

PUT YOURSELF IN HIS SHOES

Build confidence, gain new skills and learn more about yourself. Volunteering to become a special constable means making a positive difference to people's lives – not least of all your own

Being a special constable is, without doubt, the ultimate volunteering experience," says Chris Heathcote, 24, from London. He should know too. Away from his nine-to-five job with the Confederation of British Industry, Chris is one of the increasing number of 'Specials' volunteering to work alongside regular Metropolitan police officers to make London a safer place for everyone.

For Chris, the idea of helping out, giving something to his community and proactively making his home town a better place has spurred him to join the Specials. "I've worked in charity shops, been in the Air Cadets and even the Territorial Army, and they all somehow felt like I was just 'playing' the role – being a special constable really is something very different."

the level of access, trust and responsibility the Met and the public have put in me and I love every minute of it!" As a result Chris claims his confidence in dealing with people in all aspects of life has grown enormously.

Combining the volunteer role of special constable with your current career may seem like a daunting task – but as Chris found out, the two roles can complement each other. "I can fit each role around the other very well because there is a lot of flexibility about when you do your special constable hours. I normally go out one or two nights during the week with my Safer Neighbourhood Team or other special constables and then work with the response teams going to 999 calls over the weekend."

"Also, you bring your own skills to the role and then do so many

"You'll never be short of stories to tell again!"

Special constables are volunteer police officers who wear the same uniform as regular officers and have the same powers as their full-time colleagues, most notably the power of arrest. They're recruited from all walks of life – there are around 3,000 currently supporting the Met Police.

"As a special constable you do get the chance to do everything a full-time police officer does. In my relatively short service I've frequently been amazed by

things that you could not do anywhere else because police work is so varied," says Chris. He's dealt with robberies, fights, burglaries, road traffic accidents, suspected firearms incidents and conducted arrest enquiries.

"After some of the incidents I've been involved with any problems that arise during my day job really don't seem half as bad. And if you do step into my shoes and join the Specials, you'll never be short of stories to tell again!"



You can't beat it

"Volunteering for the Specials has been incredibly rewarding," says Chris. But don't just take his word for it. Studies show that 73% of employers would employ a job candidate with volunteering experience over one without. As a special constable volunteer you'll work alongside regular police officers. You give at least 25 hours of your spare time each month to carry out such duties as foot and vehicle patrols, assist at accidents, fights and fires, work in schools on safety and crime initiatives and above all do something positive for yourself and your community.

For more information or to apply visit metpolicecareers.co.uk/specials

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