

GUIDANCE NOTES

SPECIAL CONSTABLES

INTRODUCTION

These guidance notes are designed to help you through the application and selection process for a role in the Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC). In addition to the information and advice provided here, we are committed to doing all we can to support you in your application.

Specifically, we endeavour:

- To give 24-hour access to the information on our website www.metpolicecareers.co.uk
- To respond to written enquiries within 10 working days of receipt

THE APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

All applicants for the MSC can expect to go through the following broad stages.

Stage 1: Complete the application form

You should have received this form as part of the application pack, or be completing it online. For advice on how to go about completing your form, please refer to page 6 of these notes.

Stage 2: Initial paper sift

Your completed form will be checked against our basic eligibility criteria e.g. age (at least 18 years old when you apply), nature of convictions listed, indefinite right of abode for non British/EEA applicants, incompatible occupations, length of residency in the UK, employment gaps/reasons for leaving and tattoos (nature and size). Tattoos located on the face or above the collar are not acceptable for the role of Special Constable.

If you are eligible to work for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), your application will move on to the next stage. The Equality Act 2010 covers special constables. If you have a disability, we will make adjustments where it is reasonable to do so.

Stage 3: Selection Centre

If your application passes the initial paper sift, you will be invited to our selection process. This involves a written test and an interview. You will also be required to undertake a medical assessment and the Job Related Fitness Test (JRFT). We may require you to undertake a Substance Misuse Test and you will also have your fingerprints taken.

Stage 4: Offer

If you successfully complete the selection process, we will offer you a training date subject to any outstanding checks, such as vetting.

For more information, please visit www.metpolicecareers.co.uk/specials

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MEDICAL ASSESSMENT

The medical assessment involves screening your Medical History Questionnaire. The purpose is to ensure that you are able to undertake this mentally and physically challenging job.

If you have a disability we will make adjustments where it is reasonable to do so. In some cases we may need further information (for example from GPs or specialists) and we will place you on 'medical hold' while this is being obtained.

At the medical assessment you will have a hearing test, vision screen, lung function test, blood pressure check and urine test. Your height and weight will be measured to calculate your Body Mass Index (BMI).

If you are substantially overweight (BMI over 35) you will not be medically cleared. Putting this into perspective, doctors consider that a BMI greater than 26 is overweight. Candidates with a BMI between 35 - 38 with a body fat content of more than 30% for men and 36% for women will be placed on 'medical hold'. Candidates with a BMI of more than 38 with a body fat content of more than 30% for men and 36% for women are likely to be rejected, as it would take many months to meet the BMI standard.

You should bring contact lenses (with the case and solutions for lenses, or a spare pair of disposables) or spectacles, if they are worn. It is advised that you visit your GP beforehand to remove excessive earwax. For 48 hours before your assessment please avoid exposure to loud noise, for example riding a motorbike on a motorway, as this can affect the results of the hearing test.



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JOB RELATED FITNESS TEST

In certain situations, being a special constable can involve physically challenging tasks. You'll also be surprised how demanding spending most of the day on your feet can be. The Job Related Fitness Test (JRFT) assesses whether you are up to this kind of activity by testing your endurance. You must achieve the minimum requirement for your application to proceed.

Endurance

Your level of endurance is your ability to continue physically exerting yourself over time – i.e. how long you can 'keep going'. The JRFT tests your endurance by requiring you to reach level 5.4, which relates to 4 shuttles at level 5. This involves continuous running for approximately 3 minutes and 30 seconds to and fro along a 15-metre track in time with a series of bleeps. The timing between bleeps is slow at first, but becomes gradually and progressively faster as the test goes on, requiring you to increase your work rate and speed. The test will end when you can no longer keep up with the bleeps. You do not have to be an Olympic athlete to successfully complete the JRFT! We are interested only in whether you meet the minimum standard of fitness required to operate effectively as a special constable. If you prepare yourself properly, there is no reason for you to fail.

However, even if you don't pass at your first attempt, you will be allowed to re-take it within an agreed time span. If you fail after three attempts your application will be unsuccessful and you will not be eligible to re-apply for six months.



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WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU

Before applying, please double check that you meet our basic eligibility criteria, as detailed on our website. Certain posts may require a higher level of security vetting. Details will be provided if applicable. You must be able to provide regular and effective service. You will therefore be required to complete a Health Declaration form.

Commitment

You must be willing and able to commit 200 hours a year to your role as a Special. This equates to around 16 hours a month. If your employer is a member of one of our Employer Supported Policing schemes – e.g. ShopWatch, BoroughBeat and HospitalWatch – you may be able to perform some of your duties during your normal working hours. Visit www.met.police.uk/esp to find out more about these schemes.

Skills & personal qualities

To be a special constable, you must:

- be sufficiently literate and articulate in English to write short, accurate reports and potentially give evidence in court
- be able to cope with the unexpected
- be presentable, compassionate and tactful.

Financial status

It is crucial that your financial status is completely sound. Special constables have access to privileged information, which may make them vulnerable to corruption. So, it is important that you are not under any pressure from un-discharged debts or liabilities.

Qualifications & experience

There are no set educational qualifications to become a special constable. If you are currently in full-time education, or have recently left full-time education, we will ask for a reference from your place of study. So we will need you to enter the details of the establishment you attend or attended on your application form.

If you have ever served with HM Armed Forces, you should know that we only accept applications from individuals who possess a high standard of character assessments. We cannot accept applications from currently serving regular forces personnel.

Character & conduct

It goes without saying that special constables need to have very high standards of honesty and integrity. So, having a criminal record may well have a significant bearing on the results of your application. Minor offences, however, may not preclude you from becoming a Special. We will assess each case on its merits.

Precluded occupations

There are a number of jobs that are considered incompatible with the role of a special constable. To find out whether your current employment could prevent your application from being successful please visit our careers website for further information.

For more information, please visit www.metpolicecareers.co.uk/specials

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WHAT WE WILL GIVE YOU IN RETURN

Special constables are volunteer police officers and are therefore not paid. However, as a Special, you can expect to experience new and different challenges every time you go out on patrol.

You'll enhance skills such as problem solving, negotiating, decision-making and the ability to cope under pressure. These abilities, and others, will help you as a Special, but they'll also be a great benefit to you in your daily life and full-time career.

Travel benefits

All our special constables currently benefit from free travel on London Underground, London Buses, DLR, Croydon Tramlink and selected Overground routes. This is available seven days a week, whether you are on or off duty.

Many of the benefits the MPS offers are significantly better than those you would find in other organisations and that is partly why we are widely regarded as an employer of choice.

For more information, please visit www.metpolicecareers.co.uk/specials

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COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION

When completing your application form, please take the time to ensure that you give us full answers to all questions.

What to include

We will need to know if you have previously applied to be a special constable with the MPS and have been unsuccessful. If this is the case, please check the date when that application was rejected. You will have to wait at least six months after that date to re-apply, unless you receive written confirmation from us that you can do so earlier.

In the employment section, please list your most recent employer, and then all other employers before that for the last five years. If you were unemployed, in full or part-time education – or working or travelling abroad – you will need to indicate as such, along with the appropriate dates.

We also need you to let us know of all the addresses that you have lived at in the last five years, including college or university addresses, along with the dates you were living at each address. If you were in HM Forces for any period in the last five years, just add 'HM Forces' and relevant dates. Other requirements will become clear as you go through the form, including a declaration of previous convictions, cautions, investigations, or other incidents involving objection by authorities.

Location preference & selection time preference

When completing the application form, you have the opportunity to tell us, in order of preference, which areas you would prefer to work in.

Employer Supported Policing (ESP) schemes are partnerships with some London employers where you get time off for some of your duties. Patrols are then relevant to your employer or industry. Examples are ShopWatch, BoroughBeat and Pan-London ESP. If supported, you will need to indicate which scheme you wish to take part in.

What to do next

When you have gone through the guide and completed your application, please submit online.

Please thoroughly check your application form before submitting it to ensure that there are no gaps in your education/employment history. Any gaps will lead to delays in your recruitment process.

You can check and keep track of your application at any time by logging into the online system. The recruitment process is thorough and could therefore prove quite lengthy. We will confirm all decisions relating to your application via email. Please check your Junk/Spam e-mail folder/s for correspondence from us regularly as our emails sometimes could go there rather than to your inbox.

Until an offer of an appointment is confirmed you should not assume that your application has been successful.

The Commissioner reserves the right to reject any candidate whom he may consider unsuitable for the police service.

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