

**Tell me about the work you do at West Midlands Police and your current roles.**

My current role is Commander for Solihull Police, which I have been doing since October 2016. Prior to that, I was working in Birmingham as the lead for Local Policing on East Birmingham. As a senior police officer, I also undertake several force level roles (covering the West Midlands area), which include 'Tactical Firearms Commander', 'Public Order Commander' and lead for Burglary.

**What inspired you to go into the police service and law enforcement?**

Prior to joining the force, I was in the Royal Navy for 6 years. It was never my childhood ambition to join the Police, but I got to a point where I wanted to do a job that was varied, exciting and allowed me to serve the public. One of my bosses in the Navy suggested that I might want to consider the police, so I did my research and applied. It's by far the best decision I ever made. It's often said that Policing is a vocation and not a job; I wouldn't want to do anything else. I see my role as a privilege and feel honoured to have served various communities for over 23 years.

**What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them?**

Being from a minority community certainly offers its fair share of challenges. The service has matured massively when it comes to diversity and a good deal of this was prompted by the McPherson enquiry, which looked into various aspects of the service following the death of Stephen Lawrence in 1993. The large majority of officers and public embrace diversity, but on occasion (as a BME officer) you are acutely reminded that you are different. My take is that as individuals, teams and organisations, you should embrace that difference and use it to your advantage. As an organisation, we need to better reflect the communities we serve. Throughout my career I have been a solid advocate of leading by example and embracing our core values.

**What are the 3 most important things you've learnt throughout your career?**

- A) Know what you stand for and never compromise your values.
- B) Don't let what you can't do stop you from doing what you can do. We all have something to offer, the trick is to know where you fit.
- C) Resilience. Never give up and strive for continuous improvement. Every day is a school day!

**Who has been your biggest inspiration/role model to date?**

Mohammed Ali. Ambitious, inspirational and followed his dreams in the face of adversity.

**I read that West Midlands Police has one of the highest numbers of BME staff in the country, what has been the key to this success?**

The simple answer is that we have a larger pool of diversity to choose from due to the demographic makeup of the West Midlands. In addition WMP has a strong positive action stance and routinely runs programmes to attract recruits from all backgrounds. At present, about 9% of our police officers are from BME communities, against a population of over 35%, so we still have a long way to go. Our current Chief

Constable, David Thompson, is willing to challenge the norms and brings a very new and fresh perspective to recruitment.

**What advice would you give to anyone considering a career in the police service?**

Learn what you can about the role from serving officers within various roles and positions. It's not all like what the media and TV portrays!