

A career pathway in neighbourhood policing

Neighbourhood policing

The defining features of neighbourhood policing are:

- police officers, staff and volunteers accessible to, responsible for and accountable to communities
- community engagement that builds trust and develops a sophisticated understanding of community needs
- collaborative problem solving with communities supported by integrated working with private, public and voluntary sectors
- The combination of these features distinguishes neighbourhood policing from other broader policing functions. It is an essential part of the UK policing approach that aims to connect our communities directly and seamlessly to specialist policing services at local, regional and national level.

What roles are performed?

Each police force will often work slightly differently, as each community is different. Generally, neighbourhood policing teams are made up of **PCSOs** and **constables** who are supervised by a **neighbourhood sergeant**. Usually, an **inspector** oversees a neighbourhood policing area, although in some larger cities this may be a higher-ranking officer.

The focus of neighbourhood policing officers and PCSOs will be linked to force and local priorities. While having the skills to engage with communities and work with them and partners to problem solve local issues is key, the ability to focus attention on targeting issues such as serious youth violence and county lines drug dealing is equally important.

For PCSOs, a possible career route is to apply to become a constable but other roles are available too. PCSOs are often key intelligence gatherers in the local community. With these skills, PCSOs may want to progress into roles within intelligence. Problem solving is also a key skill of the PCSO, and other staff roles in crime prevention may also be a possible progression route. It is also possible to gain more skills as a PCSO and develop within the role. For example, in the aftermath of a critical incident, the role of a PCSO in engaging with the community and providing a two-way flow of information is critical to the investigation and management of community tension.

For constables in neighbourhood policing, there are many lateral progression opportunities. Constables will often develop skills in problem solving, partnership working and offender management. Constables may be able to add more to their role by undertaking training in public order, method of entry, searching, tutoring, disaster victim identification, CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) response, and more. This will allow them the opportunity to take on additional duties around the force.

Sergeants and inspectors will likely follow an in-force promotions process that will see them posted into various roles across policing. Neighbourhood policing is a great opportunity for those seeking promotion to work with partners such as schools, social services and local authorities, a skill that is valuable in any policing role.

Neighbourhood policing guidelines

The College of Policing have produced some **support materials on the neighbourhood policing guidelines** for frontline officers, staff and volunteers. You may find this useful when considering a move towards neighbourhood policing.

Exploring neighbourhood policing further

The diagram on the next page shows how you may develop in neighbourhood policing as a constable. As you can see, it is likely that constables will have some experience from other job families before starting. The opportunities to develop and 'bolt on' skills and qualifications are also shown. If you are looking at progressing through the ranks, you should look at the **National Police Promotions Framework (NPPF)** information. It may not be possible to progress through the ranks within a particular job family, as forces may assign newly promoted individuals or those in acting posts, in line with organisational need.



How your career could look in neighbourhood policing

