

A career pathway investigating serious and complex crime

What is an investigation?

The Code of Practice to the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA) defines a criminal investigation as:

‘An investigation conducted by police officers with a view to it being ascertained whether a person should be charged with an offence, or whether a person charged with an offence is guilty of it.’

Factors that may identify an offence as serious and complex include those that:

- involve the use of violence, including the use of weapons and firearms
- are sexual assaults
- involve physiological trauma or impact
- result in substantial financial gain
- cause substantial financial loss to the victim
- are conducted by a large number of persons in pursuit of a common purpose

All police officers and some police staff are investigators and have a responsibility to investigate crimes according to the level of learning and development they have received. The **Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP)** defines four levels of investigator according to the seriousness of the criminality, and provides an integrated learning and development programme for each role within the four levels (**see Investigation career pathway model**).

What do investigators do?

Investigators conducting serious and complex PIP 2 investigations, also known as detectives, will impartially follow all reasonable lines of enquiry to gather material that will point either towards or away from a suspect. This process may result in the suspect being prosecuted in the courts, an out-of-court disposal, community resolution or no further action being taken.

In many cases, despite best efforts, an investigation will not find enough material to make a charging decision. This may be because the offender has left very little evidence or because there are no viable lines of enquiry to pursue. In these cases, it is still important to record the outcome of the investigation accurately for intelligence purposes. This will help the police service to identify crime patterns and take proactive action to reduce risk and prevent further crimes.

Using an investigative mind-set, investigators will plan, understand, examine, record and evaluate the material they gather, including victim and witness accounts. They will use technical and scientific experts to maximise evidential opportunities. An effective investigation and case management processes will support the criminal justice system to achieve successful outcomes.

Throughout the investigation and criminal justice process, victims, witnesses and suspects should be supported according to their diverse needs, allowing them to give their best evidence. Any risks should be effectively managed and they should be directed to appropriate support services.

What roles are available in serious and complex crime investigation?

The majority of serious and complex investigators will work in a crime investigation department investigating a broad range of criminal offences. However, there are a number of specialisms in this role that investigators could follow. These include working in a public protection unit investigating child abuse or rape and sexual offences, and supporting major crime investigation as a specialist interviewer, interview adviser, outside enquiry officer or family liaison officer. Investigators could also specialise digital media or cyber investigation, fraud or financial investigation.

This is just a flavour of the diverse roles within the serious and complex crime world.



What are the career progression opportunities?

As a serious and complex investigator at PIP 2, you will have already developed your career from that of a police constable or police staff investigator at PIP 1.

You now have the opportunity to develop your career further within the investigation world, with many investigators progressing to supervisory or management roles, aspiring to be a senior investigating officer or strategic investigator. Many serious and complex investigators, however, go on to develop their specialist knowledge at PIP 2, for example, as a child abuse investigator or as a digital media investigator. Many police officer investigators may consider future promotion opportunities and roles within the uniform aspects of policing, such as response, roads or neighbourhood.

Exploring serious and complex investigation further

The diagram on the next page shows how you might develop as a serious and complex investigator, whether you are a constable or a member of police staff.

You can see that it is likely that a constable or a member of police staff will have some experience from other job families, as well as being an investigator at PIP 1. However, it is also possible that you come straight into the role as a serious and complex investigator through a direct-entry detective or fast-track route. A member of police staff may also be directly employed into a PIP 2 investigator role. The opportunities to develop 'bolt on' skills and qualifications are also shown.

If, as a police constable PIP 2 investigator, you are looking to progress further through the police ranks, you should look at the **National Police Promotion Framework (NPPF)** information. It may not be possible to progress through ranks within a particular job family, as forces may assign newly promoted individuals or those in acting posts, in line with organisational need. Police staff should also consider career progression and look for promotion development opportunities with their chosen job family.

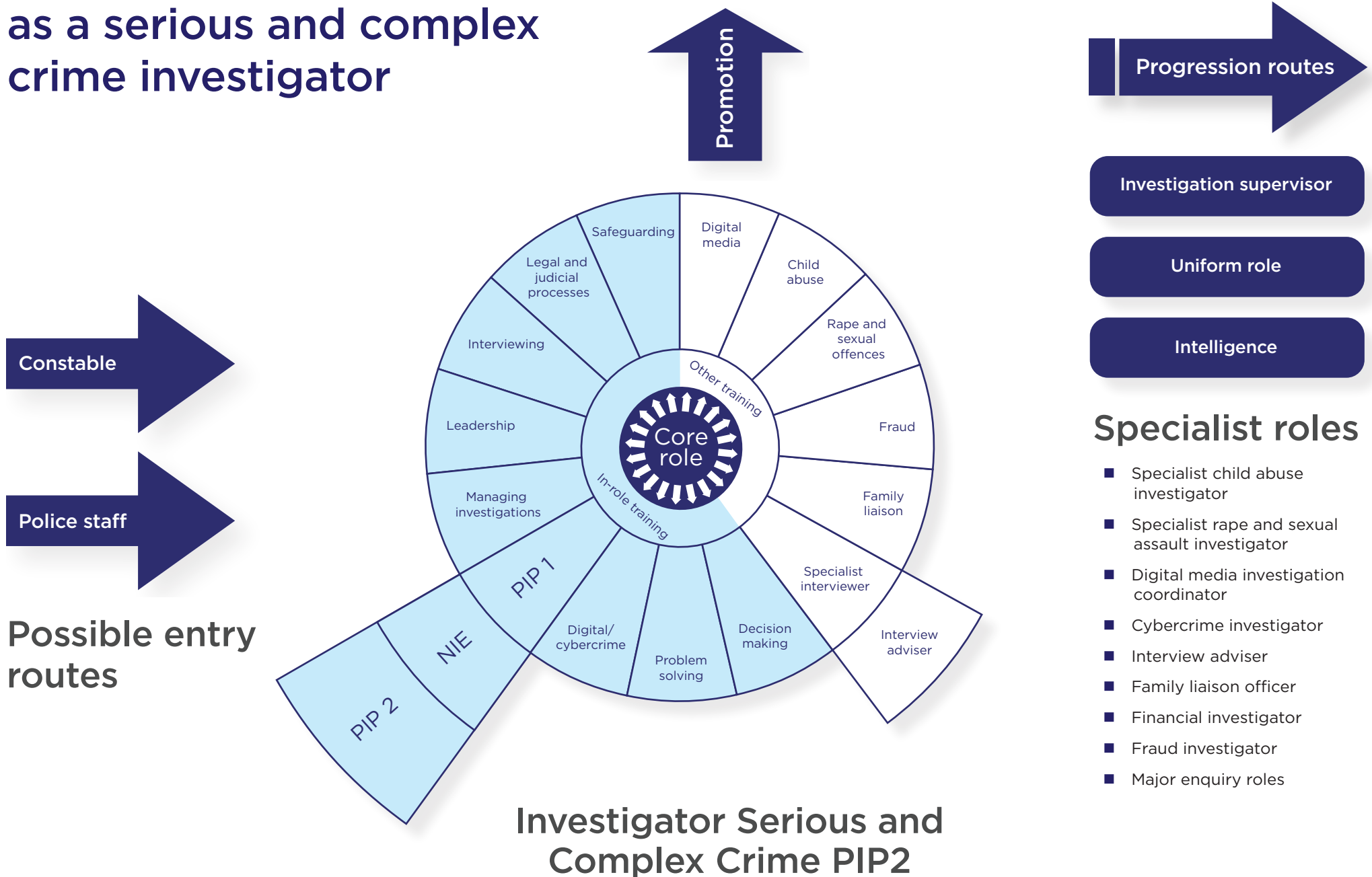
Flowchart appendix

- **PIP (Professionalising Investigation Programme)** provides a developmental pathway that includes consistent registration, examination, training, workplace assessment and certification to a national standard at each level.
- The NIE (National Investigators Exam) is a gateway exam to PIP 2 learning.

Please refer to the **Investigation career pathway flow chart** to see broader career progression and promotion development opportunities.

Investigator Volume and Priority Crime (PIP 1)
Investigator Serious and Complex Crime (PIP 2)
Investigative Supervisor (PIP 2)
Investigative Manager (PIP 2)
SIO Major Crime (PIP 3)
SIO Serious and Organised Crime (PIP 3)
Strategic Investigator (PIP 4)

How your career could look as a serious and complex crime investigator



Investigation career pathway

