



## Derbyshire Police Authority

### What is the role of a Police Community Support Officer?

PCSOs are support staff, employed by the Police Authority. They are highly visible performing a patrolling role and providing reassurance to the communities they serve.

They focus on lower level crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour and play a key role in freeing up time of police officers so they can focus on high level crime. Some of the things they are involved in could be:

Often, PCSOs perform duties that require a police presence or advice, but may not require the full skills and expertise of a police officer, such as:

- dealing with minor offences
- conducting house-to-house enquiries
- providing crime prevention advice
- offering early intervention to deter crime
- guarding crime scenes
- supporting front-line staff at major events.

### What powers do they have?

The Police Reform Act allows Chief Officers of Police to give PCSOs limited enforcement powers so they can tackle the issues they face effectively.

When on duty, each PCSO carries a permit which details their designated powers and uniform rules. You can ask to see this permit at any time.

In addition to 20 standard powers given to all PCSOs, the following have been locally designated to those working in Derbyshire communities:

- Power to issue fixed penalty notices for truancy
- Power to issue fixed penalty notices for graffiti and fly-posting
- Power to issue fixed penalty notices in respect of offences of disorder
- Power to disperse groups and remove persons under 16 to their place of residence
- Power to remove children in contravention of bans imposed by curfew notices to their place of residence
- Power to stop vehicles for testing
- Power to remove truants (and excluded pupils) to designated premises
- Search and seizure powers – alcohol and tobacco.

To learn more about any of these powers, including those issued to all PCSOs across the UK, read the PCSO Powers document.

### **How do PCSOs differ from a sworn police officer?**

It is the view of The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) that the skills of a sworn police officer are appropriate for the following circumstances:

**4.1** Wherever there is a clear likelihood that a confrontation will arise. However, PCSOs should have sufficient support, equipment and training to cope safely with confrontations that arise spontaneously in the course of their primary role of patrol, reassurance and tackling anti-social behaviour;

**4.2** Where there is scope for exercise of a high degree of discretion - for example, where a situation is complex owing to a number of different parties involved, where there is particular sensitivity within a community about police action, or where a large range of enforcement options are available;

**4.3** Where police action is likely to lead to a higher than normal risk of harm to anyone;

**4.4** Where there is a clear likelihood that police action will include any infringement of a person's human rights - for example intruding into their privacy or deprivation of their liberty (beyond the temporary detention period available to PCSOs);

**4.5** Where the incident is one which is likely to lead to significant further work being undertaken which has the potential to impact adversely upon the PCSOs' capacity to undertake visible patrol duties.

### **Where can I find out more information about PCSOs?**

If you are interested in becoming a PCSO, you can find out more about the job by visiting <http://www.policecouldyou.co.uk/>.

More strategic information about PCSOs can be found on the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) website <http://www.acpo.police.uk>.