



Employer Supported Policing Policy - Special Constables (Surrey and Sussex) (1204/2025)

Abstract

This policy and procedure details the Surrey Police and Sussex Police approach to supporting police staff who serve in the Special Constabulary.

Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Home Office definition of Employer Supported Policing (ESP) is:

"A partnership benefitting employers, their staff and the Police Service by releasing Special Constables and Police Support Volunteers to volunteer in the community they serve."

1.2 This policy outlines the minimum requirement of line managers of police staff who are also special constables. The policy allows for each line manager to have flexibility around the level of support they wish to give their special constable beyond the minimum requirements.

Line managers are expected to be as supportive as possible to enable the provision of frontline operational resilience across both Force areas.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy and procedure detail the expectations of an individual, their line manager and the wider organisation regarding the use of police staff duty time to carry out duties as a special constable.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 To demonstrate our commitment to ESP, Surrey Police and Sussex Police will give their police staff a minimum of one employed (paid) shift each month to perform policing duties as a special constable. This will typically be an eight hour-shift but may vary depending on the department or team.

This shift must be in addition to the required minimum of 16 voluntary hours per month expected of all special constables. This means that a special constable should have committed at least 16 voluntary hours within a four-week period before an ESP shift is approved by their line manager.

3.2 The Force's expectation is that ESP requests in line with this policy will be authorised by the line manager and will not be declined without a clear rationale.

3.3 In the event of a major incident, mobilisation of special constables will sit outside this policy and an individual may be required to perform policing duties as a special constable without individual line management authorisation.

Procedure

1. Purpose

1.1 ESP shifts should be used for operational policing duties or training.

1.2 ESP shifts are not mandatory and therefore there is no obligation for police staff to request regular ESP shifts. However, it is recognised that operational duties contribute to increased visibility and impact on public confidence.

1.3 There are benefits to having police staff with operational policing experience in both Forces including a greater understanding of policing, the forming of networks and contacts, and improved integration across departments.

2. Conditions

2.1 The duty shift (or ESP shift) performed in Surrey Police and Sussex Police employed (paid) time must be in addition to the required minimum of 16 voluntary hours per month expected of all special constables. This means that a special constable should have committed at least 16 voluntary hours within a four-week period before an ESP shift is approved by their line manager.

2.2 When undertaking an ESP shift, all relevant Special Constabulary policies, procedures and regulations will apply.

2.3 Staff should seek authorisation from their line manager for an ESP shift as far in advance as possible, with a minimum of ten working days' notice, to enable the line manager to plan resourcing accordingly.

2.4 Line managers are required to authorise ESP shifts unless there is a specific reason why the request cannot be accommodated; in these circumstances a clear rationale must be shared with the police staff member.

2.5 An individual may be released for more than one shift a month provided that the required 16 voluntary hours per month are committed and resourcing within the department permit.

2.6 If required, a special constable can provide their line manager with an extract from Dutysheet (Surrey) or SAP / Dutysheet (Sussex) to evidence the voluntary hours they have performed and/or committed prior to requesting the ESP shift.

2.7 Part-time police staff who are special constables should be offered ESP shifts on a pro-rata basis.

2.8 ESP shifts must be used within the same financial year and cannot be carried forward into the next year's leave period.

2.9 Police staff working in operational frontline departments such as custody, Force Contact, Command and Control Department (FCCCD) in Sussex and Force Command Centre (FCC) in Surrey, should refer to section 5 below for specific conditions.

2.10 Surrey and Sussex police staff who are special constables within any other police force are eligible to request ESP in accordance with this policy.

3. Employer Supported Training

3.1 Duties planning teams are expected to facilitate the release of individuals for operational training wherever possible.

3.2 Where operational training is scheduled at the same time as police staff duties, ESP shifts can be requested.

3.3 All special constables are required to complete an initial training course. This course is scheduled in advance and individual requests for alternative dates are challenging to accommodate. Line managers are therefore required to support the release of their police staff for their initial training course.

3.4 For all other operational training, including continuous professional development for special constables (e.g. Taser, driving courses etc) a minimum of 50% of the training course time should be provided as ESP.

For some training inputs (e.g. driving courses) this requirement will be more than one ESP shift within a four-week period and in these specific circumstances line managers are encouraged to reach a supportive agreement with their staff member.

4. Resilience for ESP

4.1 Special constables in police staff roles may be called upon to provide proactive operational policing resource to meet demand. In situations such as this, the special constable should be consulted and if they are able to support the operational requirement, line managers should facilitate their release.

4.2 ESP duties will normally be performed during the hours the police staff member would have attended their workplace.

However, where there is an operational requirement which falls outside of these hours, special constables may perform their ESP hours at alternative agreed shift times. Any agreed change will need to take into consideration the working time directive, particularly the requirement for an 11-hour rest period.

For example, if a special normally works an 08:00 - 16:00 shift but there is a requirement to support a late turn, the special constable can request line management approval to commit to a 14:00 - 00:00 policing shift but a later start time should be agreed for the following day to allow a sufficient rest period.

4.3 If a line manager is unable to provide adequate cover to release a special constable for a full shift, ESP could be split into two equal shifts (i.e. two four-hour shifts on different days).

4.4 If it is not possible to authorise the requested ESP shift, the line manager will offer alternative dates.

4.5 ESP shifts that exceed the time agreed with the line manager will not be compensated with time off in lieu or overtime; additional hours will be considered as voluntary.

5. ESP for Police Staff in Operational Teams

5.1 It is acknowledged that operational departments required to maintain minimum staffing over a range of shift patterns are unlikely to be able to support the release of their police staff for more than one ESP shift within a month.

5.2 It will almost always be the case that periods of increased demand for operational policing will also be periods of increased demand in custody and contact (FCCCD in Sussex and FCC in Surrey). It is therefore unlikely that ESP shifts will be authorised during these periods, including specific events such as Halloween and annual major operations (e.g. Epsom Derby, Lewes bonfire and Pride).

6. Withdrawal of ESP

6.1 If the resourcing of a department is such that it cannot function without the police staff member, a pre-planned ESP shift may be cancelled. In these circumstances an alternative ESP shift will be offered.

6.2 ESP shifts may be withdrawn if performance in an individual's police staff role has fallen below the standards required of the post.

7. Deployment

7.1 ESP shifts must be recorded on Dutysheet (Surrey and Sussex) and SAP (Sussex only) in accordance with the standard procedure for each Force.

7.2 A special constable undertaking an ESP shift is entitled to claim subsistence but may only claim any mileage over and above their usual journey to / from their police staff normal place of duty.

Team: Volunteering