

PC Fiona White's career in roads policing

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'I always knew I wanted to drive the instant response vehicle'

Case study 2 mins read

Reasons for joining

When I was young, I was in the front passenger seat of the car my father was driving, he stopped to allow an oncoming police car travelling on blues and twos space to get by. What struck me about the police car was that it was being driven by a female police officer, she was wearing a crisp white shirt, was single crewed and there and then it had a huge impact on me I decided that was the job for me.

Before the police

I went to work for the health service for eight years and then worked for a national charity in their central office, while the job was worthwhile it was unfulfilling.

I was used to communicating with people having worked my way through college working in a fish and chip shop, a Methodist Home for the Aged and two city-centre pubs, one favoured by the LGBT community and one by bikers and, particularly the latter pub, taught me acceptance, great conflict resolution skills, and also not to take people on face value. I also brought with me a secretarial diploma and the ability to type at 40 words per minute.

Early career

I spent a great deal of time working on my own, going to rural locations and isolated road traffic collisions (RTCs). I learned very quickly to risk-assess calls knowing that if I needed help, it could be 20 minutes or so away. I also quickly learned that if I did need help, it would come, we looked after our own.

Career aspirations

In terms of career aspirations, I always knew I wanted to drive the IRV (instant response vehicle) which I achieved in 2002. By July 2005 I had got a month-long attachment to the traffic department and I fell in love with it. Having worked on an inner-city estate for six years, knowing every road and most offence codes off by heart I felt ready for a new challenge.

I applied for a permanent role on traffic late in 2005 and was informed I had come fifth in a pool of 10, and was put on the waiting list. I finally got the call in December 2006 and started in January 2007.

In-role training

I underwent basic training in motorway procedures, safe working practices and geography. I was trained in vehicle prohibition, weighbridge, tactical pursuit and containment, hollow spike tyre deflation system (HOSTYDS), field impairment and family liaison officer training.

I retire in just under five years and my hope is that I remain on the roads policing unit until that time. I have in recent months been seconded into the role of safer roads coordinator which has presented a completely new set of challenges.

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