



## **Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF):**

### **Special Constable Learning Programme (SCLP):**

Background and rationale:

In undertaking the development of the national PEQF Special Constable (SC) learning programme, the College of Policing and key stakeholders across the service have considered all key strategic drivers for necessary change across policing including: the Policing Vision 2025, CiP National Strategy 2016 – 19, the National SC Strategy 2019 and recent developments around applied practice and upskilling across the regular service. In arriving at a programme which is most likely to provide SCs with the requisite skills, knowledge and behaviours, detailed examination of all existing and emerging known challenges of the SC role, the likely future pressures on the Special Constabulary have been fully reflected on.

This development is underpinned by extensive national consultation, including focus groups, strategic meetings and development events with key partners and stakeholders across the service and beyond, including: ASCO, NPCC, Special Constables (all ranks), operational officers from across the regular service, L&D leads and experts, Regional SC Coordinators, Higher and Further Education, The College of Policing, the Home Office, police staff associations and many other representative groups.

#### **PEQF SC Programme outline**

The PEQF SC programme is divided into five key developmental stages. These include:

- Phase One Learning
- Accompanied Patrol Status (APS)
- Directed Patrol Status (DPS)
- Phase Two Learning
- Qualified Special Constable (QSC)

#### **Phase One Learning**

The SC will undergo initial training during phase one which will provide them with the theoretical knowledge and understanding of practical underpinning skills and behavioural attitudes required to conduct a safe and lawful accompanied patrol. Initial training during this phase must also include Personal Safety Training (PST). Appropriate assessment of PST and the underpinning knowledge associated with phase one learning should be undertaken prior to the SC moving into the accompanied patrol phase of the programme, to determine the learner is ready for exposure to the operational workplace.

## Accompanied Patrol Status (APS)

On successful completion of phase one learning (and PST), the SC will be operating at Accompanied Patrol Status (APS). This is the stage of professional development where the SC is exposed to the operational workplace (the public arena), during which time they will be required to demonstrate basic operational skills of the SC role in a safe and lawful manner. During this phase, they will be accompanied at all times by an experienced officer (either a Police Constable (PC) who has achieved IPS or a Qualified Special Constable (QSC)).

It is anticipated that at the beginning of this phase the learner will be largely observing their more qualified counterpart dealing with policing duties and issues. As they gain more experience and confidence, it is expected they will (under direct observation), begin to apply and demonstrate these basic policing skills themselves.

## Directed Patrol Status (DPS)

DPS is unique to the Special Constabulary. This is the stage of professional development when the SC has demonstrated sufficient competence in role (evidence of which is collated in their operational competence portfolio (OCP)), against the specific assessment criteria associated with DPS. This evidence should be formally assessed by the Tutor signifying that the learner is able to function with some degree of independence, safely and lawfully in the workplace under supervision.

Whilst DPS indicates that a level of competence has been achieved, this does not equate to full independence or full competence in role. SCs who have achieved DPS should only be deployed on their own or as part of a team in a supervised or managed environment.

Achievement of DPS is a critical element of the SC's professional development and is the **'progression gateway' into the phase 2 learning** element of the programme. The responsibility of confirming that the SC has achieved an appropriate level of professional development to justify confirmation of DPS rests with the **force**.

It is estimated that on average SCs would achieve DPS in 18 – 24 months. Existing SCs who have achieved IPS (under current learning regimes e.g. IL4SC) will automatically adopt DPS, as a minimum, under 'grandparent rights' in recognition of prior experience and learning.

## Phase 2 Learning

During this phase, SCs will revisit core policing principles and will have the opportunity to undertake more advanced learning in one or more of the five areas of policing practice:

The five areas of policing practice are:

- Response policing
- Policing communities
- Policing the roads
- Information and intelligence
- Conducting investigations.

## Qualified Special Constable (QSC)

Once the learning has been successfully achieved in their chosen area(s), the learner will then progress to demonstrate full independent competence in that area, through undergoing further work-based assessment of additional evidence (against specific QSC assessment criteria) collated in their OCP. On successful completion of their work-based assessment they will become a **Qualified Special Constable (QSC)** in their chosen area(s) of policing practice.

QSC is the **end point** of formal SC training. To achieve parity with Independent Patrol Status (IPS) in the PEQF PCDA, the SC must complete learning, and provide evidence of successful assessment of their OCP, in **all five** areas of policing practice.

The length of time required will depend on the individual SC's availability and commitments, but, on average, we estimate that they could achieve DPS within 18 to 24 months. Following this, they could go on to achieve QSC in a single area of policing within a further four to six months. Ultimately, they could reach QSC across all areas of policing around 24 months after reaching DPS.

## Other Key Information

The College has updated its guidance for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to include detailed mapping of the curriculum and assessment criteria for DPS and QSC against entry to the service as a regular PC under the PEQF. This provides opportunities for SCs to get recognition of prior learning (RPL) at both DPS and QSC stages, so if they transfer into the regular service they will not be required to duplicate any learning and assessment already undertaken (although this is ultimately at the specific discretion of the HEI and employing force).

An additional optional module is available to QSCs to undertake learning and development in coaching, mentoring and assessment. This module can be delivered as a stand-alone delivered programme or form part of the Phase 2 learning process. This will provide ongoing support for future SCs and assist in resource planning

The PEQF SC programme is available to Home Office forces for the initial education of all new SC recruits from April 2020. The College recommends that forces migrate to the new SCLP as soon as is practical.

For existing SCs, it is recommended that forces should conduct assessments to identify the stage of the programme SCs are currently operating at e.g. APS, DPS and QSC to ensure that they are deployed to incidents effectively and safely and in parity with new recruits.

**PEQF SCLP documents** produced by the College of Policing under this programme include:

- National Curriculum for Special Constables – Defining all learning outcomes and modules content associated with all phases of the programme (phases 1 and 2)

- The national SC learning programme specification – detailing the core requirements for PEQF SCLP compliance for delivery
- The PEQF SCLP Factsheet – an overview of the programme / FAQ (myth-buster)
- The national SCLP Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
- A list of associated e-learning (existing relevant e-learning resources accessed through the MLE)
- Updates to the College's Guidelines for Assessment of Operational Competence to include the assessment criteria relating to SCLP (Directed Patrol Status (DPS) and Qualified Special Constable Status (QSC))
- Update to the College's RPL Guidance for PEQF Entry to the service via PCDA to include SCs at DPS and QSC (which fully maps to Year 1 PCDA).

**For further information:**

[Policing Education Qualifications Framework \(PEQF\)](#) and [Special constables](#)

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