**FCO - Frequently asked questions**

**What hours will I be working?** – Force Contact officers work a 6 days on 4 days off shift pattern which consists of two day shifts, two back shifts and two night shifts.

**How long will I be training for?** – The training programme will last for 10 weeks, with a combination of classroom learning, E-Learning training on our IT systems and practical training with tutors where you will be taking calls from members of the public.

**Do I need good typing skills?** – Force Contact officers will be trained to listen to calls and capture relevant information, sometimes under pressure, and type on incident logs sufficient information that explains the situation. This is because dispatch operators will need sufficient details to able to assess and dispatch police officers to incidents based on the quality of the Force Contact officers information, so being able to type accurately and at a decent speed would be advantageous.

**Where will I complete the training?** The initial training will take place at our training centre at Kirkleatham, Redcar, run by our dedicated Force Control Room trainers and experienced tutor Force Contact officers. On completion of this, you will then move to the Community Support Hub Control Room at Hemlington Middlesbrough and begin taking real calls.

**Will I have a tutor?** – You will have dedicated trainers throughout your training course and be supported by tutors while training. Once you have competed your training support will be provided by mentors and your line manager

**When will I take live calls?** – You will take live calls as part of the training programme and will take them as soon you feel confident to do so and with support from the training tutor team. On completion of your training, you will be expected to take live calls putting all your training and experience to good use

**What support will I receive?** – You will receive continuous support throughout your training from trainers, tutors and line managers, who will be available to help throughout your journey.

**What type of calls can I expect?** – As a call taker you can expect to receive a variety of calls in any given day, ranging from advice matters, to reports of crimes in progress, road traffic accidents, suicidal individuals, victims of serious sexual assaults or serious injuries, firearms incidents and everything in between.

**What other duties will I be expected to carry out?** – Force Contact officers will also perform a variety of roles in crime management, crime allocation, making appointments and other administration functions.

**Is there a probationary period?** – The probationary period lasts for 12 months.

**Will I be expected to know the law and legislation?** – You will receive a law input during your initial course, including criminal offences, domestic violence legislation and mental health. You will also undertake continuous professional development throughout your career, up-skilling your knowledge in relevant areas.

**What are the challenges of the role?** – The role of a call taker can be challenging, stressful and emotional. It can also be extremely rewarding. Force Contact officers will on occasions experience abuse or unpleasant circumstances. Working shifts can be tiring so applicants need to understand the benefits of getting sufficient rest between shifts.

**Are there opportunities to progress in Cleveland Police?** – Yes there are. Many Force Contact officers progress to dispatchers within a short space of time. There are also roles within the control room or within the wider organisation that offer variety and progression for those wanting to expand their horizons (There is a Force expectation however, that newly appointed FCOs will remain within their role for a minimum period of 12 months, to ensure skills gained are fully utilised in the core FCO role before seeking to change role).

**What type of person do I need to be?** – We are looking for calm, organised, resilient individuals who can remain focussed and professional no matter what type of call they receive. You need to be open minded and not judgemental, understanding the needs of others, offering empathy where appropriate. Good listening skills are essential, attention to detail is a must. We are looking for the best candidates who understand our communities and the challenges they face.