

First recruits from 'Introduction to Policing Programme' complete probation.



Police Scotland is celebrating diversity as the first recruits from the Introduction to Policing Programme have completed their probation.

The programme – designed to encourage people from ethnic minority backgrounds to think about a career in policing – was set up in 2017 and since then, the number of ethnic minority officers recruited has increased from 18 in 2016/17 to 68 in 2018/19.

Superintendent Ann Bell was part of the Positive Action Team that started the programme. She said: “The programme is all about encouraging people from ethnic minority backgrounds to join Police Scotland.

“We must ensure we have a police force that reflects our communities and that is why the programme was set up.

“There are many reasons why people from ethnic minority backgrounds don’t want to join the police. This can be due to

experiences in their country of birth, a lack of understanding or fear they will be discriminated against because of their race or religion.

“The programme isn’t about giving people an advantage – it’s about giving people the opportunity to see what we do and ask us questions that might be concerning them.” “There’s still work to be done however this is a positive step towards reflecting the proud history Scotland has of being a diverse country.”

The programme runs over three weekends, giving potential candidates the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of Police Scotland, understand the selection process and receive an input from senior officers, probationers and specialist divisions.

Since January 2017, 275 applications were received from those who took part in the programme. Fifty nine applicants are now regular police officers and three special constables. Constable Henna Khan, based in Shettleston, completed her two-year probation on Wednesday 26 June 2019 after attending the programme in 2017.

She is one of only three people within Police Scotland who speaks Pashto, one of the most widely spoken languages in Afghanistan.

She said: “I was lucky because my parents were very supportive but it can be difficult to encourage people from different cultures to consider policing as a career option. For some cultures it’s not seen as a reputable job and it can be particularly hard for women who might not have anyone to support them.

“Since I’ve been in the job, I’ve been approached by people who have told me they’d always wanted to join the police but didn’t know anyone who had. I don’t want to say I’m a role model but I’m proud that people can look up to me and use me as an example.”

Constable Khan was born in Afghanistan and moved to Scotland when she was six-years-old. Her first language is Pashto, followed by English and Urdu.

Within a few months of starting her probation, she was called out to a domestic incident where the victim didn't speak English.

Constable Khan said: "The woman was surprised when I asked if she spoke Pashto and I was able to speak to her. Normally we would use an interpreter but this can take time and quite often the interpreter is male, so it makes a difference being able to build that instant rapport."

The Positive Action Team held an event at the Scottish Police College in Fife on Thursday 27 June 2019 where the officers who completed their probation were given certificates alongside family and friends. The event was opened with a piper and Dhol drums followed by speeches from key speakers including Chief Constable Iain Livingstone.