

# Working in intelligence

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## Spotlight on a role: Local intelligence officer

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I became a local intelligence officer (LIO) four years ago, following over 16 years on response.

The LIO structure in Nottinghamshire is based on geographical areas, with one LIO per policing area of the force, plus for Operational Support (OS) and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). We are based in the Intelligence Department (although this varies in different forces), but we operate daily alongside local policing teams by focusing their efforts on the right targets.

## Role and responsibilities

It is a multifaceted role that requires a wide skillset. The LIO highlights connections and risk factors around offenders, locations and victims to influence the morning briefing process (which we sit in), especially around organised crime groups (OCGs). We jointly maintain the force briefing and tasking system, and assist other departments with investigations and operations. We also provide the research and briefings to inform the decision-making on policing priorities for the area.

On the development side, the LIO identifies risk and actionable intelligence on the area, then finds solutions. This is often best achieved by going into the community in plain clothes to develop intelligence on the key area criminals. We also develop and support covert / surveillance jobs, and operations to locate and arrest key criminals who are evading capture.

## What makes a good intelligence officer

As we effectively set our own workload, it is essential to be self-motivated and capable of consistently working alone to a high standard. There is a lot of risk to consider around weapons and firearms intelligence, and inter-criminal tensions. The role is therefore better suited to those seeking to put their existing policing experience to good use, as a solid understanding of crime and criminals and how they think and operate is vital. You also need to understand intelligence properly to work with it effectively, considering accuracy in terms of the different places (and motivations)

and who the information might have come from.

It is important to be personable and approachable, to support colleagues with investigative enquiries and warrant applications. You also need to be good at retaining names, faces and associations, and thinking outside the box to solve problems. Multitasking and producing good quality analytical documents are also important attributes. Lastly, it is crucial to be motivated, to 'lead from the front' and set the standard. For example, I will happily work nights sat in a hedge, and go in with the teams on my warrants. You need to care about your communities to keep up the relentless pressure on those seeking to harm them.

## Best things about the role

LIO is a challenging and rather misunderstood role, but a vital and respected one. In Nottinghamshire, it is really regarded as a specialism. I have helped take some very dangerous people off the streets, and am always hunting out the next one.

If you are considering a change of direction and want to make your own mark and really impact criminals, it is an excellent role with a lot of variety and flexibility. It allows you the time to really investigate thoroughly without being called away to competing demand.

It is as good as you are driven to make it, so you are in control of how rewarding it is. It is also an excellent grounding for upward movement into more covert work such as serious and organised crime roles.

- This article was peer reviewed by Detective Constable Lauren Hampton, Leicestershire Police.

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