



POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS (PCSOs) DEPLOYMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE POLICY

Executive Summary

This policy sets out the principles and framework for the non-confrontational deployment of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to ensure consistent, visible, and community-focused policing across West Midlands Police (WMP). The policy outlines how PCSOs are allocated, tasked, and supervised to maximise neighbourhood presence, support problem-solving activity, and provide reassurance to the public.

The policy ensures deployment decisions are intelligence-led, aligned to local priorities, and structured to deliver high-quality community engagement and early intervention. The policy provides clarity on shift patterns, tasking processes, and expectations for proactive patrol activity; while establishing safeguards to maintain neighbourhood coverage and minimise abstraction.

By setting clear standards for deployment and visibility, the policy strengthens neighbourhood policing delivery and ensures PCSOs are utilised effectively to reduce harm, build trust, and improve confidence in local policing.

Authorised Professional Practice (APP)

This policy has been checked against the College of Policing [Professional Profiles for Police Community Support Officers](#).

Scope

The Chief Constable has overall direction and control of WMP and is accountable for all policies and supporting documents of the organisation and its actions. Adherence to this force policy will be expected from all employees and representatives of WMP.

Objectives

This policy aims to:

- To provide a clear and consistent framework for the effective deployment and utilisation of PCSOs across Local Policing Areas (LPAs).
- To ensure PCSOs deliver high-visibility neighbourhood policing that improves community confidence and feelings of safety.
- To support early intervention, problem-solving and partnership-based approaches to reducing crime, anti-social behaviour, and vulnerability.
- To ensure PCSOs contribute to local policing priorities and community-identified issues in a structured and accountable way.
- To maximise the impact of PCSOs within neighbourhood policing teams while safeguarding their safety, welfare, and professional development.



Definitions/Acronyms

BWV	Body Worn Video
GBH	Grievous Bodily Harm
LPA	Local Policing Area
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PLAN	Proportionate, Legal, Accountable, Necessary
WMP	West Midlands Police

Policy Statements

1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1 WMP is committed to delivering visible, accessible, and community-focused policing through effective deployment of PCSOs aligned to local priorities, threat, harm, and risk. High-visibility neighbourhood policing will include structured foot patrol activity, community engagement events, partnership attendance, and proactive reassurance patrols aligned to local intelligence and community priorities. LPAs must ensure PCSOs are routinely deployed in a manner that maximises public contact and visibility
- 1.2 PCSOs will be deployed primarily within designated neighbourhood policing teams to maintain high-visibility patrols, engage communities, and support early intervention and problem-solving activity. PCSOs will receive structured tasking through formal briefing processes. Intelligence submissions must be timely, accurate, and compliant with force information handling standards. Supervisors are responsible for quality assurance of intelligence submitted by PCSOs during both foundation and coaching phases.
- 1.3 Abstractions of PCSOs from core duties will be minimised and must be authorised, justified, and recorded, ensuring neighbourhood policing capability is protected. LPAs will monitor abstraction rates monthly to ensure neighbourhood policing capability is protected and aligned to this policy. Repeated or prolonged abstraction must be reviewed by supervisory ranks.
- 1.4 PCSOs will work collaboratively with partners and community stakeholders to address vulnerability, reduce anti-social behaviour, and improve public confidence.
- 1.5 PCSOs will not routinely be tasked with duties that detract from their neighbourhood policing function or compromise their visibility, engagement, or problem-solving responsibilities.
- 1.6 PCSOs will gather intelligence ethically and lawfully, ensuring timely submission of information and professional handling of sensitive material.
- 1.7 PCSOs must understand child and adult safeguarding frameworks referral pathways, and escalation procedures. While not primary investigators in high-risk cases, PCSOs must recognise



indicators of vulnerability, apply professional curiosity, document concerns appropriately, and ensure timely supervisory escalation.

- 1.8 Supervisors will provide structured tasking, oversight, and support to ensure effective deployment, performance monitoring, and professional development for PCSOs.
- 1.9 Training, development, and welfare of PCSOs will be provided to maintain professionalism, capability, and wellbeing.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 PCSOs provide a critical link between policing and local communities. Through a visible, accessible, and approachable presence, they enhance public confidence, support early intervention, and contribute to the effective resolution of community concerns.
- 2.2 PCSOs play a key role in reassurance, problem solving, de-escalation, information gathering, and strengthening community relationships.
- 2.3 The role includes exercising designated PCSO powers in accordance with force requirements to assist in the prevention, deterrence, and resolution of local crime and disorder.
- 2.4 PCSOs also address a broad range of non-criminal issues that influence vulnerability and community safety. They are expected to apply professional judgement, use their designated powers appropriately, and operate in line with force policy and legal frameworks.

2.5 Working Hours

- 2.5.1 The working pattern of a PCSO will be determined by the needs of the allocated department or operational requirement.
- 2.5.2 PCSOs should expect to work a variety of hours including evenings, weekends, and public holidays by necessity.

2.6 Vehicle Fleet

- 2.6.1 The default expectation is that PCSOs will patrol on foot or by pedal cycle (where trained); with vehicle use reserved for operational necessity.
- 2.6.2 PCSOs may only use Force fleet vehicles when formally authorised, appropriately licenced and trained; and must operate them in accordance with [Force driving policies](#), the [Road Traffic Act 1988](#), and all health and safety requirements.



2.7 Key Responsibilities

- 2.7.1 Maintain a visible and reassuring presence within communities, aligned to local needs, to address public concerns, deter crime, and strengthen confidence in policing.
- 2.7.2 Support police operations by delivering community-based activity, gathering, and managing information and intelligence, and operating within all relevant legislation, policies, and guidance.
- 2.7.3 Assist police officers in the initial response to incidents, helping to resolve low-level offending in line with designated powers and role boundaries.
- 2.7.4 Build and sustain effective relationships with key community groups and individuals to share information, support vulnerable people, promote cohesion, and identify and address issues such as anti-social behaviour.
- 2.7.5 Engage proactively with all sections of the community, including vulnerable and at-risk individuals, to prevent crime, assess needs, offer support, and respond to emerging concerns.
- 2.7.6 A PCSO is not routinely expected to act as a first responder to complex or risk based incidents. Where such incidents arise spontaneously in a PCSO's presence, their role is to take appropriate action. Action is limited to dynamic risk assessment, observation, containment where safe, communication with control, victim reassurance, and withdrawal where risk escalates. PCSOs must not engage in enforcement activity beyond their designated powers or outside their non-confrontational remit.
- 2.7.7 Remain alert to risks affecting individuals and communities, escalating concerns and potential threats in line with force procedures to support early intervention and problem resolution. PCSOs must escalate safeguarding concerns, emerging threats, or operational risks to a supervisor at the earliest opportunity. Escalation must be recorded in accordance with force systems and guidance.
- 2.7.8 Strengthen neighbourhood policing by applying critical thinking, problem-solving approaches, and evidence-based practice to identify effective local solutions.
- 2.7.9 Work collaboratively with partners across sectors to reduce crime and safeguard vulnerable people, understanding their roles, responsibilities, and approaches to maximise collective impact.
- 2.7.10 Contribute to an inclusive, ethical, and high-performing team environment by valuing diverse perspectives, treating everyone with respect, modelling professional behaviours and being open to feedback in line with force values.
- 2.7.11 PCSOs may be deployed to incidents where only basic crime or non-crime reporting is required. This includes obtaining non-eyewitness victim statements for low-impact matters such as (but not limited to) minor criminal damage or low-value theft. Any investigative activity undertaken by a PCSO should be closely supported, directed and quality-assured by appropriate supervision to ensure compliance with force standards.



- 2.7.12 PCSOs may also undertake basic enquiries within low level secondary investigations (CCTV collection, house to house enquiries etc)
- 2.7.13 Conduct duties that do not require the full range of powers of a warranted constable which can include the patrol of sensitive locations and the management and record keeping of crime/incident scenes.
- 2.7.14 Outside of coaching and mentoring, PCSOs should expect to deploy on single patrol to increase visibility and reassurance.
- 2.7.15 PCSOs retain responsibility for their own safety and for ensuring that they work within the deployment principles and operational deployment practices contained within this guidance.
- 2.7.16 PCSOs retain responsibility for dynamic risk assessment. Whenever they have concerns that their deployment may be falling outside the deployment principles, they must identify that fact to a supervisor (The decision to withdraw, observe and report is a valid tactical option and will be supported by managers).
- 2.7.17 PCSOs will NOT engage in confrontational or otherwise 'high risk' activities (See point [2.8.3](#)).
- 2.7.18 There is NO positive duty for a PCSO to intervene; they are police staff, not police officers.
- 2.7.19 As representing members of public authorities, a PCSO's actions will support the human rights of individuals, according to the PLAN acronym (proportionate, legal, accountable, and necessary).

2.8 **Deployments not suited to the role of PCSO**

- 2.8.1 PCSO deployment must reflect their non-confrontational remit and the limits of their designated powers. PCSOs should therefore not be deployed to incidents that involve heightened risk, active confrontation, specialist operational requirements, or situations requiring immediate enforcement.
- 2.8.2 While they should not be deployed as primary responders to these incidents, PCSOs may provide support after the event once the scene is safe, risk is reduced, and officers have established control.
- 2.8.3 The following incident types outline scenarios where a PCSO deployment would not be appropriate as a first response.
- Violence & Threats
 - Violence in progress
 - Threats involving weapons
 - Knife crime incidents
 - Firearms related reports
 - Affray or violent disorder



- Domestic & Personal Risk
 - Domestic abuse incidents (current or recent)
 - Stalking or harassment where the suspect is present
 - Self-harm or suicide attempts in progress
 - Persons in acute mental health crisis posing immediate risk

- Serious Crime
 - Rape and serious sexual offences
 - Serious assaults (e.g., GBH, strangulation, sustained attacks)
 - Child abuse or neglect incidents
 - High-risk missing person recording (although could play a role in area searches)
 - Sudden or unexplained deaths
 - Burglary in progress
 - Robbery in progress

- High-Risk Public Order
 - Riots or large-scale disorder
 - Hostile or escalation-prone protests
 - Counter-protest situations
 - Football disorder or confrontational crowd events

- Pursuits & Suspect Activity
 - Suspects actively fleeing or being contained
 - Warrant executions
 - Breaches of bail or court orders
 - Searches of premises or high-risk locations

- Traffic & Transport
 - Serious road traffic collisions
 - Collisions involving fatalities or serious injury
 - Motorway or fast-road live lane incidents
 - Drink/drug driving investigations

- Specialist or Hazardous Incidents
 - Terrorism-related reports
 - Chemical, biological, radiological, or hazardous material incidents
 - Water-related rescues or high-risk missing searches
 - Incidents involving dangerous animals
 - Structural collapses or fire scenes



3. EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORM

- 3.1 WMP has approved a uniform, which identifies a PCSO aligned to the Police Service. The uniform is such that it clearly distinguishes a PCSO from a police constable.
- 3.2 PCSOs will not be deployed in civilian clothing or conduct any covert policing.
- 3.3 PCSOs will be provided with a radio to ensure that they are deployable by Contact Centres, stab resistant vests and [Body Worn Video](#) (BWV). Uniform should be worn in accordance with the [Uniform and Equipment Policy](#).
- 3.4 Consideration for the issue of further or newer equipment is subject of ongoing review and will be managed by the relevant portfolio holder. Department heads should avoid localised purchasing of equipment and uniform for PCSOs. Risk reduction should be primarily carried out by managing PCSO deployment rather than by additional protective equipment.
- 3.5 PCSOs in West Midlands Police are NOT issued with batons, incapacitant spray or handcuffs. This is a conscious decision to prevent engagement in tasks and activities outside of a PCSO skill set.

4. RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

- 4.1 PCSOs in WMP will be recruited through conventional recruitment methods managed by People Services.
- 4.2 Recruitment will be in line with a complete five-week foundation training programme designed to equip recruits with the operational skills, community-engagement capability, and legal knowledge required to deliver effective neighbourhood policing. The course blends classroom learning, scenario-based exercises, and practical exposure, ensuring PCSOs are prepared to work safely and confidently within local communities.
- 4.3 At the end of the five-week programme, PCSOs will be placed on their allocated LPA or department and coached for a further five weeks.
- 4.4 At the conclusion of their training and coaching, PCSOs will be suitably equipped to provide visible reassurance patrols, support problem-solving activity, identify vulnerability early, contribute to neighbourhood investigations, and act as a vital link between policing and the community.
- 4.5 PCSOs will be required to complete a probationary period which will include the completion of an e-portfolio that will be subject to assessment.
- 4.6 There is an expectation that PCSOs will commit to continuous professional development and undertake refresher or further training as required.



4.7 The training of PCSOs will be subject to periodic review by People Services to ensure training is fit for purpose.

Relevant Legislation / Policies / Procedural Guidance

- [Police Reform Act 2002](#)
- [Anti-social Behaviour act 2003](#)
- [Road Traffic Act 1988](#)
- [College of Policing Professional Profile](#)
- [PCSO Handbook 2022](#)
- [WMP Uniform and Equipment Policy](#)
- [WMP Body Worn Video Policy](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#)

Equality Impact Assessment

WMP places trust in their employees to comply with force policies and to work in accordance with and in support of:

- [WMP Vision and Values](#)
- [Code of Ethics | College of Policing](#)
- [Voice of the Child](#)

	What impact has this policy had on the nine protected characteristics in relation to the three general duties? (If applicable)	How will this updated policy positively impact each of the nine protected characteristics in relation to the three general duties? If not, explain why it will not.
Age (including children and young persons)	The operational duties of a PCSO (foot patrol, visibility) may vary in suitability depending on individual capacity.	Policy does not restrict access to employment by age and is a supportive career entry point into policing.
Disability	The duties of a PCSO may require reasonable adjustments depending on individual circumstances. No exclusion at policy level.	Existing reasonable adjustment frameworks within WMP enable participation. The role of a PCSO has non-confrontational emphasis that maybe (subject to assessment) suitable for some disabilities.
Gender Reassignment	Public-facing roles may create varied experiences for employees who have undergone gender reassignment. Any impact here is environmental not policy driven.	Inclusive workforce policies and internal networks support participation; no role barriers in recruitment or progression.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Operational duties will require alternative deployment during pregnancy.	Flexible adaptation of duties enables continuity of employment and retention.



Marriage & Civil Partnership	No obvious impact	No obvious positive impact
Race	Engagement across diverse communities may create varied experiences but not as a result of policy design.	PCSOs often improve representation; enhance trust and visibility in communities that may feel over-policed or under-served.
Religion or Belief	Working patterns and uniform may require routine accommodations for religious observance or dress.	Policy enables positive community engagement across faith communities.
Sex	No barriers in policy. Operational experience may vary based on context, not policy.	PCSOs provide visible representation in policing, supporting confidence in community groups.
Sexual Orientation	No direct impacts identified from the policy.	Inclusive policies and networks promote participation and retention.

Publication Instructions

Suitable for publication to public.

Document Control

Strategic Lead: <i>[role and name]</i>	Superintendent ██████████
Policy Author(s): <i>[role and name]</i>	Chief Inspector ██████████
Effective Date:	01.04.2026
FET Lead: <i>[role and name]</i>	T/ACC ██████ Andrew Parsons Local Policing
Version Number:	v2.0
Review Date:	01.04.2028

Any enquiries in relation to this policy should be made directly with the Strategic Lead.

All policies are subject to a formal consultation process which encompasses Legal, Professional Standards, Faith Groups, Trade Unions, Independent Advisory Groups and wider force groups and any other relevant parties. A record of consultation can be found on the Policy Portal.

It is responsibility of the Strategic Lead to ensure that all links within the policy are correct and accessible.

Amendment History:

Version Number:	Effective Date:	Summary of Amendments:	Author:
1.0	13.07.2010	New Policy	New Force policy approved by CC Sims



1.1	23.04.2012	Policy amended as follows with included: > policy reference, > signature of CC Sims. N.B. policy is currently subject to a full review, and all enquiries should be conducted with the author/contact as indicated on the front page should further clarification be required as to the information held.	[REDACTED] – Force Policy Coordinator
2.0	01.04.2026	Full policy review including PCSO powers and new template	Chief Insp. [REDACTED] [REDACTED]