

Shaping the policing experience for communities through leadership

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Making sure you're ready to take on a new challenge underpins successful career development

News 2 mins read

Temporary Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Leaper loves making a difference. Her role gives her the opportunity to shape the police service and the policing experience for the communities that she serves.

After starting her career as a response police constable in Torquay, Nikki applied for the high potential development scheme, a personal development scheme for police officers interested in senior leadership that was running at the time.

As part of her leadership development, Nikki worked on the inspecting regime for forces and completed a secondment with the Home Office before returning to her role in force.

Find out more about the [Fast Track programme for serving police constables](#) and complete the [high potential development tool](#) to see if the programme suits your potential and strengths.

'When you're ready to do a move or take on a new challenge, make sure it's right for you', Nikki advises. There's a range of support available to help you develop as a leader and to explore different pathways.

Nikki sat the [Police National Assessment Centre](#) and completed the [strategic command course](#) in 2020. Her advice is to ask questions and to listen to mentors because they can let you know what opportunities are available.

Really get to know yourself as a leader, get to understand your strengths, where your development gaps are. I know I don't know it all and I'm not afraid to ask, so I would say 'always ask'. I really do believe there is no stupid question.

T/Assistant Chief Constable Nikki Leaper

Hear from Nikki about her personal journey to senior police leadership and her advice to aspiring police officers and staff who are considering starting their own leadership journeys.

Video Transcript

I think also for me, what I love is trying to make that difference. That's why I am here in the role that I do. I want to shape the service and shape the policing experience for the communities that I serve and have the privilege to do so.

I joined Devon and Cornwall Police in 2003 as a response PC in Torquay, and during that time I applied for the high potential development scheme at the time, which meant that I was afforded the following year an opportunity to be the acting response sergeant.

I moved at the end of 2007, beginning 2008, to Review and Inspections, to look at some of our inspecting regime within force. And then in 2008, I went on a secondment based at the Home Office.

I did that for about 16 months. Meanwhile, I took my inspector exams and I was promoted up in London to inspector, taking on the joint operational head role, working with partners and services across the country.

And then in 2010, I was promoted to chief inspector of contingency planning, working on a big multi-agency operation that we have here every three years.

And then I took a temporary superintendent role working as the delivery manager for the strategic alliance, which is a programme of work between Devon and Cornwall and Dorset Police. I worked on there and gained my superintendent rank during that posting.

In 2019, I sat PNAC – the Police National Assessment Centre – and I was successful and concluded my Strategic Command Course last year, 2020. During that time since I've come back from the Strategic Command Course, I've been promoted to chief superintendent.

I've had some really good mentors and I would always say, you know, to get one. I think they are valuable and I've had a variety of mentors through my service, both inside and outside the organisation. Mentors can actually open up and tell you what's out there. I wouldn't have been on

the high potential scheme if it hadn't been a colleague who told me about it.

But make sure you're ready. When you're ready to do a move or take on a new challenge, make sure it's right for you, because lots of people give you lots of advice and it's trying to sift out the noise to make sure you know what direction you're going to go in.

I believe in what the College of Policing and the organisations before have provided, is actually really get to know yourself as a leader, get to understand your strengths, where your development gaps are. I know I don't know it all and I'm not afraid to ask, so I would say 'always ask'. I really do believe there is no stupid question.

I believe in a one-team ethos but I think if you know yourself, and you know your area of responsibility, not afraid to ask and just take some of that time out for yourself to reflect, I think, for me, are good foundations for progression for your business, and potentially your personal life too.

Find out more about [development resources for leaders across policing](#) and [career development](#).

Tags

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