

Apprenticeships in the Civil Nuclear Constabulary



What the CNC offers as an apprenticeship

New starter CNC Authorised Firearms Officers (AFO) based in England are enrolled onto the level four Non-Home Office Police Officer Apprenticeship (NHOPOA), delivered internally by the CNC's training team.

Apprentice officers also have the option to work towards achieving adult literacy and numeracy qualifications in the form of functional skills English/Maths. This is fully funded by the CNC.

Probationary CNC officers based in Scotland follow the same programme of work, to the same standard, but government rules on funding devolution mean they cannot officially do the apprenticeship. The CNC is in the process of securing curriculum assurance from the Scottish Police College, allowing them to certify officers once they successfully complete their work.

The stages of the apprenticeship



The NHOPOA takes up to two years to complete and consists of four stages:

1. Initial Foundation Programme (IFP)

The first 19 weeks of the apprenticeship are spent on the residential Initial Foundation Programme (IFP). The programme begins with a one-week corporate induction held in Oxfordshire where apprentice officers learn about life in the CNC – the Mission, Values, policies, and corporate structure. Apprentice officers then move to one of the CNC's delivery centres in Oxfordshire, Cumbria, or Caithness. During this stage, all accommodation, travel, food and refreshments are provided by the CNC, enabling apprentice officers to focus on their learning.

Throughout the programme, apprentice officers will undertake various forms of learning and assessment, including classroom, practical, and computer-based learning. They are constantly assessed throughout the training, and where required, additional support and learning interventions are provided.

The Initial Foundation Programme is divided into two elements – Policing Skills and Firearms.

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1A. Policing Skills

The Policing Skills element covers legislation (including crime and terrorism), powers, policies, and procedures. This includes key subjects such as the Energy Act 2023, the Equality Act 2010, and the Code of Ethics.

Apprentice officers are taught and assessed in observation and communication skills as well as their ability to problem solve, work collaboratively, and deal with conflict in stressful situations.



1B. Firearms

Apprentice officers are trained to the National Police Firearms Training Curriculum. They learn about each of the CNC's weapon systems and are trained to handle weapons in line with College of Policing standards. They learn about the responsibilities of carrying weapons, use of force, decision-making, and are required to successfully qualify with each of the CNC's weapons.

Apprentice officers are assessed in operational tactics (including Containment, Dynamic Search, and Method of Entry), Advanced First Aid, and Personal Safety Training.

On completion of the IFP, apprentice officers will be able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be an effective counter-terrorist police firearms officer, ready to be deployed to an Operational Policing Unit (OPU).



2. Portfolio of Evidence

At the end of the IFP, apprentice officers are posted to a nominated location where they take on their role as an operational AFO. They then have 20 months to complete a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate their policing ability.

The portfolio is aligned to the mandated knowledge, skills and behaviours listed in the NHOPOA and is designed to provide apprentices with the opportunity to demonstrate occupational competence across the standard. All elements are evidenced twice and assessed by the OPU tutors, as well as independently quality assured.

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3. Exercise Synergy

Delivered by the Professional Development Unit (PDU), Exercise Synergy is a mock assessment designed to prepare apprentice officers to undertake their End Point Assessment (EPA).

The exercise is conducted two months before EPAs and takes apprentice officers through each step of the assessment process.

The PDU works closely with the apprentice officers, offering guidance and feedback to help them develop their skills further. Exercise Synergy provides the apprentice officers with the opportunity to test themselves in a supportive environment, away from their OPU, ensuring they are thoroughly prepared for independent assessment.



4. End Point Assessment (EPA)

Apprentice officers are required to pass an EPA. This is independently conducted by Skills for Justice and will be the apprentice's opportunity to demonstrate occupational competence through a practical scenario, a 50-question multiple choice exam and a 75-minute professional discussion.

When apprentices pass all elements of their EPA, they achieve their accreditation and can be recommended for confirmation in rank at the end of their two-year probation.

Following successful completion of the EPA, apprentice officers will receive a certificate from the government. At this point, they have completed their apprenticeship and hold the rank of Police Constable. From here, they look forward to a successful career with the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and may consider pursuing promotion through the ranks or a specialist role, such as police medic, dog handler, or a member of the CNC's Strategic Escort Group (SEG).

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Who's involved and the role they play

Recruitment

The CNC's recruitment team works with candidates who meet the necessary entry requirements to guide and support them through the various stages of the application process.

Read more:

[The CNC entry requirements](#)
[The CNC application process](#)



Occupational Health & Wellbeing

The CNC's Occupational Health & Wellbeing (OH&W) team works with candidates to assess their medical suitability for the role of AFO.

Read more:

[The CNC AFO Pre-employment Medical Guidance](#)

OH&W assess the fitness level of all candidates to ensure they meet the minimum standard of 7.6 Multi Stage Fitness Test (MSFT). Apprentice officers will continue to have their fitness assessed throughout their career and the team is available to provide a range of services and education to support.



Training Team

Training is delivered by the CNC's training team and takes place across delivery centres in Oxfordshire, Surrey (Firearms only), Cumbria and Caithness.

The programme is delivered by CNC trainers, primarily in groups and using a variety of learning methods, with further development provided on a one-to-one basis as and when required. This flexible approach to training enables apprentice officers to have the best chance of success. The team also includes qualified Dyslexia Assessors and Mental Health First Aiders.

The trainers aren't bound to classrooms and ranges - they are often found delivering hands-on practical training in the form of realistic training scenarios.

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Tutor Constables

When an apprentice officer arrives at their OPU, they will be assigned a qualified Tutor Constable. Tutor Constables complete the CNC's internal tutor course and play a vital role in developing new officers.

A Tutor Constable will work closely with the apprentice officer, to help induct them to the OPU, provide frontline care, support them in gathering and approving evidence for their portfolio, and conduct regular progress reviews.



Professional Development Unit (PDU)

Following the adoption of the NHOPOA, it was recognised the CNC needed to provide an ongoing learning and development offering for apprentice officers' journeys to their EPAs. Intrinsically linked to this is the desire for the CNC to ensure all of its officers and staff receive continued professional development throughout their career.

Fundamentally, the PDU is the CNC's opportunity to increase operational effectiveness by offering a structured, managed and auditable system of learning and education for police officers and staff throughout their careers at their working locations.

The PDU actively engages with apprentice officers during Exercise Synergy, ensuring they are suitably prepared to undertake their EPA. Should further development needs be identified, the PDU works with apprentice officers to provide bespoke learning opportunities.



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Apprenticeship Manager

The Apprenticeship Manager ensures that every apprentice officer completes all the work they are required to, on time and to the expected standard. They support apprentice officers with briefings, reference material and guidance on how to complete and submit work and ensure they complete mandated tasks such as regular progress reviews with their line manager.

The Apprenticeship Manager holds the responsibility of preparing the CNC for inspection by Ofsted and maintaining compliance with the apprenticeship rules/regulations. They manage the process of registering new apprentice officers, withdrawals and achievers with the government, and claiming apprenticeship levy funding on a monthly basis. The Apprenticeship Manager maintains good working relationships with various stakeholders, including the Apprenticeship Governance Group.

Current status (as of 30 January 2026)

17 Achievers (have passed their EPA)

16 Awaiting results (have sat their EPA)

156 In progress (are working towards their EPA)



Overall, **221** people have commenced the NHOPOA programme with the CNC since February 2024. Only 14% have withdrawn, which is significantly better than the government target of 45% and an excellent outcome for our frontline capability.

100% of apprentices that have taken their EPA have passed on the first attempt.

10% of CNC apprentices are female and, whilst we are working to improve the gender balance further, it remains above the national percentage of firearms officers.

Find out more

Email: jobs@cnc.police.uk

Web: <http://CNC.jobs>