

# Working in Criminal Justice

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**This handout offers a starting point if you are considering a career in Criminal Justice.**

An overview of the Criminal Justice system in the UK can be seen at [www.gov.uk/browse/justice](http://www.gov.uk/browse/justice)

Some of the main sectors working with offenders, ex-offenders and their families are as below.



## Police

Roles include:

- Police Officer
- Police Community Support Officer
- Special Constable (volunteer)
- Support or staff roles (administration, IT, forensics, case workers, intelligence etc)

## Entry requirements:

Police officer recruitment is handled by individual Police Services. You will need to satisfy certain citizenship requirements as well as passing a series of assessment tests before being accepted as a trainee police officer.

You can apply to only one police service at a time and, if unsuccessful, you may have to wait a minimum of 6 months before you can re-apply.

Each police service sets its own recruitment process and selection policy.

Graduates can apply for the two-year work-based Degree Holder and Detective Degree Holder Entry programmes or for the [Police Now](#) graduate programme. They may also choose to do a Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA)

**For further information see:**

- [www.joiningthepolice.co.uk/](http://www.joiningthepolice.co.uk/)
- [www.policenow.org.uk/](http://www.policenow.org.uk/)
- [www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/police-officer](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/police-officer)
- [www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/detective](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/detective)

## Prison Service

The Prison Service is part of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, which runs most prisons, but some are run privately by organisations such as Sodexo, Serco or G4S.

Roles include:

- Prison Officer
- Forensic Psychologist
- Prison Education Trainer

### Entry requirements:

To work as a Prison Officer, you will need to satisfy certain citizenship requirements as well as passing background and security checks and give details of any previous convictions.

To work as a Forensic Psychologist or Prison Education Trainer you will need to be qualified in your field.

**For further information see:**

- [www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/prison-officer](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/prison-officer)
- [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-prison-service/about/recruitment](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-prison-service/about/recruitment)
- <https://prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk/roles-at-hmp/overview-of-the-prison-teacher-role/>
- [www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/forensic-psychologist](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/forensic-psychologist) for forensic psychology

## Probation and Community Rehabilitation Services

The National Probation Service (NPS) supervises offenders released into the community. Like the Prison Service it is part of HM Prison and Probation service. The local probation service is Warwickshire & West Mercia Probation Trust.

Roles include:

- Probation Officers
- Probation Services Officers
- Case Administrators

### **Entry requirements:**

- Relevant experience of working with challenging behaviour
- A Criminology or similar degree covering modules in community justice system, crime and criminal behaviour, penal policy, and the rehabilitation of offenders.
- If you do not have a Criminology degree, the required modules can be studied through distance learning prior to application.
- The Professional Qualification in Probation (PQIP)

Generally, candidates are employed as Probation Services Officers whilst undertaking the 15-month PQIP course.

### **For further information see:**

- [www.traintobeaprobationofficer.com/](http://www.traintobeaprobationofficer.com/)
- [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-probation-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-probation-service)
- [www.workwithoffenders.co.uk/](http://www.workwithoffenders.co.uk/)
- [www.bluelinejobs.co.uk/](http://www.bluelinejobs.co.uk/)
- [www.unlockedgrads.org.uk/](http://www.unlockedgrads.org.uk/)

## **Youth Justice Teams**

Youth Justice Teams deal with young people who get into trouble with the law or who are at risk of offending.

Job roles:

- Youth Justice Officer
- Assistant Youth Justice Officer

### **Entry requirements:**

Many Youth Offending Services will ask for qualifications in social work, probation or youth work as well as substantial experience in working directly with high-risk young people. If you don't have qualifications but you have plenty of relevant experience as a volunteer, you may be able to start as a support worker.

**For further information see:**

- <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/job-profiles/youth-offending-team-officer>
- [www.gov.uk/government/collections/youth-offending-team-contact-details](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/youth-offending-team-contact-details)

## **Gaining work experience to build a career in criminal justice**

It is important that you gain experience in the sector to demonstrate to future employers your ability to work effectively with client groups in the sector, and to find out for yourself whether this is an area which is a good fit for your skills and values.

You may be able to gain experience whilst studying or during vacations, or for a period when you have graduated.

Relevant experience could be paid or voluntary, with organisations providing support such as:

- Adult education
- Domestic violence
- Housing advice
- Mental health
- Mentoring
- Offender resettlement
- Prison visiting
- Substance misuse work
- Victim support services, as an 'appropriate adult'
- Youth and community work
- Youth Justice Services

Even if you are not working directly with offenders, you can still build experience working with vulnerable clients who may share some of the characteristics with offenders.

## **National organisations looking for volunteers**

[www.appropriateadult.org.uk/](http://www.appropriateadult.org.uk/)

[www.barnardos.org.uk/get\\_involved/volunteering.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/get_involved/volunteering.htm)

[www.doit.life/](http://www.doit.life/)

[www.nacro.org.uk/about-us/volunteering/](http://www.nacro.org.uk/about-us/volunteering/)

[www.partnersofprisoners.co.uk/get-involved-with-pops/volunteer/](http://www.partnersofprisoners.co.uk/get-involved-with-pops/volunteer/)

[www.victimsupport.org.uk/](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk/)

## Local organisations looking for volunteers

[www.bromsgrovebasementproject.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/](http://www.bromsgrovebasementproject.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/)

<https://citizensadviceworchester.org.uk/index.php/volunteer/>

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/support-us/volunteering/volunteering-for-citizens-advice-witness-service/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/support-us/volunteering/volunteering-for-citizens-advice-witness-service/)

[www.changegrowlive.org/](http://www.changegrowlive.org/)

<https://cranstoun.org/>

[www.kingstrust.org.uk/](http://www.kingstrust.org.uk/)

[www.maggsdaycentre.co.uk/](http://www.maggsdaycentre.co.uk/)

[www.onside-advocacy.org.uk/](http://www.onside-advocacy.org.uk/)

[www.stpaulshostel.co.uk](http://www.stpaulshostel.co.uk)

[www.wmrsasc.org.uk/](http://www.wmrsasc.org.uk/)

[www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/in-your-community/get-involved/](http://www.westmercia-pcc.gov.uk/in-your-community/get-involved/)

[www.westmerciawomensaid.org](http://www.westmerciawomensaid.org)

[www.worcsu.com/volunteer/](http://www.worcsu.com/volunteer/)

[www.yss.org.uk/](http://www.yss.org.uk/)

## Further information

- Careers in Law [leaflet](#)
- [www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles)

If you would like to book a careers appointment, please visit:

<https://worchester.targetconnect.net>

**myCareer**