



Stage 2 – The Telephone Interview

General information

The telephone interview is a screening process, and there is more to telephone interview etiquette than you might expect.

You'll be answering questions under a strict time limit and this can increase nerves. Not being able to see the interviewer also presents its own difficulties, as you're unable to gauge their response.

The telephone interview is pre-scheduled and you will have a choice of appointment times to select the most convenient time for you.

Your interview will last for approximately 20 - 30 minutes.

You will be provided with your result 5 days after your interview.

Your telephone interview will focus on your motivation for wanting to be Special Constable, commitment to the role and knowledge about the role/force.

How to Prepare

You may not be confident about speaking on the telephone and you may feel uncomfortable. However, if you prepare in advance this shouldn't affect your performance.

- Just like in any other interview situation you need to research the police service, the organisation and the job.
- Visit websites, such as Leicestershire Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and the College of Policing. There are numerous Twitter and Facebook pages that relate to Leicestershire Police and their various Neighbourhood Policing Areas. Keep informed of national police and crime issues through reading relevant journals and news articles.
- To increase your confidence when talking over the phone ask family or friends to call you for a mock interview. Treat this practise as the real thing. Try recording yourself and listening back to get a feel for how you come across over the phone.
- A member of the HR team will conduct the telephone interviews. When answering the call, you need to be professional and upbeat. You have pre-arranged your interview time so don't be caught off guard when the phone rings. Make sure that your mobile phone is set to receive private and withheld numbers. Ensure that it is fully charged and not left on silent mode.
- It is important to remember that this is not an informal chat with a friend. Answer with 'Good morning/good afternoon, (your name) speaking.' Avoid using slang or informal language and maintain this professional tone throughout the interview.
- When answering questions be aware of the pace of your speech. Time is limited but don't rush or mumble, despite your nerves. Be succinct and to the point.

Your responses need to demonstrate your knowledge of, and enthusiasm for the role. One of the downsides to telephone interviews is that without visual clues from the interviewer it can be hard to gauge how you are doing. In a face-to-face interview you are able to take direction from the employer's body language and visual responses but this is not possible over the phone. When you

are being interviewed in person you are also able to smile and nod to show the interviewer that you are engaged.

During the interview use interjections such as 'Ok', 'I see' and 'I understand' to let the interviewer know you're listening. However, be careful not to interrupt them when they're talking.

Pick a suitable location - This is really important. Avoid noisy, public spaces and instead opt for a private, quiet location such as your home. If you live with family or friends warn them in advance of the call that you need some peace. Minimise background noise by closing windows and turning off televisions or radios. Ensure your mobile is charged and receiving full reception, use a landline. Turn electronic devices to silent to avoid distraction.

Dress to impress - It may sound strange as the recruiter can't see you, but dress for an interview. You shouldn't treat telephone interviews any differently than face-to-face interviews and you wouldn't turn up to meet a potential employer in your pyjamas. Dressing for the part helps to put you in a professional frame of mind and boosts confidence.

Stand up and smile - Smile to ensure that the interviewer hears the enthusiasm in your voice from the start. To convey energy and confidence take the call standing up. At the very least make sure that you're sat upright at a table.

Refer to your notes - Being able to have application documents and notes to hand is one of the main advantages of a telephone interview, but don't rely on them too heavily. The employer will hear if you're rustling papers and will be able to tell if you're reciting answers from pre-prepared notes. Instead of reams of paper use concise bullet points as prompts.

Have a glass of water nearby - Interview nerves and lots of talking can lead to dry mouth, not ideal when you're trying to eloquently express yourself.

Don't be afraid to ask for clarification - If you miss a particular question don't try to second guess what it might have been. Apologise and politely ask the interviewer if they can repeat it.

Take notes - If you're able to multitask jot down any useful information provided by the employer and the questions you're asked during the interview. These notes could be a valuable resource if you're invited for a second interview.

Following up an interview – Don't end the interview with a polite thank-you and then hang up. Just like in face-to-face interviews employers expect you to have a couple of questions of your own. These could be about the role or the company.

After the Interview

You will hear back from HR within 5 days. If you've been unsuccessful on this occasion use this as a chance to ask for feedback on your performance so you can use the lessons learned in future applications.

Good luck, and remember, "Research and Practice!"