

Halting the tide: retention within detective constable pathways

This project is going to examine the attrition and retention within detective constable (DC) pathways, in particular fast-track routes into becoming a detective.

Key details

Lead institution	The Open University
Principal researcher(s)	James Dickey james.dickey@open.ac.uk
Police region	South East
Level of research	PhD
Project start date	October 2025
Date due for completion	October 2031

Research context

Voluntary resignations have taken over as the most common reason for those leaving the police. This project will look at those early in their career looking to become detectives, an area previously not explored in research.

The detective routes have additional nuances compared to other pathways including the national investigators exam (NIE) and PIP2 portfolio, most of which is done at the same time as other requirements all entry routes require.

This research is interested in whether these detective candidates face any unique blockers or barriers which may mean they do not become detectives, in the hope of providing the service with insights to help overcome these issues.

Research methodology

Full research methodology will be confirmed in due course however it is likely to involve the use of:

- internal records of those on the pathway
- review of recruitment materials
- surveys of those looking to join the pathway and those on or previously on the pathways