

Giving the Special Constabulary a voice within policing

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An SC shares his positive experience of becoming an Ambassador for the College

News 3 mins read

I first interacted with the College of Policing years ago when I attended the Senior Leaders Programme under the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) – after that I didn't think I used their support much at all. But over time I've come to appreciate the resources and support it offers to everyone across policing every day.

In recent years I followed both the College and its CEO Mike Cunningham on Twitter. During this time I, like many others, felt it was only worthwhile for senior regular officers and those seeking promotion. I also felt that the College didn't really care much about the Special Constabulary, as I didn't see it doing anything in my force.

I then kept seeing a range of new initiatives launched by the College but none of them were aimed at the Special Constabulary. Like many others, I challenged the College via social media on what they actually do for the SC. I was keen to bring the 10,000 special constables operating across the UK to the forefront to ensure they weren't forgotten.

It was at this point that I heard about the College of Policing's Ambassador scheme when I was asked to put my money where my mouth is. Given that the work of a special constable is voluntary and unpaid, I wasn't able to literally put the money in, but paid in the only way I could – with time.

I signed up to the scheme, and attended an induction event in Coventry. Upon arrival I was amazed to meet others who were sceptical about the College. That day I found out that almost every course I had done in force – from driving to personal safety – was actually a College of Policing product. This opened my eyes to other products and services such as APP (Authorised Professional Practice) and the work that the College is actually doing. I subsequently joined the National SC Working Group, all because I had challenged the College so many months before.

I was then asked to share my thoughts about the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) for special constables and what this means to the SC – and I jumped at the opportunity. We are now working to begin delivery on the PEQF/SC in September 2020.

I've been able to give feedback on the College through panels and phone calls, and my opinions are often sought about diverse subjects on anything from the Special Constabulary to wider policing and the ability to share knowledge – all of which helps me to build connections with people at the College who can offer me their support.

During the coronavirus crisis I've shared the COVID-19 information provided by the College with officers as the 'go to' resource for policing to use operationally. While it has been a challenging time, often with things changing at short notice, I've found the information useful and informative.

My working knowledge of the College may have started with me thinking they didn't do much for the Special Constabulary, and only small amounts for regular police officers, but being involved as an Ambassador has opened my eyes. I feel listened to, and – like the College – really care and want to make a difference in policing.

Policing is ever changing, with a wide variety of stakeholders, and you'll never get everything right and will always have critics. But – from my experience – the College listens, allows us to have a voice in shaping its work, isn't afraid to adapt and will actively support anyone in the policing family.

More about our Ambassadors

College of Policing Ambassadors bring the voice of frontline officers, staff and volunteers to us. Ambassadors are operational officers from across the UK, who share knowledge and experience that improves and shapes our work. If you're an operational officer who is interested in becoming an ambassador, email ambassadors@college.pnn.police.uk.

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