

FACT SHEET & FAQs

Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA)

- For candidates who have a minimum Level 3 qualification (two A Levels **or** a Level 3 BTEC) or pass the Verbal Reasoning & Calculation Test as part of their online application
- Three-year probationary period
- You will be working towards obtaining a BSc (Hons) Degree in Professional Policing Practice, please make sure you can fully commit to the busy schedule of work-related training in addition to completing University led learning

Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP)

- For candidates who hold a minimum level 6 degree in any subject
- Two-year probationary period
- You will be working towards a Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice

Professional Policing Degree

- For candidates who have already obtained a degree in 'Professional Policing Practice'
- Two-year probationary period

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

1st Year (PCDA/DHEP)

- Classroom Based Training (26 weeks)
- Accompanied Patrol, also known as 'Tutorship Period' (12 weeks) Probationers will be required to work nights during this phase
- Work-based Learning (14 weeks)

2nd Year (PCDA/DHEP)

- 3 deployments in Neighbourhood, Crime and Area Support Unit (provides individuals experience in specialist areas of the force, whilst also enabling the force to identify talent)
- Work-based learning
- University led learning (23 days protected learning time)
- University Assignments
- Occupational Competency Assessments

3rd Year (PCDA)

- One protracted deployment in either Neighbourhood, Crime or Area Support Unit
- Work-based learning
- University led learning (23 days protected learning time)
- Work related project in addition to University Assignments
- Occupational Competency Assessments

Individuals joining via the DHEP or PCDA route will be expected to contribute additional hours of their own time (personal learning) each year to ensure successful completion of studies

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE – PROFESSIONAL POLICING DEGREE

1st Year Professional Policing Degree

- Classroom Based Training (12 weeks)
- Accompanied Patrol Phase (12 weeks)

2nd Year Professional Policing Degree

- 3 deployments in Neighbourhood, Crime and Area Support Unit
- Occupational Competency Assessments

**Am I eligible?**

Our Eligibility criteria is detailed in full on our website. However, if you have any questions which we have not answered, please feel free to contact us directly.

What is the recruitment process?

1. 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 the application form.
2. Assessment Centre
3. Force Interview
4. Vetting
5. Fitness, Medical, Biometric and Drug testing
6. Employer References
7. 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

What Qualifications do I need in order to apply?

For the Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP) you will require a minimum Level 6 qualification and for the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) 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. 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), these are a Situational Judgement test and a Behavioural Style Questionnaire. Both of these must be passed in order to continue in the application process.

If you do not have a Level 3 qualification or above you must also successfully pass a psychometric test. This will test your academic ability to Level 3.

There are practise sessions online that you can google 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.

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 the eligibility requirements for the Apprenticeship route will still apply.

**If I have a disability, can I still apply?**

Gwent Police welcomes applications from people with disabilities.

If you consider yourself to have a disability, please inform us of the type of adjustments you might need to assist you in participating in the recruitment and selection process. Gwent Police will try to make the reasonable adjustments required where practicable.

For candidates with Dyslexia, we will require a valid diagnostic report which details the recommended reasonable adjustments.

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 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 trichromats 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

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.

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

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

What is Gwent's accepted BMI range?

Candidates are required to be in the range of 18 – 30 by the time they are appointed. If a BMI is above 30, 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 of 32 will likely be reviewed in 3 months, a BMI of 40 may be 9 months).

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 within 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

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 finger prints 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 to the level 5:4.

What training will be provided?

Months 0-6:

The first 6 months will be classroom based at various locations throughout Gwent. In addition, there will be a requirement to attend the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) Campus in Swansea.

This is a non-residential course, delivered by police officers, police staff trainers and members of the University (UWTSD). 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.

Months 6-12:

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 2/3:

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

Individuals who have joined through the apprenticeship will continue working towards achieving a BSc (Hons) Degree in Professional Policing Practice, whilst Degree holder student constables will be working towards achieving a Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice. Both entry routes will require student officers to successfully complete a combination of reflective workbooks and assignments. To do so, dedicated study time will be provided. However, there is an expectation that Individuals joining via the DHEP or PCDA route will be expected to contribute approximately 280 hours of their own time (personal learning) each year to ensure successful completion of studies.

Students on both programmes will also be assessed for competency in a number of key areas throughout the duration of their probationary period.

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

How long will I be on probation for?

- As a student enrolled on the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeships (PCDA) you will have a 3 year probationary period.
- As a Degree Holder you will have a 2 year probationary period

So how is one shorter than the other?

This is due to the variance in the academic requirements.

Will I be given time to complete the academic elements of the qualification?

You will be given 23 hours protected learning time per year to study however there is a high level of commitment required to commit some of your academic studies outside of work in your personal time. In order to successfully complete your studies it is anticipated candidates need to contribute approximately 280 hours of their own time. The Force and University have calculated the amount of time required for you to complete all elements of the qualification and this will be rostered into your shift pattern.

Where will I study?

Face to face delivery will take place on police premises in the Gwent area and at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) Campus in Swansea. Self-study and on-line learning will be carried out remotely.

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 work Part Time as a Police Officer?

Flexible and Part-time working is available once you have completed the first 38 weeks of training. Please note, this will result in your probationary period and learning programme being extended.

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.

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.

Will annual leave be permitted during training period?

Our PCDA and DHEP courses along with the academic regime behind them, mean that annual leave will be restricted during the initial 6 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.

What will I be paid?

PCDA (Police Constable Degree Apprentice)

Pay Point 0	£21,402	Starting salary
Pay Point 1	£24,780	Gateway 1 (12 months)
Pay Point 2	£25,902	Gateway 2 (2 years)
Pay Point 3	£27,030	End of probation (3 years)

DHEP (Degree Holder Entry Program)

Pay Point 0	£21,402	Starting salary
Pay Point 1	£24,780	Gateway 1 (12 months)
Pay Point 3	£27,030	End of probation (2 years)

The salary ranges of a constable rises to £41,130 per annum

Common Questions Asked of Occupational Health (OH):

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.

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.

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.

Epilepsy

I have epilepsy but have not had a seizure for 2 years. The DVLA is happy for me to drive a car. Can I join?

As long as your condition is stable, well-controlled and you have been seizure-free for at least 12 months, having epilepsy will not be a factor. However, your condition may require certain restrictions (which technically may also be considered as adjustments under the Equality Act 2010).

Police standards for driving can be higher than the DVLA, particularly for the higher levels of vocational driving. If the DVLA have allowed you to drive this will be under the Group 1 standard of the DVLA guidance (this means yearly risk of you having a seizure is assessed as no more than 20%) then you would be able to commute to and from work and potentially may be able to undertake some limited driving, if your condition is very well controlled. This is at the discretion of the Force Medical Adviser.

For any other kind of vocational driving (Level 2 and higher) the expectation would be that the annual risk of you suffering a seizure is no more than 2%. This is usually only the case if you have been off medications for ten years or more without suffering any further seizures.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Overdose, Self Harm, abnormal eating patterns, 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.

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.

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.