

Being a PCSO supervisor

Published on 9 December 2021 Written by PCSO Supervisor Michelle Haines, Avon and Somerset Police

Spotlight on a role: The skills and experience needed for this new supervisor role

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I started working for Avon and Somerset Police at the age of 16 and had various roles before becoming a police community support officer (PCSO) in 2004. The PCSO role has evolved since then and in November 2019, Avon and Somerset began a pilot scheme to introduce PCSO supervisors to support neighbourhood sergeants, who were having to manage teams of over 20 police constables (PCs) and PCSOs.

I was fortunate to be one of the five people trialling the new role in the Somerset East district. The role, which is designed to reduce pressure on the sergeants, involves working alongside them to improve the support and supervision of the PCSOs.

Having received three weeks of training in relevant administration and management, we joined our teams. A typical day consists of holding monthly one-to-ones to discuss workload, mentoring, giving structured daily briefings and working with partner agencies.

The most important part of the role is dealing with everyday business, as well as meeting the training and welfare needs of the PCSOs. I manage and support a team of 10 PCSOs over three stations. Our role is a police staff equivalent to the neighbourhood sergeants and we report to our neighbourhood inspectors.

Following the pilot, all of the neighbourhood sergeants were consulted about the PCSO supervisor role and the impact that it had had on them and their workload. They reported benefits from a reduction in their workloads, which enabled them to focus on daily tasks and planning.

It also led to improvements in the level of support that neighbourhood sergeants can provide to PCs and their teams as a whole. The role has been well received by the staff, as reflected in a recent survey.

The supervisor role affords an opportunity for PCSO career progression for our talented staff and benefits the force by giving more time for supervision to build strong, resilient and cohesive teams. PCSOs showing leadership potential are already being given the opportunity to undertake acting duties as supervisors.

Eighteen months on, it has been a (very) steep learning curve, but this is definitely the most rewarding role I have had in my 37 years with Avon and Somerset. The PCSO supervisor role has been made permanent in Avon and Somerset, and has now been rolled out across the force.

I have learned a lot and I am incredibly proud of my team and the difference they make to the communities they serve. I would highly recommend this role to other forces, given the benefits it brings to neighbourhood policing teams.

- This article was peer reviewed by PCSO Justin Piercy, North Yorkshire Police

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