

Choosing a path into policing

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New resources to support a blended approach to police officer recruitment

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We've developed new resources to give forces in England and Wales a clearer picture of what it costs to recruit officers through different entry routes and to explain the different routes available to potential applicants.

Becoming a police officer is a rewarding career with real opportunities for personal and professional growth, while making a difference to your community, reducing crime and keeping people safe.

Modern policing needs officers from diverse backgrounds, bringing varied skills and experience to meet complex challenges. The way people join the police should reflect that.

Routes into policing

The police constable entry routes (PCER) optimisation programme was set up to maximise the effectiveness of police constable entry routes.

We've worked with several stakeholders to shape standards and guidance for all entry routes into policing and help build a representative workforce. These include:

- National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC)
- forces
- higher education institutions
- Police Federation of England and Wales

There are four entry routes into policing:

- police constable degree apprenticeship (PCDA)
- degree holder entry programme (DHEP)
- police constable entry programme (PCEP)
- professional policing degree (PPD) holder route

All four routes are underpinned by consistent national standards, with a focus on practical, on-the-job learning tailored to local needs. Until now, forces have lacked a straightforward way to compare what each route costs them to run locally.

New tool to support smarter decisions

For the first time, forces can access a PCER costings tool and input local data to generate standardised cost comparisons across all routes.

It considers training costs and operational abstraction, providing useful, evidence-based information for workforce planning tailored to local circumstances.

The tool is hosted on College Learn, you will need to log in to access it.

[Go to the costings tool](#)

Why a blended approach works

National data shows that different routes attract applicants with different demographic characteristics. Graduate and specialist pathways tend to recruit higher proportions of women and joiners from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Most forces already recruit through more than one route. The new tool helps forces to make decisions with evidence grounded in their own data to help put them in a stronger position to build a workforce that truly reflects the communities they serve.

Alongside the tool, we have produced updated downloadable resources and refreshed information clearly explaining each entry route to support force recruitment activity.

[Go to police entry routes](#)

Tags

Police recruitment