

Work to rule

The end of an officer's career in the police service can be the gateway to a whole new career in another profession or sector, as Tina Orr-Munro reports

Retirement usually signals the end of your working life and the chance to put your feet up. For police officers, however, the fact that officers on the old pension scheme can retire after 30 years on a full pension means it is not unusual to 'retire' before their 50th birthday. In fact, there are just 1,200 officers currently serving who are over the age of 55. As a result, some officers feel either too young to stop working or cannot afford to take a sizeable drop in their income. Whatever the reason, retirement can often be a gateway to a whole new career – as the following case studies demonstrate.

Former Det Sgt Norman Jones – now owns a company carrying out investigative research

The key to a successful retirement, as Norman Jones found, is to start planning for the big day before it arrives. The officer retired from the Met in 1995 after 30 years' service. During his service he worked in uniform, CID, the fraud squad, the Serious Fraud Office, the central murder squad and set up Paddington's drugs squad. He began planning for his retirement eight years before he left the police.

He says: "I knew I wanted to continue full-time either employed or self-employed when I finished. I even studied for a Business degree while

working on the murder squad."

Norman decided to use skills he learnt as a police officer to set up his own business – Howells Shepherd International Ltd – which today carries out investigative research in 100 countries. He says officers planning to work post-service may need extra external qualifications as their police experience either isn't recognised or fully understood in the commercial world.

"You need something more than just saying you've been a police officer for 30 years. I have a diploma in anti-money laundering. When I took the



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course, I knew more than the instructor, but I still needed that diploma as companies recognised it. "You need the necessary window dressing if you are to succeed," he says.

Former Det Supt Crawford Chalmers – now runs a security consultancy business

Crawford Chalmers, a former Met Detective Superintendent with 32 years' service, set up his own security consultancy, Resilience Business Ltd, when he retired. He agrees it is not enough just to say you have been a police officer.

"HR departments are looking to answer two key questions when they interview a person. Firstly, will they fit into the culture of the company and secondly, will they

add value to this company," he says.

"It isn't about the fact you've been a police officer, it is about being able to demonstrate all those skills you acquired during your service and how they match the job you are applying for."

In addition to his day job, Crawford is deputy director of EPIC (Ex-Police in Commerce), an organisation staffed entirely by volunteers which provides a

business networking service exclusively for former police officers. Its members are involved in a wide range of security-related work.

Although there is plenty of work available, says Crawford, there is also increasing competition from ex-military and younger people studying security-related qualifications. But retired officers continue to be in demand.

Former Met PC Ian Kerr – works as a motorcycle consultant

Met officer Ian Kerr retired as a PC in 2008 after 30 years' service. Most of his service was spent in traffic. Since leaving the police, Ian has travelled the world testing and reviewing motorcycles for numerous motoring magazines. He is also a motorcycle consultant, working as a test and development rider for a number of manufacturers.

"When I retired, nothing changed for me in that I carried on working. While I was a serving officer I began writing for motoring magazines. I also had a very forward-thinking superintendent who allowed me to study for various qualifications. I took numerous

courses at Hendon, but I also completed a whole range of City and Guilds qualifications, including motorcycle engineering and repair, motor car and heavy goods vehicle mechanics, and tachograph examination.

"Gaining those external qualifications definitely made me more marketable when I left the job, although I would say if you have Police Class I driving you will get a job.

"The hardest part for me is that after 30 years of being paid a monthly salary, I've had to get used to the peaks and troughs of working for myself."

www.wordsrider.net



Former Det Con Kevin Shapland – now managing director of a media company



Kevin served 26 years in the Met during which time he worked in the flying squad, NCIS and the racial and violent crime taskforce. When he left the force, Kevin set up his own PR and marketing company, Media Outcomes, which works closely with the public and private sector to improve their communications. Kevin also acts as a consultant to the BBC, and other media organisations. He also runs CJS Event Solutions, an events management company.

"I didn't have a game plan when I left the Met, but I knew I didn't want to go into security. I looked at the communications industry and simply spotted an opportunity.

"Officers have excellent communications skills. My own stood me in good stead when I set up my business as I was prepared to knock on doors, something other people in the sector didn't seem to do, but there is no substitute for face-to-face meetings. People buy people.

"When you retire, I think the worst mistake you can make is to keep going on about being an ex-cop. I think retired officers have a shelf life of about 18 months in which time they need to decide what they want to do if they plan to carry on working."

www.mediaoutcomes.co.uk

"Employers like the fact officers have excellent communications skills. They also tend to have a positive, 'can do' attitude. The police service gives officers great habits. I call it a diversity of competencies."

Among its services, EPIC offers retired officers a mentoring scheme including help with CV writing, as well as continuing professional development. The scheme has seen an increase in demand since forces began implementing the A19 regulation.



"The academy is never closed. You come out of the police service and while you are not starting again you may need to make yourself more marketable and that could include continuing professional development. "I know the thought of more exams is enough to turn many off, but we have retired officers doing all kinds of qualifications, including Masters. It does open doors," says Crawford.

For more information on EPIC log on to www.epic-uk.site-ym.com