



Information about becoming a Special Constable

If you would like to gain invaluable experience and support Devon & Cornwall Police in making your area safer join us as a Special Constable



Devon & Cornwall Police

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Welcome

Becoming a Special Constable (volunteer police officer) is your chance to give something back to your community. Everything you do will be centred on looking after the community, from businesses and residents to tourists, football supporters and motorists. And you'll be a vital and valued part of making Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly safer.

In terms of a volunteering opportunity, there's simply nothing else like it. Special Constables work on the front line with regular police officers as a visible reassuring presence. As a Special Constable you will tackle a range of policing issues, whether that be attending incidents, taking part in specialist operations or routine patrols. The role allows you to support and help resolve issues for the people of Devon and Cornwall, not to mention learning new skills and gaining experience that could enhance your career prospects in the future.

You just need to be able to work a minimum of 16 hours each month. You should have the same personal qualities as our regular officers, the most important of which is the desire to give something back to the community. You can be from any walk of life, as long as you are over 18.

Use these pages to find out more about being a Special Constable with Devon & Cornwall Police and details of how to apply. If you have any general queries please email: SpecialsRecruitment@DevonAndCornwall.pnn.police.uk

Marc Kastner-Walmsley
Specials Chief Officer

Devon & Cornwall Police Vision Statement

We believe that the Special Constabulary is an integral part of the wider policing family, providing a flexible, visible, responsive and committed resource which assists us to improve service delivery and find solid solutions to crime and disorder problems. We are committed to supporting the recruitment, training and development of our Special Constables and providing them with the necessary skills and equipment to undertake their role.



Becoming a volunteer Special Constable is a great way for you to make a difference in your community, whilst at the same time developing your personal skills. Special Constables come from all walks of life but whatever your background, you will take pride from giving something back to the community of Devon and Cornwall. We are keen to use the skills you can bring.

We have expanded the roles that Special Constables can fulfil, with posts for rural officers, roads policing officers and public order officers all coming on line. I am constantly humbled and inspired by the commitment shown by Special Constables. I will support you on your journey in becoming a Special Constable and in serving the people of Devon and Cornwall.

Alison Hernandez
Police & Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly



Benefits of becoming a Special Constable

There are many benefits of being a Special Constable:

- You will learn essential policing skills and receive extensive training in key areas that will assist you in everyday life.
- You are provided with a uniform and have the same powers and authority as a regular police officer, which enables you to make a significant contribution to reducing crime and disorder in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.
- As a Special Constable you will be playing your part in building good relations between the police and the public.
- You will learn new skills, develop existing skills and make new friends. Every shift will be different and you will continue to learn about your locality, about human nature and even more about yourself as a person.
- The role of a Special Constable is undertaken on a voluntary basis but reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be paid. Few other volunteering opportunities can offer the same challenges: responsibility, caring, thinking on your feet, but with as much support as you need to deal with the many situations you will face.
- If you like working with people and being part of a team, then being a Special Constable could be for you.



Are you eligible to join?

Age

You must be at least 18 years old at the time of your application. There is no upper age limit for appointment to the Special Constabulary, but all applicants must be physically fit enough to perform the role.

Nationality

To be eligible for appointment you must be a British citizen or a member of the EC or other states in the EEA (Iceland, Norway, Lichtenstein). Commonwealth citizens and foreign nationals are also eligible but only if they are resident in the UK, free of restrictions.

Residency

In accordance with Home Office policy and our security vetting procedures, applicants must have been resident in the UK for three years or more, prior to submitting an application, to allow sufficient background enquiries to be carried out.

If you have resided outside the UK for a time, but can provide sufficient information to enable meaningful checks to be conducted in relation to that period, we will consider your application alongside the information you provide.

Health and fitness

Applicants must be in good health, of sound constitution and be able to both physically and mentally perform the duties of a Special Constable once appointed. Prior to appointment, applicants are required to complete a medical history questionnaire and undertake a medical examination and physical fitness test. All applicants will have their eyesight examined at the medical examination stage. Failure to meet the standards means you cannot be appointed. Further information can be found at <http://www.PoliceCouldYou.co.uk/>

Driving Licence

Special Constables within Devon and Cornwall Police must possess a full driving licence.

Eyesight requirements

The standard you will need to meet either with or without spectacles or contact lenses is:

Distance vision

- 6/12 or better with either your right or left eye
- 6/6 with both eyes together
- If you wear spectacles or contact lenses you also need to reach 6/36 without them
- Near vision - N6 with both eyes together (aided)

Colour vision

- The use of colour correcting lenses is not acceptable
- Severe colour vision deficiencies (monochromats) are not acceptable
- Mild anomalous trichromats are acceptable
- Severe anomalous dichromats or trichromats are also acceptable but you will need to be aware of the deficiency and make appropriate adjustments

Eye surgery

- Radial Keratotomy, Arcuate Keratotomy or corneal grafts are not acceptable
- Other forms of refractive surgery such as LASIK, LASEK, PRK, ICRS, epiflap are all acceptable provided that six weeks have elapsed since surgery, there are no residual side effects and the other eyesight standards are met.

Convictions and cautions

Convictions or cautions will not necessarily preclude you from appointment. It will depend on the nature and circumstances of the offence. Failure to disclose convictions or cautions will however, result in your application being terminated.

Tattoos

Tattoos are not a bar to appointment. However some tattoos could potentially offend members of the public or colleagues, or could discredit the police service. It depends on their size, nature and location and sometimes on the extent.

Candidates applying for the Special Constabulary should note that Devon & Cornwall Police:

- Will require you to make a declaration at the time of application
- You will need to send in two digital pictures of each tattoo. One distance photograph clearly showing where on the above body area the tattoo is located and a second close up photograph that we can use to assess this against our standards.

Financial position

Special Constables are in a privileged position with regard to access to information and could be considered potentially vulnerable to corruption. Applicants should not therefore be under pressure from un-discharged debts or liabilities and should be able to manage loans and debts sensibly.

Precluded occupations

If your current employment is any of the below then you are ineligible to apply to become a Special Constable. Please check the list to ensure that your current employment will not prevent your application from being successful:

Occupations where staff are ineligible to be appointed as Special Constables are:

- Armed forces personnel
- Traffic wardens, civil enforcement officers and school crossing patrols
- Neighbourhood, street wardens and other uniformed patrol wardens
- Highways Agency traffic officers employed in an 'on-road' capacity
- Police Community Support Officers
- Employers' police forces and private police forces (ie attendants, parks police and other bodies with constabulary powers)
- Magistrates, judges, justices' clerks and CPS employees
- SOCA (Serious Organised Crime Agency) staff designated with immigration officer and/or revenue and customs officer powers
- Members of the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner.

There are other occupations where staff are eligible to be appointed as Special Constables subject to agreement with their employer and at the discretion of the Force.

Example recruitment timeline

Below is an example of a typical recruitment timeline:-

Stage of process	Timeline
Open for expressions of interest	December
Campaign launch - open for eligibility	Early January
Closing date for eligibility	Mid January
Pre-application awareness event	Late January
Closing date for applications	Mid February
Shortlisting	Late February
Assessment centre	Late March
Medical appointment	Throughout April/May
Job related fitness test	Throughout April/May
Vetting, references and uniform fitting	Throughout April/May
Current anticipated training/appointment date	Mid June

Training programme

As a Special Constable you will undertake the National Initial Learning for Special Constables (IL4SC) programme. It utilises common learning objectives and takes Special Constables to the point of safe and lawful accompanied patrol. In doing so, it provides Special Constables with the appropriate knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and behaviours to perform operational duties.

The training programme consists of 2 phases:

Phase 1 – Open Learning@cademy (self-study). Students will use an iPad in order to undertake online study. It is encouraged that students, if available, use their own iPad however there are a number of iPads available for loan for the first 12 months of the course. This will allow student to undertake the knowledge aspect of their training at home and will include webinars, iBooks and assignments, learning at a time and place convenient to them.

Following the Open Learning @academy, the course encompasses a number of practical sessions covering all aspects of police work including: arrests, personal safety, first aid, stop and search and the use of police communications. These sessions will be held at the weekend (subject to public holidays) and consist of practical applications of the learning acquired via the Open Learning@cademy. The culmination of these sessions will include attestation by a magistrate, after which a student will become a warranted officer.

In addition each student will undertake life-saving training that will teach a variety of rescue techniques. For this training you will need to be able to swim on your front, back and tread water. Please see separate training video that shows the content of the life-saving training.

On allocation of your duty station, each Special Constable will be supported by a mentor who is a regular police officer or independent status Special Constable. They will be given the opportunity to evidence their policing skills by the completion of a Police Action Checklist (PAC1). This checklist covers a broad range of basic policing tasks and is usually completed within the first 12 months. It is a mandatory requirement that a Special Constable will work for 16 hours minimum per month during this time. Once the PAC1 is completed, a Special Constable will be considered safe and lawful for accompanied patrol.

Phase 2 – This phase of the training includes a variety of training including iBooks, webinars, practical sessions as an unaccompanied patrol officer, and completion of the 2nd Police Action Checklist (PAC2) which will allow recommended Special Constables to achieve the status of 'unaccompanied' patrol. This element of the training is voluntary and will take between 18-24 months to complete.

Frequently asked questions

Additional Information

If you are interested in taking part in a patrol observer shift prior to applying, or alongside the application process, please email Citizens in Policing to arrange this: CitizensInPolicing@DevonAndCornwall.pnn.police.uk.

Please note that once you start your training you will not be permitted to undertake a patrol observer shift for safety reasons. Should you have any queries regarding the recruitment process please email the Recruitment Team: specialsrecruitment@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

Positive Action

The Equality Act 2010 allows for the use of 'positive action' in a number of specific circumstances. Positive action can be taken to encourage people from particular groups to take advantage of opportunities for work or training. This can be done when under representation of particular groups has been identified in the previous year. This is clearly the case in the police service both nationally and locally. Devon & Cornwall Police is committed to ensuring that it has a workforce that is representative of the community it serves. Positive action is not positive discrimination which generally means employing someone because of their particular group/protected characteristic in spite of whether they have the right skills or qualifications. Positive discrimination is unlawful.

Positive action does not guarantee that anyone from a particular group will gain employment/role with Devon & Cornwall Police.

The Special Constabulary shows current under representation by females, BME and disabled officers. BME includes all diverse groups including white non-British (as per Census 2011). Not all disabilities will prevent application to the Special Constabulary, some will be due to the nature of the role, however there are other opportunities to volunteer within Devon & Cornwall Police.

If you are considering applying to be a Special Constable and you are from an under-represented group, please get in touch to find out more about positive action:
email: PositiveAction@DevonAndCornwall.pnn.police.uk

How long will the recruitment process take?

Every application is different dependent on the amount of references and checks that need to be carried out, but it should generally take around 6 months. The recruitment process can be delayed by not providing complete and accurate information on your application form.

What references will be taken up?

It is Devon & Cornwall Police's current recruitment policy to obtain current and previous employment and full-time education references for the last five years. If you have limited employment references we will also take up personal references. All references state you are applying to be a Special Constable.

Do I need specific qualifications to apply to become a Special Constable?

No, you will need to pass the assessment process but no formal qualifications are required. As a Special Constable you will be required to produce a high standard of written work for reports and statements etc. Your spelling, grammar and legibility should be of an adequate standard to ensure effective written communication.

Are there any physical assessments?

Yes, you will be required to pass a job related fitness test as part of the recruitment process. The purpose of the test is to ensure you are fit to undertake the officer safety training and role of a Special Constable. This firstly includes a 50 metre continuous swimming test, using a recognised stroke, in 1 minute 30 seconds without stopping, touching the side or bottom of the swimming pool. The second is a Progressive Shuttle Run (also known as the bleep test) which requires candidates to run between two lines 15 metres apart at a steadily increasing pace and they must reach the level 5 / 4. The final is a Dynamic Strength test (Push and Pull) which is measured using a concept 2 Dyno machine.

What if I can't attend all training dates? Is there any flexibility?

There is some flexibility with the training but this may delay you performing operational duties. If there is a specific training date you are unable to attend, alternative arrangements will be made.

During the training are there any assessments/tests/exams?

You will be required to complete knowledge checks throughout phase 1 of the training. There is no pass or fail, but this is used to see if there are any developmental areas where additional training may be required. At the end of Phase 1 you will need to pass a final assessment. There is only one written exam, which forms part of the self-defence training. There

If I live outside the Devon and Cornwall area where will I be posted?

As previously, we aim not to post you more than 30 miles from your home address. However, before applying you should firstly consider how far you would have to travel to reach the Devon and Cornwall boundary, as travel expenses will not be paid for outside the Force area.

Am I a Special Constable 24 hours per day, 7 days a week?

Once you have taken the oath you hold the office of Constable until you leave the post, however you will only be expected to use those powers when booked on duty. In exceptional circumstances those powers may be lawfully used when off duty and the correct procedure for doing this will be explained during training.

Where would I store my uniform?

Normally you would store your uniform at your designated police station. Special Constables are only expected to take their uniform home if locker space cannot be provided at their designated police station.

Can I work more than 4 hours per week?

Yes, you can work as many hours as reasonably possible allowing for work and home commitments. Consideration should also be given to the 'Working Time Directive' to ensure Health and Safety compliance. It is suggested that you confirm your availability two weeks in advance. You will probably find, as most Special Constables do, that you will establish a regular working pattern. You can choose to work during the week, during the weekend or both. You can also choose to work during the day, afternoon or evening.

Will I be involved in any operations?

Yes, as a Special Constable you are an important resource and therefore will be utilised in many ways, which may include your involvement in local operations and Force initiatives.

Will I have to go to court?

Should you make an arrest as a Special Constable and the case is later taken to court you may have to attend court to either give evidence or to be a witness. You will be entitled to any loss of earnings you may incur due to a court appearance.

Will I receive any allowances?

Yes, travel to and from your posted police station will be paid for as well as any other travel expenses made by yourself whilst on duty. If you live outside the force boundary travel costs can only be claimed from the point of entry to the force area. A refreshment allowance is also paid, this is dependent on the number of hours in any given tour of duty.

Would I be insured if I was injured on duty?

Yes, you would be covered by Devon and Cornwall's insurance if you were injured whilst on duty as a Special Constable.

Can I apply to be a Special Constable if I have an active application, or intend on applying soon, to become a regular Police Officer?

You should not apply to become a Special at the same time. The force has an obligation, as it is publically funded, to ensure that training, uniform and subsistence costs are not inadvertently misspent, which can often be the case when a candidate has dual applications. As a force we are supportive of helping candidates meet their career objectives but this cannot be at the expense of tax payers' money. Please await the outcome of your regular Police Officer application and if you are successful we will wish you every success. If unsuccessful, and wish to become a Special Constable, please contact the recruitment team who will be able to advise you of next steps. Your application may be 'Fast Tracked' depending on which stage of the recruitment process you have reached.

Are there any other ways to volunteer should I decide not to apply to become a Special Constable?

Yes, there are a variety of other volunteering opportunities across the force. For information about Police Support Volunteers and current roles available please go to the recruitment page of our website www.devon-cornwall.police.uk/recruitment and click on 'Police Support Volunteers.'

**For information about volunteering or becoming
a Special Constable in Devon & Cornwall Police
visit www.dc.police.uk**

**You can also follow us on Twitter
[@DCPolVolunteers](https://twitter.com/DCPolVolunteers)**



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