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Version 1

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT
CONSTABULARY

Special Constabulary Briefing Pack

September 2023

SC Char Bannon
Local Policing Delivery Unit

OUR SIX AREAS OF FOCUS

The Special Constabulary

Introduction

Being a Special Constable is one of the most personally rewarding, challenging and diverse volunteering opportunities available to you; a role that offers a great sense of pride by helping and protecting those within our community.

As a Special Constable, you will work closely with regular officers; you will have the same powers and will wear the same uniform. You will be provided with full training, along with opportunities for ongoing development. In return, we ask you to commit a minimum of 16 hours per month to Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary.

This guide aims to provide you with all you need to know about the role, the application process and to answer the more commonly asked questions we receive.

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The Role of a Special

Special Constables take part in frontline policing, either as part of a District Policing Team or with our Neighbourhood Policing Officers.

The duties of a Special Constable include:

- responding to 999 calls
- foot and vehicle patrols
- tackling antisocial behaviour
- road safety initiatives
- house-to-house enquiries
- helping ensure public safety and security at both local and major events
- presenting evidence in court
- taking part in 'hotspot' operations to tackle underage drinking, criminal damage, nuisance and public disorder
- offering crime prevention advice and promoting property marking initiatives

The work you carry out on duty can vary from one shift to another, the below sets out some of the types of tasks you may be involved in.

Ensuring public safety

- Assisting at the scene of accidents, fires or other incidents
- Providing security and crowd control at major public events

Preventing crime

- Carrying out high-visibility foot patrols
- Educating businesses and communities about crime
- Talking to schoolchildren about crime reduction and community safety

Tackling crime

- Confronting anti-social behaviour on the streets such as intimidating behaviour or gangs
- Managing alcohol-related incidents such as public drunkenness or violence
- Enforcing road safety laws in the local community

Investigating crime

- Conducting house-to-house enquiries and supporting larger investigations
- Taking part in police operations to disrupt and arrest offenders

Securing convictions

- Presenting evidence in court to support the justice system in prosecuting offenders

Being a Special Constable provides the chance to learn more about your community by seeing it from an entirely new perspective. It gives you the opportunity to give something back to your local area, making it safer and enhancing relationships between the public and the police.

Why Become a Special?

Although there are no financial rewards for being a Special Constable, we can promise that you'll get a real sense of satisfaction from making your community a better place to live, as well as gain and develop skills which can be transferred into day to day life.

- Understanding the law
- Conflict management
- Staying calm under pressure
- Problem solving
- Effective communication
- Swift and effective decision making
- Teamwork
- Leadership and management
- Self confidence
- Time management
- Emergency First Aid
- Personal Safety

The experiences you share in working closely with others as one team, can lead to lasting friendships. You'll learn more about life and human nature than most people will ever see.

As well as the above, there are also a range of other benefits that, as a member of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, you'll be able to access. For example:

- Blue light card giving big discounts in retail, travel & days out
- Free Access to police gyms and fitness services
- Access to Financial, health and wellbeing support.
- Access to an Employee Support Helpline

As a Special Constable, once you are in Initial training Part two, you will be able to claim for reasonable travel expenses as well as an annual Boot allowance.

Training and Development

Initial Training

At the start of your the training phase you will receive your uniform, warrant card and be sworn in as a Special Constable.

Our Initial Training is split into 2 parts:

1) Gateway (Law Theory)

The Gateway consists of 11 workbooks and workshops covering Police powers and common offences. At the end of this course, you will be required to take an exam, which you must pass in order to progress.

2) Foundation (Practical Skills)

The Foundation takes place over 20 classroom and gym based sessions. It includes your Personal Safety Training, Emergency First Aid, Airwaves and Statement taking. Again, you will need to pass an assessment in order to progress.

All training takes place at our Southern Training and Support Headquarters in Hamble (for IOW students this takes place on the Island) over the course of several months and will involve both weekend and evening classes; you must be able to commit to attend all of the training course dates you are given.

There will be things that you will be asked to learn and prepare at home prior to the training sessions. There will also be exams and practical assessments to pass, so we can ensure that you are ready to begin operational policing.

Tutoring

Following your Initial Training Phase, you will be assigned to a policing team who will look after you during the next stage of your development. You will be working with an experienced officer at all times until you have achieved Independent Patrol Status; to achieve this you will need to demonstrate your practical abilities in a number of set areas. We will support you in your development to achieve this.

Refresher Training

You will be required to complete refresher training on an annual basis, this currently comprises of 2 days personal safety training and 1 day of Emergency first aid.

E Learning

Throughout your Specials career, there will be mandatory online learning modules that you will need to complete. These modules will form part of your initial training and tutor phase as well as an ongoing requirement as and when we need to provide you with new/ updated knowledge. You will be given timescales within which the e-learning modules will need to be completed. You will be able to complete most of the e-learning modules at home should you wish to do so.

Continuing Professional Development

There will be mandatory training that you will need to attend during your service; this could arise because of a change in the law, practice, or processes, or to provide you with further knowledge, skills and understanding not provided in your initial training phase. You will always be provided with notice of the required training and will be given a number of dates for attendance. There will

also be opportunities for you to complete non-mandatory continuing professional development should you wish to develop further.

Eligibility

Standards for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Special Constabulary are high and the recruitment and selection process is thorough. We can only select applicants who reach the standard set by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary. Before progressing an application with us you should check to see if you are eligible for the role.

The questions below are here to help you decide whether you are eligible. You should answer honestly. The questionnaire will only take a few minutes. If any of your answers fall outside the shaded boxes, you may not be eligible to join. You should refer to the relevant notes for more information.

Eligibility criteria	Yes	No	Further guidance
Age: Are you over 18 years old?			See note 1.
Nationality: You must be a British citizen or a citizen of a country that is a member of the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland. Commonwealth citizens and foreign nationals are also eligible to apply but only if they are resident in the UK with indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK or EU settled status. You must have been resident in the UK for the last 3 years.			See note 2.
Criminal Record: Ideally, you should not have a criminal record but some minor offences as a juvenile may not exclude you. Have you ever been convicted or cautioned for any offence either as an adult or a juvenile.			If yes, check note 3 to see if you are eligible.
Tattoos: Do you have any tattoos on your hands, neck forearms or face?			If yes, you may still be eligible – see note 4.
If yes, could your tattoo(s) cause offence to members of the public or colleagues, or be considered lewd, garish or provocative?			If yes, it is likely you are ineligible.
Financial Status: Are you or have you ever been registered as bankrupt?			If yes, you may still be eligible – see note 5.
Do you have, or have you had any County Court Judgements against you?			If yes, you may still be eligible – see note 5.
Are any of your financial arrangements (including mortgage) in arrears or have you had any loans/credit arrangements withdrawn?			If yes, you may still be eligible – see note 5.
Health: You need to be in good health physically and mentally to be a Special Constable. Do you have any medical conditions which could preclude you from becoming a Special Constable?			If in doubt, see note 6.

BMI Do you have a BMI between 18 and 30?			If no, see note 6.
Eyesight: Corrected distance visual acuity must be 6/12 in either eye and 6/6 or better, binocularly. Corrected near static visual acuity must be 6/9 or better, binocularly. Do you meet these requirements?			If in doubt, see note 6.
A field-of-view of at least 120 degrees horizontally by 100 degrees vertically is required. The field-of-view should be free of any large defective areas, particularly in the fovea. Do you meet these requirements?			If in doubt, see note 6.
Is your colour vision normal with no monochromats?			If in doubt, see note 6.
Excluded Occupations: There are some occupations that are not compatible with also serving as a special constable. This may be due to factors such as the nature of the work role, the industry or sector, role responsibilities and regulatory powers that may be attached.			Please see note 7 for excluded occupations and appointments.

Note 1 - Age

You may apply to Hampshire and Isle of Wight Special Constabulary on reaching the age of 18 years old. There is no upper age limit.

Note 2 - Nationality

To be eligible for appointment you must be a British Citizen or a member of the EC or the states in the EEA (Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein) **and** have lived in the UK for at least the last 3 years prior to applying. Commonwealth citizens and foreign nationals are also eligible, but only if they are resident in the UK free of restrictions **and** have lived in the UK for at least the last 3 years prior to applying.

If you are a commonwealth citizen or a foreign national, you must provide proof that you have no restrictions on your stay in the UK. You should therefore send a copy of your passport, which shows that your stay is free of restrictions.

Note 3 – Criminal Record

Special Constables must respect and uphold the law. They should be law abiding and have a high standard of personal behaviour and social conduct.

Officers with criminal associations or convictions may be vulnerable to pressure to disclose information. Convictions and cautions for certain offences can also undermine a police officer's position as a witness in court. For these reasons, police forces need to be careful about recruiting people with cautions or convictions.

Although you may still be eligible to join the police service if you have minor convictions/cautions **as a juvenile**, there are certain offences and conditions, which will make you ineligible. Read the following and if you are still unsure you should contact Hampshire & Isle of Wight Special Constabulary Team.

Applications will not be accepted from those who have been convicted or cautioned for a serious arrestable offence including:

- Treason - Murder – Manslaughter – death by reckless driving
- Rape – Kidnapping – Firearms offences
- Gross indecency – Hostage taking, hi-jacking or torture

In general, applications will also be rejected if an applicant has:

- Committed any offence (as an adult or juvenile) which resulted in prison sentence, including custodial, suspended or deferred sentence and sentences served at a young offenders' institution or community home
- Received a formal caution (including reprimands and final warnings) for a recordable offence within the last five years
- Been convicted as a juvenile within the last five years for any recordable offence
- Any other recordable offence within the last five years other than those listed above.

Applicants are likely to be rejected if they have been involved in any of the following:

- Offences involving serous violence or injury including Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH) and Actual Bodily Harm (ABH)
- Offences involving unsolicited violence towards others
- Unlawful possession of weapons, firearms or going equipped to steal
- Public Order offences – involvements in riot, violent disorder, affray, causing intentional harassment, alarm or distress
- Racially motivated or homophobic offences
- Burglary and offences which involved elements or acts of dishonesty, corruption, substantial financial gain and deception
- Serious involvement in drugs including possession of a Class A drug (heroin, morphine) or more than one Class B drug (amphetamines) and/or supplying drugs of any kind
- Reckless or Dangerous Driving; one offence of drink driving, drunk in charge, or drugs driving, within the last ten years
- Other serious motoring offences such as convictions within the last five years, driving without insurance, failing to stop after an accident or driving whilst disqualified
- More than three endorsable traffic convictions (including fixed penalties) and/or two or more convictions for regulatory offences within the last five years such as failure to renew vehicle excise license.

Note 4 - Tattoos

You should not have tattoos, which could cause offence. Tattoos are not acceptable if they:

- Undermine the dignity and authority of the office of constable
- Are garnish or numerous or particularly prominent
- Could cause offence to members of the public or colleagues and/or invite provocation. This would include tattoos which are rude, lewd, crude, racist, sexiest, sectarian, homophobic, violent or intimidating or tattoos which display unacceptable attitudes towards women, minority groups or any other section of the community, or alignment with particular groups which could give offence to members of the community.

Note 5 - Financial Vetting

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

Applicants who have existing County Court Judgements outstanding against them or who have been registered bankrupt and their bankruptcy debts have not been discharged will not be considered.

Applicants who have discharged County Court Judgments may be considered.

Applicants who have been registered as bankrupt and their bankruptcy debts have been discharged will only be considered after three years from discharge of the debt. Recruitment is dependent upon successful financial vetting checks.

Note 6 – Health, eyesight and disability

Applicants must be in good health, and able to perform the duties of a Special Constable once appointed. Applicants must have a BMI between 18 and 30 in order to apply.

Special Constables are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act. If you have a disability, we will make adjustments where it is reasonable to do so. Please provide any relevant information about your disability and details of any reasonable adjustments you think you may need to undertake the assessment process and the role of a Special Constable. Disability is defined as 'a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Successful applicants will fill in a medical questionnaire and will have to undertake a medical examination; they will also have to take an eyesight form to their opticians. Failure to meet the standards means you cannot be appointed.

The Eyesight Requirement

Static Visual Acuity

Corrected distance visual acuity must be 6/12 in either eye and 6/6 or better, binocularly. Corrected near static visual acuity must be 6/9 or better, binocularly. (If you do not reach the standard, you may consider obtaining a stronger prescription). Corrected low contrast distance visual acuity must be 6/12 or better for a 10% contrast target, binocularly.

Acuity should be measured using a Snellen eye chart, or equivalent

Visual Field

A field-of-view of at least 120 degrees horizontally by 100 degrees vertically is required. The field-of-view should be free of any large defective areas, particularly in the fovea. Single defects smaller than the physiological blind spot, and multiple defects that add to an area smaller than the physiological blind spot, may be acceptable.

The field of view may be tested using a confrontation test.

Colour Vision

Monochromats are unacceptable. However mild anomalous trichromats, as well as severe anomalous trichromats and dichromats are acceptable. (Applicants who show a lowered discrimination for blue colours should be referred to an ophthalmologist for further assessment. This should include a measure of their dark adaptation performance).

Applicants should not wear 'colour correcting' lenses during the colour vision test.

Spectacles and contact lenses

Correction should be worn where necessary to achieve 6/6 binocularly. Corrective spectacles and contact lenses are acceptable for the tasks of an Operational Special Constable.

Note 7 – Excluded Occupations

There are some occupations that are not compatible with also serving as a Special Constable. This may be due to factors such as the nature of the work role, the industry or sector, roles and responsibilities or regulatory powers that may be attached.

Examples include:

- Members of the Regular Armed Forces
- Police Community Support Officers
- Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs)
- Members of Parliament
- Members of employers' Police Forces and Private Constabularies
- Magistrates, Judges, Justices' Clerks and all Crown Prosecution Service employees
- Highways Agency traffic officers, employed in an 'on-road' capacity
- Border Force officers or HM Revenue and Customs officer powers
- Neighbourhood and street wardens and other uniformed patrol wardens
- Traffic wardens, civil enforcement officers and school crossing patrols

There are also a range of occupations which will need to be considered by the chief officer. These may include (but are not limited to):

- Members of the Armed Forces Reserves (see note 1 below)
- Members of the Fire Service (see note 2 below)
- Those employed in areas which give client privilege
- Members of the Medical and Health professions (see note 3 below)
- Members of the National Crime Agency
- Holders of premises licences, designated premises supervisors, holders of personal licences and licensees of betting/gaming premises (see note 4 below)
- Probation Officers
- Youth and Social Workers or those involved in Domestic Abuse advocacy
- Bailiffs, Warrant Officers, Private Detectives and Inquiry Agents
- Employees of security organisations and security personnel, guards and door supervisors
- Individuals working directly to PCCs
- Individuals working in roles with party political relevance or affiliations

Notes:

1. Members of the Armed Forces Reserves are eligible, subject to their reserve commitments taking precedence over their Special Constabulary duty requirements.

2. All Hampshire Fire-fighters and Retained Fire-fighters are now eligible to be appointed as a Special Constable. (Contact the Special Constabulary Team for further information and a copy of the agreement)

3. Members of the Health and Medical professions are eligible, subject to confirmation that their local NHS Trust or Health Authority would not object to their becoming a Special Constable.

4. Applicants whose close members of family are holders of liquor licences, managers of licensed houses and licensees of betting and gaming establishments may be eligible at the discretion of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary.

If a serving Special accepts seasonal or temporary work in an occupation that is ineligible they may not continue in the Special Constabulary.

Please note that serving Specials must notify the Constabulary of any change in employment.

Membership of the BNP or similar

The police service has a policy of prohibiting any of their officers or staff from becoming members of the BNP or similar organizations whose aims, objectives or pronouncements may contradict the duty to promote race equality. If you are, or have been a member of the BNP or similar, your application may be rejected.

Competencies and Values

The competences and values for the role of Special Constable can be viewed on the College of Policing website at the following links. We recommend that you take a look at these prior to progressing an application as you will be asked to provide evidence of these competencies and values during the selection process.

Competencies

- We are Emotionally Aware – Level 1
- We Take Ownership – Level 1
- We are Collaborative – Level 1
- We Deliver, Support and Inspire – Level 1
- We Analyse Critically – Level 1
- We are Innovative and Open Minded – Level 1

Values

- Impartiality
- Integrity
- Public Service
- Transparency

We are looking for evidence of the qualities you already have or may develop to enable you to carry out the role; evidence of past performance is considered to be the best indicator of a candidate's likely future performance. The evidence that you provide will be used to decide whether your application progresses to the next stage. It is therefore important that you think carefully about how you can evidence these competencies and values.

Assessment Process

National Sift

Once we have received your application and you have passed the Eligibility sift you will receive an invitation to complete the National Sift. This process tests the key competencies and values, which are important for the role of a Special Constable, and consists of 2 exercises:

1) A situational Judgement Test
2) A Behavioural Style Questionnaire

These exercises should take no longer than 1 hour.

A National Sift guidance package will be sent to you along with your invitation.

Assessment Centre

Following the successful completion of the National Sift, we will invite you to attend an Assessment Centre at Police Support and Training HQ, Hamble Lane, Netley where you will complete a Competency and Values based interview and a Job Related Fitness Test (JRFT).

Identity and Right to Work

We will require you to attend an in-person meeting and provide the following:

1) 1 piece of Photographic Identification such as a current Passport (UK Passports can be either current or expired) or a photographic Driving licence.

   If you are **not** using a UK Passport as photographic identification, you MUST provide a Birth or Adoption Certificate (long or short form) together with an official document showing your permanent National Insurance number and name.

Please refer to Gov.uk website for acceptable documents for the details of how to evidence your right to work. EU settlement candidates are required to provide a share code.

And

2) Proof of address for example a Driving licence, Council Tax Bill, Bank Statement or Utility Bill (less than 3 months old)

   If you are using your Driver's license as your photographic identification then you will need an additional form for proof of address.

Competency and Values based Interview

Your Interview will last no longer than 45 minutes during which you will be asked questions based around your motivations and the Competencies and Values laid out by the College of Policing. We recommend that any evidence provided during your interview is structured using the STAR technique, there is a wealth of information online about this technique so you may wish to do some research in this area. Be specific in your evidence, give clear examples of what **you** said or did. Generalisations about what you usually do will not score well. Do not use 'we' unless your part in the situation is obvious. Try to use situations that you found difficult or challenging to deal with, if

you reflected on how you dealt with a situation consider whether on reflection you feel that you should have done something differently.

Job Related Fitness Test

The basic fitness test to join as a Special Constable is a shuttle run (bleep test). The length of the shuttle is 15 metres and you must be able to reach a minimum of four shuttles at level 5 to pass (level 5.4).

Pre Join Checks

Once you pass the assessment process you will need to complete some pre-join checks before you can start your training. The pre-join checks are explained below.

Occupational Health Screening

You will need to complete a medical questionnaire (which your GP will also need to check and sign) and attend an appointment with our Occupational Health Department to ascertain your medical fitness for the role.

National Police Vetting (including biometrics)

We will carry out checks on you and your family/ any adult living at your address, we will also check your financial circumstances and your social media accounts.

Employment References

We take up employment references covering the last 3 years; if you are self-employed, haven't been in employment or have gaps in your employment history the Recruitment Team will discuss this with you and confirm the alternative references we can accept.

Frequently Asked Question

How physically fit do you need to be?

All Special Constables' fitness is tested during the recruitment process and then annually through the completion of a 'bleep test', the College of Policing's website provides further information about the test and there are various videos online which will show you what to expect.

How many hours does a Special Constable need to commit?

You will need to maintain an average of 16 duty hours per month over any 3 months period. There is no set maximum number of hours that you can give however, we have duty of care for you so we regularly monitor duty hours and will speak with you if we feel that you are doing too many.

When will I be expected to work?

That's up to you and when you are available. However, whilst you are in your non-independent phase it is likely that you will be required to align your duties with those of your tutor.

We do ask that you pre-plan your duties so your regular colleagues know when you are going in and can plan accordingly. There will be times when we make contact to invite you to attend operations and events, again, it is up to you what you sign up to based on your availability.

Where will I be working?

You will be asked to provide us with your station preferences including any personal circumstances that might affect your posting when you commence the foundation stage. We try to accommodate these preferences where we can however; we have to balance your preference against operational constraints and requirements.

Who will I work with?

During your initial non-independent phase you will be working with a regular officer or independent Special Constable at all times, once you are authorised for independent patrol you can work alone and alongside PCSOs.

Will I get paid for the hours I work?

No, the role of Special Constable is a voluntary one.

What happens if I can't complete 16 hours one month because I go on holiday?

The minimum hour's requirement is an average over any rolling 3 month period.

Do I need a driving licence to become a Special Constable?

No, you do not need to hold a driving licence.

What happens if I need to go to court to give evidence?

You may have to attend court as a witness or to give evidence. This may mean that you have to take time off your paid employment if you are required to attend during your normal working hours. You will always receive prior notice and you will be able to claim back any loss of earnings incurred.

Do I have to buy my equipment?

All uniform an equipment that you need is provided; you will need to purchase your own footwear but you will receive a £70 boot allowance on the anniversary of your join date and annually thereafter.

Will I get expenses?

We will pay for any of the recommended immunisations that you may need and your travel to and from duty. We can only reimburse expenses once you have commenced initial training; therefore, we are not able to reimburse any travel expenses incurred before your start with us.

What if I am injured on duty?

There is national guidance around sick pay for Special Constables who are injured on duty. There is also a nationally provided legal fees insurance scheme which provides cover to pursue legal action for financial compensation for damages relating to personal injury on duty.

Can Special Constables use Tasers or firearms?

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary does not allow Special Constables to carry Tasers or firearms.

Are Special Constables covered by police disciplinary measures?

Special Constables are subject to the same performance and conduct regulations as full time paid police officers.

If I hold political office or take an active part in politics, can I become a Special Constable?

Special Constables should not take an active part in politics.

Do Special Constables have to sign up for a minimum term?

No but applicants do need to be dedicated and committed to the role.

If I become a Special Constable will it help me get into the full time paid police?

There is no direct advantage but clearly being a Special Constable will provide a valuable insight into policing and a first-hand experience.

Are Special Constables able to join the Police Federation?

Members of the Special Constabulary are able to join the Police Federation.

Are Special Constables able to drive Police vehicles?

Special Constables are able to drive Police vehicles once they achieve Independent Patrol Status and have complete the relevant driver training course. Special Constables have to apply to go on driver training courses and approval will depend on local operational need.

Are Special Constables able to join specialist units such as Roads Policing, Dog Section, Marine Unit etc?

Yes, Special Constables are able to join specialist units once they have achieve independent patrol status. There is no automatic right to work on a specialist team; there are a set number of specialist positions available and spaces are advertised when vacancies become available, there is also a competitive selection process to join such teams.

Employer Supported Policing

Employer Supported Policing (ESP) is a partnership scheme in which employers in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight allow their staff to train and patrol as Special Constables. Employers provide paid leave for some or all of the minimum 16 hours that Special Constables are require to contribute.

Allowing staff to become Special Constables offers huge benefits to the organisations in terms of staff development – benefits that cannot be bought commercially. Transferable skills include communicating and negotiating effectively, staying calm under pressure, problem solving, decision making, team building, leadership and management and responsibility.

More information about ESP can be found on the national Citizens in Policing website.

Contact

The following email addresses can be contacted if you have any further questions.

For questions about the role or commitment of a Special Constable, the training or Employer Supported Policing contact:

special.constables@hampshire.police.uk.

Please also contact this email address if you would like to speak with a serving Special Constable to discuss the role.

For questions about eligibility or selection process contact:

police.recruitment@hampshire.police.uk

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