

# POLICE SERVICE PARLIAMENTARY SCHEME



2010



## The Rt Hon Baroness Hayman – The Lord Speaker

As President of the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme, I am delighted to contribute to this latest edition of the scheme's brochure. Under the excellent leadership of Sir Neil Thorne, the scheme continues to provide members of parliament with invaluable experience of policing, as well as an understanding of the many issues police forces around the country face.

For legislators, such first hand experience is always useful. This is certainly evident in the House of Lords where many members bring significant expertise from careers in industry and, as a result, contribute much to the House's effectiveness as a second chamber.

“the scheme continues to provide Members of Parliament with invaluable experience of policing”

If parliament is to be a truly responsive and representative institution, the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme and others like it, need to continue to develop. Many members have already benefited and I hope many more will be encouraged to get involved.

I wish the scheme every success for the future.



## Nick Herbert MP

### Minister of State for Policing & Criminal Justice

The Police Service Parliamentary Scheme works together with police forces to provide a practical opportunity for Members of Parliament, Peers and Members of the European Parliament to obtain a unique insight into how policing on the front-line operates. By working alongside police officers, participants gain a better understanding of the successes and challenges the police service experiences on a daily basis. Through this scheme, Parliamentarians can see at first hand the work the police do to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and strengthen communities.

I know that participants and participating forces hugely value the Scheme. As the new Policing Minister, I am delighted to give it my wholehearted support, and to offer my best wishes for its continued success.



“Parliamentarians can  
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## Sir Neil Thorne OBE TD DL

### Chairman & Founder of the Scheme

We have now started our fourteenth year of attachments on the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme and during that period 69 Members of Parliament, Peers and MEPs have taken part with a total of 35 different police services in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. All participants have also had the opportunity to visit Holland to see the Dutch approach to policing and be able to make a comparison.

The scheme provides Members of Parliament with a 20 day programme to study the role of police men and women at Inspector rank and below. This is the most senior officer who deals with police constables on the beat on a day to day basis. The programme is made up of core elements and optional components which should reflect the particular interests of a Member of Parliament. Core elements include a period of not less than six days attached to a specific station, where, so far as possible, the Member can be absorbed into the fabric and learn most about what police service life on the beat is really like.

Those who have done the basic course are then able to return for a post-graduate course of 20 days split up into modules of not less than five days in a year either with the same or some other police service with the ability to explore other aspects of police activity if they wish.

Some of those Members of Parliament who have participated relate their experiences in the following pages and I do hope that their words will encourage others to follow.

I am most grateful to all our sponsors – who are listed at the back of this brochure – for their steadfast financial support; to those Members of Parliament who are prepared to give their time to study the police service at close quarters as there is no substitute for personal experience; also to the police men and women at all levels who have been most helpful.

However, none of this would have been possible without the enthusiastic support of both Ministers and Shadow Ministers who have been most encouraging throughout.



“The scheme provides Members of Parliament with a 20 day programme to study the role of police men and women at Inspector rank and below.”



## The Rt Hon David Hanson MP Shadow Minister for Policing

I am extremely happy to give my wholehearted support to the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme and to give my best wishes for its continued success.

The scheme works together with the police forces to provide a unique and practical opportunity for Peers, Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament to obtain an insight into how policing on the front-line operates. By working alongside police officers themselves, participants gain direct experience and a better understanding of the successes, achievements, challenges and demands faced by the police on a daily basis.

“The positive feedback I have received about the scheme, from participants and participating forces, is most encouraging.”

Through this scheme, they are able to see at first hand the work they are doing to tackle anti-social behaviour and crime issues and build public confidence locally.

The positive feedback I have received about the scheme, from participants and participating forces, is most encouraging – demonstrating how the scheme has enriched their understanding and how they have grown from their experiences. I know it will go from strength to strength.



## Sir Hugh Orde OBE QPM – President the Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland

The Association of Chief Police Officers has a number of aims, one of them is to continually improve the police service and bring the highest levels of professionalism to it. Another is to act as the voice of the service and represent it nationally. The opportunity to work with the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme contributes to both of these objectives.

The police service operates in a complex environment and there are many expectations of it at local, national and international levels. The Police Service Parliamentary Scheme provides an opportunity for democratically elected members of the House to connect with real street policing and gain first hand experience and understanding of the issues and interdependencies within modern policing. It is important that the service opens its doors and that members who have vision stride through to look at the way our staff provide a real public service 24 hours a day to both victims and to communities.

The scheme delivers more informed debate on matters of policing, but I also know that real personal connections have been made. Members have joined the special constabulary or involved themselves in other voluntary sector work which they saw during their attachments. The ability to look overseas, compare and look for best practice, brings some academic discipline. The British police service has a wonderful international reputation. For us to stay at the forefront we need to look at the best the world has to offer.



## Sir Paul Stephenson QPM Commissioner of The Metropolitan Police Service

I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to write a foreword for the 2010 edition of the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme brochure.

The scheme, which started in 1997, continues to grow and provide an important link between our members in the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the European Parliament with operational police officers throughout the United Kingdom.

This allows police officers a unique and valuable opportunity to work directly with UK and European legislators and thereby gain an understanding of the differing Parliamentary processes and procedures. In return, the participating members of the scheme witness first hand, on patrol and in a variety of policing environments, the valuable work that the police carry out on behalf of communities, often in very difficult circumstances. This promotes mutual understanding and is of great benefit to us all. In addition many friendships and strong contacts are made.

I thoroughly recommend this scheme to you all and wish you a very successful future.





# Maris den Engelsman – International Relations Officer for Police and Safety, Directorate-General for Public Safety and Security, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, The Hague, The Netherlands.

I have many reasons for acceding to the Scheme's request to write an item for this marvellous brochure. The Netherlands has played host to British members of parliament who have police and security in their portfolio now for over a decade.

Moreover one of the most decisive factors is the warm relationship we feel towards one another. the co-operation among our police regions has always been excellent. Rotterdam-Rijnmond, Amsterdam-Amstelland, Haaglanden, Brabant, the Royal Netherlands Constabulary at Schiphol, the Police Academy and others; they are always willing to provide professional speakers and fascinating practical help. While I begin setting up a four-day programme around six months in advance, the regions prepare weeks before the event. I must compliment both the British Embassy in The Hague and the Scheme Team's organisers in London for their generous help, as it simply wouldn't be possible without them.

A recent delegation visited our Lower House, where a commitment was made to get a similar 'Scheme' under way. The situation in The Netherlands is similar to that in the United Kingdom. We are also used to crime, vandalism, terrorism, fraud, drugs, and friction between the races, and at the same time we are familiar with the necessary efforts to counter them.

We believe it is particularly important that British MPs are given the opportunity to see how we do things in The Netherlands, and in how this differs.

It remains fascinating to compare the approach in both countries and to see the differences which may even lead to changes in policy. Moreover, visits at this level generally prove extremely fruitful in terms of police co-operation between us, and at the same time enable officials to become better acquainted with one another.

This unique relationship has developed over the years, and reflects changes in both police and society in general. I sincerely hope that The Netherlands may long continue to play host to our friendly near neighbours. There is no more appropriate way for MP's to conclude their course than by paying a visit to The Netherlands. You are always most welcome!



*Left to right: Melle Bakker, Former Counsellor at The Netherlands Embassy in London; the Rt Hon Baroness Hayman, The Lord Speaker; Albert Olthof, Head of Division Ministry of Interior & Kingdom Relations, The Netherlands.*





## Adrian Bailey MP – with West Midlands Police

In June 2006 I looked with bewilderment at a huge pack welcoming me to the West Midlands Police on the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme. It was only then that I remembered that I had volunteered for this two years previously and now was the moment of truth. The prospect of spending the greater part of August and September out of the constituency on police patrol suddenly seemed a lot less alluring.

I decided that there was no way out. My attempts to persuade the whips that this would best be done during the Parliamentary sessions fell on deaf ears. It was goodbye August and a fair chunk of September. There followed two months of action which I will never forget and which has provided me with enough tales to dine out on for many years. By the end of the Summer I had walked over blazing petrol bombs, swooped over Birmingham city centre in a police helicopter and crept across the grass to a tower block in a 6am raid on a wanted armed robber.

The public order training is one of the more spectacular experiences. Dressed in full riot gear with shields and protective clothing on a hot August day I joined members of the West Midlands, Staffordshire and Herts police at the West Midlands training centre at Cosford to take part in a number of exercises designed to combat riot situations. The police seemed to enjoy it. After all it is not every day that they have the opportunity to hurl petrol bombs and plastic baton rounds at a politician.

“the most exciting experience was the dawn raid by the firearms unit on a suspected armed robber.”

Happily for me, my visor was so steamed up I could barely make out what was being thrown at me.

By far the most exciting experience was the dawn raid by the firearms unit on a suspected armed robber living in a tower block in Ladywood, Birmingham. I attended the 4am briefing with about 50 officers in different teams, travelled

to the rendezvous point and then crept with them up the stairs to the front door.

The suspect awoke to the sound of a saw cutting through the protective metal grille on his front door and within seconds was handcuffed and on his way to the police station. The speed and clinical nature of the operation was breathtaking. At 5:55am one suspected armed robber was asleep in his bed. By 6:05 am he was handcuffed in a Black Maria and on his way to the police station. The speed of events was a reflection of the detailed surveillance and

meticulous planning which preceded the operation.

I found a different sort of policing at the Police dog training school in Warwickshire. I could only marvel at the bond between some of the handlers and their dogs. As a dog lover and owner I wish I could develop the handling skills that they had.

The experience was not without its lighter moments. During a night shift with the Wolverhampton police we patrolled a number of pubs with a history of problems. Needless to say a posse of police filing through a crowded pub on a

Saturday night was always likely to attract a few comments. My favourite was when I was filing through a gay bar complete with stab vest and uniform, one exotically dressed young man looked me up and down and then said in a loud voice “policemen, they seem to get older every day!”

My advice to anyone in doubt is that this is an experience that you will only get whilst in parliament. Take it, you will not regret it.



## David Davies MP – with Gwent Police

As the vehicles accelerated into the small yard the Sergeant once again repeated the instruction “stay with someone the whole time.” We braked to a halt and immediately somebody shouted “they’re running.” Police officers jumped out of the van and began chasing around a dozen Albanian farm workers who were suspected of involvement in a series of thefts. As scuffles broke out I dutifully “stayed with someone” as he chased his quarry over several fields and through a stream.

Encumbered with equipment my “minder” started to falter and with slightly more enthusiasm than the scheme requires I sprinted forward and grabbed our man. He was perfectly friendly and after being handcuffed we walked back through the fields discussing the importance of a good physical fitness regime.

This was easily the most memorable moment I had during my time with Heddli Gwent Police on the Parliamentary Scheme but there were plenty of others. A high-speed chase through the Welsh valleys to get to a stabbing incident, drink fuelled fights breaking out in a town centre, walking around in plain clothes to watch heroin dealers plying their trade, and an early morning raid on the home of one such drugs dealer.

But these moments of excitement were balanced with days spent learning about the various departments which make up a busy police force covering an area of 550,000 people. I met with the specialist officers who work in the Drugs Squad, Domestic Violence unit, forensics, the financial unit, and many others. I particularly enjoyed the afternoon with the Air Support Unit followed by the obligatory ride in the helicopter.

As well as learning a great deal about the general role of different departments, since finishing the scheme I have found the personal friendships made have been useful in dealing with constituency issues. For example when councillors recently asked about getting a speed camera into their village I knew exactly who to call, having spent a morning sat in the back of a speed van with him!

The scheme brings you into contact with officers of every rank from the Chief Constable to the freshest recruit.

“I sprinted forward and grabbed our man.”

Many will be more than happy to share with an MP their, sometimes robust, opinions about what is good and bad about their Force and some of what I heard has completely changed long held opinions about how the country should be policed.

But most of all I leave the scheme with a huge respect for the men and women who do this most challenging of jobs. We are lucky in Gwent to have first rate senior officers whose commitment is matched by that of the men and women who are willing to go out 24 hours a day in all weathers to ensure public safety.

I hope to be able to repay the time they willingly gave to me, by ensuring that my own contribution to future Home Office legislation is grounded in solid knowledge of how the Police Force works.

Sir Neil Thorne and his staff have done the country a great service by arranging this opportunity for MPs, and I can only add that I found it so useful that when I finished I joined the British Transport Police as a Special Constable and continue to learn something new every time I go out.





## David Davies MP

### Special Constable with the London Transport Police

I put my hand into the rucksack and pulled out a metal object concealed in a sock. Before the thought "what's this?" had flashed through my mind I realised. "Gun!" I yelled putting it down. I ran over to the youth who we had just pulled over for a ticket offence. My partner had already turned him around to face the wall and I grabbed him while the cuffs were snapped on. Police officers are taught to deal with finding guns and knives, but I hadn't expected to be finding firearms just a week after completing my initial training to be a Special Constable with the British Transport Police.

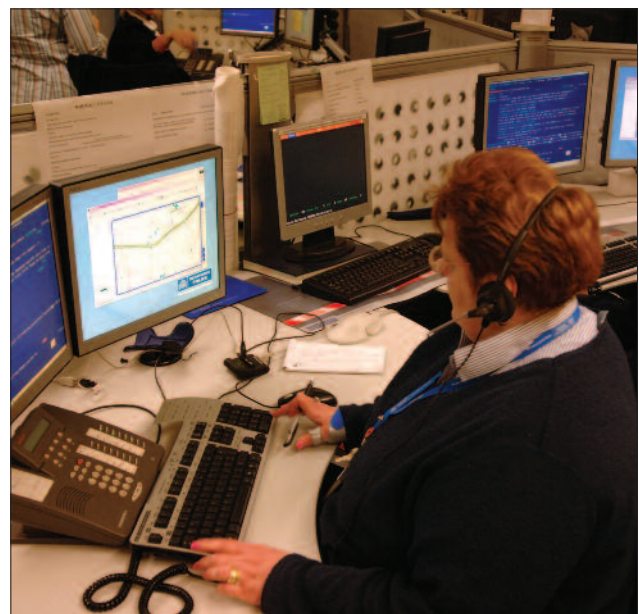
Shootings and stabbings on the streets of London have now become so commonplace that these days the press only report the worst examples. Burglaries, muggings and other violent crimes are simply a fact of life. I believe that the breakdown in law and order in Britain is one of the biggest issues to confront us.

Like most MPs I regularly call for something to be done but admit that I have been a little vague as to what the

“I hadn't expected to be finding firearms just a week after completing my initial training.”

“something” should be. Debates rage about “red tape,” the need for more officers on the beat, and the level of arrests. Few MPs have ever been police officers so the quality of debate has not always been as high as it should be.

Becoming a Special Constable has enabled me to see policing from a first hand perspective. I hope to use this knowledge to improve legislation and to raise the level of awareness about policing matters amongst colleagues in Parliament. In return I have committed myself to do two eight hour shifts each month as a police officer. I have a busy life, a family and two young children, but I believe that eight hours at a time is a small price to pay for the knowledge which can be obtained.



The vast majority of police officers want to be out on the streets catching criminals, not tied to desks. I want to help them achieve this by improving the legislation which goes through Parliament. Any fit and able person with integrity who can commit eight hours of spare time once a fortnight can do something to make their streets a little safer, if they join the Special Constabulary.





## Wayne David MP – with Gwent Police

Before I enrolled in the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme, I freely admit my knowledge of police work was limited. Having completed the scheme with Gwent Police I have a significantly greater understanding of, and admiration for, all the hard work they do in our communities. I am not in any way an expert on police matters, but I now have a much better comprehension of many of the issues which currently dominate our 'community safety' agenda.

**“My term on the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme will change the way I work as a Member of Parliament.”**

The experiences of my attachment were far ranging and varied. They extended from going on regular foot patrols around Newport city centre on weekends, to spending the best part of a day with the dog handling training department. From flying with the police helicopter to detailed discussions about the structure of police service financing.

Inevitably, and importantly, one of the themes which ran through many of my discussions was how, and if, the four police services in Wales should be merged to form an All-Wales Service. Of course, I had read all the arguments for and against put forward by civil servants, politicians and also my constituents. What I had not had, up until that point, was the views of police officers who have the day-to-day responsibility of actually policing our communities. It is not appropriate to go into whether or not the government is well advised to pursue this course but, after having my 'ear bent' on so many occasions, I am now much better informed because I know how the police themselves see things.

Due to these experiences with Gwent Police I certainly know much more about the big issues. However, I am now also acutely aware of the difficulties and frustrations which our police men and women encounter on a daily basis. My term on the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme will change the way I work as a Member of Parliament. Hopefully I am



now able to formulate a more balanced and rounded attitude on a range of complex issues which come across my desk, both in the constituency and in Westminster.

In addition, I have gained a genuine admiration for all the police officers I met. Without exception, every officer was extremely helpful, never failing to be very frank, nothing was too much trouble and everyone seemed very appreciative that I was taking the trouble to find out more about their work and listen to their views.

Another advantage of the scheme is that it provides politicians with an opportunity to explain to police officers the nature of their own work. As in society as a whole, I believe it to be the case that many police officers are not really aware of what MPs actually do as parliamentary representatives. In a modest sense my attachment helped me to demystify my job in the eyes of the police officers I spent time with. Hopefully, my attachment will lead to a closer working relationship between all of us in the future.



## Philip Davies MP – with West Yorkshire Police

The 25 days I have spent on the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme with West Yorkshire Police has been quite simply the most worthwhile, productive time I have spent since becoming an MP. Indeed it is one of the best experiences I have ever had.

In every survey I have conducted in my Shipley constituency, crime always emerges as the number one concern of local residents. I have always believed that in any walk of life the people who know best about what should be done to improve things are the people who are doing it every single day. They above anyone else see at first hand what works and what does not, and tend to have people using their service telling them what they like and don't like. For me that applies equally to nurses in the health service, teachers in schools, checkout operators in supermarkets and of course, police officers on crime.

It is police officers, more than anyone else, who see what happens in the criminal justice system and see what is working and what is not.

Although they include some immensely talented people, I believe it is a weakness of Parliament that so many MPs are lawyers, and so few are former police officers. Given

“The range of things I did was amazing”

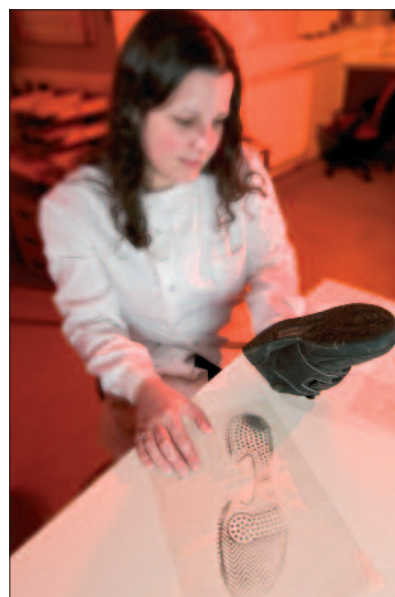
that we debate law and order issues so often, it would be invaluable to have insights from former police officers contributing to our debates. Unfortunately debates on crime in Parliament can often resemble lawyers' dinner parties and, whilst interesting, I am unsure as to how closely they represent the public's view or the views of police officers.

Whilst 25 days working alongside the police is no substitute for someone who has 25 years experience in the police, the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme was a real eye-opener and gave me a fantastic insight into the police organisation and a clearer picture of what we can do to tackle crime.

I am immensely grateful to West Yorkshire Police for all the time and effort they put into making the scheme so worthwhile, and for giving me a warts and all look at their organisation.

The range of things I did was amazing, from going out on surveillance, to walking the beat, to policing a Leeds United football match. I covered every aspect of policing and was enormously impressed by the skill, expertise and professionalism within West Yorkshire Police. Even though I was already a strong support of the police, I left with my opinion of them enhanced.

I would recommend all of my colleagues to take part in the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme; it is an opportunity too good to miss.





## Tony Baldry MP – with Thames Valley Police

I am no stranger to the criminal justice system. I began my practice at the Bar, some 37 years ago both prosecuting and defending. Having now spent time with Thames Valley Police as part of the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme I have seen life from their point of view. Members spend 20 days with a police force and see different aspects of how the police work. For me, the experience highlighted the complexity of policing in the 21st century and the considerable professionalism of Thames Valley Police.

Moreover, during my time on shift at Cowley it was apparent that a small but growing number of persistent young offenders are committing a large number of offences. For people like this antisocial behaviour orders and community sentences do not appear to be working. There is also a worrying trend of youth-on-youth violence which usually involves a gang of youngsters preying on other youngsters for their mobile telephones, cash, and goods. These are really nasty offences but classified as



“I would encourage all MPs to take up a placement.”



*Tony Baldry (right) with former Minister of State for policing Vernon Coaker*

The only police officers most members get to meet are the Chief Constable and the area Commander. This scheme provides the opportunity for members to talk to officers, police constables and sergeants and gives them the opportunity to talk to us. One spends some days with a specialist department and others on early and late shift beat patrols. I did mine at Cowley police station in Oxford. Far too many people caught up in the criminal justice system should be treated by the NHS as mental health patients.

A large amount of police officers' time seems to be spent on dealing with people who are committing criminal acts in order to fund a dependency on drugs or alcohol. There is a tremendous amount of paperwork which makes a disproportionate demand on police services.

robberies so statistically the number of robberies in areas such as Oxford go up. Violence or the fear of violence is becoming an everyday occurrence, which is wholly unacceptable.

In my youth when Thames Valley police officers prosecuted cases in the magistrates court these were run efficiently, and the prosecution quite properly secured a significant number of convictions without an ever increasing mountain of paperwork. I hope it will be possible for this to be reduced in the near future.

My attachment has given me an added dimension to my knowledge and allowed me to speak with experience and understanding on policing matters in the House. I would encourage all MPs to take up a placement to enhance their contribution to informed debate.





## Lord Chadlington – with Thames Valley Police

As a Welshman given to sudden emotional outbursts of joy, despair and pain, I could never be a policeman on the beat. Over and over again on this wonderful scheme, I found myself in awe of the ability of some very young men and women to calm things down - to avoid making a drama out of a crisis. Whereas I would have made things worse – even with the best of intentions – by my tone of voice, my wish to take control or my excessive zeal. The Police Constables I accompanied were able to take emotionally charged, often dangerous, situations and bring peace and order. This happened time and time again and was a tribute to both the selection process and their training.



And they also so enjoyed their work. They bubbled with enthusiasm. Many of them told me that they did not want to be promoted and be stuck in front of a computer screen. They wanted to be on the streets doing traditional policing – even if it meant they would not gain promotion and get more pay.

And it was clear that anything which stopped them being actually out there, patrolling the streets and doing the job for which they signed up, was a real irritation. So much has

been written about the paperwork load. Some of this seems to stem from the “criming” of incidents. There follows a stream of paperwork either reporting back from the incident or – worse still – “de-criming” some petty event which shouldn’t have been a crime in the first place. But the Police Constable is not just kept off the beat by the office paperwork. When a criminal is caught, it can take hours to get the suspect into custody. On one night patrol, we were some three hours trying to get the alleged criminal into custody.

Despite these bureaucratic inadequacies – which happen in every walk of life - you can see why a young man or woman loves the life! Not only do you feel that you are part of a vital public service, it is also very exciting! You never know what the next shift – the next few minutes – will bring.

Obviously all my boyhood dreams came true when we sped around Oxford, blue lights flashing: or, when I spent time with the helicopters, the underwater search teams or on

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the shooting range. I even had some time on the Police driving course! But it was thrill with a purpose. Time and again I saw the value – in practical terms – of all this training when driving safely at high speed after a burglary, or helicopter support when searching for a missing person.

All my career I have been managing difficult, creative people. But they are a doddle compared with managing a police force. It seems you need the natural authority of a born leader: respect and yet approachability: the unquestioning support of colleagues in a crisis – and an incredible sense of humour! I take my hat off to them all!

But the public want to see more coppers on the beat. And if we could cut down on the bureaucratic paperwork and give more delegated authority to the Police Constable on the street, then, based on what I have seen, we would make huge strides forward in giving the public precisely what they need.









## Philip Dunne MP – West Mercia Constabulary

In 2006 my local police service, West Mercia, found itself unwittingly at the forefront of the fight to save it from being swallowed up into a regional force which would inevitably be dominated by the policing needs of Birmingham.

Representing a rural constituency whose policing needs are quite different from those of metropolitan areas, I took an active role in helping the chairman of the Police Authority and the Chief Constable to criticise the plans put forward by the Home Secretary.

Marshalling the arguments to defeat the Government's proposals exposed me to the senior officers of West Mercia and to the statistics which proved its strong performance on the ground, but gave me little access to the men and women of the service. So when the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme invitation came through I realised that this would offer me the chance to become more immersed in the day to day realities of policing in Britain today.



I signed up and spent 22 days meeting front line and behind the scenes staff in each department, learning what they did, what pressures they were under, and listening to what they felt could be improved. It was a remarkable experience. I am very grateful for having had this opportunity to learn so much and understand the challenges faced by all of those in our police services every day.

The appalling shooting of PC Richard Gray in Shrewsbury, shortly after my attachment ended, brought home to all of us the daily risks faced by our police who too often are taken for granted.

Today police in Britain face twin difficulties of rebuilding community policing to tackle local crime and antisocial behaviour, while at the same time strengthening the fight against serious crime and terrorism.

In Shropshire we are lucky. Not only do we have one of the best performing police services, we also live in one of the safest areas in the country. But low crime does not mean no crime. I am a big supporter of local neighbourhood policing. It being essential that in our market towns and larger villages we have ready access to our police.

Community Support Officers have a role to play in interacting with the public. I saw how useful they could be on the beat. But there is also an important role for Special Constables which have recently had less Home Office emphasis. Having witnessed both at first hand, I recognise the contribution both can make.

Moreover I saw the vital role which uniformed officers play each day in apprehending suspects, often using experience and training, which cannot be bettered by technology or bureaucracy. On one occasion I was with an experienced officer whose intuition led to a pursuit followed by an arrest and subsequent conviction. There is no short-cut to good professional training and a physical police presence on our streets.

The need for each force to cope with higher levels of crime is being well met by West Mercia. Resources are going in to more serious crime fighting. The

force continues to demonstrate some of the highest standards in the country. An approach involving an ever tighter central grip with national targets, interference and bureaucracy is bound to lead to failure.

The message I take away from my time with West Mercia is that our police should be freed to do the job they are proud to do. Professional discretion should be restored and committed officers be rewarded for their success.





## Arlene McCarthy MEP – with Greater Manchester Police

When I embarked on the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme I could not have anticipated that shadowing Greater Manchester Police would result in a major change to European legislation on gun control.

As a Euro MP for the North West Region I represent the two cities Manchester and Liverpool, which along with Birmingham and London top the league for gun and gang problems.

After a day spent with the Armed Crime Unit I came away with more knowledge and insight on gun and gang issues. I was allowed to fire one of the “convertible” guns – the weapon of choice for criminal gangs. 46% of guns recovered since June 2003 by Greater Manchester Police are converted weapons – these are banned in the UK but freely available in sports shops across the rest of Europe without the need for a licence or permit. Following a full briefing on Operation Carbon – a successful operation which resulted in the recovery of 274 converted guns smuggled from the EU to Manchester – Superintendent Paul Saville and Detective Chief Inspector John Lyons asked for my help in tackling the problem of the supply of illegal convertible weapons to gangs in our inner city areas.

I chair the European Parliament’s Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee and as we were about to undertake a review of the EU law on the control and acquisition of weapons, I invited both Greater Manchester Police Officers to give evidence to my Committee. They raised the problem of convertible weapons and their growing use in criminal activities not only in the UK but France, Italy and The Netherlands. It was a revelation to many of my colleagues that guns designed to fire blanks or CS gas pellets were being converted to fire live ammunition and used by teenage gangsters as young as 14.

The EU draft law had failed to include convertible weapons in the scope of the legislation. With Committee backing I successfully tabled amendments and as a result of this, the Home Secretary now classifies these convertible weapons as firearms and subject to the same strict control as hand guns.

This is a good example of how the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme can be a force of change in amending a key piece of law.

“it was the most rewarding experience I have undertaken in my parliamentary career.”



I started out on my Police Service Parliamentary Scheme with a view to gaining a better understanding of how issues in Europe impact on local communities and local policing. Many of the police activities I chose to shadow did indeed have a European dimension from football policing, the operations of the anti-terrorism unit, to people trafficking and sexual crimes. I was very proud to see at first hand the work of Greater Manchester Police Officers in managing the security arrangements for The Labour Party’s first national Conference in Manchester, which no doubt has been a key factor for its return there in future.

I have to admit there were times when I did not relish the prospect of flying in from a heavy day chairing a parliamentary committee in Brussels to going out on the night shift finishing at 4am with the Tactical Aid Unit, but it was the most rewarding experience I have undertaken in my parliamentary career. Officers always had time to offer me a “brew,” were courteous and professional, even under extreme pressure.

I came away not only with a better understanding of the policing demands and priorities in Greater Manchester but with an increased admiration for officers who often go beyond the call of duty in serving our communities.



## Jim McGovern MP – with Tayside Police

Following my election in May 2005 I was invited to participate in numerous groups, organisations and schemes. I chose the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme as it provided me with an important overview of a vital local service and helped me gain a perspective of a service that many of my constituents contact me about. The scheme proved to fulfil all of these aims.



I have to say I was very surprised that I was one of only a small number of MPs to have participated in this scheme this year and I am told the first Scottish MP for six years to do so. May I highly recommend the scheme to any MP, be they new or with many years experience.

My first day consisted of a visit to Tayside police headquarters in my own home city of Dundee. I had discussions with Chief Constable John Vine and his Deputy and his Assistant regarding what I hoped to gain from the scheme and what the force could do to assist me in achieving this. This initial meeting set the groundwork for my time with the police and helped me develop strong local relationships.

Over the next year I spent 24 days with various sections of the police force learning about topics as diverse as; police identification; technical support, dealing with cyber crime and surveillance; roads policing and the administration of the police, including budgeting, recruitment and other crucial backroom tasks. I don't have the space to detail them all but below are some of the placements that had the most effect on me.

Unfortunately, in today's policing firearms play an increasingly prominent role. Three of my placements reflected that as I spent time with armed officers. I was impressed with the officer's meticulous attention to safety and was shocked to discover the number of firearms which had been confiscated, many of which are of the home made variety, but lethal nonetheless.

I also spent a memorable day with the detection dog unit and watched the dogs in action locating drugs, explosives and human beings concealed in an empty local cinema which had been borrowed for the purpose of this training exercise.

The most enjoyable placement I had was with the drugs squad, both in terms of being involved in research and preparation and also front line participation. Both sides of this were an eye opener and showed the detail and scope of this work. Despite the fact that they must occasionally feel they are swimming against the tide they continue to do a marvellous job with great enthusiasm and commitment.

The six days I spent with the Eastern division gave me a better insight into the methods of police working in smaller rural towns as opposed to the city where I live. These differences are very important. In order to avoid giving the impression that my participation was all work and no play I should say that I spent a thoroughly enjoyable day at 'T' in the park, one of the UK's largest music festivals. I was impressed at how the police dealt with the massive crowds in a relaxed fashion and with good humour. I learned that with additional resources more could be done to combat crime, although there was a pragmatic acceptance that funding is, and always will be finite.



A big thanks to all at Tayside police for what was a thoroughly interesting, informative and enjoyable experience and one which has already started to benefit me in my work as an MP.

*Editor's Note: Jim McGovern has since commenced a post-graduate scheme and visited The Netherlands in 2009 to compare policing there.*





## Brian Donohoe – post-graduate with British Transport Police

As well as being a Member of Parliament for Central Ayrshire, I have been a Special Constable with the British Transport Police for over 5 years after participating in the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme. In this role, I feel immensely proud to support and be able to work alongside the brave and dedicated police personnel who are the cornerstone of our society as keepers of the peace.

Britain's railways run over 10,000 miles of track and through more than 2,500 stations. On a daily basis, they



which is not only home to a vast bus network, but also has a busy mainline station and the Docklands Light Railway.

Recent terrorist attacks and fears for safety has meant that policing London's transport network has often proved challenging. Yet, the knowledge I have gained and the work I have witnessed during my role as a Special Constable leaves me in no doubt that we have

the right police force for the job; brave, hard-working and competent individuals.



Getting out on the beat has given me an overwhelming appreciation of what our police forces have to deal with. I've seen things from the frontline with my own eyes and firmly believe that more MPs should become Special Constables.

As London's already vast transport network is set to grow even more as we prepare for the 2012 London Olympics, I am fully confident that the British Transport Police will have our safety safely in their hands.

*Below: Brian Donohoe MP left, Sir Ian Johnston former BTP Chief Constable*

also carry 2.5 million people on the network rail system and 3 million plus on London's Underground and Docklands Light Railway. Therefore, the job of protecting this mobile population from crime and disorder is of vital importance.

It is on the London Underground that most of my work is undertaken - I am lucky enough to be a stones-throw away from the Westminster tube station. Not only am I very familiar with the station and its set-up but the fact that it is so close means I can be on the Beat in an instant! My work on the Tube system includes searching for offensive weaponry, preventing fare evaders, protecting against pick-pockets (a hazard of Central London!) and being an all-round security presence.

My work with the British Transport police is not restricted to the Underground however and I have recently been on the beat in many mainline areas in Greater London. These include the London Borough of Lewisham





## Lord Rosser – with the Metropolitan Police Service

Although I have a longstanding interest in the criminal justice system, my knowledge of the police and how they operate was very limited, and relied heavily on what I had seen and read in the media. Hence my wish to participate in the Police Service Parliamentary Scheme. 22 days spent with the Metropolitan Police has given me a real insight into the wide range of activities and functions undertaken by the Force, and the realities and issues involved in policing today.

I visited control and command rooms, training centres, the forensic service and the crime museum. I also had the opportunity to speak to senior police officers specialising in dealing with murder, kidnap, rape, gun and knife crime, child abuse, club and vice crime, counter terrorism and economic crime as well as talk to officers involved in anti-corruption and disciplinary procedures, diversity and equality issues and developing links with the public.

Six shifts were spent with officers in rapid response cars, and further turns of duty were spent with the traffic police, police community support officers, officers policing football matches, the marine unit and officers involved with security at the 2012 Olympic site. I also had meetings with the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and a Borough Commander.

In order to be able to look at policing methods in another country, and enable comparisons to be drawn with the Metropolitan Police, I spent 5 days, with other parliamentarians, in The Netherlands looking at their approach to policing.



What struck me about my time with those Police Officers I was out and about with, whether on foot or in a vehicle, was the crucial importance of the almost instant decisions they had to make on how to deal with incidents.

One episode I found of particular interest, as a lay magistrate, involved the stopping of three people on bicycles who, based on a description received, had just stolen bags from a car. Two of the bags were found shortly afterwards by the officers in a refuse bin directly on the likely line of route between the alleged theft and where the three people, who were known to the police, had been stopped. Like the officers, I felt that those stopped were the ones who had committed the alleged crime, but as a magistrate I could see that unless there was fingerprint evidence on the bags, and/or very clear and specific identification evidence from the victim of the theft, the prospects of the case even reaching court were very slim. An insight perhaps into the reasons for the frustrations that the police can sometimes feel over securing successful prosecutions.

My overriding impression of my thoroughly enjoyable and informative time with the Metropolitan Police was of the professionalism and commitment of officers at all levels, and of the very wide range of activities and responsibilities undertaken by the Force. The importance of possessing good interpersonal skills, patience and objectivity, as well as courage, was obvious.

I had different views expressed to me about the value and contribution of Police Community Support Officers. There were also concerns about the amount of paperwork and the extent to which this is caused by computer systems that don't "talk" to each other. My impression though was that morale was generally good with the quality of line management being a crucial factor in this regard.

I would certainly recommend the Scheme as I found everyone I met very open and welcoming. Based on my experience, the time spent with the Metropolitan Police Force has led to a greater understanding on my part both of the police perspective and the reality of what policing today actually involves.



## Graduates – 1997-2009

1997	Roger Gale (C) John McWilliam (L)	Metropolitan Police Metropolitan Police	2003	Martyn Jones (L) Tom Levitt (L) Tony McWalter (L) Rt Hon Sir George Young (C)	North Wales Police Derbyshire Constabulary Metropolitan Police Hampshire Constabulary
1998	Jim Fitzpatrick (L) Neil Gerrard (L) Brian Jenkins (L) Jacqui Lait (C) Stephen McCabe (L) Andrew Robathan (C)	Metropolitan Police Metropolitan Police Staffordshire Police Metropolitan Police West Midlands Police Leicestershire Constabulary	<b>Post Graduates</b> Brian Donohoe (L) Roger Gale (C)		British Transport Police British Transport Police
1999	Sir Paul Beresford (C) Ian Davidson (L) Austin Mitchell (L) Rev Martin Smyth (UUP)	Metropolitan Police Strathclyde Police Humberside Police RUC (Northern Ireland)	2004	Graham Allen (L) David Borrow (L) Annette Brooke (LD) Tony Clarke (L) John Lyons (L)	Nottinghamshire Police Lancashire Constabulary Dorset Police Northamptonshire Police Strathclyde Police
2000	Tony Colman (L) Eric Pickles (C) Bob Russell (LD) Martin Salter (L)	Metropolitan Police Essex Police Essex Police Thames Valley Police	2005	Wayne David (L) Philip Hollobone (C)	Gwent Police Northamptonshire Police
2001	Brian Donohoe (L) Lorna Fitzsimons (L) Stephen Hesford (L) Jackie Lawrence (L) Jim Murphy (L) Betty Williams (L) David Wilshire (C)	Strathclyde Police Greater Manchester Police Merseyside Police Dyfed-Powys Police Strathclyde Police North Wales Police Metropolitan Police	2006	Adrian Bailey (L) David Davies (C) Philip Davies (C) Philip Dunne (C) David Gauke (C) Andrew Gwynne (L) Lord Maginnis (CB) Arlene McCarthy MEP (L) Jim McGovern (L)	West Midlands Police Gwent Police West Yorkshire Police West Mercia Constabulary Hertfordshire Constabulary Greater Manchester Police Metropolitan Police Greater Manchester Police Tayside Police
2002	Michael Connarty (L) Barry Gardiner (L) Dr Brian Iddon (L) Chris Ruane (L) Christine Russell (L) Dari Taylor (L) Tom Watson (L) John Wilkinson (C)	Central Scotland Police Metropolitan Police Greater Manchester Police North Wales Police Cheshire Police Cleveland Police West Midlands Police Metropolitan Police	2007	Celia Barlow (L) David Chaytor (L) Philip Hollobone (C) Diana Johnson (L) Fiona Mactaggart (L) Jessica Morden (L) Lynda Waltho (L)	Sussex Police Greater Manchester Police London Fire Brigade Humberside Police Thames Valley Police Gwent Police West Midlands Police



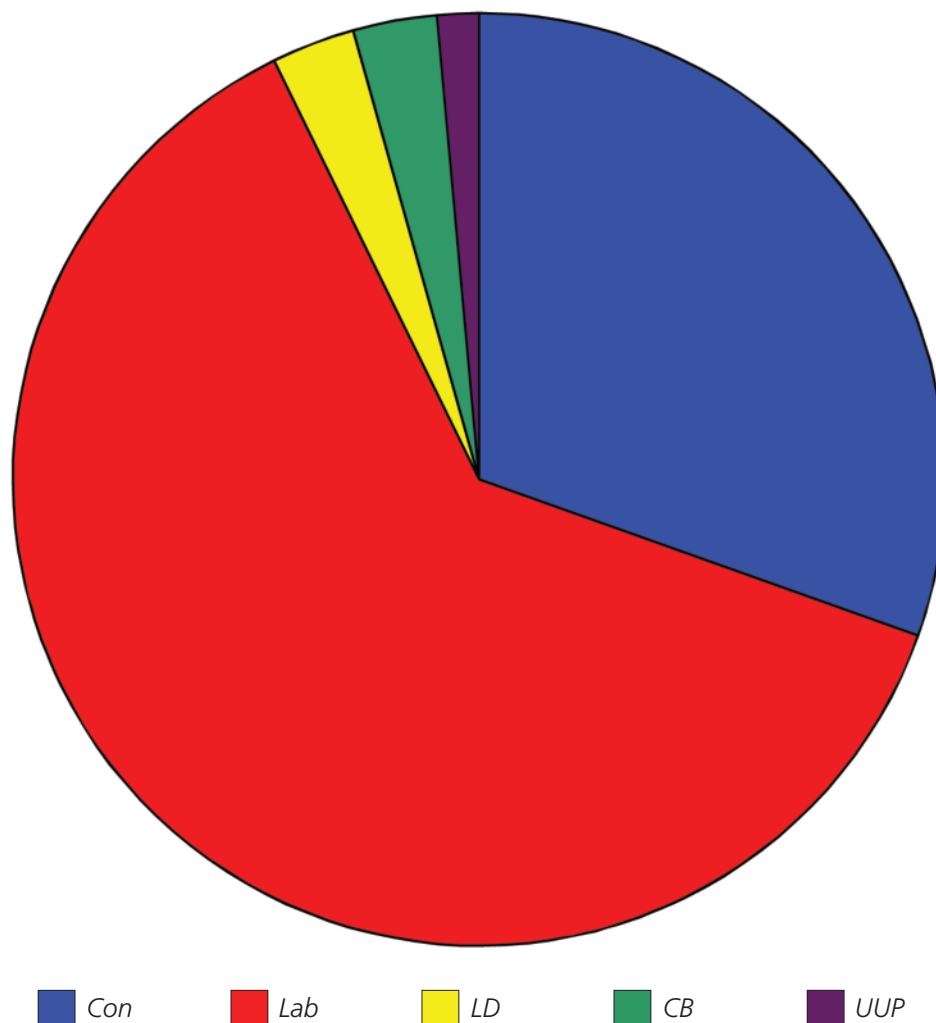


## Graduates – 1997-2009

2008	Tony Baldry (C)	Thames Valley Police
	Rosie Cooper (L)	Lancashire Constabulary
2009	Lord Chadlington (C)	Thames Valley Police
	Baroness Coussins (CB)	Metropolitan Police
	Stewart Jackson (C)	London Fire Brigade
	Lord Rosser (L)	Metropolitan Police
	Anthony Steen (C)	Metropolitan Police
	<b>Post Graduates</b>	
	David Davies (C)	British Transport Police
	Philip Hollobone (C)	British Transport Police



## Graduates by party



# Distribution of participants

## KEY

- Conservative
- Labour
- Liberal Democrats
- Cross Bench
- Ulster Unionist Party
- MP
- MEP
- Peer

**MPS** Metropolitan

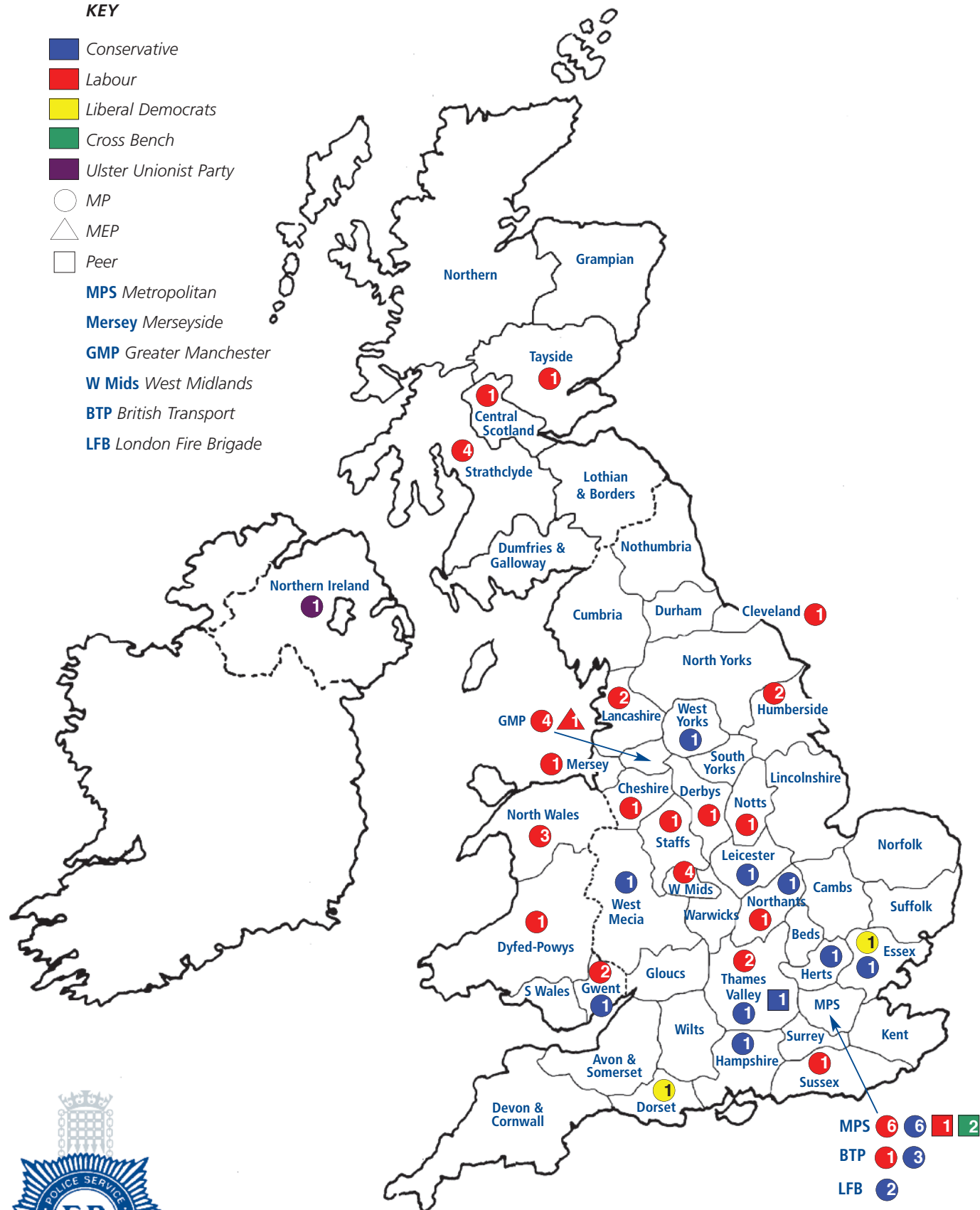
**Mersey** Merseyside

**GMP** Greater Manchester

**W Mids** West Midlands

**BTP** British Transport

**LFB** London Fire Brigade





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