Day in the Life of a PCSO: Helen Littlejohn

[Day in the Life of a PCSO: Helen Littlejohn - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMNOSzvGP08)

Welcome to BTP, my name's Helen and I’m a PCSO based here at reading station and I’m going to tell you a little bit about what the job of a PCSO involves.

I’ve been a PCSO for just over seven months now based here at reading station. In my previous roles I’ve been involved in organizing adventure holidays, school expeditions and charity challenges. Lots of those roles have lots of transferable skills which

applies to the role of a PCSO.

**Can you talk us through the training process to become a PCSO?**

The initial training takes place in London; it's seven weeks long. Do not be daunted by this, there's a lot to learn in a short space of time

and the tutors are very welcoming and there's lots of questions and answers.

The training involves learning about legislation, doing a week of personal safety training, learning how to use handcuffs and how to restrain somebody. This also includes a personal fitness test, so you do need to be fit for this job and a couple of days learning about

first aid as well.

Then at the end of the training there is a ROST day which involves live scenarios at Euston station up in London, so you'll be tasked there to go to some incidents played by role players, to put all of those skills into practice and now I’m helping now to train new recruits.

**What inspired you to become a PCSO?**

What inspired me to become a PCSO? My grandad was a PC in Bristol during the war and he served for 32 years and a lot of my family worked on the railway as well, particularly the Somerset and Dorset line, so there's a real family connection there between policing and the railways.

Every day is different at BTP, you don't know what you're going to come up against, so you're not sat at a desk all day, you're dealing with different types of people different nationalities ages, and I think in the role, there's a lot of empathy there. It’s not just about arresting people, the PCSO role really is about developing that relationships between the public the trained companies and BTP and it's a very much a customer facing role.

So yeah, it's more of a relationship building role and that's really what inspired me

**What kind of things do you deal with as a PCSO?**

Some of the jobs that you might come across are mental health, so you not only have to be physically fit for this job you also have to be

mentally fit and be able to talk to lots of different types of people; so, concerns for welfare, vulnerable adults, vulnerable children, so you could be driving you know a child back up to their home.

We also deal with sexual assaults, which happen you know on trains and getting people off and then taking a first account of what's happened on the train, when somebody is in quite a vulnerable situation.

You set up lots of school visits as well, so we can go into schools and talk about track safety and then a lot of the day-to-day role is involved in liaising with the staff train staff here at Reading station, the gate line staff, the dispatchers, the management, the retail partners here as well; just on a day-to-day basis, making sure they feel safe and secure.

Then there's also liaison with the train operating companies, so for example great western railway (GWR), set up meetings with them

to try and improve the relationships and then with cross-country trains as well, trying to improve that relationship, you know

getting information from them on a short term and a long term basis.

There are opportunities to put your own personality and opportunities to grow in this role. In my previous roles I’ve run the Duke of Edinburgh award so I’ve been working with the community policing department to set up DoE for BTP, and I’m also very keen on setting up some charity challenges for women. So, watch this space we're going to do some charity challenges to build relationships with train companies, homeless and you know ex-offenders as well.

**Why should I join as a PCSO?**

I’m 53 now and I’ve got two teenagers, so ever since joining Reading, I felt a really valued and welcome member of the team. The work-life balance, initially when you come out of your training, you will do a month where you're teamed up with a tutor, so you're

not thrown in at the deep end, so you're given a month to build up your confidence, and that will grow day on day as the more instance that you deal with.

I've got a really good work life balance, so I work four days where I’m working eight o'clock in the morning till four

o'clock in the afternoon and then I have a couple of days off and then the following week, I’ll do six days which is three o'clock

in the afternoon to eleven o'clock at night. There are the odd occasions where you will have to carry on at the end of a job because you're dealing with an incident, but don't let that put you off. There are loads of opportunities once you get involved, there's loads of

opportunities to develop and grow, go on different training courses. I've been involved in Remembrance Sunday up at Paddington station. Unfortunately, when Prince Philip died, we were at Windsor.

I’ve done training courses on sexual assaults, I’ve been down to Cardiff to do a training course down there so yeah, lots of opportunities to get involved in different things, so have a look at the website or come and see us at one of the careers fairs.