

## All in a day's work

PCSOs work alongside regular officers to provide a visible and accessible uniformed presence, and have become popular and respected figures in the local community. They contribute to the delivery of an efficient and cohesive policing service to the communities of Northamptonshire and are valuable members of the extended policing family.

The role of a PCSO is varied and PCSO Rob Stevens describes a typical day: "One of my first tasks is to review incidents on my area and visit victims and offenders of anti-social behaviour. I'm out on patrol on my bike for most of my shifts, talking to people, dealing with incidents and other local issues, offering reassurance and generally finding out what is going on in the local area.

"People find me approachable and this helps me gain a lot of useful information about what concerns them most about their neighbourhood, meaning we can be sure that we are tackling the issues that matter most to the local community."

"PCSOs have a range of powers to ensure we are equipped to respond to local issues. We can seize tobacco and alcohol from underage users, deal with anyone riding a motorcycle or other vehicle in a way likely to cause harm or distress, remove abandoned vehicles, and issue Fixed Penalty Notices and Penalty Notices for Disorder for a variety of offences."

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In an emergency, call 999



# The work of the Police Community Support Officer UPDATE FOR STAKEHOLDERS



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## Visibility and reassurance

The role of Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) has become synonymous with a visible and reassuring policing presence in the county's towns and villages, efficiently tackling the issues and concerns raised by local people.



PCSOs have been part of the extended policing family in Northamptonshire since 2002 and currently there are 168 PCSOs working as part of Safer Community Teams across the county. The role has received strong support from the county council, as well as a number of local councils, schools and colleges, Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal, Brackmills and Northampton Business Improvement Districts, who provide financial support for 30 PCSO posts in both the local and wider community.

This widespread support acknowledges the numerous benefits that PCSOs bring to the community, including tackling local issues, supporting victims of crime and anti-social behaviour, partnership working and problem solving with a community focus, early intervention, deterrence and prevention of crime, intelligence gathering and improved public safety, bringing specific benefits to the agencies that have funded them.

## Cornerstones of the community

PCSOs play a crucial role within each Safer Community Team, delivering a locally focused policing service in response to local needs. Positive relationships are developed and maintained within the local community; in particular, PCSOs are able to spend time engaging with those groups that are typically harder to reach, helping to increase confidence in the police and encourage greater reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour.



PCSOs work hard to build relationships with the young people in their local community. As well as daily interaction while out on patrol, they provide a single point of contact to schools and regularly visit youth groups and children's homes, offering safety and crime prevention advice, and improving understanding and relationships between young people and the police. They also engage with local religious and faith groups, travellers and other minority groups, as well as those who are more vulnerable, such as people with disabilities, mental health issues or learning difficulties, elderly people, and victims of domestic abuse and hate crime.

PCSOs have made a significant contribution to increasing public confidence, improving satisfaction with local policing, and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. In this year alone (as at 31 November), they have helped to:

- Increase public confidence in the police to 81%
- Reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour by 22% (a total of 7802 incidents)
- Improve victim satisfaction with the way we deal with anti-social behaviour to 85%
- Increase public satisfaction with the way we respond to local concerns to 81%

## Working with partners

PCSOs play a pivotal role in coordinating the work of the police and partner agencies in delivering long term solutions to local issues. Their local knowledge, network of contacts and problem solving skills mean they are uniquely placed to bring together the people and skills needed to deal effectively with community concerns.

**Local identified priorities** – many of the issues that concern local people need the input of other agencies. PCSOs are able to coordinate the contributions from a variety of departments, such as housing, environment, highways and neighbourhood management, to bring about effective solutions to the problems that affect people's quality of life.

**Supporting vulnerable people** – PCSOs work with partners from various statutory and voluntary agencies to provide support to more vulnerable members of the community, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, those who have experienced high levels of anti-social behaviour or victims of domestic abuse. They are able to draw on their contacts and ensure the right people are there to give the necessary support.

**Community safety** – PCSOs work closely with partner agency colleagues to ensure the environmental factors that can encourage crime to flourish, such as abandoned vehicles, overgrown trees, damaged fencing or poor home security, are identified and dealt with to improve the local area and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

The role of the PCSO is unique in bringing together the community, police and partner agencies to tackle the issues that matter most. The PCSO has become synonymous with problem solving and their success has become the shared success of each partner agency. They have fast become an established feature of our towns and communities, instantly recognisable, giving communities a voice and agencies a face.