Special Chief Officer: Ben Clifford

[Special Chief Officer: Ben Clifford - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuBCfurxBdw)

hello there, I’m Ben Clifford, I'm the Chief Officer of the BTP Special Constabulary.

**What do Specials do?**

So Special constables are part-time, volunteer police officers. They undertake patrols, they respond to calls for service, they proactively try and increase the uniform presence across the rail network and respond to anything that needs a police presence or policing resources to help keep people safe and secure, while they're on our network.

**What commitment is required?**

Being a Special constable requires a minimum of 16 hours per month for your duties after basic training. We're flexible about when you do them, as a police force, we're here 24/7 and so you can fit your shifts around other commitments.

**How many specials do BTP have?**

We've got 300 specials in the British Transport Police and they're located at over 90 police stations across England, Scotland, and Wales. Specials are working locally from their police posts, so they start and finish

their shifts usually at their local police station.

You may already have seen Specials on the network without realizing it. They wear exactly the same uniform and have exactly the same powers as a full-time police officer, and we patrol directly alongside them so, we tend to blend in alongside our full-time paid colleagues.

**Is it all about crime?**

So, the British Transport Police is the national police force for the railways. As a police force, we do spend a lot

of our time dealing with crime, trying to prevent crime, if crime has happened, securing evidence, arresting offenders and bringing them to justice.

But it's important to know it's not just about crime, so increasingly we spend a lot of time dealing with vulnerable people, people who may be having a mental health crisis, people who've run away from home, children who've run away, all kinds of vulnerable people are frequently on the rail network.

Equally when crime does happen, you'll have victims, you may have families of those victims or families have been impacted by incidents, that have happened on the network. So, it does involve dealing with crime, it does involve dealing with public order, but also involves caring for people and helping people.

**Why do it as a volunteer?**

The defining feature of the Special Constabulary is that we're volunteers, we are part-time volunteer police officers. As you can imagine being a police officer is a challenging role and you may think why would I do this as a volunteer? I myself am a volunteer, I've been volunteering to do this for over 15 years and the volunteer ethos is really important, it's about giving something back to society, it's about trying to help people and it's about also developing yourself.

So gaining new skills, getting a sense of having made that difference in society, that's always motivating but also gaining new skills yourself, around communications, around personal resilience, around teamwork and finally it just gives you that real sort of buzz. There can be challenges to policing, but it can also be quite an exciting thing to undertake.

You get to meet a really interesting range of people; you get involved in some really interesting situations sometimes.

**Do you value diversity?**

Diversity is really important to us in the police service and in the Special Constabulary specifically. We want to be as diverse as the communities we serve, we serve an enormous range of different geographical communities

but also, different sectors within society across Great Britain, and so we would really value getting applications from a wide variety of people at whatever their background.

**How do I find out more?**

So, on the BTP website there'ssome profile videos of other Special constables, there's some details about

what the role involves and then through our career’s website, you can apply to join us as a Special.