

Being a tutor constable

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How tutor constables support new police officers to put their learning into practice

News 6 mins watch

Police constables Steve Hartley and Catherine Lloyd work on the tutor constable programme at Northumbria Police, supporting new recruits through their first few weeks.

They explain that their role is to show students how to practically apply what they've learned at university, as well as support them emotionally.

The person that you are going to remember throughout your career is undoubtedly going to be your tutor. They influence you and guide you at a time when you're new, you're adjusting to the life of a police officer – which is both a personal and professional change – and they almost hold your hand emotionally as you're going through all of that learning and adjustment.

PC Lloyd

PC Hartley uses a gradual approach to getting students settled into their new roles in response.

To start, he introduces them to the shift and sets out his expectations for the next ten weeks over a cup of tea.

He then slowly allows students to lead more jobs and interviews, before eventually dropping back and just observing them.

I'll monitor everything they're doing and I'll make notes on everything they're doing and I'll feed them back at the end of every shift.

PC Hartley

To be a good tutor constable, patience and flexibility is key. PC Lloyd explains that tutor constables help new recruits to put what they've learned in the classroom into practice, in a way they understand and that suits them. They're also there to help address any learning needs that come

up.

I think a good tutor can look at the student and adapt themselves to meet their needs. They need to be flexible in their approach, they need to be dynamic because we don't all learn the same way.

PC Lloyd

Their top tips for all new recruits into response policing are to be open and honest, and to ask as many questions as possible.

You need to come in with an open mind and just an attitude of positivity and excitement, and make the most of every moment and of every day because you'll wake up and you'll have been in 15-20 years.

The support of a tutor really sets a solid base for the rest of your career. The person that you're going to remember at your retirement do is going to be that tutor.

PC Lloyd

Hear more from PC Hartley and PC Lloyd about tutor constables and their advice for new recruits.

Video Transcript

The person that you are going to remember throughout your career is undoubtedly going to be your tutor. They influence you and guide you at a time when you're new, you're adjusting to the life of a police officer, which is both a personal and professional change, and they almost hold your hand emotionally as you're going through all of that learning and adjustment.

I've been a tutor for approximately 12 years now. Tutors are important because we're the step between university and the streets. It's my responsibility to sort of take what they're learning at university and show you how to practically apply that. So, for my students, I'll tell them from the very offset before we do anything, we'll introduce them to the shift and then we'll go away to a quiet room somewhere, we'll have a cuppa and we'll sit down, and I'll say, 'This is what I expect from you'. As they go through the 10 weeks, it'll slowly be their responsibility to start taking over more jobs, taking over more interviews, and towards the end of the 10 weeks, it should be to the point

where I drop back, and I just observe. I'll monitor everything they're doing, and I'll make notes on everything they're doing, and I'll feed them back at the end of every shift. After five weeks, they'll be taken out with an independent assessor and just make sure that they're at the standard where they should be for the five weeks. If not, they'll feed back to me, and I know where we need to push on a little bit or focus on a little bit more.

I think a nice introduction phase is always the ideal. Going in with that open attitude, wanting to learn, enthusiastic, listen to what you're taught and be robust, in the sense that you're going to have to take feedback. Learn from it, develop from it and be better as a result of it. Come in with a completely open mind. You need to be like a sponge and absorb everything that you are given.

Qualities that make a good student or tutee. Honesty. Got to be honest throughout because a good tutor will see through you if you're not. The ability just to put your hands up and go 'I don't understand' or 'Sorry, I got that wrong'. That's where you learn from. I wanted to be a tutor because I had a really good tutor, really influential in the way that I work, and I get a buzz out of it. Seeing someone flourish. When they're leaving at the end of 10 weeks and they're saying, 'Thanks very much' and you can see how much you brought them on, you can see how much confidence you've given them. You know, to see someone who's come to you that's totally raw and then left you and they're going to be the next generation of cop. I retire in 12 years and my students will still be doing their role and hopefully they'll be tutoring as well. Yeah, so it's just a sense of you've done a good job, you know, you've done somebody proud.

My tutor was a very approachable person. They were that personality that everybody on the shift would go to for advice and that would include advice on 'What do I do with this piece of paperwork or this casefile'. When you've got somebody who's very new who is lacking in confidence, taking the time to say, 'You did a really good job today, well done', makes such a huge difference to the rest of that person's career, and it was 10 seconds out of yours. And you'll naturally find yourself returning to your tutor. You'll be in the job five, six years but you'll still, point to point or, you know, grab your tutor in the office and say, 'what would you do with this?' because you have that relationship.

Qualities that make a good tutor for me. Patience is the key. Dedication to the role because there'll be times where your shift's gone home, your student's gone home and you're still sitting there going

through legislation, going through paperwork thinking, 'They didn't get that today, how can I present that to them tomorrow in a fashion that they'll understand?' You've got to consider the welfare of that student as well. You could be at a violent domestic. So, it's important when you leave that incident and it's dealt with, to take time to speak to your student. 'Are you okay? How did it make you feel?' The best bit for me, or the most satisfying bit for me, is when you take someone who doesn't get it. And then they go home, and you sit there by yourself thinking, 'How am I going to change the way I'm teaching them, so that they understand it?' And you go, 'I'll try this tomorrow' and you try that different thing, and it just clicks, and they get it.

I think a good tutor can look at the student and adapt themselves to meet their needs. They need to be flexible in their approach, they need to be dynamic because we don't all learn the same way. So, we will give you the mechanics in the classroom and they'll show you how to do it in a way that suits you. They'll translate it so that you understand it. But they'll also, if we haven't been able to, they might identify a learning need that we haven't seen, and they'll help address that.

The advice I would give to my students is to enjoy yourself. Enjoy your 10 weeks, get as much as you can out of it, ask as many questions as you can because that's where you'll learn.

You need to come in with an open mind and just an attitude of positivity and excitement, and make the most of every moment and of every day because you'll wake up and you'll have been in 15-20 years. The support of a tutor really sets a solid base for the rest of your career. The person that you're going to remember at your retirement do is going to be that tutor.

Tags

Response policing