



Careers as a Police Officer

Your guide to qualifications, training and local routes

Liverpool & Merseyside | Entry Level to Level 3 | SEND-friendly options available



Why Choose a Career as a Police Officer?

- Keep people safe and respond to emergencies
- Patrol neighbourhoods and build trust with communities
- Help victims, witnesses and people who need support
- Investigate crime, gather evidence and write accurate reports
- Work with colleagues and partner services
- Paid from day one of training — every Merseyside Police route is earn-while-you-learn
- Many chances to specialise later, such as detective, dog handler or roads policing



Community policing includes listening, explaining and helping people.



Skills and Personal Qualities

- Honest, fair and respectful to everyone
- Calm when situations are difficult
- A clear speaker and a careful listener
- Able to solve problems and make decisions
- Reliable, resilient and able to work in a team
- Ready to follow rules, protect information and challenge discrimination
- Physically fit enough to pass a fitness test



Useful School Subjects

- English — aim for GCSE grade 4, or an accepted Level 2 equivalent such as Functional Skills
- Maths — aim for GCSE grade 4, or an accepted Level 2 equivalent such as Functional Skills
- PE — fitness, teamwork and self-discipline
- Citizenship / PSHE — law, rights, responsibilities and communities
- Computing — digital evidence, systems and accurate record keeping
- Sociology or Psychology — understanding people and behaviour

Merseyside Police requires Level 2 English and maths for its entry routes. Keep your certificates safe.

Local Courses (Entry Level to Level 3)

A public or uniformed services course builds fitness, confidence, teamwork and knowledge. It is useful, but it does not guarantee a police job and it is not the only route.

Entry Level / Level 1 — Getting Started

- **Greenbank College (SEND-friendly)** — Inclusive Study Programme — English, maths, employability and work-related learning (not a police qualification; ages 16–18, or up to 25 with an EHCP)
- **City of Liverpool College** — Sports and Public Services — Level 1 Certificate
- **Knowsley Community College** — Entry to the Uniformed Services — Level 1
- **Wirral Met College** — Aspiring Uniformed Services or Sports Professional — Level 1

Entry requirements: Usually few or no formal qualifications — interview and initial assessment. Knowsley asks for 2 GCSEs at grade 2 including English and/or maths.

Leads to: Level 2 uniformed or public services courses

Level 2 — Building Skills

- **City of Liverpool College** — Uniformed Public Services — NCFE Level 2 Diploma
- **Knowsley Community College** — Entry to the Uniformed Services — Level 2
- **Wirral Met College** — BTEC First Extended Certificate in Public Services — Level 2

Entry requirements: Usually a Level 1 qualification or GCSEs at grade 3. Knowsley asks for 3 GCSEs at grade 3 including English and/or maths.

Leads to: Level 3 courses — and keep working towards Level 2 English and maths, which Merseyside Police requires

Level 3 — Moving Up

- **City of Liverpool College** — Uniformed Public Services — Level 3 Diploma / Extended Diploma
- **Knowsley Community College** — Entry to the Uniformed Services — Level 3
- **St Helens College** — Level 3 Entry to the Uniformed Services
- **Wirral Met College** — Protective Services National Foundation Diploma — Level 3

Entry requirements: Usually 4–5 GCSEs at grade 4 including English and maths, or a Level 2 pass. City of Liverpool College also accepts a Merit at Level 2.

Leads to: Applying to the police, other uniformed services, or university

Hugh Baird College was checked, but a 2026/27 uniformed services course could not be confirmed — contact the college directly.

Apprenticeships and Training

Merseyside Police has four ways in. All are paid from day one:

- **Police Constable Entry Programme (PCEP)** — a two-year, non-degree training route
- **Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA)** — paid training that includes a degree-level qualification
- **Degree Holder Entry** — for applicants who already have a degree
- **Detective Constable Entry Programme (DCEP)** — a direct detective pathway, when recruitment is open
- Current eligibility includes a full manual UK driving licence. Age, residency, vetting, medical and fitness checks also apply.
- Search police vacancies: www.merseyside.police.uk/findyourbeat
- Search apprenticeships: www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk

Your route from school

Stage	What to do
At school	Work towards Level 2 English and maths. Build good attendance, teamwork and fitness.
After Year 11	Choose A levels or a Level 1–3 college course. Public services study helps but is not compulsory.
Build evidence	Try Volunteer Police Cadets, volunteering, sport, customer service or other responsible work.
Before applying	Pass your driving test (manual licence). Read the latest eligibility, vetting, fitness and medical guidance.
Apply	You can apply from age 17 — you will not start training before your 18th birthday.



Jobs, Volunteering and Work Experience

There are many roles in policing — in uniform, in investigations and behind the scenes.

Role	Where You Work	Starting Qualification
Student Police Officer (PCEP)	Response, neighbourhood and local policing teams	<i>Level 2 English & maths + manual driving licence</i>
Police Officer Apprentice (PCDA)	Frontline policing while studying for a degree	<i>Level 2 English & maths + manual driving licence</i>
Degree-holder Police Officer	Frontline policing	<i>A degree (any subject or Professional Policing)</i>
Detective Constable (DCEP)	Investigation teams, after uniform probation	<i>Check the current advert</i>
Special Constable (volunteer)	Volunteer police officer alongside another job	<i>Age 18+ — training given</i>
Police Staff / Call Handler	Control rooms, offices, custody, enquiry desks	<i>Varies by role — check advert</i>

- Join the Volunteer Police Cadets — a great way to learn about policing while still at school
- Volunteer with community projects, youth groups, sport or the Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Ask your school about work experience or employer talks with Merseyside Police
- Customer service or part-time jobs show employers you are reliable and good with people

Pay: Merseyside Police starting salary is £31,164 a year, potentially rising to £50,256 within seven years. Expect shifts, nights, weekends and bank holidays.



Next Steps and Contact Information

- Visit open days at local colleges and look at their websites
- Search police vacancies: www.merseyside.police.uk/findyourbeat
- Find apprenticeships: www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk

TAGS Careers	www.tags.careers — local careers information and resources
Colleges	City of Liverpool College: www.liv-coll.ac.uk Knowsley Community College: www.knowsleycollege.ac.uk St Helens College: www.sthelens.ac.uk Wirral Met College: www.wmc.ac.uk Greenbank College: www.greenbankcollege.org.uk
More Support	Speak to the careers team at your school or college