



**HEDDLU
GWENT
POLICE**

Becoming a Police Officer with Gwent Police

A background image showing two police officers in uniform standing next to a vehicle. The officer in the foreground is wearing a white cap and a high-visibility vest, looking towards the left. The officer in the background is also in uniform, wearing a white cap and a high-visibility vest, and is holding a radio to his mouth. The image is slightly faded and serves as a background for the text.

**Fact Sheet & Frequently
Asked Questions
June 2025**

STANDARD ENTRY ROUTES

Entry route	Minimum Qualification	Training / Probation Duration
Police Constable Entry Programme (PCEP)	<p>Will be tested on maths & English during application to assess ability to work at Level 3</p> <p>Alternatively, may supply evidence of a minimum level 3 qualification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 year probationary period• 7 months initial training• You will receive a Level 5 qualification in Policing upon completion
Professional Policing Degree (PPD)	Degree in Professional Policing Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 year probationary period• 7 months initial training• No requirement to work towards an academic qualification

SPECIALIST ENTRY ROUTES

Entry route	Minimum Qualification	Training / Probation Duration
<p>Police Constable Neighbourhood Programme (PCNP)</p>	<p>Will be tested on maths & English during application to assess ability to work at Level 3</p> <p>Alternatively, may supply evidence of a minimum level 3 qualification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 year probationary period • 7 months initial training • You will receive a Level 5 qualification in Policing upon completion • Direct entry to a neighbourhood policing role after initial training
<p>Detective Constable Entry Programme (DCEP)</p>	<p>Will be tested on maths & English during application to assess ability to work at Level 3</p> <p>Alternatively, may supply evidence of a minimum level 3 qualification</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 year probationary period • 7 months initial training • Achieve accreditation on Professional Investigations Programme (PiP) • Successful completion of National Investigators Exam • You will receive a Level 5 qualification in Policing upon completion

RECRUITMENT PROCESS



ONLINE ASSESSMENT & INTERVIEW

The first step in your path to joining us is to complete the online assessments (where required) and the initial application processes. If successful here, you'll be invited to an interview, usually face-to-face. These can also take place virtually.



ASSESSMENT CENTRE

The assessment centre process consists of a series of assessments designed to evaluate your competencies. These relate directly to the skills required to effectively carry out the role.



VETTING CHECKS

The vetting process involves completing an online form detailing information about you, your family and anyone living at your address. This is used to complete a thorough check, including any criminal convictions.



FITNESS TEST

You'll need to meet the national fitness standards for officers. This involves completing a shuttle run to level 5.4 (bleep test). This means being able to run at around 5.5mph for three-and-a-half minutes. If you don't pass first time, you'll be allowed two further attempts at a later date.



MEDICAL TEST

The medical involves various tests, including hearing, vision, audio, spirometry, reflex and body mass index (BMI). The Home Office sets the BMI standards for officers.



DRUGS & BIOMETRICS TESTS

The drugs test involves taking a hair sample to check whether there are any drugs in your system. Biometrics, meanwhile, involves taking fingerprints and a DNA mouth swab, which will be checked against a national database.



REFERENCE CHECKS

References are required to cover a minimum of five years of continuous employment history. If you have not been in employment for five years, we will look to obtain education or personal references.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

1st Year

PCEP / PPD / PCNP / PDD

Classroom Based Training
(16 weeks)

Operational Awareness*
(4 weeks)

Further Classroom Based
Training
(10 weeks)

Accompanied Patrol*, also
known as
'Tutorship Period' (8 weeks)

Work-Based Learning whilst
working response (14 weeks)

**Shift work during this phase*

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

2nd Year

PCEP

3 deployments in
Neighbourhood, Crime and
Area Support Unit

Work-based learning whilst
working response
University led learning
(protected learning time)

University Assignments

PCNP

Specialist neighbourhood
training.

Work-based learning whilst
working response
University led learning
(protected learning time)

University Assignments

DCEP

Rotation in Criminal
Investigation Department

National Investigators Exam

Professional Investigation
Programme

PPD

Response Policing

AREAS OF PATROL & RESPONSE SHIFT PATTERN



Day	Shift	Number of hours
Monday	0700 - 1700	10 hours
Tuesday	0700 - 1700	10 hours
Wednesday	1500 - 2300	8 hours
Thursday	1500 - 2300	8 hours
Friday	2200 - 0700	9 hours
Saturday	2200 - 0700	9 hours
Sunday	Rest Day	Rest Day
Monday	Rest Day	Rest Day
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest Day
Wednesday	Rest Day	Rest Day

* Please note specialist entry routes shift patterns vary, however there is still the expectation of working a range of shifts.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

APPLICATION & ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

What Qualifications do I need in order to apply?

For the Police Constable Entry Programme (PCEP), Police Constable Neighbourhood Programme (PCNP) and Detective Constable Entry Programme (DCEP) you will require a minimum of a Level 3 qualification (such as two A Levels or a Level 3 BTEC Diploma).

What if I don't have any qualifications?

If you do not have any qualifications up to Level 3, you must also successfully pass an online numeric and verbal reasoning test (maths & English) as part of the online application. This will test your academic ability to Level 3.

What do the online tests consist of?

There are 2 tests that every applicant must complete (regardless of qualifications):

- Situational Judgement Test
- Behavioural Styles Questionnaire

Both tests are contained within the National Sift. You must successfully complete both to continue in the application process.

There are practice sessions online that you can search for, that may help you.

If you successfully complete the online tests but fail the assessment centre, you will not be required to retake these tests again, should you wish to re-apply within a 2 year period.

If I am a serving PCSO or Special Constable, but I don't have a Level 3 qualification, can I still apply?

Yes you can, however you will be required to successfully pass the online numeric and verbal reasoning test (maths & English). Remember, whilst you can apply when in these roles, you will need to resign from this role before you can commence employment as a Police Officer.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

APPLICATION & ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

I don't have a full driving license, can I still apply?

Yes, however you will need to have obtained your full UK manual license by the time you are appointed.

Can I join if I have tattoos?

Tattoos are not a bar to appointment. However, some tattoos could potentially offend members of the public, colleagues, or could bring discredit to the Police Service. For full information please refer to the eligibility section on our website.

Can I join if I have a criminal record?

If you have a criminal record, this doesn't mean you won't be considered. This depends on the nature of your conviction. Please declare any current or previous cautions or convictions, including cautions as a juvenile, on your application form. If you don't, you will fail vetting due to integrity concerns. If you have any doubts about the relevance of a conviction or caution, include the details and let us decide.

Will my financial status affect my application?

Applicants will have their financial status checked. These checks are carried out because police officers/staff have access to privileged information, which may make them vulnerable to corruption.

Applicants with outstanding County Court judgements or who have been registered bankrupt with outstanding debts will be rejected.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

What is the recruitment process?

- An on-line application process which entails several on-line tests and an application form. All tests must be successfully completed before you can complete and submit the application form.
- Assessment Centre
- Force Interview
- Vetting
- Fitness, Medical, Biometric and Drug testing
- Employer References
- Unconditional offer of Appointment

How long does the process take?

Without delays, your recruitment journey can be completed within three to four months.

However, delays may be caused by:

- Candidates failing to complete all parts of the application form and include requested documents
- Limited Assessment Centre date availability
- Candidates failing to train properly to pass the fitness test first time
- Candidates unable to obtain clearance from a doctor
- Difficulties in obtaining vetting clearance (perhaps you have been living abroad or have not provided sufficient information on your vetting form)
- Delays in obtaining references from referees
- A large amount of successful applicants in the pool may mean delays to some candidates being assigned an intake
- Full and accurate answers can help to avoid delays

If I fail at any point during the recruitment process, can I re-sit?

If you fail at any point in the process, the force will notify you. While it is not possible to complete a re-sit, it will be possible to re-apply three months following notification.

Can I decide to withdraw from the recruitment process at any point?

The short answer is yes you can. Policing is an exciting but equally challenging role, which is not for everyone. However, we do ask that all prospective police officers fully consider these challenges and their suitability before submitting their application

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

What will happen should an applicant fail to attend an appointment?

In the case of applicants who fail to attend any appointments during the process, without prior notification and identifying a satisfactory reason, we reserve the right to withdraw them from the process.

What happens during the biometric test appointment?

We will take an ink press of your fingerprints and you will be required to provide a sample of your DNA via a mouth swab for the purposes of a speculative search and for your fingerprints and DNA profile to be retained on the Police Elimination Database (PEDb).

What happens during the drugs test appointment?

A sample of hair from your head will be taken (roughly the same diameter of a pencil) to test for illegal drugs use. Candidate will be required to have a hair length of at least 3cm. If this is not possible, hair will be taken from elsewhere on the body such as armpit or leg.

What happens during the fitness test?

You will be required to undertake a bleep test (shuttle run) to the level 5:4. You will be required to complete a warm-up to level 3, stretch, then start the bleep test starting at 0 reaching level 5:4

If I am successful in the recruitment process, but I fail to achieve the necessary qualification will I have to pay back any costs?

You will receive full support throughout your probationary period, however, should you fail to meet the required standard, you will not be expected to pay back any of the costs incurred.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

TRAINING PERIOD

What training will be provided?

Months 0-12

The first 6/7 months will be classroom based at various locations throughout Gwent.

This is a non-residential course, delivered by police officers, police staff trainers and members of the University (USW). It has been designed in accordance with the National Policing Curriculum to help maximise learning potential both academically and practically and start developing operational policing skills. The content includes all areas required for the role of a Police Constable, including first aid and personal safety training.

At various stages, knowledge and understanding will be assessed through both informal and formal assessment processes, including examinations and practical assessments. Additionally, the behaviour and attitude of all student officers will be continuously assessed for compliance with the police service Code of Ethics and force values.

Following the successful completion of classroom-based training, officers will commence a period of further professional development in an operational environment accompanied by a qualified tutor. Successful completion of this phase will allow student constables to patrol independently.

Year 2:

For the remainder of the probationary period, student officers will continue to work in an operational environment.

Individuals who have joined through the PCEP or PCNP will continue working towards achieving a level 5 qualification in policing, which will involve students successfully completing a combination of reflective workbooks and assignments. To do so, dedicated study time will be provided, however you will be expected to contribute your own personal time to ensure successful completion of studies.

Individuals who have joined through DCEP will be required to successfully complete the National Investigators Examination and meet the Professional Investigation Programme Level 2 assessment criteria.

Successful completion of both practical and academic elements are required to be confirmed in rank at the conclusion of the probationary period.

Optional Year 3:

Students will have an opportunity to apply to undertake a 3rd year to obtain a degree in Professional Policing Practice.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

TRAINING PERIOD

Where will I study?

Face to face delivery will take place on police premises in the Gwent area. Self-study and on-line learning will be carried out remotely.

Will annual leave be permitted during training period?

Our courses along with the academic regime behind them, mean that annual leave will be restricted during the initial 7 months of your probation. Please be mindful that if you have holidays booked or are unable to attend training for any reason on days outside the pre-determined leave periods, it will mean that there is a high probability that you will be unable to join. Extended periods of annual leave cannot be accommodated during this period. On appointment you will be provided with the period(s) of designated annual leave as we are unable to provide intake/leave dates in advance due to changing force requirements.

Will I receive travelling or subsistence costs during training?

No – any travelling costs incurred will be your responsibility.

Will I have to pay for any course materials I need to buy? Books etc.

Students will be provided with learning materials by both the Force and the partner University at no cost.

If I want to purchase a book, which one should I get?

It is recommended that you purchase the latest version of Blackstone's Handbook for Policing Students.

Can I choose what station to work from?

You can be posted anywhere in the Gwent area and will not be able to make a preference of location. Please note that during your service your posting may change in line with operational need.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SALARY

What will I be paid?

PCEP / PCNP / DCEP

Pay Point 1	£29,907	Starting Salary
Pay Point 2	£31,164	Gateway 1 (12 months)
Pay Point 3	£32,427	End of Probation (24 months)

BSc Professional Policing Degree Route

Pay Point 1	£29,907	Starting Salary
Pay Point 2	£31,164	After 12 months
Pay Point 3	£32,427	End of probation (24 months)

Police officer salary rises to £48,231 at start of year 7.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MEDICAL STANDARDS

MEDICAL CONDITION

I have a medical condition, can I still join?

If a medical condition is identified on the Medical Health Questionnaire, OH will contact you for further information and may request a report from your treating specialist to ensure the role is not going to make your condition worse and to ensure you will be fit to undertake all aspects of the role.

Can I become a Police Officer if I wear glasses or contact lenses?

As part of your medical assessment you will need to show capability of the below standards. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, you may wish to take these vision requirements to your optician to see if you would likely pass, prior to applying:

Distance Vision

- 6/12 or better with either your right or left eye, with or without glasses or contact lenses
- 6/6 with both eyes together, with or without glasses or contact lenses
- Corrected low contrast distance visual acuity must be 6/12 or better for a 10% contrast target, binocularly

Near Vision

- 6/9 with both eyes together, with or without glasses or contact lenses
- Near visual acuity is the ability to see clearly objects and fine detail at 36 inches or less

Visual Field

- A view of at least 120 degrees horizontally by 100 degrees vertically
- Free of any large defective areas, particularly in the fovea
- Defects smaller than the physiological blind spot will be acceptable

Colour Vision

- Monochromats are not accepted (complete colour deficiency)
- Mild anomalous trichromats are acceptable in standard policing roles
- Severe anomalous dichromats and trichomats are likely to be accepted for some policing roles but you will need to be aware of the deficiency and be making appropriate adjustments
- The use of colour correcting lenses is not acceptable

Eye Surgery

- Radial keratotomy, arcuate keratotomy or corneal grafts are not acceptable
- Other forms of refractive surgery such as LASIK, LASEK, PRK, ICRS and epiflap are all acceptable provided that six weeks have elapsed since surgery, there are no residual side effects other than a reduction in low light level visual performance and the other eyesight standards are met
- After any eye surgery, you may be asked to provide a report from an optician

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MEDICAL STANDARDS

What is Gwent's accepted BMI range?

Candidates are required to be in the range of 18 – 32 by the time they are appointed. If a BMI is above 32, we also look at body fat percentage. A raised BMI can be as a result of being overweight due to an excess fat storage or a high muscle mass due to training and exercise. If the result is due to a high fat percentage Occupational Health will review again at an appropriate time (i.e. a BMI over 32 will likely be reviewed in 3 months, a BMI of 40 may be 9 months).

RECENT INJURY/DIAGNOSIS

Since being passed as fit in my medical assessment I have suffered an injury / had a new medical diagnosis.

Do I need to inform you about this?

You should advise OH of any changes in your health status at any time and all stages in the recruitment process.

DIABETES

I am an insulin-dependent diabetic. Can I join?

In most cases yes, provided your diabetes is well managed, blood sugar control is satisfactory and most importantly, you are not prone to hypoglycaemic episodes requiring additional assistance.

Restrictions to driving may be required. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

When you attend your medical, bring your blood sugar meter and information from the GP/diabetic clinic regarding overall management of your condition and your latest HbA1C. If you use an app to track levels, you may wish to show us your readings.

OVERDOSE, SELF HARM, ABNORMAL EATING PATTERS, SUBSTANCE OR ALCOHOL ABUSE

I went through a very difficult period years ago where I Will I still be able to join?

Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. You have an obligation to declare all relevant conditions or adverse life effects that could indicate either a medical condition or impaired mental resilience.

Overdoses, self-harming, abnormal eating patterns, longer absences from work, mood swings, behavioural issues and excessive alcohol or substance use, past or present, should all be declared.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MEDICAL STANDARDS

MENTAL HEALTH

I am taking antidepressants for depression. Would this affect my application?

Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. The severity is reflected by the type and strength of antidepressant and the duration of treatment, in addition to other factors.

We take into consideration guidance from the Home Office (National Recruitment Standards – Medical Standards for Police Recruitment), which generally advises against accepting recruits whilst they are still being treated with antidepressants and for a period after stopping them. We recognise that this is guidance, but guidance holds a particular status in law.

The main goal of the assessment is to determine your mental resilience and the probability of further episodes of impaired mental health. Police work can be psychologically and emotionally demanding and good mental resilience and emotional stability are paramount.

You must **never** stop taking medications in order to join the police.

AUTISM

I have / I think I have autism. Can I join the police?

You may still be able to join but might require reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act. It would be very helpful to see the report from when you had your diagnostic assessment. Such reports often come with a list of recommended adjustments.

If you believe you may be on the autistic spectrum you should undergo an assessment before you apply.

Whilst reasonable adjustments will be considered you should be able to effectively interact with members of the public and be able to take an empathetic approach. These are intrinsic qualities of the role of police officer.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MEDICAL STANDARDS

SKIN CONDITIONS

I have a skin condition. Can I join?

The assessment by Occupational Health is made on a case-by-case basis. In most cases you should be able to join, but we would expect that the skin condition is either mild or very well controlled and is unlikely to interfere with your role.

Further information may be required from your skin specialist and we would gain your consent to write to them if you do not have any recent reports.

HEART

I have previously had heart surgery. Can I join the police?

This would depend on the underlying heart condition for which you had surgery. You may be absolutely fine however, in some cases, there is the possibility of you needing further surgery at some point. We would advise you try to find out as much as possible about your operation and the condition and try to obtain copies of any clinic letters. In some cases, a new cardiology assessment may be required.

The 2 key questions are; whether you can safely undertake strenuous physical exercises and what is the long-term prognosis of your heart condition.

Any medical condition which increases your risk of health problems later in life and early ill health retirement may require exclusion from the ill-health benefits component (the insurance component) of the Police Pension scheme.

HEARING

I have really poor hearing in 1 / 2 ears / I wear hearing aids. Can I still join the police?

In many cases people with hearing impairments will be able to join as long as they can do the role safely. Occupational Health will need a copy of your most recent hearing assessment to compare against the Recruitment Medical Standards. They may also need to refer you for a functional hearing assessment if you still do not meet the standards.

You will undergo a practical work-based scenario (trade test) to assess the impact of your impairment on communication. The test is based around both verbal and radio communication in a realistic work setting.

Modern digital hearing aids have proven very effective in this respect. Sometimes a newer generation hearing aid may be required.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MEDICAL STANDARDS

If you have hearing problems, you may wish to take these hearing requirements to your audiologist to see if you would likely pass, prior to applying:

Frequencies used are;

0.5, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 kHz for the low frequencies (HSE CAT 1 acceptable, CAT 2 needs further assessment, CAT 3 or unilateral Hearing loss to be referred to the FMA)

3, 4, 6 kHz for high frequencies – as a baseline for future assessment of hearing.