



**DORSET
POLICE**

JOIN US.

LOVE DORSET.

Opportunities to join Dorset as a police officer

Information guide





DORSET POLICE

OUR VISION

*A safe county
for everyone*

OUR PURPOSE

*Tough on crime
Keeping people safe
Putting victims first*

OUR PRIORITIES



Relentless pursuit of criminality



Exceptional local policing



Innovating, transforming and improving



Putting victims first



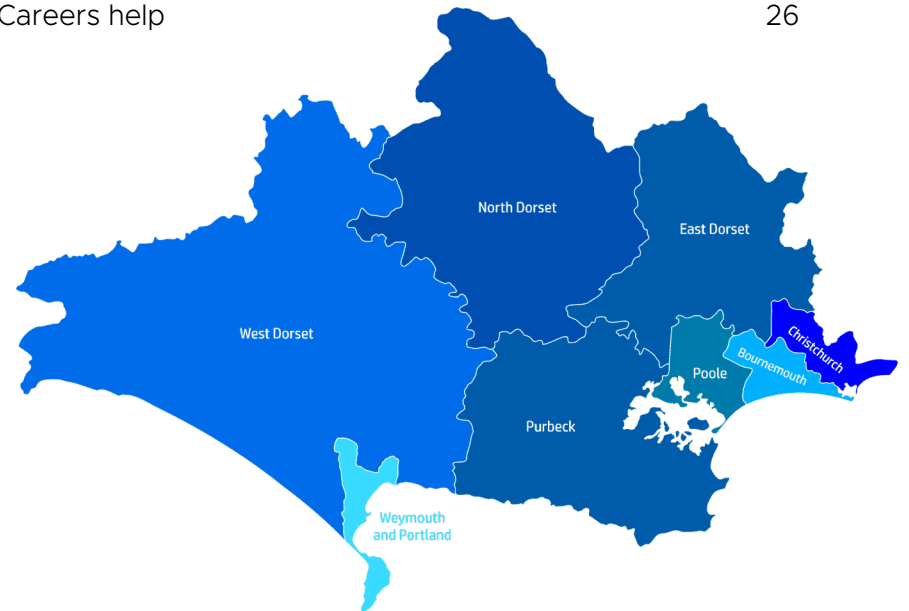
Ethical and inclusive



Enabling people to deliver excellence

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About Dorset and Dorset Police

Dorset Police covers approximately 1,024 square miles of land and a similar body of water off the coastline. Despite being classed as 93.7 per cent rural, the county includes an airport as well as seaports that serve internal and international freight and passenger travel.

Annually we provide a policing coverage for around 800,000 residents, which increases during term time with students from the universities and colleges. A further 11 million people visit Dorset each year for short breaks or holidays.

There's a lot of history to Dorset and we are no different. We were formed in 1855 and on 1 October 1967 merged with Bournemouth Police to form Dorset and Bournemouth Constabulary. On 1 April 1974 we took over some areas, mainly Christchurch and its surrounding areas, from Hampshire Constabulary and acquired our present name.

We are one of the safest counties in England, and as a member of Dorset Police you will feel a strong sense of pride in working to protect the communities we serve. Our staff are our most valuable asset and we currently employ over 2,700 people.

Our 58 special constables are fully warranted and professionally trained volunteers, who found the time to give 14,383 hours to the end of March 2026, and our fantastic volunteers, including cadet leaders, gave 8,967 hours up to the end of March 2026 in a variety of roles.

Our police family is made up of:

- **1,476 police officers**
- **1,355 police staff**
- **45 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)**
- **58 special constables**
- **128 volunteers, (excluding Community Speed Watch volunteers)**
- **1,292 Community Speed Watch volunteers**



Role of a police officer

As a Dorset Police officer, you will engage directly with our communities, businesses and visitors and will be responsible for ensuring they receive the very best policing service. We operate 24/7, 365 days a year as we strive to reduce crime and make members of our communities feel safe.

Every day is different for our officers and if you ask any of them what they love most about the role – this is invariably the answer you will get.

You have the option to apply to become a uniformed police constable responding to incidents on the frontline, or become a detective constable, investigating complex crimes like serious assaults, burglary and fraud.

You'll start your career within our neighbourhood teams, on response or within our Criminal Investigation Departments, and once you are fully trained you can apply for a range of roles across the Force. This could include firearms and the dog section, through to specialist investigation roles, including the Major Crime Investigation Team.

There are many benefits to becoming an officer, including:

- » A competitive salary with yearly increments up to £50,256 within seven years of joining
- » 25 days a year leave entitlement (excluding bank holidays) rising incrementally to 30 days following 10 years' service
- » Company sick pay
- » A competitive pension scheme
- » Comprehensive welfare package, including free access to our Employees Assistance Programme, Occupational Health and wellbeing services.



Entry routes

There are currently four entry routes to join us here in Dorset.

Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA)

- » Must have Level 2 (Grade C/4 or above) in English and Maths
- » Must have Level 3 (minimum - 32 UCAS points) OR 18 months' current service as a PCSO/call handler/special constable

This is a three-year, paid training programme to become a police officer from day one while earning a fully funded BSc (Hons) degree in Professional Policing Practice. It combines on-the-job operational training with academic study.

Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP)

- » Available for detectives and response constables
- » Must have a Level 6 Degree in any subject except Professional Policing Practice

This is a two-year programme open only to those who already hold a degree prior to joining the police. Entrants will work towards a Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing, which is an equivalent level to a Level 6 degree.

Professional Policing Degree (PPD)

- » Must have a Level 6 Professional Policing degree

This is a two-year programme where students will undertake the Initial Police Constable training.

Police Constable Entry Programme (PCEP) / Detective Constable Entry Programme (DCEP) for response constables or detective constables

Must have Level 2 (Grade C/4 or above) in English and Maths, and up to two Level 3 qualifications (equivalent to 32 UCAS points)

Or

18 months' current service as a police community support officer, call handler, special constable or service in one of the other accepted roles – these can be found on our Force Website: [Dorset New Recruit - Entry routes - Working in Partnership](#)

You don't need to have a degree to take this route or complete one as part of your training. Entrants will work towards a fully funded Level 5 Diploma in Professional Policing Practice. It is a two-year programme. After the two years, officers will be required to provide additional evidence of being an Established Practitioner via their PDR to demonstrate the additional Level 6 requirements achieved by the DHEP entrants.



Eligibility for new police officers

To ensure we give the best possible service to our communities, we are seeking the highest quality of candidates to become police officers.

That's why you'll need to meet the below set criteria before you can apply:

- » Need to be aged 17 to apply, but cannot be appointed until aged 18.
- » There is no upper age limit.
- » Must have lived in the UK for three continuous years.
- » Must be a British citizen or a European Economic Area (EEA) national, Swiss national, Commonwealth citizen, or any other foreign national who holds indefinite leave to remain in the UK.
- » Should not have criminal conviction or cautions; acceptance will depend upon the age and nature of the offence.
- » You can apply if you have a provisional driving licence but appointment is subject to achieving a full manual licence.
- » You must not be a current or previous member of a proscribed terrorist organisation or group.
- » You cannot apply if you have a current county court judgment against you. Where an individual is subject to an individual voluntary agreement, the Vetting Unit will need proof of six months of regular payments.

You can find more information on eligibility criteria here:

<https://recruitment.dorset.police.uk/resources-reference-and-faqs/reference-material/eligibility-for-police-officers/>



The training you will receive



PCDA
Police Constable
Degree Apprenticeship
3 years



DHEP
Degree Holder
Entry Programme
2 years



PCEP/DCEP
Police/Detective Constable
Entry Programme
(non-degree route)
2 years

All routes: year one

Classroom-based initial training
(6 months)

Operational training
(3 months)

Achieve Independent
Patrol Status

Assessments in year one

- Essays
- Multiple choice questions (PCDA & PCEP/DCEP only)
- Professional discussion
- Professional portfolio



Then independent patrol



All Routes: year two assessments



Essays



Professional discussion



Professional portfolio



Professional reports

- Essay
- Research project
- Report
- Presentation



DHEP finishes after year two



PCEP/DCEP in year three only have to provide evidence of established practitioner status, however they get their qualification at the end of year two

End qualifications



PCDA
Degree in Professional
Policing Practice

DHEP/DHEP DC
Graduate Diploma in
Professional Policing Practice

PCEP/DCEP
Diploma in Professional
Policing Practice

Recruitment process for new officers

Steps	Time this will take to complete	Detail
Step 1, 2 & 3	Two hours	Personal details, eligibility, application form, reasonable adjustments and accommodations
Step 4 & 5	1.5 hours	Behavioural style questionnaire and situational judgment test
Step 6	Two hours	Online Assessment Centre (OAC)
Step 7 & 8	Four - five hours	Selection day and fitness test
Step 9 & 10	Seven weeks	Medical appointment and pre-requisite checks (vetting, drugs test, references)
Step 11	Congratulations. Time to start your career! You will be formally offered a job and provided with a start date.	

Please see some helpful information below:

- » If you have previously failed the OAC you can retake this after three months, but only twice in 12 months.
- » If you have passed the OAC but there is a delay in your arrival into force, it will expire after 12 months but it can be extended at the Force's discretion.
- » If you have failed the Force interview you can retake after three months, but only twice in 12 months.
- » If you have passed the Force interview but there is a delay in your arrival into force, it will expire after 6-12 months depending on at what point you were put on hold, the reason being and any other changes i.e. changes to the Competencies Values Framework (CVF).



How we can support you

Online awareness events:

Our Resourcing Team hold online awareness events throughout the year to explain the entry routes into policing, the recruitment process and answer questions. Events will be advertised on the website and on social media.

Transferees:

A relocation package is offered to all eligible applicants where you can be entitled to payment of reasonable expenses up to £8,000. You can find out more about our relocation package here by visiting [Dorset Transfer - Working in Partnership](#).

Buddy Scheme:

We recognise the importance of supporting you through the recruitment process and that is why we run a Buddy Scheme for all candidates. Our buddies already work within policing and are here to help you every step of the way. You can select to have the support of a buddy when you submit your application or will be proactively allocated a buddy ahead of the Force interview stage.

Military leavers:

We are proud to welcome individuals from military backgrounds into our policing family. Transitioning from military service to policing is a natural and rewarding progression for many veterans. We know you will already hold many of the skills we require from our hardworking officers and staff and this is why we will recognise your military experience instead of other entry requirement qualifications. Joining Dorset Police means building on the values you lived by in uniform: integrity, respect and service. We have also signed the Armed Forces Covenant to support veterans and their families.

Police Observer Scheme:

You can spend a shift with response, neighbourhood policing teams or other specialist roles and teams to gain a greater understanding on how they contribute to keeping people safe. You can find out more and how to apply here: <https://www.dorset.police.uk/police-forces/dorset-police/areas/campaigns/campaigns/police-observer-scheme/>

Positive Action:

The Positive Action Team leads our vision to build a workforce to reflect the rich diversity and complexities of our communities by attracting the best talent from the widest pool of people. If you are from an under-represented group, our Positive Action Team can provide support ahead of and during a recruitment process. You can contact the Positive Action Team by emailing: PositiveAction@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

Support Networks:

Our networks help us to create a fair and inclusive workplace and support officers and staff in under-represented groups throughout the organisation. They can offer a safe place for members to discuss issues, meet new people, network and career progression. We have a range of networks including: the Disability Support Network, Dorset Ethnic Police Association (DEPA), LGBT+ Support Network, Men's Health Forum and Women's Inspire Network (WIN).

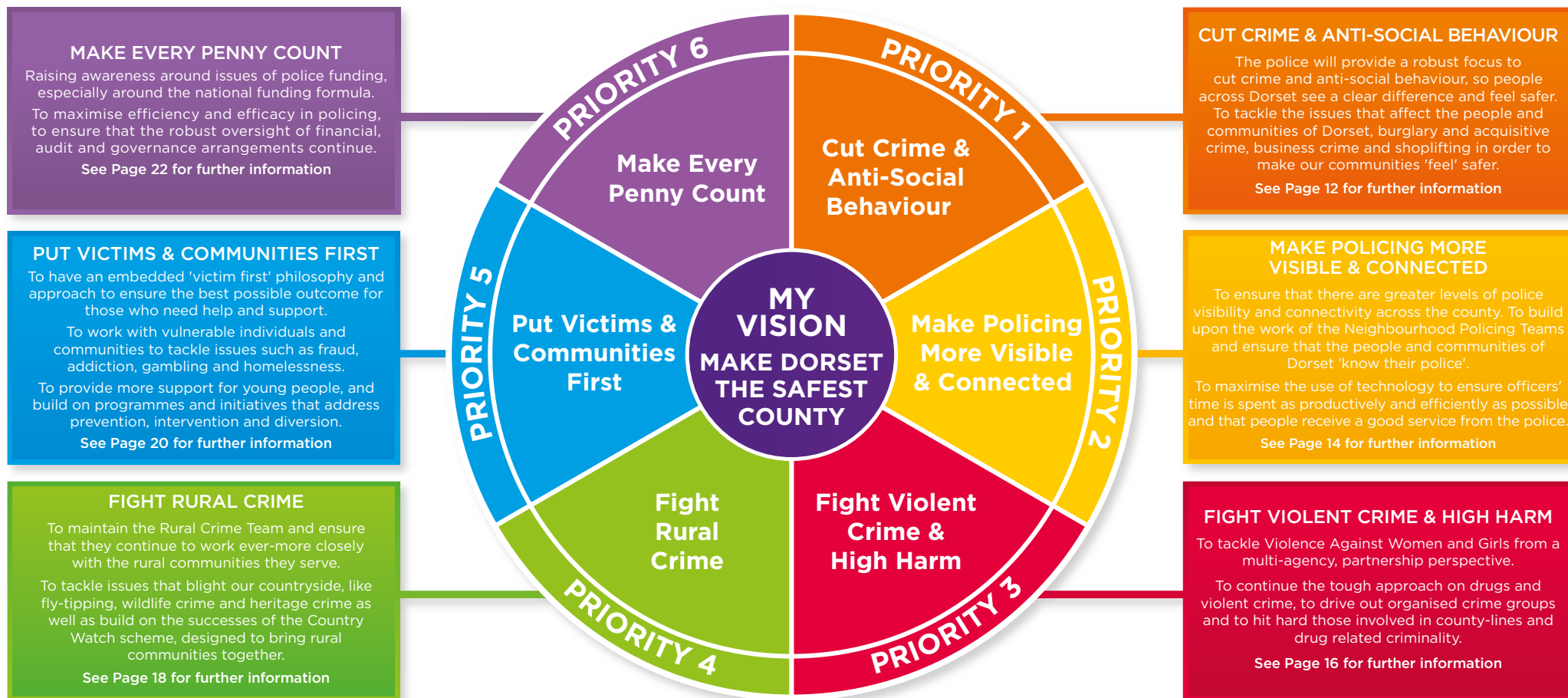
Federation, associations and unions:

Officers can also receive additional support and benefits by becoming a member of the Police Federation or Superintendents' Association. UNISON offers support and advice to colleagues working in police staff roles.

Comprehensive welfare package:

Supporting the wellbeing of our officers, staff and volunteers is a force priority. We offer a comprehensive welfare package, including free access to our Employees Assistance Programme, Occupational Health and a range of wellbeing services.

Dorset Police & Crime Plan 2021/29



MAKE **DORSET** THE SAFEST COUNTY



Being a special constable

If you are interested in becoming a police officer but would like to do it in a voluntary capacity, then joining the Special Constabulary may be for you.

Special constables are volunteer police officers who give at least 16 hours of their time each month to police our communities.

This volunteer role gives you the chance to work alongside regular police officers and staff, bringing your life skills and experiences to give something back to this beautiful part of the world.

Full training and support for special constables is provided. The initial training consists of 29 training days over 21 consecutive weekends, covering all relevant aspects of the role of a special constable, such as scenario-based public and personal safety training and a fitness test. Training is delivered between Winfrith headquarters and Ferndown police station, plus 40 hours of self-study is required to be completed at home.

You will then take part in assessed practical sessions and end of course exam to make sure you are safe and lawful to carry out accompanied patrol with a regular police officer. All of your hard work will be rewarded at a passing out ceremony at the end of initial training.

Once trained, you will have the same powers as a regular police officer helping to protect and support the people who live in Dorset.

The Employer Supported Policing (ESP) Scheme

The ESP Scheme is a great way for employers to play their part in making a real difference in their communities by releasing employees to volunteer to help keep Dorset safe.

As an employee of a company/employer who supports ESP, you would be allowed allocated paid time off to volunteer for roles within Dorset Police, including the Special Constabulary.

You can find out more information about the ESP here: [Special Constable – FAQ's & Entry Requirements - Working in Partnership](#)



Transfer to Dorset

We value the skills and diversity transferees can bring and are looking for police officers who have experience in a range of policing roles – uniform, detective and specialist – to transfer to our fantastic force and join us here in Dorset.

We are currently accepting applications for a range of transfer vacancies, which can be found on our website:

[Dorset Transfer - Working in Partnership](#)

There are a number of reasons why you should consider a move as a police officer to Dorset including:

Pay

Your pay will be in accordance with the national rates for your rank and service. You will transfer on the same pay point and increment date you currently receive providing there has been no break in service. You will continue to receive pay increments on an annual basis.

Pension

Under most circumstances, your pensionable service is directly transferable from one Force to another. So long as you do not have a gap in your service your transfer will remain as continuous service.

Annual leave

Any current or previous service is recognised for annual leave purposes, and you will receive a pro-rata entitlement upon transfer. You will be required to take all your current leave entitlement in your current force as it cannot be transferred, nor can time owed in lieu.

Every effort will be made to honour any pre-booked holiday/time off arrangements although this ultimately will be at the discretion of your supervisor.

Relocation package

Here at Dorset Police, we acknowledge the upheaval and cost associated with moving and are pleased to be able to offer a relocation package of up to £8,000 for officers transferring to the Force. The package is applicable to transferees who live beyond the force boundary and/or at least 30 miles from their future permanent place of work within Dorset. You can find out more on this on our website.

Flexible working

We recognise that our officers and staff have lives and families, and all of the commitments which come with this. Flexible/part time working is something we are proud to support, balanced with our operational needs.

Shift patterns

We operate a number of different shift patterns designed to meet operational requirements. If you are successful through the recruitment process, you will in your offer of appointment letter, be allocated a posting. Details of your exact station and shift pattern will normally be given to you during your first week of service.

Personal support and advice

Before you join, we can support you in a number of ways, including access to a buddy via our Buddy Scheme to help you with the application process and access to Positive Action. Once you have joined the Force, we have a range of support networks who are here to represent their members.

Career progression

We are keen to support our people develop within the organisation and we hold regular promotion processes to enable you to take the next step in your career.



Rejoin Dorset

If you've previously served with us or another UK force and wish to return to policing, you can apply to re-join as a police constable or detective constable.

We truly value the experiences policing offers and will work with you to understand your skill set and where you could fit in and develop yourself within Dorset Police. We're now open for applications and would genuinely like to hear from you. We are offering all candidates access to an application buddy, to help support you through the application process.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible, you'll need to:

- » Have served as a police officer with Dorset Police or another UK Home Office force.
- » Have successfully completed your probationary period.
- » Be currently living in the UK and have lived here for at least the past three years.

Selection process

If you're ready to come back to a career that makes a real difference, we'd be happy to welcome you.

Our selection process is simple – you're already an experienced officer and that speaks volumes.

Once you have submitted your application form, we will review this to understand your expertise and experience.

As part of this, we'll check you meet our eligibility criteria. If you met your day-to-day requirements in your previous role as an officer and were successful in completing your two-year or three-year probationary period, you'll likely have no issues here.

We do not conduct interviews if you have left either Dorset Police or Devon & Cornwall Police in the previous 12 months. We'll quickly guide you through our pre-employment process, including fitness, medical, drugs test, DNA/fingerprints, vetting and references.



Careers help



**Thank you for showing an interest in joining Dorset Police.
Have you got a question or want to discover more about joining us?**

We would strongly encourage you to attend one of our online awareness events advertised on the Force website. Alternatively, you can contact the Resourcing Team.

By phone or email:

Please call 01202 223825 and select the relevant option:

Option 1 - Uniform recruitment

DP-uniformedrecruitment@Dorset.PNN.Police.uk

Option 3 - Postings and promotions

alliance-policeofficerpostingsandpromotions@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

Option 4 - Special Constable recruitment

DP-CitizensInPolicingRecruitment@Dorset.PNN.Police.uk



JOIN US. LOVE DORSET.



If you would like to find out more about becoming a police officer and how to apply, please visit: [Dorset New Recruit Police Officers - Working in Partnership](#) or scan the QR code.

