

Things to Consider Before Resigning from the Police Service

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Introduction

You may well be at a point in your career where you feel it's time for a change. In years gone by, a career in the police service was often thought of as a job for life. Few jobs exist these days where people can expect to retire after 30 years spent in the same organisation and even the police service is changing from how things used to be – although it doesn't take us to tell you that.

Since leaving the police in the past few years, the members of the [Blue Pathfinder](http://www.bluepathfinder.co.uk) team have had a pretty varied working life. Between us, we've run businesses, set-up and sold businesses, been directors in other people's organisations, held senior positions in charities, worked overseas or in senior operational and strategic management roles in the UK.

If you leave the service and jump into a new role which you like, the natural thing is to compare the good bits of it with the worst parts of the police service. On the other hand, if you go through some difficult times, it's easy to sit and reminisce about the good times you had in the police service. It won't be productive or beneficial for you to dwell on it too much.

Before you do move on however, from our personal experience, we think there are a number of things you should consider before making the permanent commitment to leaving.

1. Why are you leaving?

This is a very important question and it's worth you writing down your reasons and applying logic to them so that you can at least prove to yourself that they are genuine.



If you are having a bad time right now, well, we all do occasionally and there are things you can do to overcome a temporary issue. You can just as easily have a bad time in another job, which can be magnified because things won't be as familiar to you.

It could be that you have simply had enough. Perhaps you want to do something else with the remainder of your working life, maybe a new opportunity has presented itself or you could have received an offer from somewhere else. You must be sure what you want before you commit to leaving the police service.

As part of writing this document, we spoke to everyone in our team. The reasons why people left were captured in some of these snapshots:

“Reached a glass ceiling – nowhere left to go except out.”

“Lost my mojo for the job. I clearly need a fresh start.”

“Time to do something different while I am young enough – the job is changing in a way I don't really like.”

“Had an opportunity to do something else that I didn't want to regret by turning it down – never looked back by the way.”

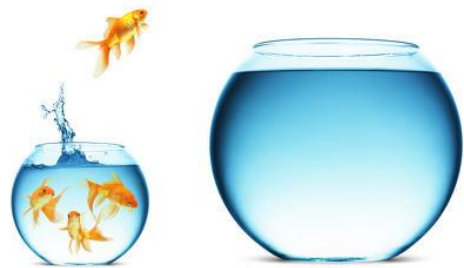
“The job is becoming impossible with the changes, cuts, outsourcing, bureaucracy – I just didn't want to remain part of it.”

“Not sour grapes, but I went above and beyond, more in my last 2 years, and realised I was just a number – so I want to take ownership of my future and am now in business.”

“I always wanted to work for myself one day and so we waited until it was financially right for me and my family. Leaving was inevitable.”

2. Does it require a change of career or maybe just a change of role?

Some people leave a job because of the role they are in without exploring the options of remaining. You may just need a change from your particular constabulary as opposed to a complete break. You could explore what it would take to make a subtler change of an internal move or a move to another police area if you think that may resolve how you are feeling.



The benefits of staying within policing are clear e.g. it's what you know, what you are good at and you will not have to drop down any pay scales or rungs of the ladder. You also have that guaranteed salary at the end of each month as you move towards your pension.

Whilst moving into the security sector would be a change of role, it would be subtler than moving into something completely different.

3. What skills, experience and interests do you have?

Before making up your mind to leave the police service, it's worth identifying what skills and experience you have and seeing how it relates to what it is that you want to do next. You may have gaps that you can fill with some further personal

development or training. It may be better to remain in the police service until you have completed some additional training, which could be in the form of study, courses or workshops that you can do whilst still earning a monthly wage from the police. There seems to be little sense in leaving to take a lesser-paid stop-gap.



Your time in the police service may have made you realise what you like and dislike, because you will probably have had quite a variety of work. You may like/dislike admin, working indoors/outdoors, working with people, flexible working, shifts work, travel etc. Give some thought as to the things you really like and disliked, so that it will help you take these things into account when considering your next role.

Finding something that fits your skillset, is reasonably straightforward to gain skills in and will be of interest to you is probably the obvious route to go. If you like the idea of being your own boss and starting your own business, then it's not only about having the relevant skills and abilities but also about your suitability for it, including your personality as well as your situation. We have created other documents in the [Blue Pathfinder](#) member's area for you to look at about business options.

4. Are you looking for something similar or a complete change of direction?

Jobs with similar skills and experience requirements will clearly be a better fit for you as things stand. There may be skills and experience you have forgotten you had or which you have taken for granted over the years. The things you have done in the police service can be just as appropriate for any number of roles so it's worth taking some time to pick apart your career and experience to identify the roles or events that are compatible.



If on the other hand, you are considering a complete change of direction, then do as much research as possible about the sector that may be of interest, particularly if any of the roles are unfamiliar, including finding out about:

Barriers to entry – What do you need in terms of skills, experience and qualifications to get into the industry?

Salary levels – What do they pay i.e. is it acceptable and affordable to you?

Culture – how different is it to what you have come from and how acceptable would that be to you?

Retirement ages and pension details – All too easily forgotten, but you should consider what could happen at the end of your next career move.

5. How much money do you need?

If you are resigning from the service then you are going to be walking away with nothing, so presumably, unless you have money to fall back on, you will want to avoid committing yourself to leaving until you have found another option.



In your search for your next role, as well as the skills, abilities and experience that you can offer, you will need to consider two basic salary questions: How much you ‘need’ to earn and how much you ‘want’ to earn. They will be two different amounts.

Once you have ascertained the two figures, you will have an idea of the salary range you can aim for to give yourself the best chance of landing the job that you would like, aiming for at least somewhere close to the ‘want’ figure but being prepared to take a lower paid job if you really like it.

6. What values do you hold?

It may be that you don't often pause to think about your personal values as it can be something we just take for granted. It could be that you don't have any particularly strong views. If you do have specific values that are

important to you, then any new role is likely to work out better in the long term if your values and those of the organisation you are thinking of joining, are more aligned. For example, if being environmentally friendly is important to you, then you may not be so keen to join a large fuel company that risks polluting the atmosphere.



7. What will you miss if you leave?

It's worth writing a list of what you are going to be leaving behind, including the more intangibles of the people you like working with, your salary, benefits and conditions. The point is to be sure that you are not going to be walking away from dozens of things that are really important to you.

If you have, for example, a great line-manager, interesting role, good salary and lots of great colleagues in a role that you enjoy, then clearly, the pull towards something else must be pretty strong.



8. What will you regret if you stay?

Are you in a situation where there is a train coming into the platform with your destination written on it and, if you don't get on it, that train will be gone forever? It could well be that you are in situation where you have to make your mind up quite soon. A job offer out of the blue or a business proposition perhaps? A



voluntary redundancy package that may not come around again? These types of things that require careful consideration are usually the one-time opportunities where you do not get a great deal of time to weigh things up and where, once committed, there is no going back.

Finally

If you are under no pressure to leave or make a final decision right now, you can work things through and weigh up your options with some careful consideration. If it turns out that now is not the right time to leave the police service, you can at least prepare yourself for some future situations where it would make more sense for you to move on i.e. if you save up some more money, complete a distance learning course or start a business in your own time as a trial.

If you are not sure about some of the above answers and would like to talk things through with someone who has been where you are now, then you may wish to get in touch with us at [Blue Pathfinder](http://www.bluepathfinder.co.uk) and we can discuss your option. There is a lot to consider - it's a major decision.