



Special Constable Guidance Notes

BEFORE YOU START – ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

AGE: Are you 17 years old or over? You must be at least 17 years old in order to apply for the role of Special Constable, though please note you cannot start in the role until you are aged 18 or over.

There is no upper age limit for applying to the police service but please bear in mind that the normal retirement age for police officers is 60 years and that Special Constables have to undertake a significant amount of training before they can patrol independently.

NATIONALITY: To be eligible for appointment you must be a British citizen or have Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in the UK or Settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

If you are an EU/EE citizen, a Commonwealth citizen or a foreign national, you will be required to provide proof that you have ILR or Settled status and that you have no restrictions on your right to remain in the UK.

RESIDENCY: In the last three years, have you spent any continuous period of over one month outside of the UK?

Time spent abroad may not be a bar to recruitment however you may be asked to supply certificates of good conduct from the local police authorities of the countries you have visited. From experience this may take some time and involve some cost to you. We reserve the right to ask for certificates from any of the other countries visited if necessary.

You are required to have been a resident of the UK for the last 3 years. There are some exceptions allowed (e.g. periods of being overseas travelling or working, armed forces etc.) which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

HEALTH, DISABILITY and EYESIGHT: Applicants must be able to satisfy Thames Valley Police that they are medically fit to perform the required duties of a Special Constable. The Police Service is covered by the Equality Act. If you have a disability, we will make adjustments where it is reasonable to do so. Please provide any relevant information about your disability and details of any reasonable adjustment you think you may need to undertake the assessment process and the role of a Special Constable.

Disability is defined as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

Successful candidates who pass the assessment phase will be asked to complete a Medical History Form. All medical criteria will be checked – eyesight, hearing and Body Mass Index (BMI must be at least 18 and no more than 30). This part of the process will be managed by the Occupational Health Unit.

EYESIGHT: The standard you need to meet either with or without spectacles or contact lenses is:

Distance Vision

6/12 or better with either your right or left eye

6/6 with both eyes together

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If you wear spectacles or contact lenses you also need to reach 6/36 binocularly without your spectacles or lenses.

Near Vision

N6 with both eyes together (aided)

Colour Vision

The use of colour correcting lenses is not acceptable.

Severe colour vision deficiencies (monochromats) are not acceptable. Mild anomalous trichromats are acceptable. Severe anomalous dichromats or trichromats are also acceptable but you will need to be aware of the deficiency and make appropriate adjustments.

Eye Surgery

Radial Keratotomy, Accurate Keratotomy or corneal grafts are not acceptable.

Other forms of refractive surgery such as LASIK, LASEK, PRK, ICRS, Epiflap are all acceptable provided that six weeks have elapsed since surgery, there are no residual effects and the other eyesight standards are met.

PRECLUDED OCCUPATIONS:

In most cases this will not be a problem; however you should be aware that there are some jobs which are known as “precluded occupations”. These are roles where there is potential for a conflict of interest to arise between the job and the role of Special Constable.

Some relevant examples are:

Precluded Occupations – Roles where you would not be allowed to be appointed as a Special Constable

- Bar work
- Door Staff
- Armed Forces Personnel

Precluded Occupations – Roles where you may be allowed to be appointed as a Special Constable depending on the nature of the work

- Security work
- Any role in the criminal justice sector

This is not a definitive list and if you have any queries you should contact the recruitment department to discuss.

CONVICTIONS AND CAUTIONS: (you and your family) Convictions or cautions will not necessarily preclude you from appointment; It will depend on their nature and the circumstances of the offence. Failure to disclose convictions or cautions will, however, result in your application being terminated.

You will be asked to complete vetting forms before you attend an assessment centre.

You must declare all convictions for any past offences, formal cautions by the police (including cautions as a juvenile, i.e. under 18 years) and any bindover imposed by any court. **You should include traffic convictions** such as speeding, drink drive offences, fixed penalties for motoring or disorder offences and any appearances before a court martial.

You must also declare any charge or summons currently outstanding against you.

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You must include spent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (by virtue of the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exemptions) Order 1975) or any involvement with civil, military or transport police.

You must also declare if you have ever been involved in any criminal investigation whether or not this led to prosecution (either of yourself or others)

If you believe you have been involved in the kind of incident we need to know about, please let us know. Some applicants do not declare information which they believe is no longer held on record. However, our enquiries will reveal incidents from long ago and failure to disclose these will lead to your application being rejected. If you have any doubts, include the details and let us decide if they are relevant.

We will also want to know whether any of your close family or associates are involved in criminal activity and we will therefore search for any criminal convictions or cautions recorded against your family. You must advise them that these enquiries will be made. The police service cannot disclose the results of these enquiries to you.

TATTOOS: Tattoos are not a bar to appointment, however, some tattoos could potentially offend members of the public or colleagues, or could bring discredit to the police service. It depends on their size, nature and location and sometimes on the extent, size and location.

Tattoos are not acceptable if they :

- Undermine the dignity and authority of the office of Constable;
- Could cause offence to members of the public or colleagues and/or invite provocation;
- Are garish or numerous or particularly prominent;
- Indicate unacceptable attitudes towards women, minority groups or any other section of the community;
- Indicate alignment with a particular group which could give offence to members of the public or colleagues;
- Are considered to be rude, lewd, crude, racist, sexist, sectarian, homophobic, violent or intimidating.

If you have tattoos on your body, you will be asked to describe their nature, words used, extent and size. In addition, you will be asked to indicate the location of the tattoo(s) and enclose a coloured photograph.

FINANCIAL POSITION: Special Constables are in a privileged position with regard to access to information and could be considered potentially vulnerable to corruption. Applicants to the police service should not therefore be under pressure from undischarged debts or liabilities and should be able to manage loans and debts sensibly.

Most applicants have debts, such as mortgages, undischarged student or other loans and credit/store card debts. Debts which are within your means and are manageable are not a bar to appointment.

- Applicants who have existing County Court Judgements outstanding against them or who have been registered bankrupt and their bankruptcy debts have not been discharged will not be considered.
- Applicants who have discharged County Court Judgements may be considered.
- Applicants who have been registered as bankrupt and their bankruptcy debts have been discharged will only be considered after three years from discharge of the debt

