

Date: 1st July 2025
Our ref: FOI/25/014998/P

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST REFERENCE NO: FOI/25/014998/P

I write in connection with your request for information dated 24/06/2025, received by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) for the following information:

Please see the following questions in regards to your Special Constabulary:

Q1) Does your Special Constabulary currently utilise a rank structure?

Q2) If so what are the names of these ranks? Also, what is the insignia for each rank (please include pictures if possible)

Q3) Are there any prefixes or suffixes on the shoulder numbers used to identify Special Constables?

Q4) If insignia for 'Special Ranks' differs from regular insignia are there any plans currently within the force to switch to using regular insignia for Special Constables? (e.g. 3 chevrons for Sgt., 2 pips for Insp. etc.)

Q5) What are the roles for each rank within the Special Constabulary? (e.g. a Special Sergeant overseas a team of 5 to 6 SCs, Special Inspector is in charge of the Special Constabulary in a single district (e.g. Tameside) etc., Special Chief Inspector is in charge of the Special Constabulary in multiple districts e.g. Tameside, Oldham and Stockport)

Q6) What is the process for Special Constables to promote within the Special Constabulary rank structure? Does a Special Constable have to progress through each rank (e.g. SC - SSgt - S/Insp etc.)? Or can Special Constables 'skip' a rank if there is a vacancy (e.g. SSgt becoming a S/Ch. Insp. without being an S/Insp.)?

Q7) On warrant cards for members of the Special Constabulary is their rank given in full (e.g. Special Constable, Special Sergeant, Special Inspector) or is an abbreviation used (e.g. SC Constable, SC Sergeant, SC Inspector or S/Constable, S/Sergeant, S/Inspector)?

Result of Searches

Following receipt of your request searches were conducted within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to locate the requested information and I can confirm the information requested is held by GMP.

Question 1 – Yes

Question 2 – The different levels within the Special Constabulary are:

- Special Chief Officer
- Special Superintendent
- Special Chief Inspector
- Special Sergeant
- Special Constable

Please see below for the GMP Special Insignia – Epulette Images.



Question 3 – No

Question 4 – No

Question 5 – The responsibilities for each level are as follows:

- Special Chief Constable – Force Level responsibility
- Special Superintendent – Force Level responsibility
- Special Chief Inspector – Cluster responsibility for 3 districts
- Special Inspector – District Level responsibility
- Special Sergeant – Team Level responsibility, up to 1:7
- Special Constable

Question 6

Specials need to be substantive/attain Independent Patrol Status only as a Special Constable before being eligible to apply for promotion to any supervisory role – so there is no requirement to be substantive in one role to apply for the next higher supervisory role, ie they don't need to progress up through each supervisory level, they can skip levels. Therefore, for example a substantive Special Constable could apply for promotion to Special Inspector. The exceptions to this are the roles of Special Chief Officer and Special Superintendent where candidates are required to have exceptional leadership skills and experience in strategic development.

Question 7

Warrant cards state 'Special Constable', as this is their legislated rank. Any other supervisory roles within the Special Constabulary are not legislated.