



# A VISIT TO THE HEART OF SPECIALS

The government has pledged funding to expand the Special Constabulary to 20,000. DO Fred Ahmed explains what happened the day the announcement was made



In August the Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, announced that the number of Specials would be increased to 20,000 officers over the next three years.

Jacqui Smith revealed that £2.25 million had been set aside to fund the additional 6,000 officers. It will be used to develop the role of the Special Constable – specifically to boost initiatives concerning their recruitment, training and development and to fund nine new regional coordinators.

“Every day of the week, Specials are making a real difference – responding to people’s concerns and making communities safer places to live. The funding I am announcing will ensure that the Special Constabulary can grow and continue their outstanding work,” Jacqui Smith told the audience at the Crime Prevention and Advice Centre at London’s Tooting Islamic Centre.

The centre is the first of its kind in the UK and was the brainchild of Farhad (Fred) Ahmed MBE, a Borough Divisional Officer with the Met, and 2003 Special of the Year. Here Fred tells us about the Home Secretary’s visit.

“Every day of the week, Specials are making a real difference”

The Home Secretary wanted to use the community policing contact centre as the venue to announce the extra funding for the Special Constabulary, but she also wanted to find out about what we were doing. She was very interested and asked us how the centre was progressing.

Since it opened, the centre has continued to be successful. It is only open for two hours on a Saturday, but we average about 40 people a session, and sometimes we have had as many as 187. What is different about the centre is that we are based in a mosque. More interesting, however, is that about 65 per cent of the people that use the service are non-Muslim. This is something we’re very pleased with as it boosts community cohesion and breaks down religious barriers. In areas like Tooting, you might have expected some trouble, especially after 7/7, but we’ve had no major problems at all and I’d like to think the centre has played a part in that.

Jacqui Smith asked me how much involvement myself and my officers have in the community. The truth is we have a very close relationship. Three years ago, we set up the Balham and Tooting Community Association. It’s still going and while it’s easy to set something up, it’s not so easy to keep it running. The Association encompasses a very wide range of ethnic groups and nationalities, as well as public sector organisations such as St George’s hospital – and the police, of course.

It was set up because it seemed to me that while the heads of the various organisations knew each other, it was only really in passing. What we wanted to do was to get them to work together and play together.

Since it was set up we have organised 5-a-side football tournaments, community awards and charity nights. Together we have raised £6,000 for charity. We also have a peace ceremony outside Tooting Broadway station where all religious leaders attend and passers-by can light a candle for peace. I even managed to find a garage in Mitcham in South London that was willing to teach youngsters how to weld.

When I mentioned all this to Jacqui Smith she thought it was great. I think she was really impressed by the enthusiasm that my officers show for their roles in terms of the level of their community involvement, especially as this is in addition to their normal operational policing duties on a Friday night. The truth is whatever we achieve in Tooting, it is all down to teamwork and I think Jacqui Smith really took that on board.

We have an excellent safer neighbourhood team. They work at floor level, very successfully. I like to think that my Specials ‘get down to the basement’.

The Home Secretary used the opportunity to announce funding to support an increase in the number of Specials by 6,000 new officers over the next three years.

I am delighted that the Home Office has taken this step. It’s always good to have more officers, but what we also need is the infrastructure behind it, such as the right equipment. When we have that in place, then Specials can be fully utilised and they can be really effective.

**Farhad (Fred) Ahmed MBE,  
Borough Divisional Officer with the Met**

LEFT: HOME SECRETARY JACQUI SMITH IS SHOWN AROUND TOOTING BY FARHAD AHMED



# NATIONAL STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

The period of consultation has passed, the foundations are laid and the building work for a refreshed Special Constabulary is under way. The time is right for an update from the implementation team...

Since the formal launch of the Special Constabulary National Strategy in March 2008 and the publication of the associated Implementation Advice in July 2008, the Special Constabulary National Strategy Implementation Programme (SCNSIP) has started its rollout at both a national and a regional level.

Centrally, the National Strategy Implementation Team (NSIT) has been established, comprising 17 Special

Constabulary members from across all nine regions of England and Wales. The NSIT represents both Special Constabulary expertise, ranging across ranks and length of service, and professional expertise in the different workstream areas of the Implementation Advice.

According to Martin Stuart, Deputy Chief Constable of Bedfordshire and ACPO officer leading the implementation programme: "The diversity and depth of talent within the Special Constabulary is a critical part of what makes their contribution to policing so valuable. Accessing these 'extra-curricular' skills, along with the breadth of Special Constabulary experience, brings a great motivation and credibility into the Implementation Programme."

#### IMPLEMENTATION TEAM REMIT

The role of the NSIT is to be a central point of support to encourage forces in implementing the National Strategy. The NSIT activities will include:

- Developing detailed knowledge of the content of the National Strategy and Implementation Advice.
- Facilitating the sharing of good practice between forces.



- Developing detailed understanding of how the operation of the Implementation Advice suggestions might look in practice.
- Developing detailed understanding of the benefits and the potential downsides for a force in implementing and operating as per the suggestions in the Implementation.
- Developing a working knowledge of the whole of the Implementation Advice and the benefits and issues relating to the other six workstreams.
- Learning and sharing good implementation practice from and with other Workstream Groups.
- Contributing to or driving development of national-level solutions to the good practice suggestions within the Implementation Advice.
- Identifying and developing any required changes or enhancements to the content of the Implementation Advice.
- Identifying and developing case study material for use at the 2010 National Special Constabulary Conference.

#### IMPLEMENTATION TEAM REMIT

In addition to establishing the central Implementation Team and a Programme Board, chaired by DCC Martin Stuart, through the ACPO Special Constabulary Regional Leads, individual forces have undertaken a gap analysis against the suggested good practice within the National Strategy Implementation Advice.

The gap analysis exercise was to provide a view on local priorities for implementation of the National Strategy and therefore guide the national Implementation Programme in its supporting activities. The results were reviewed by the ACPO SC Regional Leads Group in November. Carol Sheppard, Implementation programme manager, provides an update on recent developments:

“The National Strategy Implementation Team met for the first time at the beginning of September and started to set the scene for the work

required over the next 18 months. A second meeting was held in November and focused on detailed action planning – informed by the results of the force gap analysis exercise.”

#### LOOKING AHEAD

Keeping all stakeholders informed and on board with the implementation rollout is key according to Carol Sheppard: “The successful implementation of the Special Constabulary National Strategy relies on confidence and contribution of a number of groups and individuals. The NPIA is a key stakeholder and continues to provide strong support through resources and delivering specific projects. Developing the engagement of other critical stakeholders, from members of the Special Constabulary themselves, through to ACPO and the APA, will be a key area of focus over the next few months.”

Key activities for SCNSIP rollout over the next few months include:

- Collation and review of individual force gap analysis results.
- Development of action plans to support force-level work, based on gap analysis results.
- Development of action plans for national-level work, including standardisation of initial training for the Special Constabulary.
- Developing effective stakeholder engagement.

As we move into 2009 Martin Stuart looks forward to a successful new year for the programme: “The vision of the National Strategy Implementation Programme is for the Special Constabulary to be seen as an integrated part of strategic thinking, operational planning and tactical response thinking for the majority of forces. With the programme management processes now being put in place, but more importantly with the people – Implementation Team members, ACPO SC Regional Leads, NPIA staff – now taking up this challenge, I have every confidence the vision can be delivered.”



**MARTIN STUART**  
DCC OF BEDFORDSHIRE



**CAROL SHEPPARD**  
PROGRAMME MANAGER,  
NATIONAL STRATEGY  
IMPLEMENTATION TEAM



**TRISHA DASH O'TOOLE**  
HEAD OF SECTION  
FOR SPECIALS AND  
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**DEBBIE ALEXANDER**  
PROJECT PARTNER,  
SPECIALS AND  
VOLUNTEERS TEAM, NPIA

## RECRUITMENT PROJECT

**Boosting the number of Specials and standardising the recruitment process nationally are targets for the NPIA in its provision of central support**

On 20 August this year Jacqui Smith, the Home Secretary, announced an additional £2.25million worth of funding for the recruitment and training of Special Constables. She announced that the funding would be used to boost Special Constabulary numbers by 6,000, taking the number of Specials in England and Wales to 20,000. The money is also to be used to fund the nine Regional Co-ordinators posts (in accordance with the designated ACPO regions) for the next three years. The recruitment process to find these regional co-ordinators is now under way, and it is expected that all nine posts will be filled early in the new year.

#### RECRUITMENT STANDARDISATION

In parallel with the recruitment drive (described above) the Specials National Recruitment Standardisation Project is progressing well. The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) team is collaborating with all forces and hopes to be able to roll out the new standard recruitment process and related assessment materials by June 2009.

The project is progressing according to plan. The Examinations and Assessment Team (E&A) at the NPIA have designed the Assessment Materials and these formed part of the recruitment process pilot scheme. This pilot was run working with Specials who kindly volunteered their time. The data from the pilot was discussed at the recruitment project board meeting in November 2008.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Trisha Dash-O'Toole, Head of Section for Specials and Volunteers, is the Programme Manager for the Recruitment Project. To find out more please contact Project Partner Debbie Alexander. You can email Debbie at: [Debbie.Alexander@npia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Debbie.Alexander@npia.pnn.police.uk) or call her on: 020 7021 7067

# KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

Introducing seven Specials from different forces, with different backgrounds, career and family responsibilities, all with the same commitment – to make a difference in their local communities



CITY LONDON

## JAMES AND ROSIE PHIPSON

**HEARING HER BROTHER** James regale his family with tales of life as a Special Constable prompted Rosie Phipson to join the force a year and a half ago. In that time both she and her brother have seen her self-confidence soar. James even grudgingly admits that Rosie is getting more arrests than him!

James first joined the Specials in Avon and Somerset in 1994 when he was a student at Bristol University. He then transferred to the Met Police in 2004 when he began working in London.

At the time he was part of the only group of Special Constables in the country that is attached to an army regiment. When this group transferred to the City of London soon after, James transferred with them.

As well as working with the regiment, James juggles a busy career as a professional company director and administrator with working as a Special Inspector out of Bishopsgate station.

He has used his skills to help the force with its recruitment policy in line with the National Strategy. "One of the best things about being a Special in the City of London is that the force really understands the concept of Specials and how to use them and make them an integral part of the organisation," he says.

One of his most memorable moments came when he was a Special in the Met and he singlehandedly arrested two men armed with pistols and machetes who had just robbed an off-licence. He was given a commendation for his efforts.

"I particularly enjoy foot patrol work because the City is only a square mile and easy to get around. This ensures that we are never far from where the action is."

James will never forget the contribution Specials made to the policing effort after the London bombings, when they put in more than 2,000 hours of duties in the two weeks immediately after the incidents.

For Rosie, who is based at Snow Hill Police Station, her role as a Special couldn't be more different from her day job working for accounting and tax company Ernst and Young. However, she does hope to use her experience in this area on the force Economic Crime Unit in future when she has more experience.

"I would listen to all the stories my brother would tell about life in the



"My brother would tell stories about life in the Specials and it really made an impact on me"

Specials and it really made an impact on me," says Rosie.

Since joining the Specials, Rosie has worked on undercover operations as well as helping train the force drug dogs. Her most memorable moment was her first arrest, when she dealt with a drink driver.

"I was lucky because I was patrolling with the commandant at the time and he really helped me. Although I was terrified and felt quite daunted I felt I handled it well and the feedback I received from the commandant was positive. That gave me a real boost early on in my career."

## PRILES

RTIS TRANSP RT P LICE

## RICHARD EARLAND

**AS CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER**

for the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) Richard Earland has a good grasp of the major issues affecting frontline officers. But it was only when he volunteered to become a Special in the British Transport Police (BTP) last summer that he realised just how challenging and rewarding the role can be.

“My motivation has changed over time,” he admits, “and I wouldn’t have been able to predict that at the start. My initial motivation was to set an example and see if I could get a better understanding of policing.”

Just a few months after joining, Richard now feels that he is “engaged much more as a citizen who is making a difference. I feel, as a private citizen, that I do a bit of good. I provide a visible presence. So far I have been involved in a whole range of incidents where I think I have been able to do some good in our community.”

**A** In the Green Paper *From the Neighbourhood to the national: Policing our communities*, published in July, the Home Secretary called for the NPIA to take the national leadership role in police information technology (IT). It highlights for the first time the issues to be addressed by a national Chief Information Officer.

In this national role, Richard has responsibility for the development of Forensic Science and Identification services, as well as national programmes delivering digital secure communication services and the Information Systems Improvement Strategy (ISIS) for the police service. Richard is now working with the APA, ACPO and police service to change the way IT is delivered across UK policing through ISIS.

Richard was interested in joining BTP because he wanted to learn more about how to protect our critical infrastructure from a street policing perspective. The fact that nearly all terrorist attacks have been carried out on transport infrastructure makes the role of BTP even more challenging.

Recalling an early arrest, he describes how he made the Section 5 Public Order arrest on a person who had been previously convicted of assaults on police. He started pursuing the suspect

overground but the pursuit moved into the London Underground system.

Because a colleague was carrying out a separate arrest simultaneously, a period of confusion ensued and the two officers had to think quickly.

*“A value of the NPIA is to be passionate about policing. Being a Special helps me transmit that passion more easily”*

“We sometimes forget that when we are in an office or similar ordered environment, situations can become quite confusing out on the ground. Such incidents require you to react instantly in a way you don’t have to in your day job.”

**P te advocate**

As a Special, Richard is conscious of the service he is providing to victims. His early career was spent in healthcare so he has a long history of working to help people when they are distressed.

“I do often reflect on this when I come off duty – the fact that I have made a personal contribution to that individual’s experience of policing.”

Richard works mainly on Friday and Saturday evenings and is now attached to the Lewisham Neighbourhood Policing Team. He takes part in a variety of policing activities ranging from planned operations to patrolling on trains and in the streets around railway stations, where he admits he has encountered “some very interesting people.”

His role as a Special has given him a renewed sense of respect for police officers and policing:

“It’s a tough job and it’s also very diverse. I think we expect a lot from people who are young in service and they certainly rise to the challenge in a way that is admirable.”

Now determined to qualify for independent patrol at the end of the year, Richard hopes he will act as a role model for other people within the NPIA.

“I’ve been heartened by how positively my peers have reacted to me becoming a Special and I hope my experience will encourage others to come forward,” he says.

“One of the values of the NPIA is to be passionate about policing. Being a Special helps me transmit that passion more easily. I understand policing now in a way I never did before.”



**RICHARD EARLAND,**  
CHIEF INFORMATION  
OFFICER FOR THE  
NPIA, IN UNIFORM AS A  
SPECIAL IN THE BRITISH  
TRANSPORT POLICE

DORSET

## YOGINDRA PATEL

**JUGGLING JOBS** at a busy garage, newsagents and a post office doesn't prevent sub-postmaster Yogindra Patel giving hours of his time to being a Special in Dorset Police.

He transferred to the force from Hampshire and has dedicated 25 years of his life to the Special Constabulary. Yogindra was presented with his nine-year service medal in 1989 and gained a long service bar in 2001.

He relishes every minute of being a Special and despite encountering many difficult situations, from assaults to low-level crime, Yogindra admits to finding the Special Constabulary "relaxing and totally different from my day job".

"It has allowed me to learn more about my community as well as providing me with valuable experience that I have transferred into running my own business," he explains.

"It has definitely helped me get the best out of team working and dealing with conflicts and tough situations, and it has enabled me to make quicker and more effective decisions."

Yogindra says being a Special has helped him develop much greater self-confidence, and has improved his communication skills.

"I have also been given the opportunity to learn more about life and human nature than most people will ever find out and for that I feel privileged."



**TIM NIXON, SERVING HIS COMMUNITY IN LANCASHIRE AND EDUCATING CHILDREN ABOUT THE POLICE SERVICE**



**WIFE AND MOTHER LISA JONES MOVED FROM POLICE VOLUNTEER TO SPECIAL AND IS COMMITTED TO HER ROLE WITHIN THE CONSTABULARY**



**ADAM LANGLEY IS FOCUSED ON A CAREER IN THE POLICE SERVICE AND IS GAINING EXPERIENCE AS A SPECIAL CONSTABLE WHILE STUDYING FOR A DEGREE**

LANCASHIRE CONSTABULARY

## TIM NIXON

**TIM HAS WORKED** as a Special for the past year and has been using his skills as a primary school teacher to develop stories for young children that provide positive messages about the police.

He devised a character called Constable Colin and his stories have become so successful among local children that he is planning his second and third stories.

He hopes that Constable Colin will be adopted nationally and that he can make a real difference to educating children about the police and making them feel comfortable in their company.

"The children really love hearing all about the exploits of Constable Colin and I hope that they will make a real

difference to the way children view the police in future," he says.

As well as writing stories, Tim carries out patrols from Bamber Bridge station, where he has dealt with anything from domestics to road traffic incidents.

One of his weaknesses is geography, and he admits to being terrified when one of his first duties as a Special was leading a local parade, but he carried it out competently without getting anyone lost!



CHESHIRE

## LISA JONES

**THE ONLY THING** that prevented Lisa Jones becoming a regular officer when she left school was that she didn't meet the height requirement that were imposed on new recruits at the time. Instead she went to work in an office, where she met her husband, and soon after she became a full-time mother.

Lisa never gave up on her dream and worked as a police volunteer at Congleton collating burglary packs and organising local community action groups. When she discovered that Cheshire Police had lifted its height restriction she applied to become a Special – a role she has fulfilled since April.

Lisa works on Friday and Saturday nights and admits that being a Special adds a different dimension to her life as a wife and mother. She is based at Sandbach and works as part of the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

Her proudest moment so far was making her first arrest on only her fourth shift. She arrested a suspect in a local pub for assault – an incident she felt she handled well. "Since that first arrest, I have seen my confidence build and now I don't hesitate in dealing with a situation," she says. "I get straight in there and deal with each incident to the best of my ability."

Lisa is committed to working for the Specials for the long term and wants to work to become a sergeant over the next two years.

CHESHIRE

## ADAM LANGLEY

**LIKE LISA** (above), Adam has wanted to join the police for as long as he can remember. Again like Lisa, he began as a community volunteer, with Cheshire Police, working in the Neighbourhood Policing Unit in Warrington West, where he set up a speed watch scheme and worked on a variety of community projects.

He transferred to the Specials and has been operational since April. In that time he has helped make a recruitment DVD for Specials that is used at open days. His tasks include attending local community action meetings to speak

to residents about their concerns as well as patrolling on foot.

Now 18, Adam is studying for a degree in Police and Criminal Investigation at the University of Central Lancashire as well as working part-time at Marks & Spencer and is more determined than ever to become a regular. "I think it's important to not just gain qualifications while I'm at university but to combine this with the practical experience that I get from being a Special," says Adam.

"It's particularly important for me to live in the area I police and I want to make sure that people are safe and feel safe – which is our force motto."

Adam recently won Cheshire Special's 2008 Student Award – see page 4.

# RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

The help provided by unpaid police volunteers played a major role in Suffolk Constabulary's largest ever criminal enquiry

## SUFFOLK WEST YORKSHIRE

### SUFFOLK SERIAL MURDER ENQUIRY

**MANY MAJOR POLICE INVESTIGATIONS STRETCH POLICE RESOURCES AND REQUIRE SPECIALS TO PUT IN EXTRA HOURS OF DUTY. HERE WE FOCUS ON ONE SUCH INVESTIGATION**

In December 2006, Suffolk Constabulary began its largest criminal investigation ever – Operation SUMAC. Five young women from Ipswich were murdered and their naked bodies dumped in the countryside near the town. The first body was found on 2 December; the remaining four were discovered over the following 10 days. On 19 December a man was arrested, and on 21 December Steve Wright, from Ipswich, was charged with the murder of Gemma Adams, Tania Nicol, Anneli Alderton, Paula Clennell and Annette Nicholls.

#### MASSIVE RESPONSE

More than 300 officers were brought in from across the country to help with the investigation. They included police divers from neighbouring Norfolk, officers from Northern Ireland and Ministry of Defence police. The Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland said the number of officers deployed from forces outside Suffolk, under the control of the Police National Information and Coordination Centre, was the largest ever for a murder inquiry.

Chief Officer of Suffolk Special Constabulary, Martin Ashburn MBE, says: "These five murders made the headlines, but at the same time a fatal shooting took place in an Ipswich nightclub on Christmas Eve, and then a fatal stabbing took place in Bury

St Edmunds, so for a force the size of Suffolk it was a huge challenge." Some 300 Specials from Suffolk Constabulary and beyond joined the investigation between the beginning of December and the middle of January, and according to Martin the support that Suffolk Specials received from employers during this period was crucial in allowing them to help with the investigation.

Specials helped in a number of ways, says Martin. "They provided security for the crime scenes, which was arduous because it meant standing in the middle of a field for 12 hours in the cold, and that wasn't a pleasant task. They did 'anniversary checks', which meant a week after an event they asked motorists and pedestrians if they remembered any relevant details. There was an ANPR ring around the entire district of Ipswich, and Bedfordshire Specials helped man it."

Reassuring the public at this time was a mammoth task, and public-reassurance patrols for the Ipswich population of 120,000 were a major part of the operation. Specials were involved in the high-visibility patrols that were conducted in the town – particularly in the Ipswich red-light area. "There was high-visibility policing in and around Ipswich, and we had as many uniforms on the street as we could sustain," says Martin.

News of the five murders and the investigation also dominated the local, national and indeed international headlines at this time. "The media attention meant there was a 24/7 media presence at headquarters, and a lot of staff were needed at Martlesham to support that," says Martin.

*"I have never seen such demands on a small force"*



The focus on the investigation also meant that many regulars were taken away from their normal duties in the run-up to Christmas, which meant that Specials stepped in. "Suffolk Specials continued to work in their own communities, where regular officers were taken away to work in Ipswich. And in Norfolk, where regulars and detectives were called into Suffolk, the local Specials filled the gap left behind," Martin says.

#### MUTUAL AID

The help provided by Specials from Bedfordshire and Essex forces was a first for the Special Constabulary. At that time the police powers of Bedfordshire Specials did not extend to Suffolk – Specials' powers extended only across their own and neighbouring counties. But extraordinary times lead to innovative measures, and two magistrates worked Friday and Saturday evenings in the assembly room at Ipswich Police Station to swear in the visiting officers one by one.

Martin stresses said that the contribution made by Specials was inestimable. For example, 28 periods of duties totalling over 300 hours were





## SUFFOLK STATISTICS

# 13,000

calls were made by members of the public to Suffolk Constabulary during the Suffolk murders investigation

# 10,000

public information leaflets were printed, providing safety advice for people planning a night out in Ipswich

# 300

officers were brought in from across the country to assist the local force with the investigation



carried out by Specials from Bedfordshire, and some Specials visited Suffolk on more than one occasion. "It was unprecedented. In 35 years as a Special I have never seen anything to match this in terms of the demands on a small police force."

### INTENSIVE FOLLOW-UP WORK

Since the arrest and subsequent conviction of Steve Wright, much effort has been made in Ipswich to encourage vulnerable street workers away from the sex industry, providing health and drug support where necessary. This work has resulted in a dramatic reduction in offences of soliciting. In addition, the police have taken robust action against kerb-crawling motorists, and a specially trained team of Specials has been instrumental in warning, and arresting, persistent offenders.

Since March 2007, more than 130 men have been arrested for kerb-crawling offences and numerous letters have been sent to the registered owners of vehicles suspected of kerb-crawling. This has helped to virtually eliminate the problem of street prostitution in Ipswich, helping the local community to feel safer.

THE MASSIVE POLICE RESPONSE REQUIRED FOR THE MULTIPLE MURDER INVESTIGATION SAW SPECIALS PLAY AN INTEGRAL ROLE PROVIDING PUBLIC REASSURANCE AND SUPPORTING THEIR REGULAR COLLEAGUES