

Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill

Fact Sheet: Police Community Support Officers' powers (clause 135)

Background

1. Since their introduction in 2002, police community support officers (PCSOs) have played a huge part in effective neighbourhood policing. They provide a highly visible presence within communities and have proved to be an invaluable link between the police and the communities they serve, with a focus on understanding and identifying local priorities, solving local problems and low-level crime and engaging with the community. They bring key skills, values and diversity to policing.
2. The PCSO role has evolved since its introduction and the Government wants to ensure that PCSOs have the right powers available to continue to provide the best service for their communities and remain an integral part of neighbourhood policing.
3. PCSOs currently have 20 standard powers.¹ In addition, there is a range of additional powers, which may be granted by the local chief constable should he or she believe that they are required to respond effectively to local priorities. Clause 135 will add two further connected powers to the list of discretionary powers available for designation.

New cycling powers

4. PCSOs currently have the power to stop a cyclist riding on a footway and issue them with a fixed penalty notice.² Clause 135 allows chief constables to give PCSOs the same powers in respect of a cyclist riding without the lights required under the relevant road vehicle regulations.³
5. These powers would complement the existing package of powers for PCSOs, who play an important role in educating communities and using their knowledge and skills to prevent crime. They would enable PCSOs to educate cyclists about cycle safety, particularly the importance of visibility to motorists, and help to prevent future road traffic victims.

Home Office
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¹ A full list of standard and discretionary powers is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-community-support-officer-powers>

² Riding on a footway is an offence under section 72 of the Highways Act 1835 (c.50); fixed penalty notices are issued under section 54 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 (c.53).

³ The current requirements are in Table III of Schedule 1 to the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989/1796); contravening the regulations is an offence under section 42 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 (c.52).