

Home Office encourages civil servants across government to volunteer with police

Civil servants volunteering as special constables will get up to 12 days paid special leave a year to spend more time supporting their local police force, following an initiative from the Home Office.

Cabinet Office and HM Treasury are among the 19 departments increasing this dedicated leave allowance for staff.

The announcement comes as new central guidance is issued to support civil servants who want to become special constables. For the first time, the guide sets out in one place information on how to apply, who is eligible and the types of roles available as well as detailing what support the Civil Service offers Special Constables.

It follows the Home Office increasing its special leave allowance for employees volunteering as special constables in November 2018, a move the Metropolitan Police has today acknowledged with a certificate recognising the department's commitment to the Special Constabulary.

Supporting the volunteering initiative, Cabinet Secretary Sir Mark Sedwill said:

As public servants, those civil servants who volunteer are citizens who serve twice. We should all be proud of them.

I hope that colleagues from across the Civil Service will follow the lead of those from the Home Office who've become special constables – warranted police officers who keep their fellow citizens safe – developing their own skills and leadership too.

Home Office Permanent Secretary, Sir Philip Rutnam said:

Special constables play a pivotal role in meeting some of our most important priorities – tackling knife crime, safeguarding the vulnerable and keeping the public safe.

Civil servants who take this opportunity will gain professionally and get an insight into frontline policing, which will be valued across government.

I am proud the Home Office is leading the way in supporting civil servants who wish to become special constables and make a difference in their communities.

Special constables wear the same uniform, have the same powers and, if permitted by their force, drive the same vehicles as their regular colleagues.

They bring diverse and valuable skills from outside policing, complementing the work of officers while helping to build important relationships with communities.

Peter Brown, civil servant at the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, said:

I've been a special constable for five years and yet everyday has been different – from working beats and leading teams to helping manage the deployment of officers.

So if you like a challenge and care about your community, don't hesitate to give it a go.

Having 19 departments offering this special leave policy to support the work of special constables is a big step forward.

Special constables receive no payment for performing these duties. They do, however, receive expenses and some forces may provide benefits, such as free local travel.

As at 31 March 2019, there were more than 10,000 special constables in the UK.