Applying To Become a Special Constable
A Guide to Completing the Application Form

A Special Constable holds a responsible position within society. One of the primary roles of the position is ensuring law and order is maintained. Applicants therefore need to be able to demonstrate their respect for the law. They need to show that they can maintain the standards expected of police officers and are not vulnerable to corrupting influences. In order to assess this, specific personal details are sought on this form.

The application form pack is a national document, produced by the College of Policing. The booklet includes questions specific to understanding you the candidate: your education; your qualifications; your employment background and information about your family.

Your application will determine whether you go through to the next stage of our selection procedure. Please read these notes carefully before completing the form. You may find it helpful to do a rough draft first – particularly within Section 4 Competency assessment questions. You must complete all sections of this form in your own words and based on your own personal experiences. Please complete your application form in black ink; no more than 10 spelling or grammatical errors are allowed. Make use of the additional information sheets at the back of the application form if required.

You should retain a copy of your completed application form to refer to throughout the application process. The completed application form and all enclosures should be sent to HR Shared Services at Nunnery Square, Sheffield, S2 5DH

Section 1 - About you
The information you provide in this application form will be entered into a manual filing system and onto a computerised recruitment system and as such is covered by the rules set out by the Data Protection Act 1988.
You must complete all sections of this form, use continuation pages only where allowed and clearly mark which questions they refer to. Please put your full name at the top of each continuation sheet. Sections that do not apply to you should be clearly marked N/A or put a diagonal line through the Section.

Age requirements
To be appointed as a Special Constable you must be at least 18 years of age at the time of attending at the Assessment Centre. There is no upper age limit, although the normal retirement age for Special Constables is 60 years.

Driving licences
At present, you do not require to have a driving licence to apply to become a Special Constable. If you have a driving licence issued by a country that is not a member of the European Union, it must be exchangeable in line with UK driving licence requirements.
You will be asked to provide full licence details on your application form.

Nationality
To be eligible for appointment you must be a British citizen or a citizen of the European Economic Area or Switzerland or have the right to live and work within the UK. Commonwealth citizens and foreign nationals are also eligible but only if they are resident in the UK and free of restrictions.
If you are a Commonwealth citizen or a foreign national, you must provide proof that you have no restrictions on your stay in the UK. As it is currently impossible in some cases to gain vetting/security checks for foreign nationals, a period of 3 years UK residency applies. In certain circumstances, it is possible for the minimum residency period for Force Vetting levels to be removed (for further information see the Vetting Form Guidance Notes on the South Yorkshire Police website).

You are required to bring your passport to the Assessment Centre should you be successful. Other documentary evidence of your status may be required later in the process.

**Medical and fitness standards**
As part of the recruitment process, you will be asked to complete a medical questionnaire. This will be dealt with confidentially by the Occupational Health Unit. HR Shared Services does not require to be made aware of your medical status.

All applicants undertake a medical examination and will have their eyesight examined prior to appointment.

The fitness assessment is conducted on day two of your personal safety training. Police Officers and Special Constables are covered by the Equality Act 2010 and reasonable adjustments will be considered. Having a disability does not automatically exclude you from becoming a Special Constable.

Please ensure you have understood all elements of the selection process. This will allow you to ask for any reasonable adjustments that you may require.

**Criminal histories**
Whilst most of the information required is quite standard for applicants to most organisations, for the police, there is an additional process which is called vetting. Vetting is a process which seeks to understand you and your close family within the context of integrity. Due to the unique role officers have, the access to confidential material and data and the potential opportunities which inherently exist for abusing the position of authority, South Yorkshire Police as every other force vets potential members of the organisation, including Specials. Please see the Vetting Application Criteria and FAQ page on our internet pages (www.southyorks.police.co.uk - > Work for Us - > Specials) for further information.

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 refused.

**Tattoos**
Tattoos are not necessarily 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. Photos of tattoos are necessary, only those that are in view when wearing a uniform.

If you have tattoos, you should describe their nature, words, extent, size and location.
Tattoos, regardless of language or symbolic format, are not acceptable if they:—
- Are on the hands, face, and neck or above the collar line.
- 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, extensive or particularly prominent;
- Indicate unacceptable attitudes towards any individual or section of the community
- Indicate alignment with a particular group, which could give offence to members of the public or colleagues;

The person dealing with this correspondence is:
Inspector Ferguson Tel: 01142 964303
e-mail: paul.ferguson@southyorks.pnn.police.uk
• Are considered rude, lewd, crude, racist, sexist, sectarian, homophobic, violent or intimidating.

Section 2 - About your employment
You are asked to provide details of all employment. Include any paid employment, including self-employment and periods of unemployment. You should also add any current or previous business interests.

References
We require references for a five-year employment history; this may be one or several. In addition, give the names and addresses of two personal referees that have known you for three.

These should be two employers and must include your current employer (or most recent employer, if you are currently unemployed). Applicants applying direct from full time education may include a referee from the educational establishment. Personal references should only be given if you have not been employed or are self-employed. Current serving and former Police Officers/Special Constables should not be asked to provide references.
We will not make enquiries with your current employer until you are recommended for appointment OR you have agreed to let us approach them.

HM Forces
Applications from HM Forces personnel will be accepted only if you have 12 months or less to serve before discharge. Please enclose confirmation of your projected date of discharge (e.g. a letter from your Commanding Officer).

Due to the nature of employment with the HM Forces, it must be emphasised that security checks will be made with the appropriate military authority at an early stage in the selection process. This is in addition to your current employer’s reference, if different.

It is at the discretion of the Chief Constable as to whether successful applicants are permitted to remain on the reserve list.

Section 3 - About your education and skills
Please give details of schools, colleges, university or other institutions attended since the age of 14. Start with the most recent and work backwards. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and attach it to the page in Section 3.

Section 4 – Competency Assessment
During these pages there are series of questions which seek to understand the candidate’s personality, abilities and experiences. We do this by asking questions which are not hypothetical, not, “What would you do if…….?“ or “How would you deal with…….?“ Instead, we ask you questions which invite you to describe occasions when you did do something. We prefer accounts about actual events. From reading how you performed in different scenarios, we seek to extract an understanding as to your capabilities; your initiative; your communication skills; your self-motivation and then to go on to infer as to how suitable those attributes would be for a member of our organisation. In short, we want to learn about you from what you have done, how you did it and why to assess your suitability to become a Special.

I will now discuss each question and offer some comment which may be of assistance to the applicant.

Q1 Professionalism
“Please describe a specific occasion when you have intervened to take control of a situation.
Why was it necessary to intervene in the situation?"

In response, the strongest applicants will be able to provide an account whereby he or she has encountered a challenging scenario, in their workplace; in their club or society or on the streets. A situation should then be described where there are differing options. For instance, a weak candidate would describe walking away and leaving somebody else to deal with the situation (clearly this is not the actions of a potential officer!) However, the strong candidate will listen; observe and come to understand the conflicting points of view or issues. He or she will then make fair and balanced input. He or she will support those involved. A conclusion will be reached which was appropriate. In essence, the scenario comes to a better conclusion through the candidate’s intervention than if he or she had not been involved.

Q2 Working with others
“Please describe a specific occasion when you have encouraged a person to view an issue more positively.

Why was it necessary to encourage the person to view the issue more positively?”

This question invites the candidate to describe a situation whereby a colleague, friend or relative has a dilemma, where he or she is at a cross-roads in their personal or professional life. The strong candidate will describe becoming actively involved, sharing the problem, seeing and hearing the issues, then providing measured and appropriate advice; practical support or counsel. In doing so, the third party is able to work through their difficulty and come to a better place. The response should have emphasis upon listening; understanding; supporting and working as a team to resolve the issues.

Q3 Tell us why you want to become a special constable.

This is obviously quite personal. It is an opportunity to voice your motivation for your application. It might be to develop personal and/or professional skills; to experience new challenges; for self fulfilment or to support communities.

Q4 Tell us why you have applied to your chosen police force.

The applicant should have an affiliation to the force’s area – the county of South Yorkshire. Often this is where he or she lives, works or studies. However, we welcome many applicants from adjacent counties (eg. West Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire) who have a particular relationship with South Yorkshire and are happy to commute. In response, outline your rationale.

Q5 Tell us in some detail what tasks you expect to be undertaking as a special constable.

For this question, describe what you expect the role to be, what you think you will be expected to do, when and how. Include your thoughts upon the role and the anticipated affects upon you.

Q6 Tell us what effect you expect being a special constable to have on your social and domestic life.

This is another question intended to allow you to demonstrate that you have considered how the implications for you if you are successful. Most of us operate within a context of self; family; friends; work/study and social life. Assessors seek to be reassured that you have thought about the implications of adding the commitment of becoming a Special into your
own personal work and home-life balance. How will you manage to fit in sixteen hours per month or more with the Specials into your lifestyle?

Q7 What preparation have you undertaken before making this application to ensure that you know what to expect and that you are prepared for the role of special constable?

In this question, describe your preparations which have led you to submitting your application. For instance, have you been to a presentation event? Spoken to serving officers? Read about the role?

Q8 If you have previously applied to be a police officer, special constable or police community support officer (PCSO), what have you done since your last application to better prepare yourself for the role of special constable?

If you have applied previously and were unsuccessful, describe what’s different about you now: have you spent more time preparing your application form? Gained new experiences?

It is good advice to prepare an application form in draft first. Ensure that your answers will fit within the spaces provided. Try to be succinct but able to fully answer the questions posed. Be as neat as possible. This is your first opportunity to communicate positively with the organization, make a positive impression through your form.

If having read this advice, you would still like some additional advice and support we will be happy to help. We would like you to present yourself through the application from in the best possible way. To contact one of us to advise, please e-mail SCBuddies@southyorks.pnn.police.uk

Finally, your application form must be submitted honestly. It must accurately disclose all relevant information. Failure to do so could suggest a lack of integrity and may lead to an application being rejected.

Seize the day, get writing we are ready and waiting to receive your application! Good luck.

Kind regards,

Steve Merrett
Chief Officer of the Special Constabulary

Paul Ferguson
Inspector

The person dealing with this correspondence is:
Inspector Ferguson Tel: 01142 964303
e-mail: paul.ferguson@southyorks.pnn.police.uk