• VOLUNTEER POLICY

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**Linked documents**

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1 Policy Section

1.1 Statement of Intent – Aim and Rationale

It is the aim of this Volunteer Policy to provide the framework for a robust approach to volunteering within Dorset Police. The objectives are:

- To clarify how the important partnership between Dorset Police and the volunteers who support the Force will work in practice.
- To identify how quality volunteers can be effectively used to support the Policing Plan priorities.
- To set out management guidelines to ensure regular attendance and retention of the volunteer once they are trained and protect both the individual and the Force.

The principles of equality of opportunity, diversity and impartiality ensure that Dorset Police is an inclusive organisation. Volunteering can contribute to the implementation of these principles by extending the capacity of the Force to involve people from all sections of the community.

1.2 Police Mission

Our Mission for policing is:

To make communities safer by upholding the law fairly and firmly; preventing crime and antisocial behaviour; keeping the peace; protecting and reassuring communities; investigating crime and bringing offenders to justice. This mission is set nationally and adopted locally by Dorset Police.

Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics underpins every policy, procedure, decision and action in policing today. The Code of Ethics is an everyday business consideration. This document has been developed with the Code of Ethics at the heart ensuring consideration of the 9 Policing Principles and the 10 standards of professional behaviour. Monitoring is carried out through the Equality Impact Assessment process which has been designed to specifically include the Code of Ethics.

National Decision Model

The National Decision Model (NDM) is the primary decision-making model used in Dorset Police. The NDM is inherently flexible and is applied to the development and review of all policy, procedure, strategy, project, plan or guidance. Understanding, using and measuring the NDM ensures that we are able to make ethical (see Code of Ethics), proportionate and defensible decisions in relation to policy, procedure, strategy, project, plan or guidance.

1.3 People, Confidence and Equality

Throughout history policing has been most effective when the community and the police work together, helping each other to reduce crime and fear of crime. Our priorities have been based on today’s risks and from what our communities have told us are areas of concern.

This document seeks to achieve the priority of increasing the public satisfaction in the delivery of policing in Dorset.

GSC - Official
This document also recognises that some people will be part of many communities defined by different characteristics. It is probable that all people share common needs and expectations whilst at the same time everyone is different.

Consultation and engagement has identified a common need and expectation for communities in Dorset to be:-

- Listened to
- Have their needs understood
- Have their expectations met where possible
- Be kept informed

## 2 Standards

### 2.1 Legal Basis

In recent years the National Policing Plan has recommended that "Forces and authorities should examine the opportunities for making increased use of local volunteers."

The NPIA has since developed a National Strategy for the Special Constabulary and a National Business Plan for Police Support Volunteers. Dorset Police has signed up to both these documents and with colleagues regionally and nationally, is working towards the implementation of the recommendations.

### 2.2 Equality Impact Assessment

During the creation of this document, this business area is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). Its aim is to establish the impact of the business area on all people and to also ensure that it complies with the requirements imposed by a range of legislation.
3 Procedure Section

3.1 Introduction

Volunteers have been supporting Dorset Police for over 175 years as members of the Special Constabulary. In 2004 the first Police Support Volunteers joined the Force and since then the contribution from our volunteers has grown to include Independent Advisory Group members and Chaplains among others. This policy relates to all individuals who carry out a volunteer role with Dorset Police.

This policy clarifies the important partnership between Dorset Police and the volunteers who support the Force. It provides the framework for a logical approach to volunteering across the Force. It brings together a wide range of both external and internal good practice, and demonstrates the commitment of the Force to develop an effective partnership that is of mutual benefit.

Volunteers are not staff and have no employment status. Dorset Police does not enter into any form of legally binding agreement or contract with a volunteer, either in writing or verbally, that suggests the presence of an employment relationship. It is therefore the intention of this policy to provide a clear structure for volunteer management that reflects the unique nature of the volunteering relationship.

3.2 General Principles

Dorset Police officers, members of the Special Constabulary, staff and volunteers work in partnership to maximise the capacity of Dorset Police to provide the highest quality of service to the community and to raise public confidence in the organisation.

A Police volunteer is someone who, through personal choice, commits time and energy to perform a task at the direction and on behalf of the organisation. They agree to do this without expectation of compensation or financial reward, except for the payment of pre-determined out of pocket expenses. These expenses will be at the rate set down in Home Office Circular 12/2006 (Special Constabulary – clarification of review of allowances) and will be funded by the Division or Department where the Volunteer is utilised.

Volunteers are an integral part of Dorset Police. However, they are not employees and have no employment status. In terms of health and safety considerations, volunteers are bound by the same rules that govern employees.

There is no obligation on either side, therefore when an individual agrees to take on the role of volunteer no contract of employment is created.

Either partner may cancel the partnership at any time, signifying the termination of the volunteer’s role.

All volunteers are required to sign forms agreeing to the principles of Data Protection and the Official Secrets Act. Once signed, a copy will be given to the volunteer and the originals placed in their personal file.
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Handling Instructions: Suitable for Public Publication

The benefits and costs of volunteers and their contribution to the aims of the Corporate Plan will be continuously reviewed through quarterly meetings of the Volunteer Board (Full Group). This meeting will be chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and attended by volunteers and members of staff from the territorial divisions, UNISON, the Police Federation and members of the Volunteer Support Team.

Dorset Police is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all members of the community. This policy is written to ensure there is no unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations. Volunteers who experience friction of any sort can ask for support and advice with their role from the HR Policy and Strategy Officer for Equality and Diversity.

3.3 Principles of the Relationship

Volunteers will be used on a supernumery basis; Dorset Police will not introduce volunteers to replace employees. The underlying principle of the partnership is that volunteers complement and support employee roles, releasing police officers and police staff to undertake core policing duties. Volunteers will not be used to reduce overall staff numbers or hours worked.

Dorset Police has a duty of care for all volunteers and will provide a safe working environment. The Division or Department in which that role is initially identified will provide an up-to-date risk assessment where relevant.

The principles of equality of opportunity, diversity and impartiality ensure that Dorset Police is an inclusive organisation. Volunteering can contribute to the implementation of these principles by extending the capacity of the Force to involve people from all sections of the community.

Volunteers will be given resources to carry out their role effectively, and once their induction is complete, are responsible for their own decisions and actions. Dorset Police will ensure that through induction and training, volunteers are properly integrated into the organisation. Employees at all levels are expected to work positively with volunteers.

Any member of Dorset Police staff can identify a possible volunteer role. This will be assessed by the line manager for suitability. If approval is given for the role to be developed for a volunteer, full details will be forwarded to the Volunteers Co-ordinator, UNISON and the Head of Department or Division for final agreement.

Volunteers can expect Dorset Police to provide them with adequate support and training, a safe and risk assessed environment within which to volunteer; and regular contact and recognition for their contribution.

Dorset Police can expect volunteers to conduct themselves appropriately as representatives of the Force; follow health and safety directives; make the Volunteer Support Team aware of any conflicts of interest or change in circumstances; and undertake training required for their role.
3.4 Management Environment

On behalf of the Deputy Chief Constable, the Volunteers Co-ordinator is responsible for the strategic development of the police volunteer initiative and co-ordination of all volunteers in the Force. The Volunteers Co-ordinator will act as a champion for all volunteers.

The application process will be the responsibility of the Volunteers Support Team at Force Headquarters until the volunteer is accepted into the Force. The Force Volunteers Co-ordinator will have responsibility for the development of policy, training and force level recruitment issues, and will ensure a personal file is created for each volunteer at the point of formally joining the Force. These records will then be maintained by the Volunteers Support Team and accorded the same confidentiality as employee records.

One member of the Command Team in each Division will have responsibility for Volunteers in that Division.

Departments where Volunteers are utilised will nominate a post within the Department to co-ordinate and take responsibility for those Volunteers. In addition, all Volunteers must have a clearly identified supervisor, whose post will be selected at an early stage and included in the role specification.

It is the responsibility of each supervisor to give regular informal feedback to the volunteer/s and ensure they know their contribution is valued.

3.5 Recruitment and Selection

Special Constables will be recruited and vetted according to the Special Constables (Amendment) Regulations 2002, NPIA circular NPIA (WSU)(SC)(07)1 and the Police (Minimum age for Appointment) Regulations 2006 (SI2006/2278), together with the guidance set out in the Dorset Police Special Constabulary Recruiting and Selection Procedure. Other Volunteers will be recruited and vetted according to the Dorset Police Volunteers Recruiting and Selection Procedure. It should be noted that there are different vetting levels for PSV’s and as such they cannot move from one post to another without first notifying the Force Vetting Officer.

3.6 Training

All volunteers will receive an induction pack with written details of relevant policies and other useful documentation. They will also receive induction training outlining the essentials of volunteering within Dorset Police prior to the start of their role. The contents of the pack will be monitored and kept up to date by the Volunteer Support Team. For members of the Special Constabulary this information will be included as part of their probationer training course and will be based on NPIA guidelines. Induction training for the Special Constabulary will be the responsibility of the Learning and Development Unit.
For Police Support Volunteers the induction will consist of two days training once they are in their role, one day covering diversity issues and the other general information including an explanation of the Working Time Directive. Induction training for Police Support Volunteers will be the responsibility of the Division.

Further training requirements will be identified dependent on the role. This will be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the role and if necessary, an outline-training programme will be provided in the volunteer’s welcome pack.

Training should only be given if necessary for a volunteer to carry out their role. Training that is not directly relevant to the volunteer role performed could be seen as a benefit in employment law that might mean the individual concerned is classed as a ‘worker’.

The personal development portfolio for Special Constabulary student officers should be completed and signed off within 18 months of the officer’s attestation date.

Special Constabulary officers will be required to attend mandatory training in addition to general training sessions and meetings. The SC Chief Officer will decide which training will be mandatory.

Failure to comply with the above may result in a Special Constable being required to leave the Force if their knowledge and skills have not been maintained to the required standard.

3.7 Conduct, Performance and Grievance

The public quite rightly expect the highest standards of conduct from all members of the Police Service regardless of the role or capacity in which they perform. As such, any issues of concern relating to the conduct of volunteers will be addressed quickly by their direct line supervisor initially.

The Police (Performance) Regulations 2008 cover members of the Special Constabulary in relation to issues of unsatisfactory performance. Any complaint against a Special Constable from a member of the public will be dealt with by the Professional Standards Department under the guidelines set out by the Independent Police Complaints Commission in their revised statutory guidance of 1 April 2010. However, for the purposes of the complaints process Police Support Volunteers are not subject to these Regulations.

Where the conduct, performance or commitment of non-uniformed Police Support Volunteer falls below the standard expected, the Divisional Command Team member with designated responsibility for the volunteer will undertake proportionate enquiries, or arrange for them to be undertaken on his/her behalf. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances to request that the volunteer refrains from performing their role whilst these enquiries are conducted. The manager will then arrange a meeting with the volunteer to discuss the reported concerns and offer any advice or instruction deemed appropriate.

In the event that a member of the public makes a formal complaint against a Police Support Volunteer, full details of the complaint should be passed to the Complaints and Misconduct Unit in order that a decision can be made on what action is appropriate in the circumstances.
Where it is considered that it would be inappropriate for the individual to continue within the scheme, the Manager will advise the volunteer that their appointment is terminated and will confirm the decision in writing, setting out the reason(s). The volunteer will have the right of appeal against the termination to the Head of Personnel Services and to exercise this right they must write to this officer at Force HQ within one month of receipt of the decision. They must notify their intention to appeal; setting out the grounds on which they consider their appointment should be permitted to continue. The Head of Personnel Services will arrange a meeting to consider the appeal as soon as practicable at which both the volunteer and manager will be invited to attend. The volunteer may be accompanied by a UNISON representative if they are a union member, or a Dorset Police colleague. If a decision can be reached at the time of the meeting then this will be advised but if not it will be confirmed in writing as soon as practicable after the event.

Volunteers will be required to comply with the policies and procedures of Dorset Police. Details of how to access these policies will be enclosed within each volunteer’s welcome pack.

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining confidentiality at all times in line with Force policies and procedures.

Volunteers have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their work and to adhere to the Health and Safety policies of the Force. They must also ensure that activities undertaken in their private lives do not affect the integrity of Dorset Police or compromise the Volunteer scheme.

Dorset Police is committed to creating an environment where all members of the Force are able to achieve their full potential by creating a working environment which is free from all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying. Similarly the Force wishes to ensure that any grievance an individual has is resolved as quickly as possible. Whilst Volunteers are not employees it is appropriate that any dignity at work issue or grievance raised by a Volunteer is considered in line with the Force Dignity at Work Policy and Grievance Resolution Procedure.

All Volunteers are required to treat people fairly in line with Dorset Police Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policies. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining confidentiality.

3.8 Supervision and Support

Dorset Police staff who work alongside volunteers will be given clear written guidance of their responsibilities in relation to their volunteer colleague/s. They will be responsible for providing regular feedback to the individual/s on their contribution. This can be verbally, in writing or in the form of a PPP3.

All supervisors are encouraged to provide positive recognition to volunteers on a regular basis throughout the year. Supervisors should also ensure they have regular contact with police staff who work alongside volunteers, to monitor progress and deal with any problems as they arise.

All individuals aged 16-80 who join Dorset Police as volunteers are insured in line with Police Staff. They can join the Dorset Police Sports, Social Clubs and Welfare Fund as associate members. Details of these groups will be enclosed within the volunteer welcome pack. Volunteers may also join UNISON, the trade union for police staff. The volunteer will meet the cost of these subscriptions. Details of the membership benefits will be included in the welcome pack.
A confidential personal file will be kept for every volunteer by the Volunteer Support Team. All documentation and correspondence relating to the volunteer should be held within this. A volunteer can access their own file on request, subject to the considerations of Data Protection.

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to keep an accurate record of the number of voluntary hours completed. This should be recorded on a monthly basis and forwarded to the Divisional Volunteer’s Development Officer to collate and provide management data.

Current NPIA guidelines state that the Working Time Regulations do not apply to any time spent performing Special Constabulary or Police Support Volunteer duties because the voluntary nature of the role means that the individual is not a ‘worker’. This policy will be amended to reflect any subsequent changes to this guidance. However, managers should be mindful of the number of hour’s duty their volunteer is performing in terms of ensuring the health and safety of that individual, their colleagues and members of the public, particularly if they have employment elsewhere.

Guidelines for Special Constables who wish to transfer into or out of Dorset Police are set down in Home Office Circular 6/1999. [HOC 6-1999.pdf](HOC 6-1999.pdf)

A volunteer can resign at any time. This should be in writing, stating the reason for their departure and enclosing any property issued to the volunteer by Dorset Police. An exit form must be completed and forwarded to the Volunteers Co-ordinator to allow trends to be identified.

Any volunteer who experiences difficulty or problems with their physical or mental health as a direct result of their volunteer activity will be able to access services provided by the Welfare Department. The cost of their membership of the Welfare Fund is paid by the Force.

### 3.9 Dress Code

All volunteers must adhere to the guidelines set down in the Standards of Dress and Appearance Policy. [Intranet - Policy and Procedure Library](Intranet - Policy and Procedure Library)

### 3.10 Recognition

Volunteers provide vital links with our communities and are often performing roles which enhance the service we provide and increase public confidence. Special Constables and Police Support Volunteers are valued members of the extended police family and their reward should not be limited to the knowledge that they are helping to make their community a safer place to live and work.

Supervisors and managers should ensure that informal thanks are ongoing and regular so that volunteers know they are valued and appreciated as part of the team.

Regular events and meetings should be organised by Divisions to enable volunteers in the BCU to meet together and discuss relevant issues.

Volunteers may be recommended for a Divisional Commander's Commendation and where appropriate, a Chief Constable’s Commendation.
Any Special Constable who meets the criteria may be nominated for the annual Special Constable of the Year Award.

Any Volunteer who meets the criteria may be nominated for the annual Volunteer of the Year Award.

Special Constables who complete nine years active service will receive a long service medal. At subsequent intervals of ten years they will receive a bar to their long service medal.

3.11 Security

All volunteers must be clearly identifiable while on police premises or performing their volunteer role with Dorset Police. Their photo ID must be available for inspection at all times.

Volunteer vetting is the responsibility of the Force Vetting Officer and all vetting issues will be referred to him. Volunteers who change roles may require a higher level of vetting and will therefore be required to complete a change in personal circumstances form for submission to the FVO before starting the new role.

Vetting clearances are based on a ‘snapshot in time’, and do not provide a guarantee of future reliability. It is through effective supervision, and a well-defined and robust aftercare regime, that a vetting clearance remains valid. The Professional Standards Board will put in place procedures to ensure that this process is carried out, but volunteers must be prepared to submit updated vetting forms at the request of the FVO.

Any breach in confidentiality may result in the volunteer being asked to leave Dorset Police and may result in civil or criminal proceedings.

3.12 Recording of hours

Police Support Volunteers are not required to complete a minimum or maximum number of hours. However, some roles will require a regular commitment to the allocated task.

Special Constables should perform an average of at least four hours duty per week, preferably in line with the shift patterns of the regular officers they support.

All volunteers are required to keep a record of completed hours and submit them to their Divisional Volunteer’s Development Officer on a monthly basis.

3.13 Out of pocket expenses and allowances

Out of pocket expenses and allowances will be paid to all Special Constables according to Home Office circulars 40/2005 and 12/2006. Police Support Volunteers will be eligible for travelling expenses and a meal allowance at the rates as members of the Special Constabulary as set out in Home Office circulars 40/2005 and 12/2006.
Any out of pocket expenses and allowances are paid to Special Constables and Police Support Volunteers in order to reimburse costs incurred in the performance of their volunteer role which they would not have had if they did not volunteer. Any such payments made by Dorset Police to a volunteer are not wages.

Claims for expenses must be submitted on a month by month basis, authorised by a supervisor and can only be claimed in relation to the actual amount incurred during the claiming month.

### 3.14 Leaving Dorset Police

Volunteers are free to leave Dorset Police at any time without providing a reason, and similarly, Dorset Police may require a volunteer to leave at any time without providing a reason.

Volunteers who wish to leave must be provided with an opportunity to feedback on their time as a volunteer with Dorset Police. This opportunity should be organised by the Divisional Volunteers Development Officer or an appropriate member of staff using the exit interview questionnaire.

Retention of uniform, equipment or ID could represent a breach of security. Therefore all clothing and/or equipment issued by the force, including the ID card and Pac key, must be returned to the Volunteers Co-ordinator before the volunteer leaves the Force.

### 3.15 Challenges/Representations

Any challenge to this policy from any interested party, or any other representation should be directed to:

Volunteers Co-ordinator, Volunteer Support Team, Learning and Development Unit, Dorset Police HQ, Winfrith, Dorchester, DT2 8DZ

**E-mail**: carole.oliver@dorset.pnn.police.uk  
**Telephone**: (01305) 223558

### 3.16 Resources

Each role description should identify any resources required. Consideration must be given to how such resources will be funded before the role is advertised.

Induction training for Volunteers will require support from the Learning and Development Unit at Force Headquarters.
4 Consultation and Authorisation

4.1 Consultation

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<td>Sam Mayes, LDU Governance Manager</td>
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<td>Authorised:</td>
<td>Supt Wes Trickey, Head of LDU</td>
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5 Version Control

5.1 Review

Date of next scheduled review | Date: 8 July 2010

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