

Detective Sergeant Sarah Copeland's career story

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From banking to a hugely varied career in policing

Case study 4 mins read

Before the police

I successfully applied for the police in Cambridgeshire after completing my degree in economics and finance in 2002, however I was also successful in obtaining graduate scheme opportunities with three large companies. I declined the police opportunity and commenced work on a graduate banking scheme with a large bank.

I absolutely loved my time with the bank, I completed a second degree as part of the scheme. I was allocated a buddy and mentor from day one and this is something I have brought across into my work in Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

I am the third generation of my family to join the police service, I was getting paid very well and had lots of perks working for the bank, however I realised I was working hard to meet targets to basically increase turnover for the bank. I wanted to help people and make more of a difference to society so I applied again for Cambridgeshire and started in October 2004.

Progression

After completing my probation I was moved into investigations and completed my national investigators' exam (NIE) and shortly afterwards took my sergeant OSPRE part 1 examination in 2007, by this time I was a temporary sergeant in neighbourhood policing.

On successfully completing my sergeant board I spent two years in a different part of the force working as a response and custody sergeant, during this time I took my OSPRE inspector part 1 and 2 examinations.

In 2010 I decided I wished to return to investigations so I took a detective sergeant board and was moved to a serious investigation team, this was a steep learning curve for the first few weeks but I

loved learning and managing some large investigations.

On this team I had my first child and while on maternity leave the domestic abuse investigation safeguarding unit (DAISU) was created in Cambridgeshire and I was moved to that team. My first day back from 11 months of maternity leave was a late shift on day one of the new team. The first few months was a crazy journey, however I had such an amazing team of officers who worked tirelessly to protect domestic abuse victims.

I had my second child while working in the DAISU and left in 2016. I joined the investigation standards and development team and I am still in post today. I have always felt very in control of my career and have been fortunate to enjoy all of my postings which I have actively applied for.

Future aspirations

Major crime really tempts me and being professionalising investigative practice (PIP) level 2 qualified will really help me achieve a move into this field. Plus every year I think should I do my inspector's board. This is what is so great about a police career, there are so many options, plus being an investigator widens the options even further.

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