

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a city street. A dark-colored sedan is driving away from the viewer in the center lane. To its right, a white car is parked or moving slowly. On the left side of the road, three people are walking on the sidewalk. A building with a sign that reads "BUT AL BUDGETS STYLES & FASHIONS" is visible on the far left. The street has white lane markings and a large white arrow pointing forward. The overall tone is desaturated, with a teal/cyan tint.

UNCOVERING THE REALITIES OF BEING A DETECTIVE

POLICE:NOW
INFLUENCE FOR GENERATIONS

INTRODUCTION



Being a detective takes commitment and hard work in order to succeed, however, the rewards you'll get are incomparable to any other job.

You'll be transitioning into a completely new lifestyle with changing shift patterns that will likely impose restrictions and affect your personal life in ways you might not have experienced before.

However, one important thing to remember throughout your policing journey is why you've chosen to be here. Although there will be challenging times ahead and tough situations to deal with, **you will be there to lead by example and make choices that have a real impact on people's lives.** You'll be making a lasting impact in some of the UK's most deprived communities, making life safer and happier for those who are most vulnerable in society.

The following guidance will help to uncover some of the realities of the role of a detective, and the types of things you're going to experience day-to-day, so that when you arrive on day one, you'll feel well prepared.

We are thrilled that you have chosen to start your journey with us. Your commitment to the programme is recognised by all here at Police Now. In return, we will invest in you through development and empowerment to be leaders in policing, on the policing frontline and for society.

Upile Mtitimila

Detective Inspector

Police Now National Graduate Leadership Programme alumnus

TOP TIPS FROM A DETECTIVE

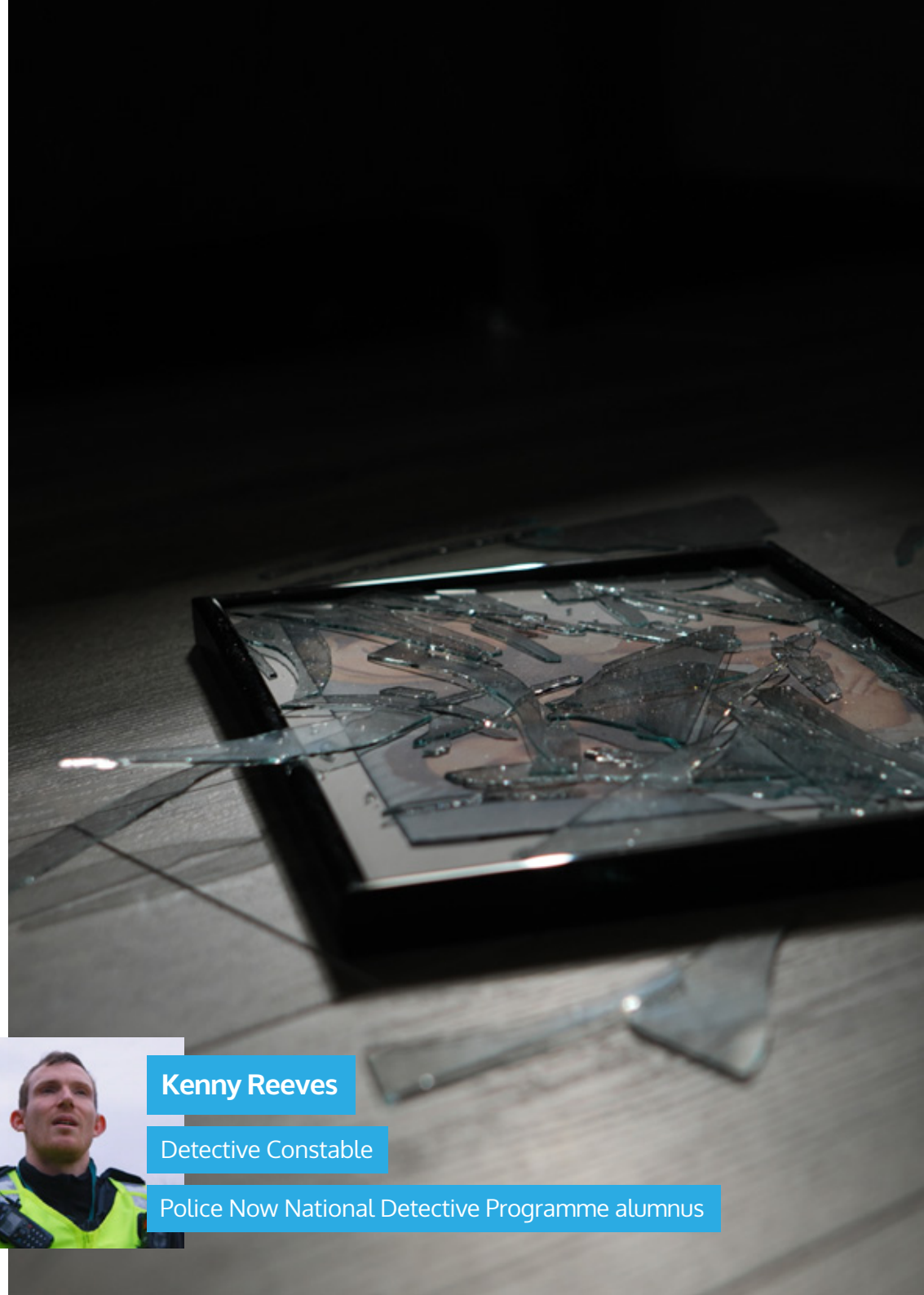
1. Be comfortable with the uncomfortable, you should accept that you won't feel like you know everything about your role, or comfortable doing it until at least 18 months in.
2. You'll be required to study as part of your onboarding. You'll complete Core Learning and also study for the National Investigators' Exam (NIE). Make sure you get started early to ensure you are successful at academy and beyond.
3. Although it's important to learn from others around you, you must remember that others can also learn from you, so value the difference you can bring.
4. The best way to learn is by making mistakes, it sticks with you and you'll be less likely to do them again.
5. For eating on the job, it depends whether you like hot or cold food. If you like cold food then simply pick it up and eat it when you get the chance to. If you like warmer food, your best bet is normally a microwave. Also, try and bring food with you as you don't always get the chance to pick things up.
6. Make the most of your rest days, and if exercise is your thing, commit to it and don't talk yourself out of it. Despite the bleep test score required being manageable for many, you may get in a dangerous situation and you want to be at your fighting best.
7. Switch your work phone and laptop off when not at work and never be tempted to check them. There are things you can control and things you can't, don't worry about the things you can't.
8. Put yourself out there, try as many new experiences as you can even if they scare you. The best way to learn is by experiencing them yourself.



Kenny Reeves

Detective Constable

Police Now National Detective Programme alumnus



LIFE ON THE PROGRAMME

On the Police Now National Detective Programme, you'll be helping to create safer communities, working proactively to tackle problems and resolving cases.

You will be working within your force's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) understanding the complex challenges of investigating serious and complex crime and how it impacts your community. On the National Detective Programme, you will have ownership and responsibility to bring about and evidence positive change, so you'll really see the impact of the work you do and showcase this at your Police Now Impact Events. Your approach will be underpinned by the work you complete for your university degree as an evidence-based policing approach to your day-to-day role.

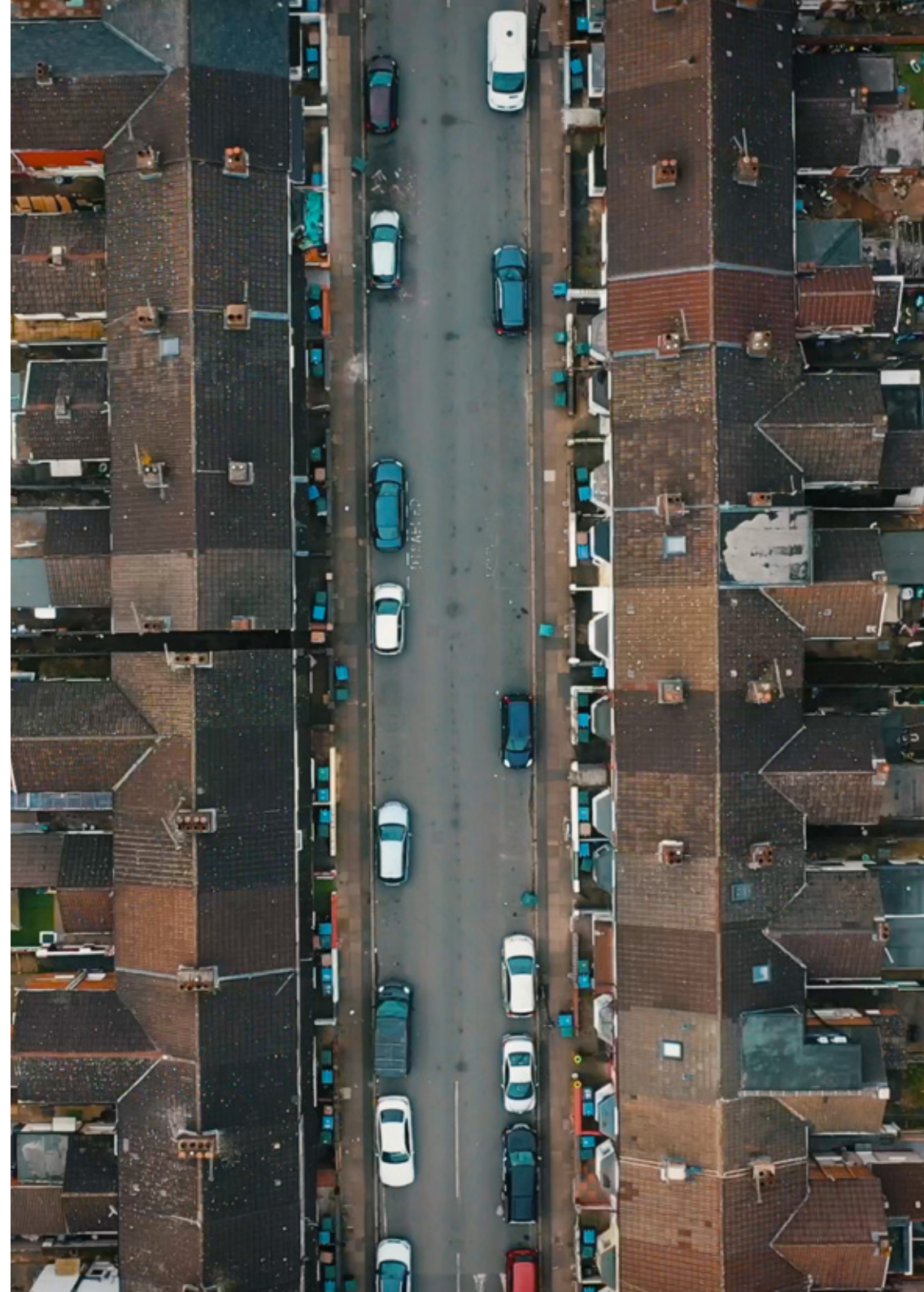
"The mission for Police Now is very timely, it's really important that the police work really hard to become a representative workforce for the communities and society in which they work, to be able to understand communities, work better with communities, engage not just with victims and suspects but the community as a whole to improve not just the image of policing but also the work we do."



Larry Brown

Detective Constable

National Detective Programme alumnus



YOUR LEARNING

CORE LEARNING

Core learning is your foundational legislative learning to introduce you to the legal and procedural knowledge required for all detectives.

It will form foundations of your learning for the National Investigators' Exam (NIE) and enable you to access the sessions throughout the academy. It will remain as a valuable bank of knowledge for you throughout your career.

NATIONAL INVESTIGATORS' EXAM (NIE)

The NIE will take place during the Police Now Academy, this is a national gateway examination to become a detective and is therefore a requirement of the programme.

You will have two opportunities to take the exam. Your core learning will include links and signposting to additional materials to support with your revision. The purpose of core learning is to give you the best opportunity to prepare for both academy and the NIE. Core learning will ask you to develop your own study plan for the NIE and it is expected that you will be familiar with and have practiced NIE-style multiple choice questions by the start of academy.

During your academy you will continue to manage your own learning for the NIE. However, we will provide several workshops during that period as well as a revision course, and additional revision materials to help support your learning.





THE POLICE NOW ACADEMY

The Police Now Academy is an intensive 14-week training programme. You will have theoretical and practical sessions throughout the academy delivered by Syndicate Leads (serving police officers from your force who will assist in leading you throughout academy), and you will have the opportunity to learn on the ground, in force and show your ability in assessments. You'll learn leadership and problem-solving skills which will set you up to make a difference from day one.

During your academy, we will build on the foundational policing skills from core learning through lessons from Syndicate Leads, discussions and scenarios. You will learn and practice the skills you'll need before you enter your force, some of the sessions you will engage with are:

- **Sudden Death** – where you will begin to understand the process you must follow at these incidents.
- **Managing a Crime Scene** – where you will understand how to handle evidence, safety requirements, security and your role.
- **Interviewing** – This will be a series of sessions including the theory and practise of interviewing a suspect and witness.

"I have left academy feeling so excited to start my career in the police and feel I have been given all the necessary skills and guidance to begin as a competent detective."

Police Now participant

THE POLICE NOW ACADEMY

DIGITAL ACADEMY

There are a number of weeks of digital delivery during the academy. You will guide yourself through a number of online sessions and engage with small seminars with your Syndicate Lead each day. The NIE revision course, mentioned on page five, will take place during the digital weeks, alongside a digital investigation course.

IN-PERSON ACADEMY

The location of the in-person academy will be communicated in the coming months. Here you will engage with practical and theoretical training sessions to build your understanding and ability to go into force as a strong trainee detective constable.

SKILLS SESSIONS

You will undertake innovative and dynamic Skills Sessions delivered by the Police Now team and partner organisations over the course of the two-year programme – developing your detective and broader leadership development skills.

IMPACT EVENTS

At each event, there is an opportunity to hear from keynote speakers, share the impact you're having and connect with fellow Police Now participants and guests from within policing, the community and wider civil society. It's a great way to stay up-to-date with a fast-moving and intense programme. The Impact Event process is one of the key ways you will be assessed and they form part of your Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice. As well as building an evidence base, the purpose of the assessment is to develop the way you think, problem-solve and project manage.



STUDYING WITH LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

As part of the College of Policing's introduction of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF), we have partnered with Liverpool John Moores University to deliver the Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice (GDPPP).

The course combines a theoretical and ethical understanding of policing, centred around evidence-based policing, with on-the-job learning and gaining of operational competencies. The GDPPP will promote personal and professional development and enable you as a participant on the Police Now National Detective Programme to make an impact from day one.

The GDPPP will help you develop independent and critical thinking skills and utilises the evidence base to help you identify best practice in policing. It will enable you as a Police Now participant to make an impact early in your career, by helping you develop both personally and professionally.



Alongside your five academic modules, you are required to submit evidence of achieving Independent Patrol Status (IPS) and Full Operational Competency (FOC) in year one and year two of the programme, respectively. This is demonstrated through your Occupational Competency Portfolio (OCP) and will be signed off by your force.

Modules are assessed in a variety of ways; you will be asked to:

- Complete written reflections based on your experience at academy, and in force.
- Record video presentations.
- Complete practical based assignments relating to your role.

Throughout your GDPPP, you'll be making specific references to Evidence Based Policing, considerations around diversity and inclusion, as well as reflecting on your personal leadership journey. You won't be alone in this, you will receive ongoing support from the university in the form of your Personal Academic Tutor (PAT), the module and course leaders as well as discussion boards and 'live' Q&A sessions. The university's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Canvas also hosts a wealth of general academic support resources to help you with your studies.

LANDING IN FORCE

Once you've completed your academy, you will start in your force, and complete up to ten weeks of response policing to achieve your Independent Patrol Status (IPS), then you will join the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) as a trainee detective constable.

During your Immersion Period you'll be with an experienced police tutor who will support you in putting all your training into practice and achieving your Independent Patrol Status (IPS). This will allow you to engage with multiple departments throughout your time on the two-year programme. These rotations are a research-backed approach to ensuring that you have a breadth of knowledge as a detective and will serve you well as a foundation in your long-term career. Research indicates that this is an effective and impactful approach to training detectives.

Day-to-day, you'll be managing an ever-changing caseload and the people involved, including dealing with witnesses and interviewing suspects while encountering people in crisis. You'll also work collaboratively with multi-agency teams and act on any intelligence that you gather. We'll support you to develop your skill set so you can communicate with vulnerable individuals and get to the heart of transforming communities.

Going equipped

'Going equipped' is a fantastic resource for any police officer or detective. The publication is filled with research, ideas and examples of good policing practice that has all been put together so that you can learn from experiences nationally.



Issue 1 (Summer/Autumn 2020)

Issue 2 (Spring/Summer 2021)

Issue 3 (Autumn/Winter 2021)

Issue 4 (Spring/Summer 2022)

"I currently have 19 crimes assigned to me, but 11 of those are a series of linked burglaries where the modus operandi has caused significant issues this year. **In total I have nine separate investigations.** I am currently working in Programme Challenger which has major operations ongoing. **The amount of investigations that you'll work on depends on the demand in your district.** I may have nine separate investigations but some of those have been concluded and I am waiting for them to be closed. There are other investigations where mobile phone devices have been sent for examination which can take several months to complete."



Zulqi Tanweer

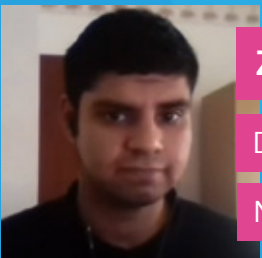
Detective Constable

National Detective Programme alumnus

LANDING IN FORCE

"Your shifts will depend on which force and division you're in, but in all of the response shifts you have two earlies, two lates, two nights and four days of rest period. As a detective, you won't be expected to do nights for at least two years until you're signed off. You might shadow nights to get the experience of it, but they rarely happen. You might have four early shifts, three rest days, then back in for two shifts followed by two rest days, and it varies like that. So **you have a period of early shifts and a period of late shifts and it rotates – this is generally a three-week pattern.**

I am currently stationed in a unit where I work 07:00 to 15:00 Monday to Friday and have the weekend off. In the main CID at my division, you can expect to have two weeks every month where your shift pattern dictates that you have the weekend off. **I wouldn't say it is very rare for your two days off a week to be on weekend days side-by-side.** However, I would suggest you find out what your division's individual shift patterns are like."



Zulqi Tanweer

Detective Constable

National Detective Programme alumnus

SHIFT PATTERNS

One of the challenging parts of the job will be adjusting to a new lifestyle and getting into a new rhythm.

Your existing routines will inevitably change, and it will be important before you start your shifts to begin to figure out how you will maintain a healthy and realistic work/life balance. Once you begin shift work, you will likely have to adjust and readjust as you go, and often you may not have time to plan ahead. Policing can be unpredictable at times, but you will begin to learn what works best for you – when you'll get sleep, how you'll balance eating habits and when you'll have time to exercise.

Top tip: We recommend having a calendar either on your phone or a diary where you can note down your shifts and plan around this.

As you will be part of a team dealing with investigations, generally you won't be required to work night shifts. But there is still the expectation that you would do night shifts periodically.

What's it like being a detective constable?



Amy from Thames Valley Police speaks about her time as a detective - her journey in policing, what the hours are like and what she experiences on a day-to-day.

[Read the interview](#)

POLICE IN THE MEDIA

The media can play an important role in our society by holding companies, political figures and Governmental bodies accountable to those who are or can be directly affected by their decision making and actions. It's a powerful medium because of the influence it can have in shaping our perceptions and forming our opinions.

Policing, whether portrayed in a positive or negative light, will have an impact on how people perceive it as a whole, and in most, if not all cases, the negative stories will outshine the positive ones as they will stick with them for longer. People's confidence in the police becomes affected because of the narrative surrounding policing, especially those who are vulnerable in society such as the elderly who would feel safer if what they were seeing in the media was positive.

There are many who've faced being disproportionately targeted because of their background, because of their gender. There has been a long history of inequalities which has unfortunately been the reality largely down to actions taken by those in power that fall well below the standards expected of police officers, and how communities expect to be served. There are also underlying cultural issues that exist that you may witness or be subjected to.

It is natural that you will feel personally impacted by the stories that you see and might feel guilty by association – because of the uniform that you wear. There's a few in the service that create headlines, however more coverage that shows good policing practice can help reshape the narrative. You have this opportunity to set those standards by policing in the right way, working with colleagues already in the service.

Policing and our wider society still has a very long way to go to be truly representative and to truly serve every community and every individual. It is a reminder of the importance of the work you will undertake; to keep communities and all those who live within them safe and ultimately to ensure the police service is trusted by the public.

What is important to remember is that you are the point of difference. You represent the next generation in policing, and you are about to become an outstanding leader in your field. You are someone who can change the narrative.





Upile Mtitimila

Detective Inspector

Police Now National Graduate Leadership Programme alumnus

"Before I became a police officer, I didn't trust the police and I was extremely sceptical. I had negative experiences of the police through Stop and Search, however I wanted to make a bit of a difference and didn't want people to experience what I did so in a way I felt provoked to join policing. Honestly, I think my experiences were in the minority.

My identity, like who I am, I'm mixed heritage, my mother is White British, my dad is Black Malawian and my upbringing was always in places that weren't that diverse and so I didn't really notice my visible difference. I didn't really pay attention to being from an underrepresented group. It wasn't something I'd really engaged with in conversation or felt was a part of my life until I became a police officer – there were a number of reasons for that.

Firstly, it's the monumental amount of media that you will see around policing diversity and the issues – some of them extremely pressing currently as well. Policing has come a long way, I do think it will do better, but I think that's a slow change. There are a lot of critical issues in policing which we won't be able to fix overnight. I think policing comes into the spotlight a lot because we have powers and quite often the use of those powers isn't voluntary, they're against an individual, and we represent the use of those powers against individuals from the state. I think it's really important that we are acutely aware of how we use those powers and the impact those powers have on people. So that was feeding into my perceptions when I first joined. I think you as an individual can bring an incredible amount of value to policing.

The other thing that came to light as I entered policing was that I didn't really notice I was a person of colour until I was in the uniform, weirdly, it was people making small but quite significant and powerful comments about how them seeing me in a uniform or in the policing role changed their perspective on policing. It was through various encounters, through investigations, where just by talking to witnesses, suspects and victims, we were able to connect asides from what was under investigation. But there were some lived experiences, shared experiences we had that I was able to understand, relate to and contextualise and maybe challenge and change some of their perceptions of the police that they'd had up until that point. So, diversity is incredibly important in policing, and it was only as a result of numerous contacts like that I then became more involved, more aware and more conscious.

I'm a big believer in 'seeing is believing', and entering policing, I'm aware there aren't necessarily many role models at senior levels that look like me, so I'm keen to be one of those role models in the future."

LANDING IN FORCE

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION IN THE ROLE

Being able to communicate clearly and efficiently is one of the most essential skills of a detective.

Not only are verbal communications skills vital, but in order to provide proper documentation and file clear reports, detectives need to be able to write in a way that is free of error and easy to understand.

During an investigation, you will gather information from physical evidence and witnesses and analyse the evidence to solve the crime or problem. You will go on to prepare, complete and submit accurate case papers and evidential files to the highest professional standard and within set time limits. These reports and documents must be clear not only for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), but for the barristers and judges should the case make it to court.

You will need to constantly check your work, keeping in mind that your investigative report may be seen by your colleagues, supervisors, and even high ranking officers within your force, as well as the judiciary if a case goes to court.



POLICING BEHAVIOURS

Behaviour within policing has varied over the years. Essentially, it's how police officers make sense of what they do and how they do it.

Attitudes and beliefs about the role will directly influence detectives' decisions and behaviour, impacting how they interact with members of the public.

Being a detective requires you to be fair and impartial, making sure you're using procedurally just practices in your day-to-day dealings with the public. Procedural justice is the degree to which someone perceives people in authority to apply processes, or make decisions about them, in a fair and just way. If our policing workforce treat members of the public with dignity and respect, they will be more likely to view the police as legitimate – which is crucial as it governs the extent to which a person abides by the law and cooperates with the police.

The following are the four key components of procedural justice and are also the standard of behaviour that ties in closely with the College of Policing's Code of Ethics:

- **Neutrality:** The absence of bias and prejudice in police procedures, conduct and decisions.
- **Voice:** Providing citizens the opportunity to have a voice in the decision-making process and listening to them attentively.
- **Respect:** Behaving in a way that protects civil rights, treats individuals with dignity and values input from the public.
- **Trustworthiness:** Showing care and concern for the safety and wellbeing of citizens and acting on their behalf to provide reassurance and solve problems.

A deeper look into the procedural justice model



Our latest insight briefing focused on the procedural justice model and why its use is so important in the detective role.

[Read our briefing](#)

"The culture of policing I imagine will differ for many other officers. There is a reminder from the older officers who have a lot of time and experience how it has 'changed' drastically, but change is good, change is what the world needs isn't it? **As society changes, so does policing, not only by means of the law, but how we, as police officers, actually work.**"



Catrin Hughes

Neighbourhood police officer

Police Now National Graduate Leadership Programme alumnus

POLICING BEHAVIOURS

Core competencies

You hopefully recall from your assessments our core competencies and values that we promote and require our participants to align to throughout their policing journey. You can find them [here](#).

“As a police service, we must show impartiality throughout all our dealings with colleagues, partners and members of the public. This is achieved by being **unprejudiced, fair and objective**. We consider different sides of a situation and ensure that each side is given equal consideration.”

College of Policing

Peelian principles



To conceptualise the ethical practice of police forces, Sir Robert Peel proposed nine key principles upon which policing should be built – these were put in place and shared with those working in policing from 1829 and remain the bedrock of British policing. The nine principles help establish trust within communities while maintaining the basis that policing powers should be exercised by the consent of the common public, creating for a more transparent and accountable police workforce.

What are the key principles?





"The brilliant thing about the day-to-day is it varies. It is just as varied as any uniform role I've been in, and just as challenging – although the challenges are different. **For me a good day would be getting a positive result in a case or the result of a line of inquiry that cracks the case open.** Ultimately, as long as I can say I did my best for the victims of crime, then that's about as consistent as a day can look. There really is no clear structure and the work on units I work on is really varied which means no two days or cases are the same."



Upile Mtitimila

Detective Inspector

Police Now National Graduate Leadership Programme alumnus

DEALING WITH TOUGH SITUATIONS

As a detective, you will have to see and experience difficult situations throughout your career.

As you would expect, there is a huge amount of support available to you during your time on the programme to help manage your mental health and wellbeing - one of them being [Police Mutual](#) who offer you dedicated support on a number of issues that may be impacting your wellbeing. A particular focus of their work is on mental health and you can access a number of qualified support services through their app, 24/7. These services are free to access and independent of both Police Now and your force. You will find out more about how to access these services in your Participant Handbook and during your academy.

While at academy, you'll get trained in understanding the science behind resilience in policing terms. You'll also be taught coping strategies that can help foster resilience and minimise stress. So, over time, you'll develop resilience through the use of different techniques – allowing yourself to adapt and progress through emotionally-challenging scenarios. This is one of the most effective ways of building resilience, as is your ability to learn from your experiences in the aftermath of these events. Your positivity will help you make a real difference as you face these situations.

It is important to remind yourself that whatever you experience in your role, you'll be surrounded by people who have had similar experiences before. Your colleagues will be one of the best resources for support available to you in times of need, so be sure to use them. Your Performance and Development Coach will also help you develop your personal resilience.

"As a career detective, I can think of no other policing specialism that brings more satisfaction and sense of personal pride than being an investigator. Supporting victims and their families through the most harrowing life experiences and finally securing justice is why many of us join policing. However, we know that the personal sacrifices investigators make, **the continual exposure to trauma and the high workloads can converge to heavily impact on the wellbeing of investigators.**"

Martin Brunning

Detective Chief Superintendent

NPCC Sub Group Lead - Wellbeing of Investigators working group

A [wellbeing toolkit](#) has been built and launched in collaboration with the College of Policing, Oscar Kilo, Police Federation and others to provide investigators with the information they need to build up their resilience to continue doing the critical job that they do.

Supporting your wellbeing

Take a look at some of the resources we have available, which includes some great materials to help you understand what's available to manage your wellbeing on the programme.

[View the resources](#)



LIFE ON THE PROGRAMME: A Q&A WITH DETECTIVE CONSTABLE KENNY REEVES

What's your day-to-day like?

"Our days are split up into either being pick up days where you deal with any people that are in custody or admin days whereas, you guessed it, you work on your admin sending emails to hospitals and companies which have CCTV and any other enquiries you may have. Admin days are also good for carrying out voluntary interviews, taking any outstanding statements, or repeatedly calling victims who are disengaged and don't want to talk to the police anymore.

Pickup days are where the action happens if you have a live job. If you do, the day will often consist of evidence gathering by talking to victims and witnesses before interviewing the suspect to hear their account. You will then decide as to whether you have enough evidence to charge them and if not, how you are going to safeguard the victim. These days can be very fast paced and you can often end up doing overtime."

What should future participants expect from their academy?

"The academy was hard work and quite full-on with only a few hours a day of your own time. You have to work hard but there is a lot to fit in so it's imperative. You really need to get on top of the content early and devote yourself to the process while at the academy."

What's the culture like in policing?

"There is generally a very team focused culture in policing as you're all on the same side trying to do the best for the victims and I've met some great people while in the job. Provided you get on with people, work hard and take on feedback colleagues will warm to you. In terms of the community they like to be listened to and engaged with and know their voice is heard, so if you can listen you're off to a good start. They also appreciate honesty and if you've made a mistake own up to it and look what you can do to put it right and that goes for in force too, honesty is key. Of course, don't repeat the same mistakes or people will grow tired of you."



Kenny Reeves

Detective Constable

Police Now National Detective Programme alumnus

FINAL THOUGHTS

Throughout your two years on the National Detective Programme, you'll be working as part of a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to identify threat, harm and risk by developing an understanding of local issues.

You'll be working in collaboration with others to address community issues, providing a presence that is accessible to, responsible for, and accountable to that community, so be prepared for this. Your Core Learning will provide you with the backbone knowledge required and after you pass the National Investigators' Exam (NIE) - being tested on different policing laws and procedures - you'll have gained the confidence and ability to perform in your role. You'll also be working with the university, mentors, colleagues and your Police Now Performance and Development Coach to further develop your skills to become an inspiring leader in policing.

Being a detective is an intense and demanding career, but it's deeply rewarding. It's a career where you'll have a chance to make a real difference to the communities that you are policing, and to make an impact on individual lives. There will be challenging times ahead and some practices may feel unnatural to you first time round, but remember that you have a huge support network around you to help you along the way.

Becoming a detective

This video features Police Now participants Detective Constable Larry Brown and Detective Constable Kenny Reeves who take you through a 'day in the life of' the job and what it means to be a detective.

[Watch the video](#)



"Being a detective is about uncovering facts. You will get a crime report that's given to you, you will then have to pull together an interview strategy, a CCTV strategy and how you're going to look to identify offenders. It's going to be about putting the jigsaw together so ultimately you can bring a positive outcome to that offence. **It is about using your mind to problem solve and to bring a satisfactory outcome to victims of crime.**"



Karen Geddes

Mission Support Superintendent

Chair West Midlands Police Black and Asian Police Association

Look out for our drop-in sessions

Over the next few months, we'll be inviting you to virtual drop-in sessions which will occasionally feature current participants and alumni where you'll get the opportunity to ask any questions you have, whether that's about the academy, working in policing or anything else on your mind. When these sessions become available, we'll let you know how and when you can attend, so please look out for these updates.

