

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.

[Construction of F35 facilities progressing at RAF Lakenheath](#)

The base is due to welcome the first of the new aircraft in late 2021 and the buildings will house the latest training and maintenance technology to prepare both the aircraft and crews to deliver their missions effectively.

These new facilities will accommodate approximately 1,200 additional personnel who are expected on the base as part of the arrival of 2 new F35 squadrons.

Construction began in July with a groundbreaking ceremony at the base. Work has been progressing with 2 important buildings taking shape.

The squadron operations building will include an Aircraft Maintenance Unit (AMU) with separate administration, amenity, lecture theatre and classroom areas.

There will be similar spaces for both squadrons, with accommodation for each mirrored on either side of the building.

To improve training in a variety of different operational scenarios, work has also started on the construction of a flight simulation facility to train the next generation of F35 pilots.

DIO USVF Programme Director, Keith Maddison, said:

We are pleased with the progress achieved at the base since the groundbreaking event. The site is changing and improving every day and it is exciting to see key buildings like the flight simulator and the maintenance unit beginning to take shape.

We are proud to be playing a central role in preparing RAF Lakenheath to become the first permanent international site for US Air Force F-35s in Europe.

Col Jason Camilletti, USAF 48th Operations Group commander, said:

We appreciate the collaboration with our teammates to deliver these world-class facilities.

By creating synergy in the training and development of our aircrew, maintainers, and support personnel, this shared space will ensure we'll continue to be ready to secure the sovereign skies above.

Chris Evans, managing director of VolkerFitzpatrick's Civils division, said:

It is great to see the significant progress which has already been made since we broke ground in July. Our teams are working collaboratively and efficiently to get the work done and I look forward to celebrating future milestones as the project progresses.

Managing Director Strategic Projects at Kier, James Hindes, said:

It is fantastic to see how the work on site has been progressing since the ground-breaking event in July. It is great to be working collaboratively with VolkerFitzpatrick, the DIO and the 48th Fighter Wing to deliver this key infrastructure to allow RAF Lakenheath to become the first permanent international site for US Air Force F-35s in Europe.

At the height of construction, it is expected that there will be up to 700 people on site supporting the programme. The investment will also provide wider benefits both to the project and to the local economy.

Construction materials from the demolished buildings have been reused on site for sub-base for car parks, roads and other hard standing areas. A concrete plant has also been built on site reducing carbon miles and traffic in the community.

DIO is also working closely with Forest Heath District Council and Kier VolkerFitzpatrick to ensure that the opportunities to create employment and training are maximised and that they last beyond the end of construction.

In the first 6 months of the project 6 apprentices were taken on and 22 new jobs were created. A 'meet the buyers' event was held recently for local companies to understand what work opportunities are available in the project.

DIO awarded a contract worth £160-million to the Kier VolkerFitzpatrick joint venture in November to deliver critical infrastructure at the Suffolk airbase.

The current work is part of a wider programme of work to support US Air Force operations in the UK, with more than US \$1 billion expected to be invested in the UK over the next 7 to 10 years.

[Home Office staff deployed to migrant camps in northern France](#)

Border Force and Immigration Enforcement officers have been deployed to northern France to support French immigration and law enforcement agencies as a migrant camp in Dunkirk is cleared today (17 September 2019).

The deployment has been made at the invitation of the French authorities and is part of the UK's ongoing work with France to tackle the number of people attempting to reach the UK illegally by small boat.

Immigration Minister, Seema Kennedy, said:

People thinking about making the perilous journey across the English Channel in a small boat are taking a huge risk with their lives and the lives of their children.

We are determined to put an end to this reckless and illegal activity by stopping boats from leaving French shores. We are working closely with French authorities at all levels and the deployment of UK officials to Dunkirk is part of our ongoing joint commitment to tackling this.

Over the weekend Home Office staff were deployed to the camp to inform people

about the harsh realities of crossing the Channel in small boats and entering the UK illegally, as part of Operation Focal. The initiative sees officers countering the misinformation being spread by other sources, including organised crime groups, about making the journey and what life is like for migrants who reach the UK.

Alongside this work, people who live and work near the UK's coastline are being encouraged to report suspicious activity as part of Project Kraken. This is a national Home Office-led initiative that supports the operational activity Border Force is engaged in every day to protect the UK from all forms of maritime crime.

The Home Office is dialling up the campaign in Kent by asking stakeholders to support the project, working with partners such as Kent Police to promote it.

Suspicious behaviour could include boats arriving at unusual times or to isolated locations, people making attempts to sign or guide boats offshore, boats showing signs of unusual modification or minor damage and people making large cash payments for maritime equipment.

People can [report suspicious activity online](#) or by calling the local police on 101. Information will be shared with the relevant agency and investigated. Anyone in Kent is also encouraged to use Kent Police's Country Eye app to report border crimes.

UN Human Rights Council 42: Item 4 General Debate

The United Kingdom would like to refer to interventions elsewhere on Myanmar, Syria, Yemen, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. The United Kingdom is concerned about States' use of arbitrary detention and the number of political prisoners being held around the world, and calls on all States to protect human rights, and uphold the rule of law.

We remain deeply concerned by the wide range of systematic human rights abuses in Xinjiang as described in the recent joint letter to the Human Rights Council President. UN experts should be granted immediate unfettered access. In addition, China should immediately cease arbitrarily detaining Chinese and foreign nationals, which constitutes a breach of human rights and China's international obligations.

We also remain extremely concerned by Iran's deplorable human rights record. Justice should be transparent and we urge Iran to cease arbitrarily detaining ordinary Iranians, foreigners and dual nationals.

Russia must uphold the human rights of all its people, including LGBT people

in Chechnya and protect all freedoms including freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly. We call on Russia to grant international human rights monitors access to illegally annexed Crimea and release all Ukrainian political prisoners.

We have grave concerns about widespread human rights violations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and call on the authorities to work with relevant human rights actors to address the situation.

Continued human rights violations and abuses in Libya are deeply worrying; the international community must consider all options to hold accountable those who are responsible.

In Egypt, prison conditions and restrictions on media freedom remain of concern. We hope that the new NGO law will allow civil society to operate more freely.

We are deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Venezuela, as documented in the OHCHR's July report. We call for the restoration of democracy and the release of all political prisoners.

Finally, following severe human rights violations in Sudan, we welcome political progress and the opportunity this provides to make positive advances on longstanding human rights challenges.

[Campaign launch targets increased UK-China partnership](#)

Today (Tuesday 17 September) the UK's Department for International Trade and the British Embassy Beijing held National Day at the UK Garden and Pavilion at the Beijing Expo 2019.

British Ambassador to China Barbara Woodward opened the day, launching the Green is GREAT campaign. The launch is the latest commitment made by the government to promote climate change initiatives across the world. It follows the news that Britain will host the UN's climate change conference, COP26, in Glasgow in December 2020.

The campaign will focus on three opportunities for the UK and China to work together to achieve more sustainable growth:

- Raising the Green Finance needed to sustain levels of investment in green technologies and infrastructure
- Developing innovative technologies and delivering projects in renewables and electric vehicles
- Forming new UK-China partnerships in business, research and policy to

tackle the challenge of marine plastic pollution

The first phase of the campaign consists of over 40 UK-China events in cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Chongqing, Wuhan and Hefei.

Secretary of State for International Trade, Elizabeth Truss said:

I'm proud to see the launch of the Green is GREAT campaign at the Beijing Expo during our National Day celebrations. This Expo has offered us a chance to show our commitment to sustainability as well as our strong trade relationship with China.

We've already hit 830,000 visitors on site, an incredible achievement and a great acknowledgement of our horticultural expertise, and the events and businesses that have represented the UK at the Expo.

To demonstrate the commitment of UK business to sustainable development at the Expo, Jaguar exhibited their first all-electric five-seater sports car, British Airways demonstrated the future of sustainable flights and Pearson hosted a STEM workshop with students to design and build a mini green house and learn about the impact of climate change.

Barbara Woodward, British Ambassador to China said:

On our National Day at the Beijing Expo, I'm delighted to launch Green is GREAT, a programme of 40 events in 10 Chinese cities to spur action to clean our rivers and lakes, accelerate switches to low carbon energy and provide green finance.

Our garden at the Expo celebrates Britain's vibrant horticultural heritage, and is an example of how we can grow sustainably and protect our planet.

Come and visit!

During the day thousands of visitors visited exhibits on clean energy as well as UK culture, heritage and creativity. These included a viewing of David Attenborough's Blue Planet documentary, a sustainable British sparkling wine tasting, and stories of some of the UK's most iconic animated characters such as Peter Rabbit and Paddington Bear.