difference through future employment and/or voluntary national insurance contributions. All relevant information and guidance can be found on the government website at [gov.uk/voluntary-national-insurance-contributions](https://www.gov.uk/voluntary-national-insurance-contributions)



There may be some additional government benefits that you are entitled to, but most are means tested so will take account of the income you receive from your pension as well as any savings and investments you may have.

Some people find themselves with additional caring responsibilities as parents or other family members become more elderly. In some circumstances you or family members may qualify for further financial support and benefits that could include:

- Carers Allowance
- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Personal Independence Payments

How do I budget for my pension?

Clearly your personal circumstances will be unique to you. You might be pleasantly surprised at the difference between your current take home pay and your monthly pension payments, for starters you will no longer be paying pension contributions or national insurance!

Once you have got your projection it might be useful to review your personal and/or family incomings and outgoings. A change in lifestyle might be the ideal opportunity to carry out this exercise. Whilst you may no longer have any travel expenses you may find you want to budget for a new hobby, university fees or a long 'bucket list' of experiences.

To assist there is a free budget planning tool available from Money Helper, which is a government approved online advice service provided by the Money and Pensions Service, a body sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions.

What happens if I start work again?

Many people return to work after they have retired from policing. This can be for different reasons; extra financial security, a continued sense of purpose or simply because they feel they are too young to retire. These decisions are, of course personal ones, and may have tax implications too.

Essentially you pay tax on the total income you receive that is over your personal tax allowance. You can find more about your income tax and personal allowance at gov.uk

Your total income could include your police pension, income from savings (remember your personal savings allowance) or investments, earnings from employment or self-employment, and your state pension when you receive it. So, any income you receive in addition to your pension could change your tax position and place you in a different tax banding.

You should always seek appropriate financial advice from one or more advisers and/or your bank to understand your position, the tax implications of further employment/self-employment and ensure you follow HMRC guidance and requirements.

Police staff pensions overview

How much pension you build up in the LGPS is based on your pay. The pension you build up each year is added to your pension pot. If you joined the LGPS before 1 April 2014, you have membership in the final salary scheme. Your final salary benefits are worked out differently.

Your pension

The pension scheme after 2014 is called a career average scheme. 1/49th of your pensionable pay is put into your pension pot every year and builds as income at retirement. The more you earn each year the bigger the contribution will be.

Finding out about your pension

The member's pension account will continue to build up in the same way every year. You can see what you have accrued on your pension statement/portal. You may have to request your pension statement from your provider or log in to your pension portal. Your statement will be updated after April in June/July for the previous tax year. You should also be able to see previous pensions prior to 2014 on your portal/statement.

If you are buying extra pension by paying additional pension contributions or shared cost additional pension contributions, the amount you buy in each year is added to your pension account.

If you join the 50/50 section of the LGPS, you pay half your normal contributions for half the normal pension build-up. Each year you are in the 50/50 section 1/98th of your pay is put into your pension account instead of 1/49th.

How benefits built up before April 2014 are worked out

The LGPS changed from a final salary scheme to a career average scheme on 1 April 2014. If you joined the Scheme before 1 April 2014, you have built up benefits in the final salary scheme.

For membership built up between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2014 you receive a pension of 1/60th of your final pay as a pension for each year that you have paid in, and then have the option to reduce that pension in exchange for a lump sum payment.

For membership before 1 April 2008, you receive a pension of 1/80th of your final pay plus an automatic lump sum of three times your pension.

Your final pay is usually your pensionable pay in the year you leave the scheme. Pay from one of the previous two years can be used if it is higher.

If you have worked part time before 1 April 2014 your pension provider will calculate this for you and this should be reflected on your pension statement. Please visit your LGPS website/portal for more information.

Overview

You can take your LGPS pension at any time from age 55 to 75, as long as you have met the two-year vesting period. You must take your pension by age 75. If your employer agrees, you can even take your pension without leaving your job – this is called flexible retirement.

The Government has announced the earliest age that you can take your pension will increase from age 55 to 57 from 6 April 2028. This will not apply to ill health retirements. Special rules apply if you have to retire because of ill health.



For more information on the police staff pension please visit
www.lgpsmember.org

Your wellbeing

Emotions during a transition

When experiencing any transition, such as a life event, career change or retirement, people can experience a sense of grief and loss. The Elisabeth Kübler-Ross 'five stages of grief' process was originally developed to explain the grieving process of losing a loved one but has been more widely applied to the retirement process, including for professional athletes. It is particularly applicable in policing in relation to retirement which happens within a

set timeframe and that may be beyond the individual's control. There are also those who have to retire early on medical grounds and this model can help explain the range of emotions that you might be experiencing during and after the transition. The five stages include: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. The process is non-linear, meaning that you may go back and forth between the stages before you reach the final stage of acceptance.

The five stages of the grieving process

Kübler-ross grief cycle



How might this look for you in your transition or retirement journey?



By understanding where you are in the grief process and the range of emotions you can experience, this can help normalise those feelings. It can also help you pinpoint the stage of the process you are currently at, knowing that it is a normal human process to any transition or loss and at some point in the not so distance future, you will reach a stage of acceptance where you will be able to move on to your new opportunity and next chapter.

Developing personal resilience during transitions

What is resilience?

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity and transitions or workplace and financial stressors. It means **bouncing back** from difficult experiences and challenges.

Evidence suggests there are a range of factors that contribute to resilience. These are:

- **Cognitive components** - our core beliefs and patterns of thinking
- **Behavioural components** - our (usual) patterns of action
- **Existential components** - our sense of the value of our existence, purpose or meaning in the world

Cognitive elements

Optimism

A key cognitive element is optimism. This can be described as maintaining positive expectancies for future outcomes. An individual's degree of optimism can shift over time or across situations. This is good news as we can practice becoming more optimistic. Through positively re-framing things to 'look on the bright side' or 'find the silver lining' we can have a more positive outlook over time. Maintaining optimism for the future while dealing with challenges in the present can provide the stamina to endure difficult situations. Optimism has been associated with a range of wellbeing benefits including better psychological adjustment during life transitions.

Cognitive flexibility

Cognitive flexibility is our ability to reappraise how we view and understand challenging circumstances. We do this through:

- Acknowledging negative and painful consequences
- Finding meaning and positive outcomes
- Revaluating the value and meaning of the challenging or traumatic event

Reframing our thoughts about a challenging or stressful event cements them into our memories and beliefs allowing us to find a place of acceptance. We can't change our experiences or what has happened to us, but we can change the way we think and respond to these. We should remember these experiences have shaped who we are.

Acceptance and assimilation of a traumatic or challenging experience into our own story helps acknowledge that experiences can provide opportunities for learning and growth. This allows us to find the value and meaning in this situation – the 'lessons learned'.

Active coping skills

Different coping strategies can be useful in different situations and can provide a protective mechanism for our psychological wellbeing. Maladaptive coping such as disengagement, emotional suppression and avoidance can make your mental health worse. Active coping is achieved by striving to create positive statements about yourself or the situation and taking control. Employing proactive strategies by planning and managing tasks can help individuals feel more in control during significant life transitions such as retirement.



Physical health

Often when we have a demanding career, our own physical health and wellbeing can take a back seat. Physical activity, and addressing physical wellbeing is a behavioural coping strategy that can help reduce the impact of stressful or challenging circumstances.

We know physical activity can:

- Improve physical hardiness
- Improve mood
- Increase self-esteem
- Improve cognition and brain function
- Improve emotional regulation and make interpersonal relationships easier

It is helpful to establish a routine of physical exercise and/or activity. This doesn't need to be a long gym session. Doing something you enjoy for a short time can generate positive benefits. Research has shown that a small amount of exercise equivalent to 11 minutes a day or 75 minutes a week can have a big impact on our health outcomes, reducing the risk of early death, heart disease and cancer.

Social support network

Seeking support from others can be another proactive coping mechanism. Many officers and police staff have long lengths of service, establishing strong bonds with colleagues throughout their working life. Engaging with family, friends and the wider community can be critical during work transitions.

Think about your peer networks in policing, how are you going to maintain these peer relationships? Does this work transition present an opportunity to build new networks and social support through hobbies and volunteering activities? What can you do now to foster and maintain the current peer networks you have beyond retirement?

Very few can 'go it alone'; emotional strength can be derived from close relationships with others. Having this 'safety net' can enable a positive transition. Feeling connections can foster strength to face situations, minimises the experience of loss or hopelessness and encourages active coping. One way of fostering connection and developing peer support networks can be by engaging with a resilient role model. Role models are all around us, not just in the workplace. They could be friends or family members or people in our community. You may also want to engage with others who have recently retired. Look for someone who has had similar experiences to you and navigates them well, and model their behaviours and coping strategies. These individuals can also become an important part of your supportive peer network during this transition and beyond.

Personal moral compass

Retirement or transitioning out of policing may provide an opportunity to experience a renewed sense of purpose. Often individuals choose careers that are aligned with their values and sense of purpose. Public sector roles can be seen as vocational and our identity can be closely aligned with our professional persona. Transitioning into retirement or life outside of policing can create an opportunity to reflect on these values and purpose and create a sense of optimism and opportunity for the future. This is a time to reflect on and develop a set of positive core beliefs about yourself and your purpose in the world. Take time to reflect on what a purposeful transition means to you. Maintaining positive core beliefs results in adaptive thinking that encourages resilience.

Altruism (or kindness to others) is another important behavioural component associated with resilience. Altruistic behaviour encourages connectedness with others and gives meaning and purpose in life. There may be things you do now that are altruistic and link with your values and sense of purpose. Perhaps you volunteer to help others in the community, support the local children's football team or help in the local school. There may be other opportunities for volunteering or pro-bono work that you would like to do in the future. Civic duty is something that may have given you a sense of purpose in policing. Now is the time to think about those opportunities to be altruistic and seek opportunities to do the things that you enjoy and foster a new sense of purpose. Make sure you are engaging in activities and goals that give meaning and purpose in your life.



Volunteering

How to find volunteer work

Volunteering is when someone spends unpaid time doing something to benefit others. In other words, a volunteer is a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task and receives no form of monetary reward or payment.

To consider whether volunteering is a good fit for you personally, it's a good idea to think about what interests you, or what are you passionate about and then begin researching volunteering projects either locally in your community or on a wider scale.

This might be the ideal way to fulfil a passion project, something you have always wanted to do, or as a way to build up skills and experience in an area you have never worked in before to help with future employment opportunities. You could help protect the environment, work with animals, or support disadvantaged groups of people. Alternatively, you could get involved with your community and assist with local initiatives and cultural events, such as arts, music, or sports. Always do your research and see what's out there before you settle on one idea as you may find something that better fits with your passion and perhaps provides work experience where you can really add value and help. Choosing a cause you care about and support will go a long way in making your volunteer work journey successful for you.



Preparing a list of your strengths and values is a great way to decide what volunteering route you should take. Not only will it help you figure out what you'd be good at, it'll also give you a comprehensive list of your key strengths that may be relevant in an application. It may be a good idea to consider a skills-based CV when applying for a volunteer role. You will also need to consider what time you can allocate to volunteering so it doesn't interfere with a full time, part time or self-employed career you have. In addition, work-life balance and other family commitments need to be considered. Most local organisations will offer flexible volunteer work and will allow you to take on part-time, evening or night volunteering opportunities. It all comes down to tailoring your search to your personal diary and looking for the projects that fit in with it.

Some organisations might not advertise voluntary programmes, but this doesn't mean you can't get involved. Proactive tactics (like getting in touch with a business directly) could actually persuade an organisation to give you a chance to volunteer – even if they are not offering a formal position.

If the volunteer roles you are looking at are being advertised, you should reach out to the organisation to find out more about the role and they may even remember you, which looks good when they are reviewing your application.

Good questions to find out more about voluntary roles include the following:

- How long will the volunteer initiative last?
- What hours would you like me to do?
- Will my expenses be paid?
- What support and training will be provided?

You can also look at various volunteering opportunities on a number of job boards (Indeed, Monster, CV-Library, Reed, Glassdoor).

National Association of Retired Police Officers

Member Benefits



Exclusive discounts on holidays and breaks



Offers on high street brands through Perkjam



Discounts on products Inc. Whirlpool and new cars



Digital Job Board with Roles that are suited to ex-officers



Access to NARPO's travel and healthcare insurance



Member rates on car and home insurance from Police Mutual



Visit: www.narpo.org
Call: 01924362166
Email: hq@narpo.org

What is NARPO?

NARPO is a UK-based, rank-free association of retired police officers dedicated to improving benefits for all members. We have 105 branches with over 93,000 members throughout England and Wales, making us one of the largest public sector pensioner organisations in the country. Our approach is threefold, as we provide advice and support in life, work and leisure after the police.

Our members

Full membership is open to former police officers who have served in a police force and who have met the minimum requirements that would entitle them to a police pension. Membership can be granted by a branch committee to any person who is not eligible to join the branch as a full

member, which includes widows, widowers, partners and spouses.

Member benefits

NARPO provides advice and assistance on a wide variety of topics including police pensions. There are also free advice services for members on state benefits, IT and taxation. NARPO also works with a range of organisations to provide members with a variety of wellbeing resources. Your local branch may also have a team of welfare representatives who can provide signposting. The NARPO website has an exclusive members section allowing access to the latest information and offers. NARPO HQ is able to take enquiries by phone and email, Monday-Friday.

Appendix A

Motivation and self determination theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) suggests we have three basic needs that underpin our motivations. SDT assumes all individuals have the same three innate psychological needs: competence, relatedness and autonomy. The need for competence is deemed to be satisfied through successful completion of a goal or the mastery of a skill, alongside the ability to effect change. The need for relatedness refers to a desire for acceptance from others and is deemed to be satisfied through the development of social connections and interpersonal relationships. Finally, the need for autonomy is deemed satisfied when an individual feels able to make their own decisions without restriction or pressure from others.

SDT is driven by our innate need for growth and this drives our behaviours. In order to develop a cohesive sense of self, we are driven toward growth and gaining mastery over challenges.

SDT relates to internal sources of autonomous motivation such as gaining independence or knowledge, and is not driven by external factors and goals such as status and money.

In addition to being good for our own health and wellbeing, pursuit of autonomous motivations and purpose in life can lead to positive ripple effects on the people around us.

When thinking about the goals we set ourselves to achieve our future aspirations, it is helpful to think about what need they are satisfying. The fulfilment of these three basic needs are considered essential and necessary for healthy human functioning, regardless of culture or stage of life.



Self-Determination Theory

Humans' three basic needs

1.

Competence

Need to be effective in dealing with environment

2.

Autonomy

Need to control the course of their lives

3.

Relatedness

Need to have close, affectionate relationships with others

Appendix B

Values exercise:

Look at the following and identify the 10 that are most important to you.

accountability, achievement, adaptability, ambition, balance, being liked, being the best, caring, caution, clarity, coaching, commitment, community life, compassion, competence, conflict management, continuous learning, control, courage, creativity, dialogue, ease with uncertainty, efficiency, entrepreneurial nature, environmental awareness, ethics, excellence, fairness, family, finances, forgiveness, friendship, future generations, generosity, health, humility, humour, independence, initiative, integrity, independence, job security, leadership, listening skills, openness, patience, perseverance, personal contentment, personal growth, professional growth, positivity, power, resilience, self-discipline, trust, wisdom.

Think about your 10 chosen values, where you have demonstrated these and how they made you feel.

Value	How did you demonstrate these?	How did it make you feel?

Appendix C

Life Crafting Exercise	
1.	<p>Identify your values and passions</p> <p>Write down your list of identified values</p> <p>Think about what your passions are.</p> <p>What skills would you like to build?</p>
2.	<p>Reflect on your ideal future</p> <p>Think about what you would like your life to look like in the future with no constraints, including personal life, hobbies/leisure time and career/ volunteering. What does that look like and what will you be doing when?</p>
3.	<p>How will you attain those goals?</p> <p>List the goals you need set yourself to achieve this life. Make sure they are SMART goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific – what exactly do you want to achieve? • Measurable – how will you know the goal has been met? • Achievable – how attainable is the goal and is it within your ability to affect the outcome? • Relevant – is the goal aligned with your values and what is important to you? • Timeframe – over what period of time will you achieve this goal? <p>How will you overcome any obstacles you might face in achieving your goals?</p> <p>How will you track your progress towards your goals?</p>
4.	<p>Make a public commitment to your goals</p> <p>Communicate these goals to friends, family and/or colleagues.</p> <p>Write a purpose statement or statements, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your unique qualities or skills aligned to your passions/values • how you will express these qualities or skills • the effect you want to create in retirement/wider world • how you are going to monitor those goals/overcome obstacles. <p>My purpose is that I will use my (unique qualities) _____ through/in/as (role/activities) _____ in order that/to (intention) _____ I. will monitor my progress by _____ .</p>

Appendix D

Common interview questions, and how best to answer them:

“Tell me about yourself.”

This question is one of the most traditional opening questions, partly because your interviewers want to get to know the real you and uncover how you cope in a stressful situation like an interview.

You're being given some freedom in how to answer this as it's an open question. Try to share relevant and specific information, and try not fall into the trap of sharing your whole life story.

Keep your answer short and try not to swerve off topic.

Your answer should be between two and four minutes long, and briefly mention your education, relevant skills, training, and experience.

“What are your weaknesses?”

Use this assessment question to turn your weaknesses in to a strength, or to show that you are working on improving yourself. Don't answer by saying that you have none, as we all have strengths and weaknesses, and one person may perceive what you believe may be a weakness as indeed a strength.

Sample Answer: Michael Cheary, Writer from Reed suggests the following sample answer to this assessment question.

“I used to find it difficult to work on simultaneous projects, preferring to finish on one task before starting another. However, since taking a time management course recently, I've learnt how to manage my

schedule more effectively, making it easier to multi-task when necessary.”

“Why should you get this job?”

This is a huge opportunity for you to really sell you, your skillsets and expertise during the interview. A well-rehearsed and prepared elevator pitch to demonstrate why you want the position and why you are the perfect candidate for the role is advised for this assessment question. It is recommended that use the job description and person specification to help you create this answer. You use these to 'sell' you back to them. The company have created a need so use their words and terminology to sell them back you. You need to position yourself as the perfect person to achieve the objectives they have specified and have the demonstrable skills and experience to deliver against their requirements.

Sample Answer: “From our conversation, you're looking to A' (or 'having a problem with A'). In the past I have demonstrated A, B and C (experience and your main strengths), which have really helped my current employer'.

“What are your salary expectations?”

It is recommended at interview to never discuss or bring up salary to the interviewer in the first instance. However, when researching and preparing for your interview always come with a broad benchmark range in your mind of what you are expecting to earn.

If you have applied for a role speculatively, you may not have not clear salary and package details. Research the Reed, Indeed,

Glassdoor or other websites for more information. Reed has its own salary checker webpage which is a very good place to start, which is reed.co.uk/average-salary.

Also research similar salary packages for individuals in the same profession or industry sector on job advertisements. As mentioned above it's never recommended at the early stages of the interview process to discuss package and salary or to begin negotiations, particularly at telephone, video, assessment centre stage or first stage interview. However, if the potential employer or interviewer brings it up, give your salary range, give a broad (but realistic) answer, for example, "I'm looking for a starting salary somewhere between £25,000 and £30,000".

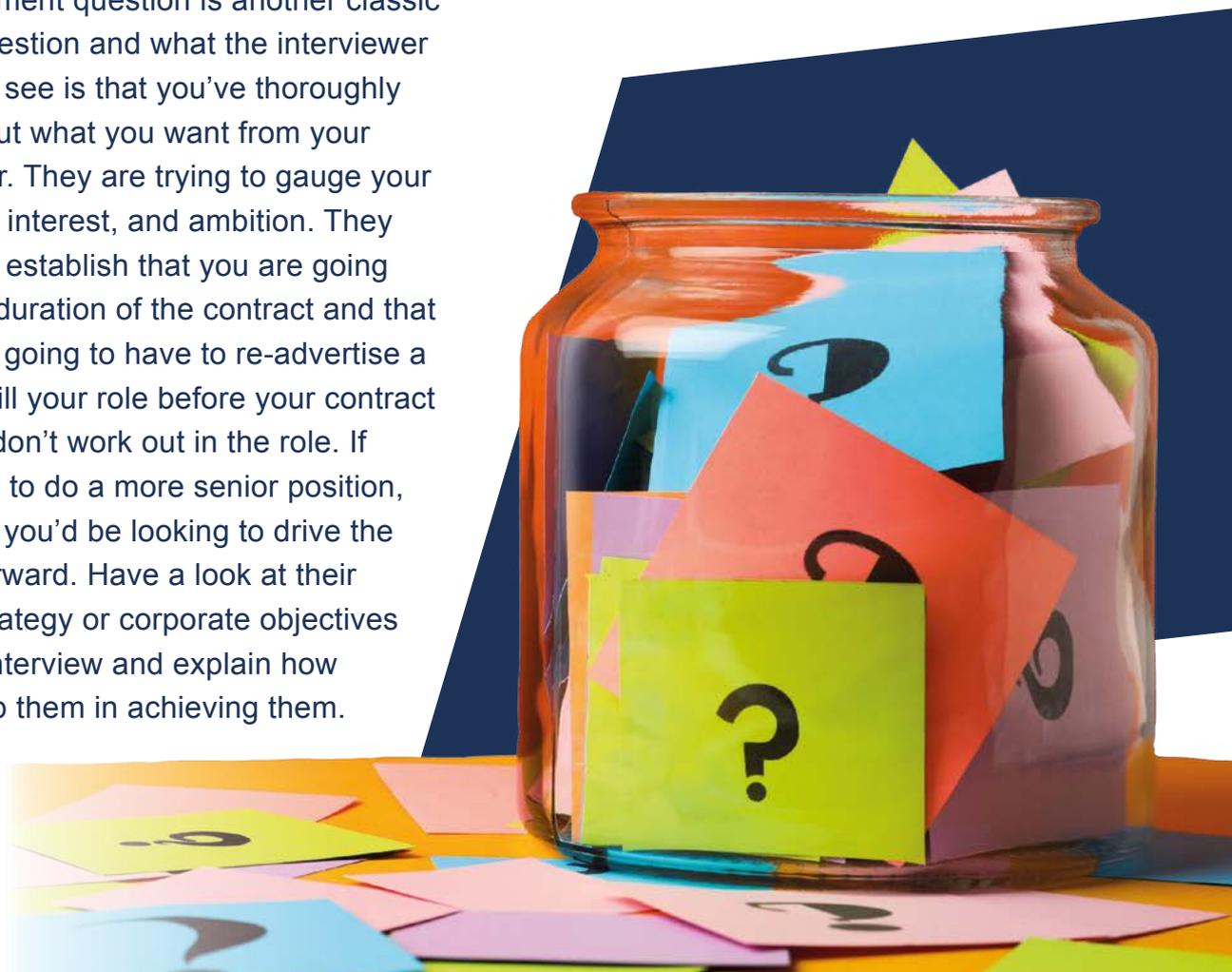
“Where do you see yourself in xx years' time?”

This assessment question is another classic interview question and what the interviewer is looking to see is that you've thoroughly thought about what you want from your future career. They are trying to gauge your enthusiasm, interest, and ambition. They also want to establish that you are going stay for the duration of the contract and that they are not going to have to re-advertise a vacancy to fill your role before your contract ends if you don't work out in the role. If you're going to do a more senior position, explain how you'd be looking to drive the company forward. Have a look at their business strategy or corporate objectives before the interview and explain how you can help them in achieving them.

Be passionate about the industry. Fit your career goals around the organisation's objectives, demonstrate ambition and sell your strengths.

“Why did you leave your previous position?”

This is another classic interview assessment question that is used a lot to establish if you've got a growth plan, or are just looking for new opportunities. It is the interviewer's goal and intention to delve deeper than the explanation cited or not on your application form, or discussed in your CV. It's vital that you remain honest, so if you genuinely had no clear growth plan then saying career progression is a good enough reason to use in this instance. Avoid critiquing your earlier employment and previous employers.



STAR Method examples with sample answers

1. “Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership skills.”

Many employers are looking for people who can lead a team. Leadership is not the same as being a boss, as one inspires, the other rules in the workplace. Utilising the STAR method, the candidate clearly describes what happened, how they managed the situation and the outcome and what they learned from the experience.

Sample answer: Working in a search team, we were once tasked with utilising CAD. We did not have a good grasp of CAD, however we decided to do it anyway, making a few errors along the way. Our sergeant was not satisfied with the results. I decided to take responsibility for our team performance. I admitted that we tried our best, but explained given further training we could improve our skills if we were given another chance to complete the project.

Our sergeant was pleased that we as a team took responsibility and gave us another opportunity to work on the design. We received some training and we managed to complete the requirements to a good standard as a result.

2. “Tell me about a conflict you had with a work colleague and how you resolved it.”

This question has two parts to the answer. Describe the conflict, then demonstrate how you resolved it. As mentioned in the first question, make sure that you clearly explain the outcome.



Sample answer: One of my colleagues once felt that my way of handling a situation was incorrect. He was a more than a little abrupt when he gave me his/her opinion. I remained calm instead of getting angry. I politely asked him/her if they had a better idea. This resulted in good communication on the subject across the whole team. Then as a team it was decided that his/her idea was a better way of dealing with the task in hand and the outcome generated better results.

3. “Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your supervisor.”

Disagreements are extremely common in the workplace. You may be opposed to someone’s approach or their management style, however, that does not mean that there should be a bad atmosphere in the workplace. Describe an experience where you disagreed with your supervisor and explain what happened, then how you handled it and the outcome.

Sample answer: My inspector requested that I did something I felt uncomfortable with. I declined explaining that if I completed the task the way they had suggested there may be consequences both for me and for them. In policing we adhere to a very strong code of ethics. He/she continued to ask me to do this task and even hinted at disciplinary warnings which I was unhappy about. I reported the matter to my chief inspector who took the necessary action. He/she was given further training and I no longer was asked to participate and engage in this activity. My inspector apologised to me, realising after updated training their policy knowledge was out of date.

4. “How do you normally handle issues in the workplace?”

This behavioural question assesses your problem-solving skills. You should try to explain to the interviewer that you can handle challenges well under pressure without panicking. Then describe a situation where you had to employ good problem determination skills and how you handled the situation, what you did and the solutions you provided in the workplace.

Sample answer: I would describe myself as good at solving workplace problems, you have to be, in a policing environment. You encounter challenging situations on a daily basis and even if just for a few moments, I take time to reflect and think before responding to situations with some possible solutions. I enjoy being part of a team and if possible I like to get the views and opinions of the wider team. Being able to share in their experience is invaluable. After we have talked it through, we settle on the most appropriate action to take and implement these solutions as quickly as possible.

5. “Tell me about a time when you had to say no.”

Sometimes as an employee you must demonstrate assertiveness and say no to something that has been asked in the workplace. This assessment question is testing your boundaries and communication skills. This question is therefore testing your assertiveness, ability to draw boundaries, and communication skills.

Sample answer: I was approached by a work colleague who had been given several verbal warnings for coming into the workplace late. He/she asked me if I could provide them with an alibi. In policing you have to pride yourself on integrity and honesty, so I refused and said no.

My colleague was unfortunately disciplined as a result but did get the chance to explain a very challenging situation in their home life. Overall it was the best outcome.

6. “Explain to me a time where you motivated a fellow worker in the workplace.”

The interviewer is trying to uncover if you can work well with others in the workplace and whether you can motivate and bring the best out of your colleagues and co-workers.

Your ability to influence, motivate and encourage others will ensure that you are the right fit for the role.

Sample answer: One of my colleagues explained she was contemplating resigning her position when we were in the middle of a complex policing initiative. She felt she had lost her passion, and felt demotivated. She struggled to get up and come in to work, and needed a fresh challenge. I urged her to consider and reflect on all the achievements she had experienced in her career and shared some resources which I had found to be quite motivational. She continued with the project until it was completed, which was good for the team. Eventually she did leave policing to pursue her passions but she left on a high, full of enthusiasm for the future.



7. “Tell me about a time when you handled a difficult situation.”

The interviewer is trying to uncover how you handle challenges whenever they come up in your role. You need to consider for this example when you encountered a problem and how you dealt with it.

You can also demonstrate how you have grown from that experience and the lessons you learned because of the challenging situation.

Sample answer: In policing you have to face difficult situations on a daily basis. As a sergeant one of the things that historically has been challenging is when team numbers are depleted through sickness or mutual aid. As a result of the absence the rest of the team have to pick up a much higher workload. I sat down with the remaining team and we agreed how we were going to work together, agreeing a strategy to get our jobs done. We all agreed to divide the remaining workload between us both and work overtime until the team was back to full strength.

8. “Have you ever made a bad work decision?”

Bad decisions are easily made, however the best outcome from making a bad decision or making a mistake is learning from this decision so you can put it right should you need to repeat this process again.

How you handle bad decisions determines your value and worth as an employee to the business. Demonstrate that you are accountable for your mistakes, and you will obtain valuable insights from this experience.

Sample answer: On one occasion after a good 121 with one of my team, I forgot to perform a follow up welfare check, which is professional courtesy and which I had promised to do. My colleague was going through a very difficult time with their mental health. I apologised to my colleague for the lack of follow up. I now am so much more organised and I diary reminders to ensure that if I commit to something it gets done.

9. “How do you deal with pressure in the workplace?”

The interviewers want to discover some of your work strategies that help you maintain your demeanour and remain calm and organised in the workplace and deal with stress when under pressure.

Sample answer: From my experience of working in policing, I can work exceptionally well in pressured work environments and am good at remaining calm. Once I volunteered to work on a project which required a quick turnaround. The superintendent later changed the deadline to an even shorter timescale. It meant I had to work overtime and change my work schedule during this period to ensure that I completed the project within the timescales that were set. My line manager was really pleased with my work. During this project I created a new work template which increased productivity by almost double and management are going to roll out this solution across the project management team to save time on future projects.

10. “How do you keep yourself motivated with a repetitive work routine?”

Repetitive jobs can be extremely monotonous and can therefore cause demotivation. This assessment question is asked to explore your motivation strategies and your passion for your position.

Sample answer: In most roles there are elements which can be repetitive. Whenever I start to feel a little bored, I look for new ways to make my role more enjoyable in order to keep my motivation levels up and I take regular breaks in between tasks.

11. “Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an angry customer.”

This is a common question in interviews that is usually asked to determine whether you have people skills. Can you stay professional when handling an angry customer?

Sample answer: As part of my role as police staff in the contact centre we do get a lot of irate calls, often because members of the public are concerned, worried or scared. One older customer approached me with an angry demeanour because they had not had a call back which had been promised. Putting yourself in someone else’s shoes can offer a very different perspective and that is exactly what I did. This member of the public was actually very worried about anti-social behaviour outside of their house, which can be very frightening.

I apologised and spoke to him/her in a very calm manner and explained how busy we had been on this particular day. After talking things through the customer agreed to a call back the following day. We ended the call on really good terms and they actually apologised to me for raising their voice.

12. “Give me an example of a time when you took the lead.”

Managers want employees who can take initiative when things become difficult or when colleagues and managers are tasked to work elsewhere across the business or during unusually busy periods. This is especially important for individuals in supervisory or managerial positions. Give an example of an experience where you volunteered and decided to lead a project to successful completion.

Sample answer: My neighbourhood team were once tasked with getting involved with a head office initiative. One of us was going to have to assume the role of project lead. Nobody wanted to do it, including me. I went home and reflected on it and decided to volunteer to take the lead and I thoroughly enjoyed it. We got some really positive feedback on our contribution to the initiative, guiding the project to its successful completion and achieving impressive results. It was good for me personally too as it made me realise that I actually enjoy leadership positions. It was the push I needed to put in for my sergeant exams.

13. “Tell me about a time when you didn’t achieve a career goal.”

The interviewer wants to know how well you can handle failure or disappointments. You can also mention what you learned and some of the things you may consider approaching in a different manner.

Sample answer: In 2021 I went for a job in another dept which would have been a step up. I didn’t get the job and felt very disappointed afterwards. I told myself that I was not good enough and that I should stay as I was. I shared my feelings with a colleague who I respected, they could not believe that I was thinking so negatively and they reminded me of all of my successes and the impact I had had on the department since I started. That conversation completely changed my thinking. I tried twice more to get to the next level. I didn’t give up. I didn’t beat myself up. I just kept my self-belief, did my preparation and knew I would get there eventually. In the August of that year, I was promoted into a new department. What started out as a disappointing year ended on a real high for me and has taught me a lot about perseverance and resilience.

Appendix E

Employer question samples

Is this post a new or existing one?

This question is a great way to get an idea of what's expected of you, which will hopefully lead to an even bigger discussion and get the employer talking whilst you remain in control of the interview process.

If it's a new post, then ask why it was created and what targets if any you may have as part of the remit of the role. If it is a new role, you can ask questions about current growth in the department or company, which may be a good sign for career progression opportunities. However it is wise to research the company so you should know the answers already to some of your questions.

If it's an existing position, ask the reason for the replacement, for example is the person being promoted to a new role in the company or is the person leaving to pursue an opportunity elsewhere? It may be the case the person is retiring or leaving for another reason. Asking questions is also a great way of demonstrating your interest and maintaining the control and flow of the interview. It is always a good sign if the interview is conversational and maintains an amiable and steady flow of backwards and forwards information between the interviewee and the employer.

How many people are in the team?

This is a great question to understand not just the numbers in the team but to give you an idea of the culture, team dynamic and whether it will suit your approach of working – it'll also give you an idea of who's in your

team in terms of their specific roles, and how they relate to your position. If you've talked about working well in a team in your CV, this can be a great way of demonstrating your capabilities. You can then elaborate and expand by providing examples of your work approach and how you interact with team members.

What would my day-to-day responsibilities be?

This is an excellent question to establish whether the role is right for you.

What does a typical day look like?

This question goes further than the question above as it gets the employer not only discussing the day to day responsibilities but also other details, such as when the department is most busy. This helps you get a better understanding of the duties and whether it sounds like something you may see yourself doing and enjoying. This way if you receive a job offer, you will have no surprises and will be able to consider honestly whether you would like to accept the role.

What promotion opportunities exist in the company?

Asking about career progression opportunities is vital at this juncture, if you are an ambitious candidate looking for opportunities to progress in your career, to ensure this is the right company for you. Listen to the company's long-term growth plans and compare against your own career path plan. It's also a wonderful way to demonstrate your desire to progress within the organisation. Most employers

are looking for employees that exhibit these type of leadership qualities, so showing these attributes early on is always a good sign.

Are there any training and career development opportunities?

This question is also another great one to ask about career development, progression and training opportunities within the business. Job satisfaction, personal development and training can often be just as important as a good salary and benefits package and, if you have a personal development plan, this is the perfect opportunity to discuss where you see your career going, and show how their organisation could fit in with your career goals and aspirations.

What are the company's growth plans?

This question really demonstrates your interest in the company, not just the industry. It will also give the employer the opportunity to explain the company's future growth plans, which is typically an exciting topic for the company to discuss to a potential candidate and it's something that not everyone will do, so it will give

you a chance to stand out against your competition. You can also add in pieces of information that you have researched, something that could help impress the interviewer by demonstrating that you've taken the time to find out a little more about the company prior to your interview.

How would you describe the ideal candidate?

It recommended that you ask this question as early on in the interview as you can, before you answer your own questions, as it will give you valuable information as to what they are looking for in terms of skillset, attributes and previous experience. You can then use these active words that they give to answer your questions to describe your own skills and experience.

When can I expect to hear from you?

This is the perfect way to end an interview. Not only does it show that you're keen, it's also good for your peace of mind. No-one wants to sit by the phone for a week, waiting for it to ring – especially if it turns out it's not going to for a minimum of two weeks because they have other interviews to do.



Whatever stage you're at in your policing career, at Oscar Kilo, we're here for you.

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and support on our website:



www.oscarkilo.org.uk