

Members' Articles

TPCSO article submitted on 22.3.04

This article submitted by lanh6, a TPCSO at the Met's Kings Cross. lan is at pains to remind us, that TPCSOs get 7 weeks training not 3, that they have the

same powers as regular PCSOs plus the Met Traffic Warden powers and are Traffic trained and used on Accident scenes, ATS failures and on Congestion Teams. They have the Yellow tabs on their shoulder boards and since they are in the traffic flow on a regular basis are nearly always in their high vis jackets.

Do TPCSOs exist outside the Met? This is something that lan would particularly like to know.

here's Jo at Kings Cross ready to patrol

TPCSOs look for traffic offences such as stationary vehicles - FPN(R) red lines, illegal parking in loading bays, over staying in Parking bays, misuse of bus restricted boxes, bus lane and bus stop offences. They can issue the Endorsable FPN(E) for parking on pedestrian crossings, double white line offence and dangerous position. The regular FPN(P) parking only really gets used

for "unnecessary obstruction" - double parked etc, and non red route parking.

lan and Jo are TPCSOs, traffic PCSOs

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There is a great deal of talk about more offences coming our way - mobile phones, seat belts, yellow box's - have been mentioned... but it would require change to the law and further training.

As to road worthy vehicles - we have no special kit or powers but can of course report and request traffic police to attend.

Pretty much the same deal for the cars - again just like the Police vehicle but without the lights.

John Child from London graduated from KIAD Rochester in 2001 now working as a graphic designer

Scooters, we have eight per 18 person congestion team - although there is still an issue with kit and training - but we are getting there. No one has so far complained about any problem with the radios - I have just been issued my bike kit, and have passed my CBT - but not the Police Competency Qualification yet. I am qualified to drive Police cars in "basic mode" ie no blues and twos (pity), and my van test is early next month. Van drivers are at a premium - most ex-Traffic Wardens who have made the switch. The helmets are issue BMW -and just have a PSCO badge on the front. The full bike kit works out at about £1000. As for popular, it depends on the person - some are not so keen, some are hard to get off them - which works out pretty much ok. Only real problem recently is the wearing to Met Vests - which has become compulsory since the drive by shooting of a Police vehicle a few weeks ago. Some riders are not happy, saying that they feel uncomfortable and not very safe. As a Car driver I must admit that the Met Vest is a pain.

Scooters are really intended to make the foot patrols redundant, giving greater range and flexibility to patrol the red routes and bus lanes, and quicker response to incidents that usually leave the foot patrols helpless. And yes, zooming along a bus lane and catching people illegally parked up is much easier at 30mph. Our presence tends to keep the red routes clear, the bus lanes free... turn your back and they soon fill up again. The scooters should make us much more efficient at our primary role.

8 scooter patrols are based at Kings Cross

Training

red routes, bus lanes, accidents, plenty to do!!

The six weeks at Hendon included all the additional powers of PCSO's crammed into about one week. The bulk of the training covered Traffic issues, such as licence plates, driving licences, road markings and parking restrictions. The four flavours of Fixed Penalty Notices, the Red Route, normal Parking – FPN Non Endorsable for cycling and the like, and the most frightening of all, the FPN Endorsable which puts three points on a licence and seems to involve writing a small novel.

Kings Cross

I am currently a member of Congestion Team 4, temporarily based with Teams 1, 2 and 3 at Kings Cross. Currently teams 1 and 2 cover North London, while teams 3 and 4 are being sent South, in anticipation to our moving to a new base at the Oval soon.

All TPCO's have to be drivers, and we will all eventually be certified to drive the new cars and vans and pass the CBT and certification for the Vespa scooters.

the TPCSO van at Kings Cross is used constantly

The Van is driven and manned by TPCSO's and does look exactly like the Police vans - our blue lights are for use only when parked, ie an accident scene. Usually 6-8 TPCOS's in the van, on call for incidents, accidents, traffic point, road closures and to patrol "pinch points" ie - clearing bus lanes, issuing FPN's.

A typical day can be rather varied. Foot patrols in local areas where

illegal parking is a known problem. Van and car teams to more distant areas with Congestion issues, identified as "pinch points". We are also on call for a variety of incidents, and come across our own on a regular basis. We work closely with London Transport and the buses in particular. Our control room is closely linked to that of the bus drivers, and we respond to their calls for assistance with passengers, revenue inspectors or problem vehicles in bus lanes. Add on the road accidents, fires, failed ATS, mini-cab issues, vehicles - non-road worthy, tax and insurance issues, stolen and abandoned. The tourists, shoplifters, street fights, suspect packages and their associated cordons and road closures. No shortage of variety in Traffic.

thank you Ianh6 for that superb article, absolutely great!! much appreciated Ian, I am sure many PCSOs will be reading that lot over for a second time!!

well could YOU submit an article as good as that for this site?

if you could why not submit your photos and text for approval??!

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