



**DORSET
POLICE**

JOIN US.

LOVE DORSET.

Joining the Special Constabulary Information Pack





DORSET POLICE

OUR VISION

*A safe county
for everyone*

OUR PURPOSE

*Tough on crime
Keeping people safe
Putting victims first*

OUR PRIORITIES



Relentless pursuit of criminality



Exceptional local policing



Innovating, transforming and improving



Putting victims first



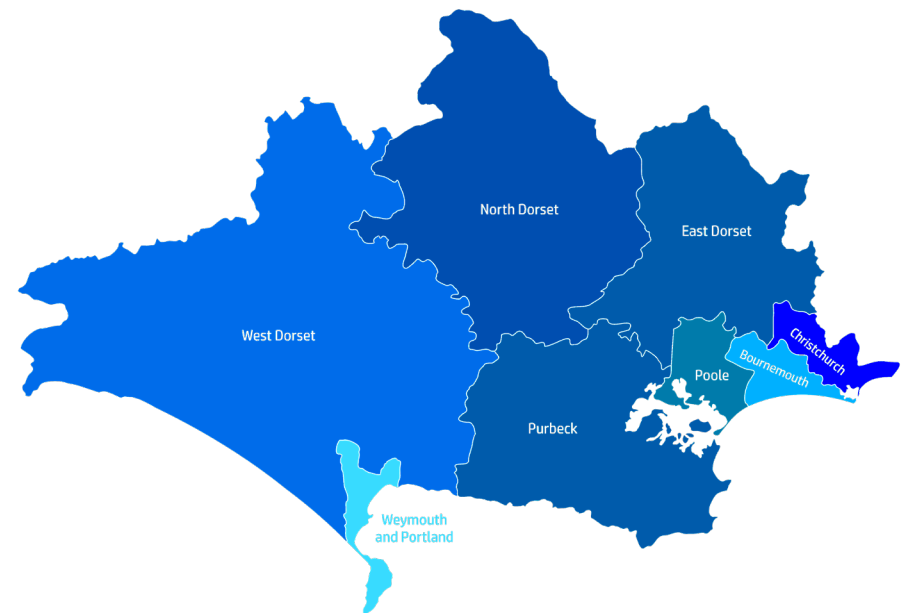
Ethical and inclusive



Enabling people to deliver excellence

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Introduction from Temporary Chief Officer Ben Deeks



Thank you for taking time to explore this exciting opportunity to join us as a special constable here in Dorset.

If you talk to any of our special constables, they will tell you the value this unique volunteering opportunity brings. From the excitement of the role and the satisfaction you feel giving something back to your community, to learning additional skills and being exposed to new experiences.

I am proud to lead such a fantastic group of volunteers and delighted that the value special constables bring has been recognised with the introduction of the Special Constable Learning Programme (SCLP), which is built upon the same foundation as the training delivered to regular police constables, covering topics like law, police powers, public order and investigation.

We're at the precipice of a period of growth and development within the Special Constabulary, and we are looking for fantastic people to join us here in Dorset as volunteer police officers. We need your commitment, perspectives and your diversity of thought to help make Dorset a safe county for everyone.

We are looking for applications from all backgrounds and are offering candidates an application buddy to help support you throughout the application and recruitment process.

If you'd like to discuss the role or find out more, please visit the Special Constabulary pages on our website or reach out to the Citizens in Policing Resourcing Team by email:

dp-citizensinpolicingrecruitment@dorset.pnn.police.uk



The history of the Special Constabulary

The Special Constabulary is a force of trained volunteers who work with and support their local police. 'Specials' come from all walks of life and they all volunteer a minimum of four hours a week with their local police force, forming a vital link between the regular (full-time) police and the local community.

The Special Constabulary can be traced back to at least the 9th century when members of the public were invested with "special powers" to give unpaid assistance in enforcing the law and keeping the peace.

The Act of 1673

In 1673, Charles II passed an act that laid down that any citizen may be sworn in as a police officer on a temporary basis to deal with threats of great disorder. These special constables continued earlier notions that every individual had a responsibility to see that law and order were maintained. If a citizen was summonsed before the magistrates to be sworn in as a special constable and refused to take the oath or perform duty, he was liable to a heavy fine of £5. This Act was in force for hundreds of years and used to call up specials on many occasions.

The 1831 Act

The Act included many provisions, including a new power allowing local authorities to appoint special constables for the purpose of preserving the peace should they consider existing police numbers inadequate for doing so.

Specials were granted all "powers, authorities, advantages and immunities" as any serving full-time constable. They were also given the power to act in adjoining counties in extraordinary circumstances.

The Act also stated that specials were to be issued with any articles or weapons the authorities considered necessary to execute their duty.

Work during the wars

At the beginning of the Great War, 1914 to 1918, the Special Constabulary was ordered into a body similar to the present day one: a voluntary, part-time organisation that were paid only their expenses. During World War One, their primary function was to prevent German infiltrators from interfering with the nation's water supply.

The Second World War between 1939 and 1945 saw around 130,000 special constables acting as the wartime police reserve, supplemented by retired police officers recalled to duty to assist. While many became full-time 'regular' police officers, others contributed duty hours whenever possible while carrying on with their full-time responsibilities.

1949

In 1949, in a major move after hundreds of years of inequality, women were allowed to join the Special Constabulary.

The Police Act of 1964

The Police Act of 1964 established the Special Constabulary in its present form and gave Chief Constables the power to appoint and manage specials.



About Dorset Police

Dorset Police covers approximately 1,024 square miles of land and a similar body of water off the coastline. Despite being classed as 93.7 per cent rural, the county includes an airport as well as seaports that serve internal and international freight and passenger travel.

Annually we provide a policing coverage for around 800,000 residents, which increases during term time with students from the universities and colleges. A further 11 million people visit Dorset each year for short breaks or holidays.

There's a lot of history to Dorset and we are no different. We were formed in 1855 and on 1 October 1967 merged with Bournemouth Police to form Dorset and Bournemouth Constabulary. On 1 April 1974 we took over some areas, mainly Christchurch and its surrounding areas, from Hampshire Constabulary and acquired our present name.

We are one of the highest performing police services in the United Kingdom, and as a member of Dorset Police you will feel a strong sense of pride in working to protect the communities we serve. Our staff are our most valuable asset and we currently employ over 2,800 people.

Our 58 special constables are fully warranted and professionally trained volunteers, who found the time to give 14,383 hours to the end of March 2026, and our fantastic volunteers, including cadet leaders, gave 8,967 hours up to the end of March 2026 in a variety of roles.

Our police family is made up of:

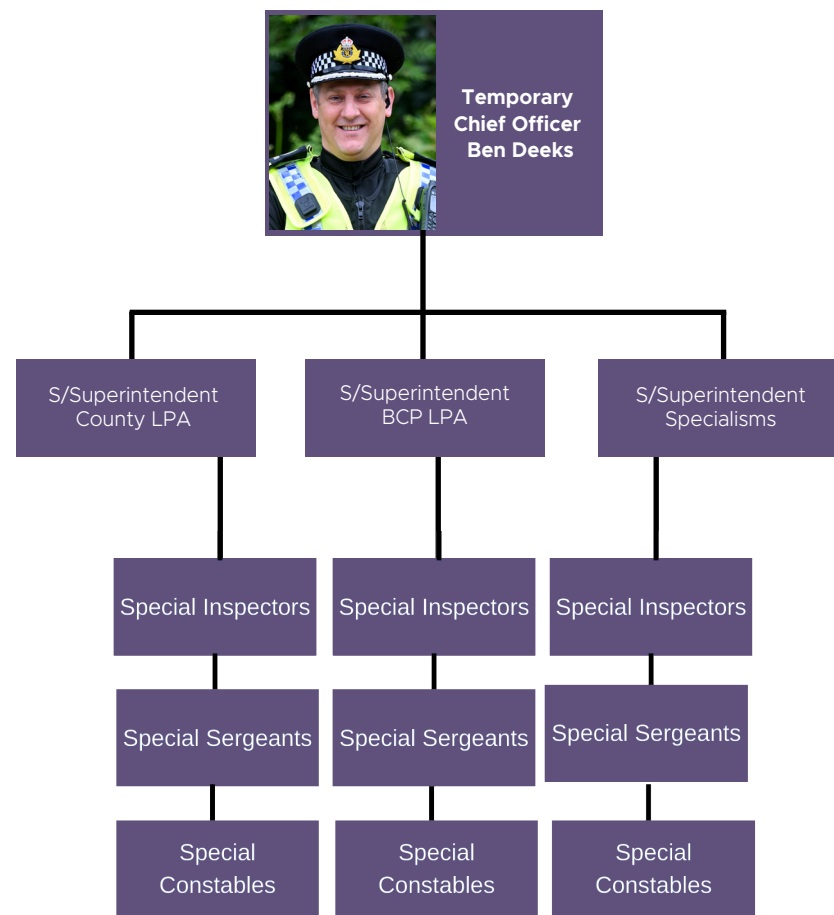
- **1,476 police officers**
- **1,355 police staff**
- **45 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)**
- **58 special constables**
- **128 volunteers, (excluding Community Speed Watch volunteers)**
- **1,292 Community Speed Watch volunteers**



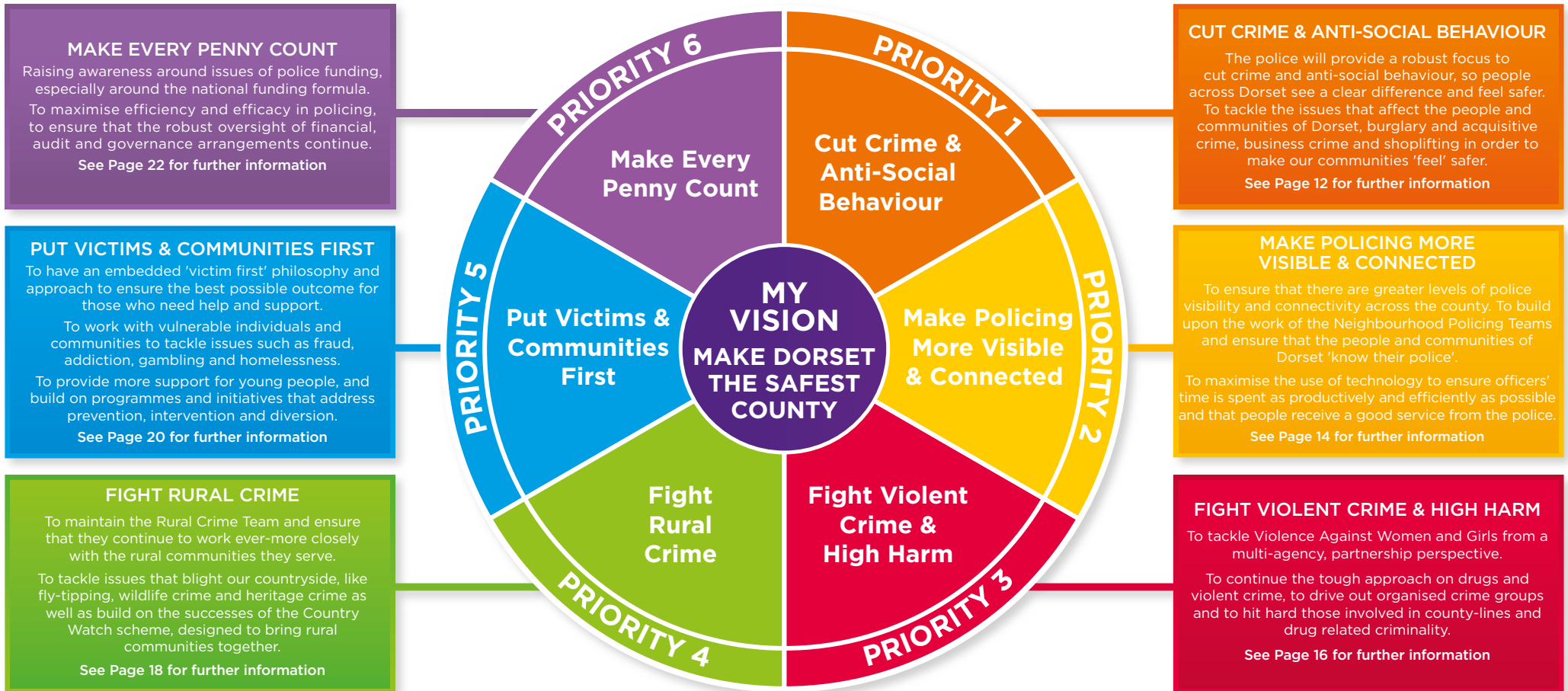
Dorset Police structure



Special Constabulary structure



Dorset Police & Crime Plan 2021/29



MAKE **DORSET** THE SAFEST COUNTY



Being a special constable in Dorset

Special constables are volunteer police officers and have the same powers, wear the same uniform and undergo the same training as regular police officers.

Once you are fully trained, you will work alongside regular police officers, police staff and other volunteers, to tackle crime and keep the communities of Dorset safe.

As a special constable, you can align yourself with different sections in the Force, including the Roads Policing Unit, response teams, neighbourhood policing teams or even the Dog Unit. Whatever section or team you are part of, there will still be lots of opportunities to get involved in different events and other operations in the county.

What training and support are provided?

Full training and support for special constables is provided. The Special Constable Learning Programme (SCLP) provides a training and development pathway for all new and existing special constables.

It is based upon the initial Police Education Qualifications Framework and is built on the same foundation as the training delivered to regular police constables, covering topics like law, police powers, public order and investigation. It uses a blend of online, face-to-face and on-the-job learning to equip special constables with the necessary skills and knowledge to help police Dorset alongside their regular colleagues.

It aligns with the new non-degree diploma entry route Police/Detective Constable Entry Programme (PCEP/DCEP) so any learning and experience gained under SCLP can be your training to become a special constable consists of 29 training days delivered over 21 consecutive weekends, covering all key aspects required for the role. It takes place at Winfrith Headquarters and at Ferndown police

station. In addition to the classroom and practical training, there is 40 hours of self-study at home to support your learning. A full timetable will be given setting out the training over the 21-week period so you will know when you are required to attend.

At the end of the course, you will take part in an assessed practical session and an end-of-course examination to ensure you are safe, confident and operating within the law before carrying out patrols alongside a regular police officer.

All of your hard work will be rewarded at a passing out ceremony at the end of initial training.

Voluntary hours

As a special constable, you will need to be able to volunteer 16 hours a month on average every year, equating to 200 hours in total a year. Most importantly, the time you give is flexible so you can fit it around your busy lives.

If you are employed, Dorset Police has a range of companies signed up to Employee Supported Policing, allowing for extra days off for policing duties or training. You can find out more about this on our website.

Recruitment timeline

The recruitment process for special constables can take several months. We have broken down what to expect when you apply to be a special constable.

Step 1 and step 2: Online registration, eligibility screening and application form

You will be required to enter your personal details such as your full name, full residential address, driving licence details and your national insurance number. You will then undergo eligibility screening, in line with the national standards and then asked to fill in the application form

Step 3 and step 4: Behavioural styles questionnaire and situational judgement test

You must pass both of these this in order to progress to the next stage.

The behavioural styles questionnaire invites you to review a number of statements and indicate which statement you completely agree with or completely disagree with on a sliding scale.

In the situational judgement test, you will be presented with a number of different situations that you might face as a special constable, with a choice of different actions that might be taken. You will be asked to identify which action will result in an effective or counterproductive outcome.

[Click here for National sift guidance from College of Policing.](#)

Step 5: Force interview and pre-employment checks

If successful in step 3 and 4, you will be invited to one of our in-person assessment days that take place at Headquarters, Winfrith. You will also need to complete a fitness test.

The force interview will be a structured interview with a panel of interviewers consisting of police officers and staff. This interview lasts approximately 30 minutes.

The questions in the interview are aimed at exploring your values and motivation to join Dorset Police as a special constable, these will be structured against the Competency Valued Framework.

The police Job Related Fitness Test (JRFT) is a critical component of the recruitment and deployment of police officers. It comprises of an aerobic shuttle run test (15m Multi-Stage Fitness Test – 15m MSFT at level 5:4). You can find more detail and a video on our website.

Step 6: Pre-employment and vetting

After you've passed your assessment day, we will carry out vetting checks.

Everyone joining the police must be vetted. Vetting checks are an important way to maintain our high standards and reassure our communities that appropriate and relevant checks are done on people who hold a position of trust, such as our officers and staff.

The Resourcing Team will seek references from employers, education

or other volunteering opportunities covering a period of five years. Your permission will be sought ahead of requesting your current employment reference.

Step 7: Medical suitability

A medical assessment will be carried out by our Occupational Health Support Unit. They will check BMI (Body Mass Index), eyesight, colour vision, lung function and hearing. You will be asked to complete a confidential medical history questionnaire.

Depending upon your medical history, we may have to contact your GP/specialist for further information. On this day the Resourcing Team will also complete a drugs test.

Step 8: Formal offer

Upon passing the medical and vetting, you will be issued a date to begin your training, as well as your force number.

After your training

You're ready to become a special constable and become a valuable member of our policing family!

You will get your full uniform provided, which is the same as a regular police officer. This includes boots, body armour, handcuffs, baton, vest, utility jacket, amongst other clothing and equipment.



Meet our special constables

Paul

“I became a special constable because honestly, I was tired of hearing people say there weren’t enough officers on the streets — and I felt the same. So, I thought, why not do something about it? I saw an ad on Facebook, and I just clicked on the link. I had nothing to lose and everything to gain.



“Since joining, I’ve realised just how varied and rewarding the role is. No two shifts are ever the same — you meet people from all walks of life, and every day brings something new. Whether it’s dealing with emergencies, or connecting with the community, you’re right there making a difference.

“What really surprised me was that special constables are given the same powers and equipment as regular officers — including a laptop and phone. You’re fully equipped and trusted to do the job. I split most of my shifts between response policing (999 calls and emergencies) and neighbourhood policing, which focuses more on longer-term community issues. In the summer, we also police at events like carnivals, fireworks displays and other big gatherings — there’s a real buzz to it.

“Over the past year, I’ve worked alongside some brilliant people who all share the same goal: protecting the communities we serve. The media can be quite negative about policing, but that’s never been my experience. What I’ve seen is professionalism, compassion and real teamwork.

“Being a special constable is exciting, emotional, and incredibly fulfilling. The skills you learn stay with you for life — and the difference you make is real.”

Emma

Emma joined the Special Constabulary in 2020 having always wanted to join the police and decided that joining the Special Constabulary meant she could stay in a day job that she enjoyed and have the flexibility of policing around family life and work.



Emma said: “I work for HMRC as a senior tax specialist and I’m used to dealing with people in often challenging situations. I realised that many of the skills were transferable between the roles and that the skills of each role would enhance the other.

“I have worked response shifts, events and neighbourhood policing and embraced opportunities for development within my role.

“I have represented the Force on an action learning set for female leaders which has given me confidence and allowed me to share my skills and experience with partner agencies.”

Emma is convinced the skills she is developing in the Special Constabulary are helping her in her day job.

“I have recently been promoted at HMRC and have no doubt that the confidence and competences I have gathered through my police work have helped me achieve this.

“I love being in the Special Constabulary because I find myself in unique and challenging situations. I’ve gained so many skills and dealing with these situations gives me self-belief and a sense of purpose. I’ve proved to myself what I am capable of and I wish I had known that there is so much flexibility to add something so rewarding to life... and done it a lot sooner!”

JOIN US. LOVE DORSET.



If you would like to find out more about becoming a special constable and how to apply, please visit:
<https://recruitment.dorset.police.uk/dp-sc>
or scan the QR code.

