APPLICATION GUIDANCE

MANY ROUTES IN
ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE
Protecting People and Fighting Crime
Together

WHO CAN APPLY

Age requirement
Candidates can apply at age 17, but will need to be 18 before they can sit the Online Assessment Centre (OAC), which is the stage after the application form. There is no upper age limit for appointment, but the compulsory age of retirement is 60 years.

Previous applications
Previous applicants can re-apply six months after receiving their letter of rejection from a police force. Applicants can only apply directly to one police force at a time.

Nationality
To be eligible for appointment, you must be a British citizen or a citizen of a country that is a member of the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland. Commonwealth citizens and foreign nationals are also eligible but only if they are resident in the UK free of restrictions.

If you are a Commonwealth citizen or other foreign national, you must provide proof that you have no restrictions on your stay in the UK. You should therefore send a copy of your passport showing that your stay is free of restrictions.

Qualifications

Specific educational qualifications are required for the different routes we offer. Please see the ‘Routes Into Policing’ section which details the different qualifications required for the different routes we have available.

Tattoos
Tattoos which are offensive, garish, prominent or numerous are not acceptable. Please supply photos and measurements of any tattoos along with your application. They will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Medical

You must be in good health and your BMI must be between 18 and 30.

We no longer have a standard for uncorrected vision, as long as your vision with glasses is:

- 6/6 or better binocularly
- 6/12 or better in either left or right eye

You must have good fitness levels: you need to achieve 5.4 on a bleep test.

Following success at the assessment centre and interview, candidates will be provided with a work health questionnaire that must be completed and sent directly to the Occupational Health Department. A full medical history must be disclosed as failure to do so may result in your application being rejected. Please complete the questionnaire carefully and thoroughly – if in doubt, disclose it.

Financial situations

If you are struggling with debt, you may still be able to apply, you just need to supply us with evidence of your ability to manage your debts successfully. However, if you are an undischarged bankrupt, or you have been declared bankrupt within the past three years you are automatically ineligible. Any outstanding county court judgements will be assessed by the vetting team on a case-by -case basis.

Cautions or convictions

If you have had any previous cautions or convictions please detail these on your application form. Each application will be judged on a case-by-case basis; however it is essential that you disclose all previous cautions or convictions, regardless of whether you believe they are relevant.

Driving licence

Applicants can apply without holding a driving licence, but will need to, ideally, have a full manual driving licence by the end of their 22 week classroom based training, but **must** have this by the end of their 15 week tutorship.

Business interests

Unless the Chief Officer decides otherwise, you will not normally be eligible for appointment as a police officer, if you have any of the following business interests:

- You hold office or e mployment for higher gain (other than a police officer) or you carry on any business.
- Your spouse or any other relative living with you keeps a shop or similar in Bedfordshire.
- You, your spouse, or any relative living with you holds or has financial interest in any license or permit relating to liquor licensing, refreshment house, or betting and gaming or the regulation of places of entertainment in Bedfordshire.

Reasonable adjustments

We welcome applications from candidates with disabilities and will give full consideration to reasonable adjustments required either throughout the recruitment and selection process and, if successful, in the role of Police Constable.

FIND OUT HOW
Adaptable
YOU ARE

START YOUR CAREER IN POLICING
DISCOVER YOUR POTENTIAL

ENTRY ROUTES AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

NEW ROUTES INTO POLICING

Bedfordshire Police, in partnership with Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), offer two entry routes for the role of police constable which are delivered through a combination of practical front line duties and academic work.

Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA)

PCDA is a three-year apprenticeship resulting in a Degree in Professional Policing Practice. Candidates will undertake a comprehensive practice-based course where students will be assessed against the national assessment criteria to demonstrate that they can achieve Independent Patrol status (IPS) and full operational competence (FOC).

Candidates must have GCSEs, or equivalent, at grade C (4 in the new grading system) or above in Maths and English AND A levels A-C or the equivalent (BTEC's etc.) amounting to 64+ UCAS points. If you do not have these qualifications please see below the different options to join this route.

A candidate with 64 or more UCAS points, who passes the initial shortlisting and the ARU eligibility criteria will proceed to the SEARCH assessment centre.

If a candidate passes the initial recruitment shortlisting and has between 32 and 64 UCAS points, they will have to pass an online academic aptitude test followed by an admissions interview. The interview board will consist of representatives from the force and ARU. Successful candidates will proceed to the SEARCH assessment centre.

For candidates that don’t have two A levels at grades A-C or equivalent, but have GCSEs and two years relevant experience in the below occupations will be asked to complete an online academic assessment and a further discussion with ARU.

To follow the above route you will need two years or more experience in the following occupations:

- Armed forces
- Nursing/ care sector
- Social work
- Youth work
- Charity work
- Teaching
- Experience in the justice and law enforcement sectors
- Police staff - particularly in custody, public contact, demand hub, enquiry office roles, investigative roles
- PCSO or special constable who has gained independent status for a minimum of two years
- Criminal justice sector/CPS/ courts
- Border force
- Prison service
- Relevant local authority experience which has involved close and sustained work with police
- Experience of emergency services e.g. ambulance or fire service
- Experience of cyber/digital and financial fraud/crimes
- Roles that focus on promotion of equality of opportunity and inclusion

Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP)

DHEP is a two-year entry programme which operates as a conversion programme to the profession of policing, resulting in a Level 6 graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice. Candidates will undertake a comprehensive practice based programme of learning and development where they will be assessed against the national assessment criteria to demonstrate that can achieve independent patrol status (IPS) and full operational competence (FOC).

Applicants must hold a degree or equivalent to enrol on this programme.

Accelerated Detective Constable Programme

This is a two-year route which offers candidates the opportunity to work towards being a detective constable at an accelerated rate. All candidates will need to complete the relevant training and assessments along the way to ensure they meet the standards required by the force.

Successful applicants will complete initial classroom training and go on to work as a police officer across the county to gain valuable experience in both the force's response and community teams. Within the first year they will take the National Investigators Exam (NIE) and be given study material for this. After a year, if the candidate has demonstrated that they meet the requirements expected, they will be placed into an investigative team. From there they will complete an intensive Trainee Investigator (TI) training programme to obtain the qualification needed to become a detective. Once this has been obtained sucessful candiates will be a fully qualified detective.

You do not require any specific educational qualifications or previous policing experience for this programme, but you do need to be driven and show dedication throughout this programme.

"As a detective I get to investigate some of the most serious crimes and work with victims impacted by them.

"During my time with the force I have worked with various departments like Child Protection, Serious and Organised Crime and Guns and Gangs, as a build my knowledge and experience."

JEEVAN SAHOTA, STUDENT DETECTIVE CONSTABLE

BEFORE STARTING YOUR APPLICATION

In the application form, we will be looking for evidence from your past actions, behaviors and experiences to see if you've got what it takes to work for us.

When filling out the form there is one thing that you need to remember – we don't know you. Make your talents shine through by writing clear answers backed up with examples.

For example, saying that you're 'hard working' or 'a good communicator' isn't enough. Instead tell us a structured story and provide details on the specific competence that relates to the question. Please try and keep to one example for each competency and make sure you provide lots of in-depth detail.

We advise using spell check on your computer or asking someone to read your application before submitting. We suggest drafting your submission on a word-processing package such as MS Office word and copy and pasting it into the application form.

"I worked in the leisure industry as a lifeguard and joined the police in 2005 as a PCSO, just before I was 19 years old. I then joined the police constable role a few years later.

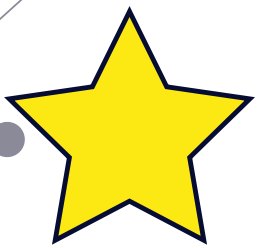
"My supervisor and peers recognised I had a talent for investigations – my ability to think outside the box and being incredibly relentless in achieving results for the victims and bringing offenders to justice. So I soon took the detective career pathway. I also wanted to use this opportunity to specialise in the intelligence world of policing."

Lucy, Detective Constable

APPLICATION TIPS

- Check your spelling and grammar and ensure it is to a high standard before submitting you application. Use a spell checker to help you spot any spelling or grammar mistakes
- Provide context for your example. Write a brief opening paragraph so we can understand your example better
- Does your example flow? Does it have a beginning, middle and end? It may be difficult for the assessor to understand your application if your example does not follow a logical format
- Does your example make sense? Does it have enough context? Remember that the assessor does not know you or the background to your examples. You need to provide enough context and structure your example
- Ask a friend for help. Ask someone to read through your example to spot any mistakes and to check if it makes sense and has enough context
- Use the word count as a target to reach. Submitting a few words or lines will not give enough information we need to learn more about you

Use the acronym **S.T.A.R** to structure your story and provide one specific example for each of the questions work:



Situation - set up the situation
Task - what do you need to do to resolve it
Action - what actions did you take
Result - what did the steps above achieve

WHAT IS GOOD EVIDENCE?

When completing the application keep in mind the following:

- Give **specific** examples explaining ‘how’ not ‘what’
- Your evidence should relate to the competency being assessed. Read and understand the competency before providing your example
- Do not use multiple examples within one answer. We will ask four competency based questions and want you to use a different example for each
- Avoid being vague or ambiguous
- It is important to describe what part **you** played in the example you are providing
- If you give a statement, for example; ‘it is important that we engage the community’, your evidence should be able to support that statement; how are you engaging with the community?
- Demonstrate your awareness of the various factors that need to be taken into account during the situation you’re writing about

When writing about the results and outcomes remember to:

- Give clear examples
- Supply any facts or statistics that strengthen your answer
- Make sure you give a conclusion to your example, whether the outcome was good or bad
- Consider what you may do different next time if the outcome was not positive

Remember to avoid jargon, words and phrases which are (or can be construed as) misleading or ambiguous.

Use the word count as a target to reach. One line answers will not be enough to showcase your skills and reasons why you would make a good police officer.

HASEEB BENSHARIF

STUDENT OFFICER

Being a police officer has always been a dream job for me. A few of my family members are police officers and hearing about what type of jobs they attend really opened my eyes to policing. I have always wanted a job where every day is different and the officer role perfectly demonstrates this. I am yet to have a day where it is the same as the day before.

Being part of a team like this is really enjoyable because I can talk to others about my job and ask for advice. My team support me all the time.

During my tutorship my tutor, PC Wilshere, supported me throughout. The first four months were tough as I was adjusting to being a police officer and seeing things I haven't seen before, especially coming from my previous job in customer service.

My tutor supported me by always being there if I needed her and was ready to step in to help.

She also provided advice about how I handled a situation and gave guidance on what I could have done differently. This had a really positive impact because it can be daunting starting a career like this but my tutor made the transition very easy.

Once I gain my NVQ in policing and have passed my two-year probation I want to specialise with BOSON, which is our guns and gangs unit and specialises in disrupting gang activity.

POLICE OFFICER COMPETENCIES

Serving the public

Demonstrates a real belief in public service, focusing on what matters to the public and will best serve their interests. Understands the expectations, changing needs and concerns of different communities, and strives to address them. Builds public confidence by talking with people in local communities to explore their viewpoints and break down barriers between them and the police. Understands the impact and benefits of policing for different communities, and identifies the best way to deliver services to them. Works in partnership with other agencies to deliver the best possible overall service to the public.

Openness to change

Positive about change, adapting rapidly to different ways of working and putting effort into making them work. Flexible and open to alternative approaches to solving problems. Finds better, more cost-effective ways to do things, making suggestions for change and putting forward ideas for improvement. Takes an innovative and creative approach to solving problems.

Service delivery

Understands the organisation's objectives and priorities, and how your own work fits into these. Plans and organises tasks effectively, taking a structured and methodical approach to achieving outcomes. Manages multiple tasks effectively by thinking things through in advance, prioritising and managing time well. Focuses on the outcomes to be achieved, working quickly and accurately and seeking guidance when appropriate.

Decision making

Gathers, verifies and assesses all appropriate and available information to gain an accurate understanding of situations. Considers a range of possible options before making clear, timely, justifiable decisions. Reviews decisions in the light of new information and changing circumstances. Balances risks, costs and benefits, thinking about the wider impact of decisions. Exercises discretion and applies professional judgement, ensuring actions and decisions are proportionate and in the public interest.

Professionalism

Acts with integrity, in line with the values and ethical standards of the Police Service. Takes ownership for resolving problems, demonstrating courage and resilience in dealing with difficult and potentially volatile situations. Acts on own initiative to address issues, showing a strong work ethic and demonstrating extra effort when required. Upholds professional standards, acting honestly and ethically, and challenges unprofessional conduct or discriminatory behaviour. Asks for and acts on feedback, learning from experience and developing own professional skills and knowledge. Remains calm and professional under pressure, defusing conflict and being prepared to step forward and take control when required.

Working with others

Works co-operatively with others to get things done, willingly giving help and support to colleagues. Is approachable, developing positive working relationships. Explains things well, focusing on the key points and talking to people using language they understand. Listens carefully and asks questions to clarify understanding, expressing own views positively and constructively. Persuades people by stressing the benefits of a particular approach, keeps them informed of progress and manages their expectations. Is courteous, polite and considerate, showing empathy and compassion. Deals with people as individuals and addresses their specific needs and concerns. Treats people with respect and dignity, dealing with them fairly and without prejudice regardless of their background or circumstances.

The selection process is designed to test the above core competencies as deemed suitable for the role of a police officer, which is constantly assessed through the full assessment process.

The competencies as summarised are:

- Decision Making
- Openness to Change
- Service Delivery
- Professionalism
- Serving the Public
- Working with Others

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

Question 1 - Professionalism

Please describe a specific occasion when you intervened to take control of a situation and why was it necessary to intervene.

As a police officer you will find yourself intervening in difficult situations where it is necessary to take control in order to prevent the matter escalating. With this in mind, think of an example along the lines off:

- Dealing with an angry customer at work
- Intervening in a heated argument between family members
- Dealing with an intoxicated person on a night out

Now think about about why it was necessary to intervene:

- Were you or others at risk?
- Would damage have been caused to property?
- Were you in a position of responsibility?
- What may have happened if you had not intervened?

What did you do to take control of the situation?

- Did you use your position of authority?
- Did you use your communication skills to calm the situation?
- Did you separate the involved parties?
- Did you ask for support and provide instructions or guidance?
- Did you listen and show empathy towards others?

What did you consider when intervening?

- The safety of yourself and/or others
- Financial loss and impact on business
- Your training/experience and position
- The best and worst possible outcome

What was particularly good or effective about how you intervened to take control of the situation?

- Your communication skills
- Creating distance between the people involved
- Your ability to problem solve and come up with a resolution

What difficulties did you experience and how did you overcome them?

- Was there a language barrier?
- Was it difficult to make your voice heard?
- Was the aggressor bigger than you?
- Was it hard to communicate due to intoxication?
- Were there environmental factors that made it difficult?

Question 2 - Working with others

Please describe a specific occasion when you have encouraged a person to view an issue more positively. Why was it necessary to encourage the person to view the issue more positively?

As a police officer you will support vulnerable people who have found themselves in difficult situations. With this in mind, think of a occasion along the lines of:

- You had to support a friend through a break up
- You had to support a colleague through a difficult period at work
- You may have helped someone struggling at college/university

Why was it necessary to encourage the person to view the issue more positively?

- Would they be at risk of losing their job?
- Would they be at risk of failing their course or missing a deadline?
- Was their mental health at risk?
- What was the potential outcome had you not encouraged this person?

What did you consider when encouraging the person to view the issue more positively?

- The reason for their negative outlook
- Their previous experiences
- Your relationship with the person
- Whether your view was correct

What was particularly good or effective about how you encouraged the person to view the issue more positively?

- Your empathetic approach
- Your communication style
- Your body language
- Sharing your own experiences
- Your ability to put someone at ease
- Your understanding of their views

What difficulties did you experience and how did you overcome them?

- Was the person responsive to your intervention?
- Was there a language barrier?
- Were there any external complications like others getting involved?

Question 3 - Decision Making

Please describe a specific occasion when you considered a number of options before making a decision.

Why was it necessary to consider a number of options before making the decision? Why was it necessary to intervene in the situation?

As a police officer you will find yourself in situations where you have to make an important decision which can impact the lifes of many. It is important that you avoid making rash decisions and consider all of your options. To help answer this question, think about situations like:

- Choosing what college or university to attend
- Choosing a new career path

- Choosing a new car
- Choosing a new house to live in
- Deciding where to send your children to school

Why was it necessary to consider a number of options before making a decision?

- There would be a considerable financial costs
- This decision would impact your family
- This decision would impact your future
- Each decision would have a different outcome

What did you consider when identifying the options?

- The potential outcome of each decision
- The information available regarding each option
- What impact the options would have on others?
- What options were not available and why?

What was particularly good or effective about how you identified the options and made the decision?

- Did you speak to any professionals?
- Did you research the different outcomes and impacts?
- Did you seek advice from family and friends?

What difficulties did you experience and how did you overcome them?

- Did others disagree with your choice?
- Were others affected by your choice?
- Did the available options change?

Question 4 - Service delivery

Please describe a specific occasion when you have had to manage your time effectively in order to complete a task? Why did you have to manage your time in order to complete the task?

As a police officer you will need to balance your daily duties, case files, victim engagement and crime reports all within set deadlines. With this in mind think of a time:

- You've had to manage your time effectively to complete several assignments at college or university
- During a busy period at work when you've had to be efficient in your time management to get everything done

How did you manage your time effectively in order to complete the task?

- Did you break down larger tasks into smaller ones?
- Did you delegate smaller tasks to a team?
- Did you assign time parameters to each task?

What did you consider to make sure you completed the task?

- Setting realist time parameters
- The skills and experience of your team
- Your own skills and experience
- Any external factors which could effect your deadline

What was particularly good or effective about how you managed your time?

- Did you take the lead and allocate duties?
- Did you create a work schedule to help you keep onto of all your tasks?

- Did your previous experiences help?
- Did you use or establish best practice?
- Did you utilise technology?

What difficulties did you experience and how did you overcome them?

- Resistance from others
- Not understanding the task
- Unrealistic time restraints
- The impact on other tasks

Question 5 - Tell us why you want to become a police officer (50 words)

- Do you want an exciting and dynamic job?
- Do you want to help others?
- Do you want a rewarding career with a variety of roles?
- Do you have family in the police service?

Question 6 - Tell us why you have applied to Bedfordshire police? (35 words)

- Do you know Bedfordshire well?
- Have you researched our performance figures?
- Have we been recommended by a friend, colleague or family member?
- Did our inclusive approach to diversity appeal to you?

Question 7 - Tell us, in some detail, what tasks you expect to undertake as a police officer? (70 words)

- Are you aware of the many tasks and roles that police officers carry out?
- Are you aware of the dynamic and demanding nature of policing?
- What else do police officers do other than patrol, take statements and arrest suspects?

Question 8 - Tell us what effect you expect being a police officer will have on your social and home life (45 words)

- Are you aware of the unexpected nature of policing?
- Will shift work affect your relationships or personal life?
- Will you lose friends?
- Will your hobbies suffer?

Question 9 - What preparation have you undertaken before making this application to ensure you know what to expect and prepare you for the role of police officer? (35 words)

- Have you looked at the role profile?
- Have you been on a ride along with officers?
- Have you spoken to a friend or family member in the police?
- Have you attended any recruitment events?

Question 10* - If you have previously applied to be a police officer, special constable or police community support officer, what have you done since your last application to better prepare yourself for the role? (35 words)

- Have you looked at the national role profile?
- Have you come out on a ride along with officers?
- Have you attended an of our recruitment events?

*Only answer question 10 if it is relevent

Questions 5 to 10 are not marked and will not affect your application at this stage. However, answering these questions will greatly improve your knowledge of the force, the county and the role of a police officer, which may be assessed at a later stage during the recruitment process.

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BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE

Protecting People and Fighting Crime

Together