



Community Policing Volunteer

Supporting policing, crime prevention and community engagement across Kent.

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Background

The first Community Policing Volunteer (CPV) role in Kent was established in 2017 through the introduction of the Volunteer PCSO ((V)PCSO) role.

Section 38 of the Policing & Crime Act 2017 expanded and clarified the powers that Chief Constables can designate to police civilian staff and police volunteers under the Police Reform Act 2002. (V)PCSOs are granted 14 designated policing powers, in line with PCSOs. It is important to note that, like all volunteer roles, the (V)PCSO position provides additional support to the force and is not intended to replace the establishment of paid staff.

In 2025, to note the expansion into many new areas far beyond what people understand as a (V)PCSO, the role was renamed CPV to better reflect the focus of the volunteers' wider work within local neighbourhood policing teams.

The CPV areas have developed organically in response to identified community issues, and by trialling and testing the need and impact. Some been created to enable volunteers with specialist skills, knowledge, or experience to provide further additional support to the force, such as the current CPV Forensics pilot, which utilises qualified specialist volunteers.

What is a CPV?

CPVs work closely with communities and businesses to promote community safety, local engagement, and crime prevention. They identify and support vulnerable people through that local engagement and working with partner agencies, community groups, and special interest groups (such as the British Horse Society, the Dogs Trust, and so on).

They are responsible for patrolling their local neighbourhood and supporting the community by:

- Providing a high-profile, visible uniformed presence to reassure the public, maintain confidence and reduce the fear of crime.
- Providing reassurance and act as a point of contact within the community, establishing local links and supporting victims of crime and ASB.
- Utilising powers to address anti-social behaviour and support traffic management.
- Working as part of a team with police officers, Special Constables, PCSOs and partner agencies to prevent and reduce crime, disorder, ASB and vulnerability, while promoting community safety.
- Taking a proactive problem-solving approach to community issues and developing effective working relationships with partner agencies and community members.
- Actively seeking community information and intelligence, making accurate and timely submissions relating to criminal activity, ASB and vulnerability, and providing feedback on police action.
- Responding to appropriate incidents and supporting police operations and events.
- Attending court to give evidence when required, helping to maximise prosecution and conviction opportunities.



How does it work?

CPV roles are performed exclusively by volunteers. CPV is a Kent concept designed to enable micro-volunteering and expand public-facing volunteering opportunities without the need for the full, rigorous, commitment required to serve in the force's voluntary Special Constabulary. Roles can be dynamic and task-focused, responding to emerging trends in crime, vulnerability and anti-social behaviour.

While Kent Police provide governance on professional standards, training, and operational oversight, the CPV programme has a distinct volunteer identity and is shaped by volunteers themselves. Volunteers are not simply tasked by police employees, they have a direct role in identifying priorities, influencing the development of their specialist strands, and determining where volunteer effort can have the greatest impact within communities.

There are formal volunteer leadership opportunities within the programme. CPV team leaders and senior CPV leaders are volunteer positions responsible for providing direction, mentoring volunteers, representing volunteer views, engaging with community stakeholders and contributing to strategic discussions relating to the programme's development.

Training is delivered by the Citizens in Policing staff, with support from volunteer leaders and wider force colleagues where appropriate. For roles that include designated powers, authorisation is granted by the Chief Constable and reviewed periodically. Volunteers carry a designated powers card detailing their role and powers, which can be presented to members of the public.



Strands

Volunteers help shape their area of interest, identifying where they would like to make the greatest impact. Working in conjunction with the Citizens in Policing Team, they help develop and deliver activities that support these priorities and benefit their local communities, while helping deliver against force priorities.

CPV Neighbourhood

CPV Neighbourhood volunteers provide a visible frontline presence in full uniform, working alongside Community Safety Units and under the guidance of PCSOs. Their purpose is to support local policing teams through patrols, community engagement and attendance at non-emergency incidents such as anti-social behaviour, low-level crime, missing persons, road traffic collisions, and other community concerns. They also advise local businesses on crime prevention and listen to their concerns. The role includes the use of limited designated legal powers and is designed to strengthen neighbourhood policing capacity in town centres.

CPV Equine

CPV Equine volunteers provide a visible uniformed presence on horseback, acting as an eyes-and-ears resource in areas that can be difficult for the force to reach regularly.

Their purpose is to support rural policing by identifying and reporting issues such as suspicious activity, environmental crime, off-road bikes, fly tipping, and other community concerns, while building relationships and providing reassurance to rural communities and improving local intelligence. They also take part in community engagement events, and advise on crime prevention, in a close and established partnership with the British Horse Society.

CPV Therapy Dog

CPV Therapy Dog volunteers provide trained canine support to help Kent Police engage with vulnerable people, support wellbeing, and improve communication in challenging or sensitive settings. Volunteers use their own dogs to assist with child-centred policing outreach, mental health and wellbeing activity, community engagement, support for officers and staff, and emotional support for victims and witnesses in court. Volunteers regularly work with team leaders to identify and develop new opportunities for deployment, expanding the reach and impact of this valuable resource across a wider range of settings and communities. The team were praised for their impact by HMICFRS and cited as 'Innovative Practice' in PEEL 2023-25.



Strands

CPV Canine Crime

CPV Canine Crime volunteers support specialist work linked to dog theft, illegal dog importation, and wider canine-related criminality. The role was developed to address public concerns, support investigations, provide education, and strengthen partnership working with external agencies and charities. Its purpose is to assist officers in tackling crimes, while also contributing to intelligence development, public reassurance, and raising awareness.

CPV Security

CPV Security volunteers are trained and vetted SIA-licensed security professionals who provide additional support to policing and emergency response arrangements. The role was created following lessons identified from the 2017 Manchester Arena bombing and is designed to enhance public safety by identifying risks, providing emergency first aid, supporting evacuations, protecting crime scenes, and relaying information and intelligence to police when required.

CPV Drone

The CPV Drone role has been developed to support and expand the force's drone capability. Its purpose is to allow trained

volunteers can assist with aerial observation and operational support under the guidance of experienced members of the well-established Special Constabulary drone team.

CPV Aviation (Airsearch)

CPV Aviation volunteers are qualified pilots or trained observers who provide aerial support using access to light aircraft. Their purpose is to assist Kent Police with pre-planned operations, road network monitoring and searches from the air. By reporting observations back to the force, they provide specialist intel that can enhance operational oversight. They also report on activities of concern at Kent's many air strips under Project Pegasus.

Other areas currently under development include CPV Forensics, which is currently being trialled and built around a small team of committed volunteers interested in supporting Crime Scene Investigation.



Recruitment

The recruitment process remains dynamic to support Kent Police's commitment to a flexible workforce that reflects and understands local communities. There is a focus on supporting the talent mobility and flexibility aims of the National Talent Development Strategy.

Eligibility

To join Kent Police as a CPV, candidates are required to meet the eligibility criteria below.

- Age - candidates must be 18 years of age or older
- UK residency/status - If a candidate is from the UK, they must have lived here continuously for the last three years. This doesn't apply to those serving abroad in the British Armed Forces. If a candidate is not from the UK, they must have lived here continuously for the last three years and have indefinite leave to remain.
- Vetting - all candidates will go through a vetting process, and security checks are carried out
- Appearance assessment - tattoos and piercings are assessed in line with police requirements
- Medical suitability - candidate required to pass medical examination or medical self-assessment, depending on the role

Additional eligibility criteria

Each strand has specific eligibility criteria and powers.

Neighbourhood CPVs

- Required to contribute at least 16 hours per month (four hours per week), with some flexibility for your personal commitments
- Medical examination and fitness test required
- Policing powers granted

Equine CPVs

- Applicants must be a horse owner or rider with guaranteed access to a horse
- Medical examination required
- Policing powers granted

Canine - Therapy Dog

- Must be a dog owner
- Must complete eligibility self-assessment form
- Dog required to pass a public access test

Canine - Crime Team

- Medical self-assessment required

Security CPVs

- Candidate must be a current SIA licence holder
- Must complete medical self-assessment
- No minimum hours stated

Aviation CPVs

- Applicants must own or have access to a light aircraft
- Must be a qualified private, commercial or tutor pilot, or trained observer
- Medical self-assessment required

Drone CPVs

- Must hold a current drone license

Training

All CPV strands receive bespoke training consistent with the role and force needs. This is determined by volunteer leaders, subject matter experts or the central learning and development team. In some roles accreditation through a portfolio assessment is required to demonstrate practical skills in an operational setting.

All training is delivered by accredited trainers, and the assessment is carried out by qualified assessors and where required, independent quality assurance is completed. A core training curriculum allows CPVs to move between strands by completing additional required modules, rather than having to repeat their training.





[Watch Community Policing Volunteer \(CPV\) Tina and her therapy dog, Alfie](#)

Hear about their vital role in attending courts to comfort vulnerable victims, and how Tina and Alfie make a huge difference in the local community at events, schools, hospices and police stations.



Contact us about community policing volunteer opportunities

Please use our [CPV contact form](#) if you have any questions about volunteering in one of our community policing volunteer roles. We will respond to your enquiry as soon as is possible.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Kent Police. We hope to hear from you soon.

