**Frequently Asked Questions**

**The new routes to join Durham Constabulary**

**Q – What are the routes into the Police Service?**

A – There are currently three ways you can join the police service:

Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA)

Degree Holders Entry Programme (DHEP)

Professional Policing Degree (PPD) (Pre-join)

The police force will assign you to the appropriate programme based on the information you provide as part of your application process.

**Q – How does the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) work?**

A – the PCDA is a three-year programme combining operational duties with academic learning. On successful completion of your probation, you will achieve a **Degree in Professional Policing Practice.**

Not only does the PCDA pathway provide unrivalled training and job security, you will earn whilst you learn, with no student fees to repay. You will undertake training in areas critical to effective 21st century policing, such as evidence-based policing, decision-making and discretion, risk and public protection and criminality and crime prevention.

Unlike a traditional degree course, new apprentice recruits will spend most of their time on frontline duties, in the same way probationers work now.

If you **do not** already hold a degree and are looking for a career that offers first-class training, continuous development, unrivalled variety and unique challenges, the PCDA is the route for you.

**Q – How does the Degree Holders Entry Programme (DHEP) work?**

A - the DHEP is a two-year work-based programme, supported by protected learning time. On successful completion of your probation, you will achieve a **Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice.**

Not only does the DHEP pathway provide unrivalled training and job security, you will earn whilst you learn, with no student fees to repay. You will undertake training in areas critical to effective 21st century policing, such as evidence-based policing, decision-making and discretion, risk and public protection and criminality and crime prevention.

If you **already** hold a degree this programme offers a fantastic opportunity for you to continue to learn beyond your initial degree, whilst earning a salary as a fully warranted police officer from day one.

**Q – How does the Professional Policing Degree (PPD) work?**

A – This route is only open to you if you have a **Professional Policing Degree**

The PPD, also known as the Pre-join, is a standalone professional academic knowledge-based degree, based on the national curriculum for the police constable role. It is offered by several universities across the country, who are licensed by the College of Policing, to deliver the national curriculum.

The degree is offered independently of Durham Constabulary and will have to be successfully completed before applying to the police.

The degree is **not funded** by the police, and you would have to apply through the standard university application process.

Through this route you will have achieved all the academic learning that the DHEP and PCDA student will be undertaking however there are still areas of study that you will need to learn and must demonstrate competence in. Durham will provide any additional learning you will require and support you through your two-year probationary period.

The PDD provides those students who have independently undertaken the learning to join the police put what they have learnt to practice in the operational world and focus on demonstrating their competence as an operational police constable.

You must apply to join a police force **within five years** of your graduation

**Successful achievement of the degree does not guarantee recruitment as a police constable.**

**Q – Will I be paid whilst I am training to be a police officer and studying?**

A – Yes, you will be paid throughout the period that you are training and/or studying for your Degree Apprenticeship in Professional Policing Practice or Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice or the Professional Policing Degree. The starting salary for all routes is £24,780. This will rise incrementally

**Q – I don’t want to study for a degree, can I still join?**

A – All routes into policing in Durham Constabulary will now incorporate formal study to undergraduate level (Level 6) or higher. We are currently recruiting for new joiners who will undertake the **degree apprenticeship programme** OR the **Degree Holder Entry Programme** OR have completed the Professional Policing Degree.

**Q – Will I need to pay tuition fees?**

A – The Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) will be funded by Durham Constabulary by using funding from the Apprenticeship Levy. The Degree Holders Entry Programme (DHEP) is fully funded by Durham Constabulary. The Professional Policing Degree will have been completed prior to your application and you will have paid for your tuition as part of the course.

**Q – Will Durham reimburse my Professional Policing Degree tuition fees?**

A – No, the Professional Policing Degree is undertaken at your own expense prior to applying to for the role of police constable

**Q – Will I have to attend University for lectures?**

A – Learning is flexible. Our students will log into Northumbria University systems for distance learning and some face to face lectures will be delivered by the university at Durham’s Police Learning Centre at Meadowfield. There will also be opportunities for you to use Northumbria University’s excellent facilities, such as the bespoke crime house, and specialist software in the newly opened computing building.

**Q – How often will I be expected to study?**

A – Your study will be ongoing. However, you will be required to use approximately 20% of your work time for off the job learning.

**Q – Will I have to study for exams during my degree or graduate diploma?**

A – Yes, you will be required to take some exams, but you will also achieve your degree by completing assignment work and by demonstrating your skills on the job.

**Q – Can I still work or study an additional course part time whilst I am training and completing Degree Apprenticeship or Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice?**

A – No, you will be working as a full time police officer while you are studying towards your degree or graduate diploma.

**Q – Is it all classroom study? How will I learn the practical elements of policing?**

A – No, there will be lots of practical training and ‘on the job’ development too. We will also provide as much support as you need to achieve the required outcomes.

**Q – Can I choose which University I gain my PCDA/DHEP qualification from?**

A – No, we are partnered with Northumbria University to deliver the degree apprenticeship and graduate diploma. This partnership will bring two outstanding organisation’s together to provide an excellent opportunity for you to gain the best possible experience and qualification.

**Q – Does it matter which University I gained my PPD qualification from?**

A – No, as long as you have successfully completed the course and passed the degree we welcome applicants from any university who deliver the approved Policing Practice Degree.

If you have reviewed the information at our website <https://www.durham.police.uk/Join-us/Pages/default.aspx> or Northumbria University’s website <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/study-at-northumbria/courses/bsc-hons-professional-policing-practice-police-constable-degree-apprenticeship-ncl-durham-dufdpc1/> and the above FAQs and have been unable to find the information you require please contact the recruitment team via [policerecruiting@durham.pnn.police.uk](mailto:policerecruiting@durham.pnn.police.uk) and add ‘**PC Application – General Query**’ to the subject line.

**Role of Police Officer**

**Q – What professional standards are police officers held to?**

A – A police officer is expected to maintain and demonstrate a high standard of ethical behaviour, both while at work and off duty. They are guided by a code of ethics which the force will expect any candidate to understand and adhere to.

The Code of Ethics is a supportive, positive, everyday decision-making framework and is a constant reinforcement of the values and standards policing is proud of.  It is intended to encourage personal responsibility and the exercise of professional judgement; empowering everyone in policing to ensure they always do the right thing.

If the public doesn't have the confidence to trust the police to be fair, act ethically and in their best interests, they are less likely to assist the police in upholding the law.

For further details please go to: <https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Ethics/Ethics-home/Pages/Code-of-Ethics.aspx>

**Q – Will I be expected to work night shifts?**

A – Yes, police officers work on a rota system which includes both day and night shifts, including weekends and public/bank holidays.

**Q – When can I take holidays and time off work?**

You will not be able to book any time off during the initial training course which is approximately 17 weeks, except public and bank holidays and weekly rest days. Some courses will have holidays programmed into their timetable and you may be required to take certain days off as holiday. You will be advised of this at the start of your appointment.

You are entitled to 22 days paid annual holiday, rising to 30 days a year depending on your length of service. This is on top of public holidays and an average of at least two rest days each working week.

**Q – Can I work part time?**

A – You will have to work full time during your probation – two or three years dependent on route – but you can apply for part time working once this is completed. It should be noted there is no guarantee of part time working being granted in particular roles; requests are considered on an individual basis.

**Q – How will you accommodate my religious beliefs?**

A – We welcome applicants from all religions and alterations can be made to the uniform to accommodate some religious requirements – for example it is possible to wear a hijab; or the helmet may be replaced with a Sikh turban. We also take into account the needs of individuals with regards to time off and bank/public holidays.

**Q – If successful, can I join a specialist unit or become a detective?**

A – Not at first. All newly recruited police officers must undergo a probationary period in which you’ll spend time in a response team, although attachments to other teams may be given.

**Q – Can I choose where I work?**

A – No, you will need to be prepared to work across the Durham Constabulary area including Darlington, Bishop Auckland, Durham, Peterlee, Consett.

**Q – I live outside of County Durham, can I still apply?**

A – Yes, we welcome applications from outside the force area. However, please consider that you will need to be prepared to work across all locations within Durham Constabulary.

**Q – Once I have passed my probation, are there opportunities for career development and promotion?**

A – Yes, you will be supported to develop throughout your career. There are a wealth of opportunities as a police officer including promotions through the ranks or lateral moves into specialist teams such as investigation including safeguarding, neighbourhoods, roads policing etc.

**Q – Will I have to deal with confrontation?**

A – Yes, you will encounter stressful situations that include dealing with confrontation. We will provide you with extensive training and support you to be ready to handle these.

**Q – What benefits does Durham Constabulary offer?**

A – There are many benefits, these include:

* secure a degree level qualification
* receive extensive training and development throughout your career
* have access to a generous pension scheme
* have the opportunity to work in a wide range of policing departments
* a minimum of 22 days annual leave; rising with service to 30 days
* access to additional schemes such as childcare vouchers, employee assistance programme and lifestyle discounts

**Eligibility**

**Q - What are the basic eligibility requirements?**

In order to pass the initial sift you must pass the following:-

1 - Age – 17 years or older at the point of application and 18 at the time of appointment

2 - You have not failed a SEARCH Assessment Centre within the last six months

3 – No criminal convictions

4 – No tattoos on face, neck or hands

5 – No CCJs

6 – Eligible to work in the UK

7 – Not a member of the British National Party, Combat 18, National Front or similar organisation

8 – Full driving licence for a manual car

In addition to the general requirements to join as a police officer with Durham Constabulary require you to have the following:

* **​ A levels/NVQ Level 3 qualifications** where the grades total 120 UCAS points or higher.

The 120 UCAS points can be made up of several different types of level 3 qualifications. The UCAS calculator can help you identify if you have an equivalent qualification: [**https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator​**](https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator​ )

* If your Level 3 qualifications do not equate to the required 120 UCAS points, professional training or significant work experience may also be considered\*

\*Durham Constabulary will review a candidate's professional training and/or work experience in line with the [National Police Officers Competency Framework](https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/competency-and-values-framework/Documents/Competency-and-Values-Framework-for-Policing_4.11.16.pdf). This will require you to complete the Experiential Learning form as part of your application process.

**Q – Are there any age restrictions in order to apply?**

A – You will need to be at least 17 to apply to be a police officer and the normal pension age is 60 for a PC.

**Q – I am nearly 18, can I apply?**

Yes, however you must be 18 at the point of joining

**Q – Are there height restrictions?**

A – No, there is no minimum or maximum height requirements

**Q – Do I need to hold a full driving licence?**

A – As you will be expected to respond to incidents across Durham Constabulary force area you will need to hold a full driving licence for a manual car at the point of application.

**Q – I have a criminal conviction or caution - can I still work for the police?**

A – This will depend on the nature of the conviction or caution. You will need to provide full details to assist our vetting department in making a decision, via the applications process.

PLEASE NOTE: applicants must declare all convictions and cautions. Failure to declare certain details will seriously undermine an individual’s integrity and credibility and is likely to prevent them from appointment, regardless of the nature / seriousness of the incident.

**Q – I have previously been arrested but not charged - do I still need to declare this?**

A – Yes, you must declare if you have ever been subject of a criminal investigation whether this led to a prosecution or not. Failure to make such declarations will lead to your application being rejected.

**Q – Do I need to declare motoring offences?**

A – Yes, you must declare all offences including penalty notices. Your application will not be automatically rejected for minor offences; consideration will be given to repeat offending, behaviour, age, the actual offence committed and length of time since the offence.

**Q – I have a relative who has convictions - can I still apply?**

A – Yes. If your friends or family members have convictions, this must be disclosed. Your application will not be automatically rejected; consideration will be given as to how close the association is and the level of criminality involved etc.

**Q – Can I apply if I have been bankrupt?**

A – Yes, you can apply but only if it is three years after the bankruptcy debts have been discharged.

**Q – Can I apply if I have a County Court Judgment (CCJ)?**

A – Yes – if the judgement has been discharged, you can be considered. If you have an existing judgment, your application cannot be considered.

**Q – Can I apply if I have an Independent Voluntary Agreement (IVA)?**

A – Applicants with a current Independent Voluntary Agreement (IVA) will not be considered. However, if it has been discharged, and you have a certificate of satisfaction, you may be considered.

**Q – Can I continue with my other business interests?**

A – You must declare any other employment for hire or gain, or any other business interests that you intend to maintain, when you apply to become a police constable. A decision on your eligibility will be made based on all the information provided during the recruitment and selection process, and whether your business interests are compatible with performing the role of a police officer.

This also includes if you, or one of your close relatives, holds a license or permit relating to alcohol licensing, refreshment houses or betting and gaming or regulating places of entertainment in the force area.

**Q – I am involved in politics, is this OK?**

A – Police officers are not permitted to take an active part in politics.

**Q – Are there any restrictions on hair style and colour?**

A – Yes, when you begin your training you will be required to adhere to nationally set appearance standards. Hair should be worn so that it is cut or secured above the collar and ears and is neat and tidy. Extreme and vivid hair colour in unnatural colours is not permitted.

**Q – I have a tattoo can I still apply?**

A – We know some people like to express themselves with body art. However, anyone who has a tattoo and / or piercing which could be reasonably interpreted as offensive to any religion or belief, or is in any way discriminatory, violent or intimidating, will not be accepted. In line with the College of Policing’s national guidance we will carefully consider the size, nature and prominence of visible tattoos and piercings to determine if they are acceptable.

If you have a tattoo on your **arms, face, neck or hands** you will be required to submit photos with your application. We will assess all photos to ascertain if they are acceptable.

**Q – I have dyslexia, will reasonable adjustments be made for me?**

A – Adjustments such as more time to complete assessment centre exercises, ICT provision/aides to complete studies, and workplace adaptations can be made to ensure those with dyslexia are not put at a disadvantage on either the PCDA or DHEP. Adjustments will depend on the degree of your dyslexia which should be confirmed in a report by educational psychologist. We ask any successful candidates that would like adjustments to be considered to provide this report at their own cost.

**Application and Qualifications**

**Q – How long does the selection process take? Can I choose when I start?**

A – The process length varies – we strive to complete the process within six months but it may take longer. The process includes:

1. completing the application form including proof of eligibility and assessment of your competency-based questions
2. On-line assessment centre programme (if you do not have a current, valid Assessment centre score)
3. interview
4. provisional offer
5. pre-employment checks including fitness test, medical, references and vetting
6. start date

Once your checks are complete, we will generally offer you the next available start date considering your notice period. There may be the opportunity to delay this by a short time.

**Q – Will the applications process be adapted in any way given the current restrictions around COVID-19?**

Yes, so far as is possible we are business as usual, however under these uncertain times the force may be required adjust our approach and in these circumstances you will be informed of any changes

**Q – What qualifications do I need to apply to the PCDA programme?**

In addition to the general requirements to join as a police officer with Durham Constabulary, applicants for the **PCDA** programme are required to have the following:

* ​ A levels/NVQ Level 3 qualifications where the grades total 120 UCAS points or higher.

The 120 UCAS Points can be made up of several different types of level 3 qualifications. The UCAS calculator can help you identify if you have an equivalent qualification: [**https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator​**](https://www.ucas.com/ucas/tariff-calculator)

* If your Level 3 qualifications do not equate to the required 120 UCAS points, professional training or significant work experience may also be considered\*

\*Durham Constabulary will review a candidate's professional training and/or work experience in line with the [National Police Officers Competency Framework](https://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Development/competency-and-values-framework/Documents/Competency-and-Values-Framework-for-Policing_4.11.16.pdf). This will require you to complete the experiential Learning form as part of your application process.

**Q – Are there any additional educational requirements for the PCDA?**

A – Understanding of Maths and English are both essential to the PCDA programme. Candidates must therefore have achieved – and be able to evidence – at least Key Skills Level 2 in both subjects (equivalent of GCSE, A\* - C) – however please see following question

**Q – I don’t have the required level two qualification in English and / or Maths – what can I do?**

A –– Maths and English, GCSE A – C, 4 – 9, or equivalent, are part of the essential criteria. If you do not have these qualifications, you will not pass the initial sift and your application will not progress any further.

**Q – What qualifications do I need to apply for the DHEP programme?**

Y – In addition to the general requirements to join as a police officer with Durham Constabulary, applicants for the **DHEP** programme are required to have an undergraduate degree (Level 6), or overseas equivalent and the degree must include evidence of a written component.

**Q – What qualifications do I need to apply for the PPD programme?**

Y – In addition to the general requirements to join as a police officer with Durham Constabulary, applicants for the **PPD** programme are required to have successfully been awarded the Professional Policing Degree (Level 6) and the degree must include evidence of a written component.

**Q – I don’t have the certificates for my qualifications - is this OK?**

A – You will need to evidence your qualifications on your application and we require you to send a **copy** of your certificates with your application form.  If you are unable to locate your certificates please visit [www.gov.uk/replacement-exam-certificate](http://www.gov.uk/replacement-exam-certificate) for information on how to request duplicates or an accepted ‘certified statement of results’.

**Q – I’m waiting for the results of my degree qualifications - can I still apply?**

A – Yes, Durham will accept predicted grades\* for DHEP and PPD applicants (but NOT A levels for PCDA) and but would require confirmation of the grade and a copy of qualification certificate prior to being offered a position.

\*these must be officially predicted by the awarding university

**Q – I’m waiting for the results of my level 2 qualifications - can I still apply?**

A – Yes, you can still apply.

**Q – Do I need to pass the Certificate in Knowledge of Policing (CKP) before I apply?**

A – No, completing the Certificate in Knowledge of Policing (CKP) is not a requirement. However, if you have achieved this it will contribute to your overall UCAS points.

**Q – I’ve previously applied to be a police officer in Durham Constabulary or another force - can I reapply?**

A – Yes, however, if you have previously attended a SEARCH® / on-line assessment centre and did NOT pass, you will not be able to sit another centre within six month.

**Q – I am already part of the police family as Special Constable. Is this be considered towards the required qualifications?**

A – Yes - as long as you have at least 2 years’ service as a Special Constable who has achieved Independent Patrol Status and is performing minimum hours Suitability of your professional experience will be jointly assessed by Durham Constabulary and Northumbria University.

**Q – Is being a Police Community Support Officer also taken into account towards the required qualifications?**

A – Yes – as long as you have at least 2 years’ Police Community Support Officer relevant professional experience. Suitability of your professional experience will be jointly assessed by Durham Constabulary and Northumbria University.

**Q – What about Police Staff members - is their service taken into account towards the required qualifications?**

A – Yes - as long as you have at least 2 years’ service in a police staff role which is deemed appropriate by the Chief Constable. Suitability of your professional experience will be jointly assessed by Durham Constabulary and Northumbria University (see eligibility criteria above for types of role accepted).

**Q – I already have an application to become a police officer with another force - is that OK?**

A –You can apply to more than one police force/service at a time. However, you can only progress to the on-line assessment centre stage with one force.

**Q – I have applied to become a PCSO / other police staff role – is that OK?**

A – Yes you can have other live applications with Durham Constabulary, or another force, that aren’t for the role of a police officer. However, as the applications progress you will need to make a decision on which you would like to take further.

**Q – I’ve already passed the SEARCH / On-line assessment centre through my application to another police force, can I transfer my score?**

A – You will need to apply in the normal way and pass the assessment of your application form; once you reach this point, we are able to accept your SEARCH score.

However, you must have achieved an overall score of 50 % - with at least 50 % in working with others and 50 % in oral communication – as well as demonstrating competence in the written assessment. As evidence you must attach pages three to five of your assessment feedback to the application form.

For the Online Assessment Centre, you must have a received a Pass score and again evidence must be provided. This could be a confirmation e-mail from the Force you applied or from the College of Policing.

Please note scores are only valid for 24 months.

**Q – I have a student visa - is that sufficient for me to apply?**

A – No – international students are not able to apply.

**Q – Will you apply for a working visa for me?**

A – No - you would need to have status of indefinite leave to remain and work in the UK to apply.

**Q – I already work as Police Staff in Durham Constabulary, or another force, is the process the same for me?**

A – Yes, the recruitment and selection process is consistent for all.

**Q – What does the Recruit Assessment involve?**

A – The On-line assessment centre stage involves, a Situational judgement test (SJT), Competency-based video interview and Written exercise and briefing exercise

**Q – Can I claim expenses for attending the fitness test and medical?**

A – We are not able to reimburse you for any expenses incurred as part of the recruitment process.

**Q – What is biometric vetting and what happens to the samples I give?**

A – Biometric vetting checks will be undertaken on those candidates who have reached the stage of being considered suitable and are undergoing pre-employment checks. A fingerprint and DNA sample will be taken and checks made against the appropriate databases. The purpose of the searches is to determine whether:

* The individual has come to police attention;
* If so, whether that was under the identity being used for the application; and
* If the individual is linked to any outstanding crime scene marks or stains

Only one set of fingerprints and DNA sample will be required. If subsequently appointed, these samples will be retained on the respective police database for elimination purposes. For those not appointed, their fingerprints, DNA sample and DNA profile and all copies and records will be destroyed.

**Q – What does the drugs test involve?**

A – A hair sample will be used for drug and or substance abuse. For those unable to provide a hair sample, an alternative test may be utilised.

**Q – What does the fitness test involve? How can I prepare?**

A – The test focuses on aerobic capacity.  The purpose of the fitness test is to ensure that candidates have a basic level of fitness for entry into the police service.  You will carry out a shuttle run over a 15meter area and run in time with a bleep.  At the end of each level, the time in between the bleeps is shortened and you therefore have to run faster to keep up with the pace.  The recruit pass mark is level 5.4.  This involves running for approximately 3 mins 40 seconds.  It is mandatory that you maintain fitness for duty and to pass a fitness test on an annual basis. Failure to do so may result in your inability to complete your probationary period.

You can find out more about fitness tests via [this Google search](https://lmgtfy.com/?q=fitness+tests), and watch the videos to help you prepare.

**Q – How will you contact me through the process?**

A – Generally, we’ll contact you via email. If we need to reach you quickly, we may give you a call. Invitations to assessment will be sent via email. It’s important that you provide us with your correct details and update us if anything changes. It is important that you regularly check your spam or junk folder also.

**Q – How do I contact Durham Constabulary if I have any questions about my application?**

A – Please read through the information on our recruitment pages and these FAQs. If you are unable to find the answer to your question, please email [policerecruiting@durham.pnn.police.uk](mailto:policerecruiting@durham.pnn.police.uk) and add **‘PC Application – General Query’** to the subject line.

Please remember the process does take some time to complete and we are unable to provide specific feedback on progress of your application. However, we will keep you updated at key points in the process.