



Dorset Police

Dorset Police is the territorial police force responsible for policing the county of Dorset in the south-west of England, which includes the largely rural area covered by Dorset Council, and the urban conurbation of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

The force covers an area of 1,024 square miles (2,650 km²) with a population of 774,000, which increases in the tourist season.

History

Dorset County Constabulary was formed in 1855. In 1965, it had an establishment of 544 and an actual strength of 466. On 1 October 1967, it merged with Bournemouth Borough Police to form Dorset and Bournemouth Constabulary.

On 1 April 1974, this force took over some areas (mainly Christchurch and its hinterland) from Hampshire Constabulary and acquired its present name of Dorset Police.

Chief constables

??–1962 Ronald Berry Greenwood
1962–1980 Arthur Hambleton
1981–1982 David Owen
1982– 1995 Brian Weight
1995–1998 D. W. Aldous
1999–2004 Jane Stichbury
2005–2012 Martin Baker
2012–2018 Debbie Simpson
2018–2021 James Vaughan
2021–present Scott Chilton

Governance

Dorset Police was formerly responsible to the Dorset Police Authority, which was replaced in 2012 by an elected Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). As of May 2021, the PCC is David Sidwick, who is an independent politician.

Organisation and operations

Dorset Police often work with other organisations to assist in emergencies, such as Dorset Search and Rescue, who assist in the search and recovery of missing persons.

Overview

In the 2018-2019 financial year, Dorset Police:

Received 104,028 emergency calls and 420,677 non-emergency calls

Recorded 183,412 incidents, including 55,028 crimes

Made 10,515 arrests

Dealt with 5,832 missing persons incidents and 7,426 mental health incidents

Criminal Investigation Department

CID is based at Dorset's divisional headquarters in Bournemouth & Weymouth, and provides advice to all policing units on crime-related matters and maintaining a corporate approach to reducing crime, as well as providing specialist and investigative roles. The department is split into numerous sub-departments, which include but are not restricted to, Child Abuse Investigation Teams, Volume Crime Teams, Priority Crime Teams, Financial Investigation Units, Major Crimes Investigation Teams and Serious Sexual Offences

Roads Policing Unit

Dorset Police is responsible for policing road across the county. There are no motorways located within Dorset. Dorset Police have a total of ~450 vehicles, from 20 different manufacturers, and drive a total of 7.5 million miles a year.

Ports Policing Unit

The Dorset Police Ports Policing Unit is responsible for policing all designated and non-designated ports in Dorset, making sure that legislation is followed, particularly the Terrorism Act 2000. It also obtains any intelligence on smuggling and contraband. Ports in Dorset include Poole Harbour, Swanage Harbour, Portland Harbour, Weymouth Harbour, Christchurch Harbour and Bournemouth Airport.

Marine Policing Unit

Dorset Police' Marine Unit is responsible for policing the 89 miles of Dorset's coastline and up to 12 miles out to sea. The area is one of the busiest coastal areas in the UK, including two of the busiest ports, numerous shipping lanes, thousands of private moorings, the RNLI's busiest callout area and a training centre for the Royal Marines.

Armed Response Unit

Dorset Police's Armed Response Group is a 24/7 sub-department of the Operations department that responds to major and serious crimes where firearms are involved. The unit responds to incidents with the capability of firearms and Taser deployment. As of 2011, they were working hard to 'crack-down' on imitation firearms.

Dog Section

Dorset Police has had a Dog Section since 1953; the unit is based in Eastern Division HQ in Ferndown. The unit comprises one inspector, one sergeant, 13 constables and 22 dogs, including general purpose German Shepherds and more specialist breeds.

Air Operations Unit

Dorset Police formerly operated an MD 902 helicopter from its headquarters at Winfrith.[20] In 2012, the National Police Air Service (NPAS) was created, and all police air support units in England and Wales were gradually transferred to it.[21] The NPAS inherited 23 bases, including Winfrith, but this was eventually reduced to 14.[22] A helicopter remained based at Winfrith until 26 September 2014, when it was moved to a new home at Bournemouth Airport. Although based in Dorset, the helicopter forms part of the NPAS south-west region of police forces – which includes Devon and Cornwall, Avon and Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, South Wales, Dyfed-Powys and Gwent.[23]

Locations

The headquarters of Dorset Police is at Winfrith, roughly halfway between Weymouth and Poole. Police stations open to the public are located at Blandford, Bournemouth Central, Bridport, Gillingham, Poole, Sherborne, Swanage and Weymouth. The opening hours of some of these stations are, however, very limited.

Stations without a public front desk are Boscombe, Dorchester, Ferndown, Shaftesbury, Sturminster Newton, Verwood, Wareham, Wimborne and Winton.

There are two custody suites always open at Bournemouth Central and Weymouth Police station. Work was completed on Weymouth's Station in January 2002, which has 19 cells, with work completed on Bournemouth's in October 2010, with 37 cells. There is also a third custody suite at Poole Police Station which

opened in December 2009 with 27 cells, however, due to financial costs, this is only opened when operationally necessary.

In September 2017, the Christchurch Neighbourhood Policing Team moved from the site on Barrack Road to the fire station on Fairmile, further advancing the relationship with Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Uniform

Male police officers wear the traditional custodian helmet in the comb style with a Brunswick star that reads 'Dorset Police' for foot patrol, a peaked cap when on mobile patrol in vehicles, and a white peaked cap for traffic officers, both with a chequered Sillitoe tartan band. Female officers either wear a bowler hat or peaked cap, or a white bowler hat or peaked cap for traffic officers, also with Sillitoe tartan. PCSOs wear a peaked cap or bowler hat, but with a blue band.

When on duty officers wear black combat trousers and wicking T-shirts. Dorset Police no longer use the traditional police jumper, having favoured the black fleece with police written on the chest and back. Dorset Police do not have Brunswick stars on their epaulettes, just the rank and collar number (or just collar number for constables). Regular Officers and Special Constables wear the same uniform. PCSOs wear a similar uniform, but with blue epaulettes rather than black. High Visibility Tac Vests are now issued to all officers, along with Body Armour, which they are required to wear when on operational duty. The idea of these utility vests are to spread the weight of the equipment carried by officers across the torso rather than place strain on the waist.

Formal dress comprises an open-necked tunic, with white shirt/blouse and tie/cravat. Constables and Sergeants wear custodian helmet's and collar numbers on their epaulettes, all higher-ranked officers wear peaked caps with their rank and collar numbers on their epaulettes. The No.1 uniform is accompanied by black boots or shoes and occasionally white gloves, or brown gloves for the rank of Inspector and above.

Equipment

Dorset Police use TETRA digital radios, rigid handcuffs, leg restraints, collapsible baton and incapacitant spray. Some officers use the Taser, a non-lethal electroshock weapon used to incapacitate targets via shocks of 50,000 volts.

Vehicles

Dorset Police Transport Services manage the force's 450 vehicles, across its divisional units, road policing unit, and armed response.[30]

Recruitment

Training for new recruits in Dorset is held at the Headquarters in Winfrith. For Police Constables it consists of eight months' training and a two-year probationary period. For PCSOs it consists of 18 weeks' training and a 15-week probationary period. For Special Constables it consists of a similar but shorter programme of training during weeknights and weekends, accompanied by a two-year probationary period or less, dependent on the hours they can commit a month. Recruits receive their warrant card and uniform during training. Once the training period is over, the new officers are posted in a local division.

Performance

British Crime Survey

The British Crime Survey for 2010 found that there was an overall fall in crime in Dorset by 2.5%, and the largest fall in crime was robbery, which fell by 20%, making Dorset Police the eighth best performing force out of 43 in England and Wales, and first in forces similar to Dorset.

The performance figures from Dorset Police comparing April to December 2009 with the same period during 2008, showed a 9.9% drop in burglary, an 8.5 per cent drop in criminal damage, a 3.5 per cent fall in vehicle crime, a 3% drop in total violent crime, and a 17.8 per cent fall in the most serious violent crime. Criminal

damage fell by 5.8%, violence against the person without injury by 9.3%, violence against the person by 5.2%, drug offences by 5.1% and there was a 2.8 per cent fall in total recorded crime.

According to the British Crime Survey, 63.8 per cent of people think Dorset Police deals with local concerns, making Dorset the best performing force in England and Wales for that issue.

Some 9.9% of people say there is a high level of perceived anti-social behaviour, making Dorset the eighth best performing force in England and Wales – and the top performing force among its family of five most similar forces. Some 17.6% of people said there was a big problem with drugs while 18.8 per cent of people in Dorset said there was a big problem with drunk and rowdy behaviour. 51.6% of people in Dorset agreed that the police and local councils were dealing with issues, making Dorset the twelfth best performing force in England and Wales.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

In 2010, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services since 2017) graded Dorset Police overall as 'fair' on local crime and policing, protection from serious harm, confidence and satisfaction. In detail they were graded as 'fair' at neighbourhood policing, neighbourhood presence and solving crime. They were rated as 'good' at reducing crime. They were graded 'excellent' at suppressing gun crime, suppressing knife crime, comparative satisfaction of the BME community, confidence in the police and proportion of police cost met by council. They were scored 'poor' and 'stable' on reducing road death and injury.

Controversies

In 2006, a Dorset Police officer's use of CS gas against a Wareham gardener left him with permanent scarring. The gas canister was held inches from the man's face for a prolonged period of time. The man's family alleged that he was prevented from seeking medical care in the immediate aftermath of the incident. It was later reported that the man pleaded guilty to interfering with the arrest of another individual when he was sprayed with the incapacitant and was sentenced to two weeks in prison. This sentence was served concurrently with a 3 month prison sentence for three assault by beating offences which the man also admitted and was on bail for at the time of the CS incapacitant incident.

In the same year, a man who had previously been sprayed with CS gas by Dorset Police was arrested and forcibly stripped in his own home by Dorset Police officers.

In 2011, a Slovakian care worker was unlawfully detained and strip-searched in a Dorset Police station in Bournemouth. In a later settlement, Dorset Police admitted liability, and paid out damages of £4,750.

Alliances and merger proposals

In 2006 the Home Office announced plans to reduce the number of police forces in the UK from 42 to 24.^[40] This would have seen Dorset Police merge with Gloucestershire Constabulary, Devon and Cornwall Police, Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Wiltshire Police. The plans were publicly criticised by all the involved forces, stating that it would lead to poor quality service and a reduction in local policing. The merger plans were abandoned in August 2006 by the then Home Secretary, John Reid.

Devon and Cornwall Police and Dorset Police announced in December 2013 that their Chief Constables and PCCs were exploring opportunities for greater collaboration; to save costs without reducing service, and share assets, resources, expertise and best practice. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) defines a strategic alliance as: "An agreement between two or more forces to pursue a set of agreed objectives, while retaining separate identities." A strategic alliance was agreed to in March 2015, covering over 30 administrative and operational business areas (almost 40% of the total activity of the two forces). These business areas include admin services, finance, human resources, fleet services and ICT, together with some specialist policing teams. The first joint teams became operational in April 2016. In each business area, there is a single team and management structure made up from people from both organisations, to work on behalf of

both forces. Any costs and savings are shared in proportion to the size of each force. So far[when?] the strategic alliance project is on track to achieve the initial target of £12m of combined annual savings by 2018.

In September 2017, it was announced that Dorset Police and Devon and Cornwall Police were looking at merging to form a single force. This was cancelled in October 2018 when the PCC for Devon and Cornwall was unwilling to submit the merger plans to the home officer for consideration.

Officers killed in the line of duty

See also: List of British police officers killed in the line of duty

The Police Roll of Honour Trust and Police Memorial Trust list and commemorate all British police officers killed in the line of duty. Since its establishment in 1984, the Police Memorial Trust has erected 50 memorials nationally to some of those officers.

Officers killed in the line of duty or who have died reporting for, on, or off duty (Bournemouth Borough Police, Dorset Constabulary and Dorset Police)

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Name	Rank	Age	Force	Date of death	Circumstances
Thomas Bishop	Constable	39	Dorset Constabulary	21 September 1877	Fatally bludgeoned with stones by a drunken man he had warned. The incident occurred in Bere Regis following the Woodbury Hill Fair. ^[45]
Samuel Foster	Superintendent	51	Bournemouth Borough Police	6 August 1904	Collapsed and died while representing the force at the funeral of a colleague.
Sidney George Wood	Constable	27	Dorset Constabulary	26 April 1908	Died after crashing his bicycle on a steep hill searching for a thief
Thomas Biddlecombe	Constable	47	Dorset Constabulary	18 December 1916	Whilst patrolling Thornford Road, Sherborne, he took severely ill and was taken by ambulance to Yeatman Hospital where he died.
Wilfred Charles Viney	Constable	31	Dorset Constabulary	25 July 1930	Killed riding pillion in a motorcycle collision on plain clothes night patrol.
Sidney F. Loader	Constable	40	Dorset Constabulary	8 September 1938	Fatally injured in a collision with a car while on cycle patrol.

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Name	Rank	Age	Force	Date of death	Circumstances
Alfred E. Head	Constable	46	Dorset Constabulary	19 October 1938	Fatally injured in a road collision cycling to court in bad weather.
Stanley Ivor Marsh	Constable	24	Dorset Constabulary	9 February 1939	Died as a result of injuries received in 1938 when he attempted to stop a car.
Walter Charles Billett	Reserve constable	61	Dorset Constabulary	5 July 1940	Killed in a fall from his bicycle while reporting for duty in the blackout.
Ronald Mayne Roffey	Sergeant	37	Bournemouth Borough Police	22 August 1956	Drowned attempting to rescue his daughter from the sea in Jersey.
Cecil Robert Budden	Constable	27	Dorset Constabulary	19 May 1957	Fatally injured in a collision with a car while on motorcycle patrol.
Kenneth Frederick Innell	Inspector	44	Dorset Police	13 December 1982	Collapsed and died during an incident on duty at Poole Quay.
Sean Oxford	Special constable	21	Dorset Police	7 May 1992	Collapsed and died during warm up exercises in preparation for self defence training.
Stephen Wilson	Constable	37	Dorset Police	16 May 1996	Fatally injured in a motorcycle collision while reporting for night duty.
Ian Leslie Toomer	Inspector	50	Dorset Police	20 April 1999	Killed in a road collision when his police car crashed in wet weather.
Robin Povall	Detective constable	50	Dorset Police	7 March 2003	While cycling home from duty at Weymouth he was in a collision with a car that had cut across his path. He sustained serious injuries from which he died a few hours later in hospital.

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Name	Rank	Age	Force	Date of death	Circumstances
Ian James Morton	Detective constable	32	Dorset Police	26 October 2008	Killed in a road traffic collision whilst travelling to report for duty at Bournemouth, in the early morning, when his vehicle left the road and crashed into the wall of a bungalow at Highcliffe.
Jonathan Mark Hicken	Detective constable	47	Dorset Police	6 October 2019	Collapsed and died while travelling to duty.

Dorset Police Male Voice Choir

The Dorset Police Male Voice Choir was founded on 4 July 1995 as independent charity that today has 60 members, that perform regularly throughout Dorset. The choir has performed throughout England and also France, Guernsey, Ireland and the USA. The choir has so far raised over £250,000 for charity.[46