



## Police Officer Questions & Answers

### Avon and Somerset Constabulary

#### General

##### **Does the police force only want young people to join?**

Anyone over 18 years can join and we welcome school/university leavers, we are also keen to encourage applicants from people of all ages and backgrounds and the valuable life experience they bring with them.

You will need a Level 3 qualification or equivalent to join the police and need good communication skills, enthusiasm, compassion, commitment and self-motivation.

You will need to hold a driving licence before appointment but not on application.

You must live within the boundaries of the Constabulary area by the time you begin your police officer training course.

**What are the working hours and are you only able to work full-time?** The normal working week is 40 hours and you will work a variety of shifts- earlies, lates and nights. You will have to work over night and weekends. The shift patterns vary, but you do get used to it.

Everyone can apply to work part time over a full range of shifts including night duties upon completion of the initial training period.

##### **Do you have to be really fit to join the police?**

You need a good level of fitness, but you do not need to be an “athlete”.

[Read more about the fitness tests on our website](#)

##### **Do the Police only want to employ white English people?**

We welcome applicants from all ages, cultures and backgrounds however, you must be a British citizen, EC/EEA national or a Commonwealth Citizen or a foreign national with no restrictions on your stay in the UK. We must also be able to verify your personal background for the minimum of 3 years leading up to your application.

##### **Do you need qualifications to be a Police Officer?**

There is a minimum requirement of NVQ Level 3 or equivalent to join the Constabulary if applying from outside of the Force.

You can find further information of the equivalent qualifications from the awarding organisation or at the [Gov.uk](#) website.

If you already work for the police service, the entry level requirement is either a Level 3 qualification or (at the discretion of the Chief Constable) the following experience and line management confirmation that you are competent in role:

- PCSO
- Special Constable – signed off for solo patrol
- Detainee Officers
- Detainee Investigators
- Call Handlers - past your first year's probation
- Dispatchers - past your first year's probation
- 101 Operators
- Enquiry Officers

### **What if I gained my qualifications abroad - I am still eligible to apply?**

Yes as long as the qualifications are from a recognised examination board are equivalent to a Level 3 qualification and you can provide a certificate.

If you are unsure - contact our HR Recruitment team at:

[policeofficerrecruitment@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:policeofficerrecruitment@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk)

### **Can I join if I have tattoos?**

Having tattoos does not necessarily prevent you from joining us. During the recruitment process, we will consider the nature, location and size of your tattoo in order to assess what impression they may give to members of the public or colleagues and whether they could reasonably cause offence.

Officers with tattoos are expected to take all reasonable steps to cover them whenever possible whilst on duty or representing the force at public events.

### **If I have a criminal record- Can I still apply to become an officer?**

Whether you can join will depend on the nature and circumstances of the offence. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

## **Cultural and faith related questions**

### **Do the police allow turbans or any other religious clothing?**

The police service respects individuals' needs, particularly religious or cultural needs. We try wherever possible to accommodate religious clothing for example:

### **If I am a Sikh and have a long beard -would I have to shave it off?**

No- but we do require all staff to keep beards and moustaches neat and tidy. We also consider the health and safety risks associated with a long beard; however, we can make exceptions for religious reasons depending on the role you have.

### **Can I wear a turban as part of my uniform?**

Yes, if you wear a turban - we ask that you wear a chequered band across the front which has the force badge on it.

### **If I am a Muslim woman- can I continue to wear a Hijab?**

Yes - if you were to obtain a role as an operational officer performing foot patrol, we would ask that you wear your uniform headwear over your hijab.

### **As part of my religious beliefs/culture I do not drink alcohol - what would I be expected to deal with as an officer?**

There are very few things that a police officer **MUST** do but one of them is that a police officer is under a **legal duty** to help expel anyone who is drunk or disorderly from licensed premises or prevent them entering once they have been asked to leave by a licensee etc. Additionally you would be expected to enter supermarkets and establishments where alcohol is sold.

## **Physical and medical questions**

### **If I have a medical condition; can I still apply?**

Yes – if you are successful at the interview stage then you will be asked to complete a medical questionnaire. At this point any medical conditions will be discussed with you by our Occupational Health Team. We will look to make any reasonable adjustments possible to support you to take up a post.

### **Can I join as a Police Officer if I have asthma?**

As long as your asthma is well controlled and you would not react badly to things like dust or cold air, you are physically fit and able to meet the fitness requirements on the bleep test/shuttle runs, you may be able to join.

**I have dyslexia; would this affect my chances of becoming a police officer?** We are committed to making our selection process and facilities as accessible as possible for all applicants and employees and will apply reasonable adjustments when we are made aware of any conditions for which we can make the relevant modifications.

### **Are there any eyesight requirements?**

Yes – Eyesight requirements are set out below:

**Distance vision with or without spectacles or contact lenses** – 6/12 or better with your right or left eye, 6/6 with both eyes together.

**Near vision with or without spectacles or contact lenses** – 6/9 with both eyes together.

**Colour Vision** – Poor colour vision is not normally a barrier to joining unless you are monochromatic (the use of colour correcting lenses is not acceptable).

**Eye Surgery** – contact the Recruitment team for queries following eye surgery.