



Metin Enver, Managing Editor

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Special PCSOs?

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So, with the autumn political party conferences almost upon us who will be ensuring the smooth passage, security and protection of our 647 MPs to Brighton, Blackpool and Bournemouth?

You would assume it would be fully sworn police officers, busy fighting for a fair pay deal, as well as fighting the threat of possible terrorist attacks or disorder when Westminster's finest gather for their yearly chin wag. But recent newspaper revelations suggest there's every chance that the local mother and toddler group may be providing some additional PCSO cover.

Now, I know they call the summer months the silly season, but the idea of 16 year old PCSOs really does take the biscuit, or should that be rusk.

I mean, what are our chief officers thinking of? I know they are desperate to recruit as many PCSOs as they can. Their argument, the same as the government, that PCSOs are the eyes and ears of the service. I assume that makes police officers the arms and legs, as eyes and ears alone can't do very much.

But recent events in the Metropolitan Police Service would suggest there's an alternative agenda. I note in the latest edition of *The Job*, the Met's internal magazine that the first SPCSOs have arrived.

So, what are these SPCSOs? Are they Special PCSOs? Perhaps these ones can detect more than one crime every six years, as reported recently in the *Daily Mail*.

But, no; they are Station Police Community Support Officers. Yes, you did read that right – station PCSOs. Perhaps they provide the eyes and ears to detect any tea mugs that have gone missing from the canteen.

SPCSOs are to replace Station Reception Officers. So, they are taking police staff jobs as well now. There is, however, a more sinister logic to the introduction of SPCSOs. As the PCSO funding comes from a separate pot of money the Met is able to recruit and train them to do the jobs currently being filled by police staff, starting with front counter work.

You may ask where will this all end? Well, if our chief officers have their way, don't be surprised if the next time you take a break, you're served your tea by an acne-laden PCSO behind the kitchen counter missing your cup as they busily revise for their GCSEs.