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I worked as a police officer in Leeds for most of my life. In 1970, off I went as a fresh-faced recruit to the police training college. I'll tell you now, it was really hard. The drill sergeant met you off the bus, and his main objective was to make

you turn round and get back on that bus. He was so intimidating, shouting at you, because he needed to clear out any weak ones. The old 'drill pigs' were brilliant at it, incredibly strong characters who built your strength of character by

making you experience intimidation, but in a controlled way - so that you learnt to deal with aggression in a controlled way yourself. As the course progressed, you got closer and closer to this drill pig, and there was such a bond by the end of the course, that he'd be walking round with his chest stuck out and his arm round you, saying, "These are my boys."

I was posted to Chapeltown, which was a very troubled area. But there was no doubling up then - you were on your own and you had to learn to talk yourself out of trouble. There were riots, but we had no rioting equipment, it



was just bin lids. Later I joined the vice squad in Chapeltown, and you got paid to go into pubs and clubs! You needed to be close to your informants, and build a rapport and an understanding with them, so you could get a heads-up on what might kick off. You had to be very professional to stand above it all, and never get too close.

For the last eight years I was in the Firearms and Major Crime Search Team, and we worked with the VIP Protection Unit, protecting the royals, among others - for which I got an invite to a garden party by the Queen!

I retired from the police service, but I was too young for retirement so I applied for this job and got it. When I came here in 2001, there was one security officer and 13 CCTV cameras for the whole site. Now there are six security patrol officers working 24/7, and 130 CCTV cameras! York Hospital is a flagship site for security - we've reduced crime by 70%.

Dress and deportment are very important in the police service, and very important to me. I find it a bit difficult that some managers don't polish their shoes! When patients come here they want to see someone who looks the part, then they know they'll be treated professionally. My staff are often the first and last people that patients see when they come here - so I make sure they've got a smile on their face and look the part to inspire confidence. We recruit security staff on their ability to communicate, their humour, compassion. We like to see a bit of character. All the qualities you would

want your granny to experience if she started to kick off after a gin and tonic. Laying hands on people is a very, very last resort. In a way, they're just like community police officers on the beat.

Three of the lads did the Three Peaks Challenge for Macmillan, and one went on Outward Bound with some of the A&E staff. So the security team here feel an ownership - they are part of the hospital family.

