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This circular is about:

**Special Constables:
Transfers**

From:

Workforce Strategy Unit, NPIA

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This supersedes
Home Office Circular 06/1999

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This circular is addressed to:

Chief Officers of Police

Copies are being sent to:

**Chairs to Police Authorities
Special Constabulary Chief Officers
Special Constabulary Coordinators
HR Directors**

ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

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Dear Chief Officer

SPECIAL CONSTABLES: TRANSFERS

This circular contains guidance on:

- **The process to be followed to allow a serving special constable to transfer permanently from one Home Office force to another.**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The following guidance sets out the national protocol for the transfer of special constables between police forces in England and Wales. It is intended to cover cases where a serving special constable wishes to leave his or her current (home) force permanently and serve in another (receiving) force and sets about facilitating a smooth transfer between forces. This circular supersedes Home Office Circular 06/1999.
- 1.2 This protocol applies to the 43 Home Office forces of England and Wales. However, it is open to forces as to whether to apply these protocols to individuals wishing to transfer from the non-Home Office forces. Additionally, forces should exercise their discretion in relation to officers wishing to transfer from police forces in Scotland.
- 1.3 Each year, forces lose a number of special constables as a result of their moving out of the force area. The pressures involved in permanently relocating and taking up new employment can mean that they need encouragement to maintain their link with the Special Constabulary. Forces should consider providing such encouragement, as this would be beneficial to each force that applies this policy.
- 1.4 At the heart of this circular is the intention to support the retention of skills in the Police Service and avoid losing trained individuals following a move to another force or geographical area. It is also important to make a transfer between forces a simple process – benefitting both the individual special constable and force administration.
- 1.5 The protocol has been approved by the Special Constabulary National Consultative Group (SCNCG).
- 1.6 Further guidance, particularly concerning special constable eligibility, can be found in NPIA Circular 01/2011 - Special Constables: Eligibility for Recruitment available at: <http://npia.police.uk/en/10193.htm>

2. Definitions

2.1 All references in the circular to the 'home force' refer to the force that the special constable will be leaving.

2.2 'Receiving force' refers to the force to which the special constable is intending to transfer.

3. Underpinning principles

- Forces should, where appropriate, inform individuals who are intending to resign and move to another part of the country of the possibility of transferring to a force in that area in order that their skills and experience are retained within the Police Service.
- Forces should ensure that the transfer of special constables is administered as efficiently as possible and in a timely way. Breaks in service should be kept to a minimum.

- Forces should consider nominating a sole point of contact - a 'Force Transfer Co-ordinator', or equivalent (hereinafter 'FTC') to manage transfer applications.
- Forces should ensure that the process for transferring special constables is equitable and applies equally to all applicants. Each individual case should, however, be treated on its own merits.
- Special constables should not feel obliged to resign from one force before applying to join another.
- These procedures apply to all members of the Special Constabulary and forces should ensure that individual special constables are aware of opportunities to transfer to another force.

4. Force Transfer Co-ordinator

- 4.1 Each force should consider nominating a sole point of contact (i.e. an FTC or equivalent) who will be responsible for managing the transfer process and answering transfer queries. It is essential that the FTC in both the home and receiving forces communicate with each other to:
- i. Adopt uniform procedures
 - ii. Ensure that there are no delays in sending necessary paperwork and in responding to requests for information.
 - iii. Appropriate communication is maintained with respect to training requirements to address any potential gaps and that the special constable's training record is shared appropriately between forces.
 - iv. Demonstrate to applicants that their service is valued and that they are motivated to transfer from one force to another.

5. Transfer Procedure

- 5.1 All requests for transfers should be made by application to the home force FTC.

i. Applications as a result of resignation

Where a force identifies a special constable submitting their resignation for the reason of relocation to another force area, the FTC should initiate contact with that special constable to encourage and/or inform them of the opportunity to transfer to another force.

ii. Applications initiated by an individual special constable

A special constable who wishes to transfer to another force should submit a transfer application (incorporating a release form for permissions to forward on personal details to the receiving force) by his or her home force. This document can be found at Annex A. Once completed, this form should be submitted to the home force FTC for processing.

- 5.2 Upon receipt of a completed transfer application by a special constable, the home force's FTC should ensure that the Special Constabulary Chief Officer and relevant senior management are notified of the transfer request.
- 5.3 The FTC should then make contact with the receiving force within 7 working days of receipt of the completed transfer application. The special constable should be provided with the details of the FTC at the receiving force to ensure that they have a point to which queries can be addressed about the receiving force or transfer process. The receiving force should send any documentation/application forms to the transferring special constable.
- 5.4 Upon receipt of the completed permissions form, the home force should send a copy of

the special constable's personal file, latest PDR (if available), part/completed Personal Development Portfolio (PDP), vetting information, statement of training, confirmation of completion of probation and any outstanding complaints or discipline cases. The home force will confirm details of the recruitment standards that were met by the special constable, if requested by the receiving force.

- 5.5 On receipt of the transfer application form, the receiving force will write to the special constable within 7 working days of receipt of the application form, confirming the point of contact (FTC) for their application, outlining the process and inviting them for an interview, and notify the FTC in the home force.
- 5.6 As this guidance is aimed at individuals already serving within the police service, it is suggested that they should not need to go through the full recruitment process. However, it should be borne in mind that individuals do not possess a right to transfer. It is therefore suggested that forces interview prospective transferring special constables to make a decision as to suitability.
- 5.7 The receiving force is responsible for maintaining regular communication with the special constable and the FTC of the home force throughout the transfer process.
- 5.8 A special constable will be notified in writing of the outcome of the interview at the receiving force and an update should be sent to the FTC in the home force.

iii. Non-permitted transfer applications

- 5.9 As the transfer process is designed to provide clarity, special constables should not be permitted to apply independently to another force.

6. Successful transfer applications

- 6.1 If a special constable is successful in his or her application to transfer, the receiving force should carry out any necessary vetting, reference checks, and any medical and fitness tests in line with force policy. For additional information on vetting, please see paragraph 12.
- 6.2 The receiving force should also notify, in writing, the special constable and the home force of the effective date of the transfer.

7. Unsuccessful transfer applications

- 7.1 If a special constable is unsuccessful in their application to transfer, the special constable should be informed in writing of the decision within 7 working days. A copy should be sent to the FTC in the home force.
- 7.2 Forces should ensure that special constables are aware that the Chief Officer of the force retains the right to reject any application, but in all cases the applicant can request feedback on the decisions that informed the outcome of the application.

8. Training requirements of the transferring special constable

- 8.1 Receiving forces may wish to consider whether the training that the special constable received in the home force is equivalent to the training required in their force. This is made easier where both forces have adopted similar training models, such as the national student curriculum: Initial Learning for the Special Constabulary, or IL4SC.
- 8.2 Where there is no initial training or other training common to the home force and the receiving force, the receiving force may require the transferring special constable to

undertake relevant training. Forces should therefore consider conducting a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) for all special constables transferring from another force. The TNA should be carried out by the receiving force against their special constable role profile and associated training requirements. Account should be taken of the transferees' length of service, experience and personal requirements.

9. Independent Patrol Status (IPS)

- 9.1 It is the case that not all special constables across the 43 forces in England and Wales have reached or are required to reach Independent Patrol Status (IPS) and may continue to work on Accompanied Patrol. This is a matter for forces.
- 9.2 Given that the deployment of special constables varies from force to force, the decision as to whether to solely accept special constables on transfer who have reached IPS will rest with the local force concerned.

10 Recruitment Assessment Process

- 10.1 Receiving forces should consider disapplying their recruitment assessment process in respect of transferring special constables. A decision to exempt transferring officers is made easier if the two forces concerned have applied the NPIA Specials NRS Assessment Process. Exemption would mean the avoidance of duplication and thus the incursion of extra costs.

11. Length of service

- 11.1 Forces may consider setting a minimum qualifying period stating the length of time or number of hours a special constable should have served in the home force before they are regarded as eligible to request a transfer to another force. Previous local policies on this issue, agreed within some ACPO regions, have suggested a two year period as a guide. Based on a special constable undertaking a minimum duty commitment of 16 hours a month, this equates to approximately 384 duty hours. The view is that a special constable should become eligible to request a transfer subsequent to their having completed the required probationary period.
- 11.2 There are several considerations to be noted in respect of a minimum qualifying period/ number of hours being required. The receiving force will be able to draw upon the services of a fully trained special constable i.e. one that has completed their probation period. While it is also important to ensure the home force does not expend a significant level of investment in terms of time, training and resources only to regard this as being 'wasted' due to the officer requesting a transfer.
- 11.3 However, it needs to be noted that special constables are volunteers and are subject to external influences in their lives beyond their control e.g. their primary working arrangements may require them to move to a different geographic location. Therefore it would seem appropriate for their previous service and the investment in their training not to be totally lost due to a technicality regarding the amount of time they have served. Forces are encouraged to consider individual applications on their merits, particularly if circumstances are extenuating or beyond the control of the special constable which prevent him or her reaching a minimum qualifying period/number of hours.

12. Break in service

- 12.1 Forces should complete the transfer of special constables as soon as practicable. Breaks in service are permissible but should be kept to a minimum.

12.2 However, where forces wish to implement a no-break in service clause into transfer policy, it should be borne in mind that the practicalities of the application process (following an application to resign and depending on the notice period) may make a non-permissible break in service clause difficult to apply in practice.

13. Keeping rank/ grade

13.1 Forces may consider that special constables who have achieved a particular rank/grade should be eligible to apply for a post in the receiving force at an equivalent level, where vacancies exist. Recent policies developed by ACPO regions also mirror this position. However, it should be noted not all police forces currently follow the suggested national rank/grade structure within their respective Special Constabularies, or, at the time of transfer application, there are no relevant equivalent rank/grade vacancies within the receiving force. As such, it may not be possible for a receiving force to accommodate a particular rank/grade an individual previously held at their home force.

13.2 In such circumstances, it is suggested the situation be resolved via local agreement on an individual case basis. Both police forces and the transferring special constable should be involved in discussions and give their agreement to the proposed solution.

14. Vetting and other checks

14.1 Consideration should be given to the fact that a transferring special constable will have to undergo vetting checks by the receiving force. This may cause some delay in the overall application process time. It is recognised that vetting forms an integral part of the recruitment process, however forces are encouraged to seek to minimise the time taken as a result while not compromising the integrity of the vetting process. Forces may find it useful to refer to the **ACPO and ACPOS National Vetting Policy for the Police Community** which is available at:
<http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/workforce/2010/201008WDNVP01.pdf>

15. Exit Interviews

15.1 Forces may consider conducting exit interviews for transferring special constables prior to departure in order to identify the reasons behind the transfer e.g. employment related, geographical factors, personal issues, etc.

16. Induction periods

16.1 Forces may consider implementing an induction period to familiarise the transferee special constable with the local policies of the receiving force. A buddy scheme may also assist during this time. The period of time that this covers is for forces to decide, and may vary by individual.

17 Uniform

17.1 Uniforms often vary from force to force but some parts of Special Constabulary uniforms (such as trousers, shirt and boots) may be the same. In such cases the home force should consider allowing the special constable to retain these items for service in the receiving force. Other badged items particular to the home force should be handed back to the home force.

18. Attestation

- 18.1 Where a special constable transfers under the arrangements described in this guidance, they will not be required to resign from their home force, but they will be deemed to have discontinued their service with the home force upon completion of the transfer to the receiving force.
- 18.2 It is suggested that transferees be attested in the new force area given the specific wording of the provisions set out in section 29 of the Police Act 1996. However, the final decision as to whether to attest transferring special constables will rest with the Chief Officer of the receiving force.
- 18.3 Where a force accepts an application from a special constable whose home force is one of the Scottish forces or non-Home Office forces, that individual must be attested as a special constable in the second force to allow them to exercise their powers across England and Wales.

19. Employer Supported Policing (ESP)

- 19.1 Where a transferring special constable indicates that they are currently being supported by their employer under the ESP Scheme to undertake training and duties in their home force, the receiving force should consider whether there are opportunities which may benefit the force and the special constable. For example, the force may benefit from more flexible working and, potentially, more individuals interested in joining the Special Constabulary via the ESP scheme in that force area.

20. Disclosure of information about an applicant between forces

- 20.1 Any information held by a police force about an officer or individual is personal data and must be handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. Forces must therefore ensure that they handle information about a special constable wishing to transfer in accordance the 1998 Act and any other relevant legislative provisions. Particular care should be taken where a special constable fails a vetting check by the second force. Forces should clarify any legal issues with their appropriate legal representatives.

21. Special Constabulary Strength

- 21.1 Forces should ensure that when recording the number of special constables for service strength, care is taken to accurately reflect the current position, taking into account those special constables that have transferred to or been received from another force.

SPECIAL CONSTABLE TRANSFERS APPLICATION FORM

Section 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT

Name of applicant:

Current address:

Current force:

Start date with current force:

Rank/grade:

Division/station:

Force you wish to transfer to:

Reason for request to transfer:

Are you currently supported by your employer under the Employer Supported Policing (ESP) Scheme to undertake training/duties as a special constable in your home force?

yes no

I agree for my current force to pass on my personal file, part/completed PDP, most recent PDR, confirmation of completion of probation and details of any outstanding complaints or discipline cases:

yes no

Important:

I also acknowledge the following:

- i. That I will be subject to vetting checks (which may include financial checks, the results of which will be treated in confidence) by the second force in line with force policy; and that I may also be required to undergo fitness/health or other checks as required by that force policy.
- ii. If granted permission to transfer, I understand that I may be required to re-attest in the second force's area as directed by the Chief Officer of that force
- iii. The Chief Officer retains the right to reject any application, but in all cases I can request feedback on the decisions that informed the outcome of the application.

(Please tick to indicate acknowledgement)

Applicant signature:

date:

For office use only by home force

Date application received:

Section 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HOME FORCE

Applicant information

Length of service: _____ Date of promotion and rank/grade: (if relevant): _____

Has the applicant completed their minimum duty requirement/number of hours?

yes no

If no, please provide details:

Appointment record

Has the applicant undertaken the National Specials Recruitment Assessment Process?

yes no

If yes, please give date, result and details of NRS feedback report:

If no, please provide details of your recruitment/selection process:

Training record (please supply training record)

Has the applicant completed the following training?

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Induction: | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | |
| Personal development portfolio (PDP): | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | |
| Completed probationary training: | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | |
| Completed Initial Learning for the Special Constabulary (IL4SC): | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | |
| Confirmed for independent patrol (IPS): | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | |
| Personal Development Review (PDR)/appraisal: | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | |
| Officer safety training (OST): | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | If yes, date: |
| First aid: | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | If yes, date: |
| Leadership training: | <input type="checkbox"/> yes | <input type="checkbox"/> no | |

If yes, please provide details:

Standard driving: yes no

Advanced driving: yes no

Details of any other developmental/mandatory training:

Details of long service awards:
Details of any commendations:

Details of any outstanding complaints or disciplinary actions against the applicant:

Details of previous complaints or disciplinary actions against the applicant:

Vetting History

Status:
(Normally ACPO Recruitment Vetting - RV and National Security Vetting Counter Terrorist Check (CTC))

When undertaken:

Expiry date:

Endorsement of request to transfer

Please supply any additional information in support of application to transfer; (to be completed by supervisor, SC coordinator or recruitment department)

Name:

Signature:

Rank/post:

Date:

Checklist

The following documents are attached in support of transfer application:

Personal file	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Part/completed PDP	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Most recent PDR	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Statement of training	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
Confirmation of completion of probation/authorisation of independent patrol letter	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no

For office use only by home force
Date application forwarded to receiving force: