

Press release: Home Secretary honours special constables and police volunteers

Police volunteers who helped rural communities, assisted individuals in mental health crises and supported the victims of Grenfell Tower have been honoured for their work at an awards ceremony in London today (Tuesday 28 November).

The Lord Ferrers Awards recognise the outstanding contribution of special constables, police support volunteers and volunteer police cadets. They also acknowledge the support employers and their employees offer their local force. Over 600 nominations were received, twice as many as last year. This is the first year where volunteers who use technology creatively were acknowledged in a new award for Technical Innovation.

Nine winners were announced at the ceremony at Millbank Tower, attended by Home Secretary Amber Rudd and Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, Nick Hurd.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

Policing volunteers across the country play a fundamental role in what is widely recognised as one of the best police forces in the world.

The contribution all of this year's nominees have made in keeping their communities safe is testament to the wonderful spirit of volunteering that exists in this country.

I want to thank every winner, runner up and nominee for all that you do as we celebrate your true dedication and professionalism to policing.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd said:

Every year the Lord Ferrers Awards recognise the truly inspirational work of those who give up so much to serve their communities.

Volunteers bring valuable skills from outside policing and help ensure our police force is fully equipped to deal with the challenges of 21st century policing.

The government has brought forward legislation in the Policing and Crime Act

to transform the powers and roles of police staff and volunteers which will come into force on 15 December. These reforms will, for the first time, enable volunteers to be given powers at the discretion of chief officers, based on local need, and set out the core list of powers only available to a police officer holding the office of constable.

The Home Secretary also announced that from next year volunteers in the Offices of Police and Crime Commissioners will be eligible for nominations.

The winners are:

Ferrers Special Constabulary – Individual Award winner: Gareth Owen, Gwent

Gareth Owen worked with the Welsh Ambulance Service to establish a Joint Response Unit. With emergency services working closer together they were able to attend serious incidents quicker and tailor each response according to patients needs. The creation of the unit has resulted in a significant reduction in unnecessary conveyances to A&E as well as improved collaboration with the Ambulance Service.

Ferrers Special Constabulary – Team Award winner: Street Triage Team, Essex Police

A team of Special Constables with experience in the health and social care sector were brought together to help better serve individuals in a mental health crisis who needed urgent support or intervention. They set up a Street Triage Team where mental health nurses joined police patrols. Their invaluable expertise brings additional skills and knowledge to support mental health incidents. By working together they ensured tailored and appropriate responses to mental health incidents. The creation of this team also promoted a greater understanding within the police of mental health.

Police Support Volunteer – Individual Award winner: Andrea Phipps, Merseyside Police

Andrea Phipps is a chartered accountant and a chartered tax advisor, and has been assisting the Economic Crime Team at Merseyside police. She works on a variety of cases, each requiring specialist tax and accountancy knowledge. Without Andrea's expertise the force would have had to outsource the work to a Forensic Accountant. Her work over the last two years has helped ensure the Economic Crime Team are one of the top three performing forces in the country for financial investigations and cash seizure.

Police Support Volunteer – Team Award winner: Puppy breeding scheme, West Midlands Police

West Midlands police had an issue procuring suitable dogs for the various operations undertaken by the force – including explosives and drugs detection. The commitment and flexibility from the police support volunteers has ensured that West Midlands police now have one of the largest puppy

breeding and walking programmes in England and Wales. The police volunteers help raise the pups from six weeks to 14 months, assisting with training sessions and ensuring the continued development of the dogs.

Their efforts have meant the dog unit is maintained 24 hours a day and is able to offer a round-the-clock response to firearm, drugs and bomb threats. The dogs also help foster positive relationships with the public, especially among groups that are traditionally difficult to engage with – including children in care. The police support volunteers have also started a charity to support retired police dogs by helping to finance their ongoing medical treatment.

Volunteer Police Cadet – Individual Award winner: Hassan Khan, Greater Manchester police

Hassan has been a key member of the GMP cadets. He aims to break down barriers and educate his peers about tolerance and respect in an inner city area of Manchester. Hassan is also responsible for mentoring all of the new recruits that start the cadet scheme, ensuring they are all fully integrated within the team. He has worked with cadet leaders to develop a senior cadet leadership workshop so cadets can improve and hone their skills. Hassan plays a vital link between the cadets and the team leaders to ensure that young people are supported and work towards their development aims.

Volunteer Police Cadet – Team Award winner: Kensington and Chelsea Cadets, London Metropolitan

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, a team of cadets in Kensington and Chelsea organised fundraising events and vigils for the victims of the fire. They also organised a residential camping trip to the Isle of Wight for young people affected by the tragedy so they could have a break away from the city. The cadets provided support the young people throughout the trip and it enabled them to speak openly about how they felt and the impact the fire had on them. As a result of their work, local children have enlisted with the local cadets.

Employer supported policing Award winner: Trafford Council, Greater Manchester Police

Employer Supported Policing (ESP) is a partnership benefiting employers, their staff and the police service. Trafford Council agreed that they would offer staff an additional 10 days paid leave to either undertake volunteer police duties or training. The council already supported Special Constables who live and/or work within the Trafford borough by offering reduced council tax payments, however they were keen to encourage council staff to join the ESP scheme – and now give paid leave to their staff who are Special Constables. As a result, ten new applications were made to the Special Constabulary from council staff and Trafford Council based Special Constables have so far given 269 hours of policing to the local community since the scheme began last year.

ASCCO Leadership Award winner: Andrew Turner, Devon & Cornwall Police

Andy has introduced a dedicated 'Rural Engagement Team' to address the problems of rural crime, increase engagement with the farming community, help to reduce suicides amongst farmers and provide crime prevention advice. Rural communities and farmers in Devon and Cornwall often feel isolated so the team maintain a high visibility in those areas to provide reassurance. They have also signed up over 400 farms to Farm Watch, a scheme that shares intelligence between the community and the police to prevent theft.

The Sussex policing area has one of the highest rates of road deaths in the country. CSW online have developed and introduced an internet-based application and web-platform to manage all aspects of Community Speedwatch activity. CSW online today manages almost 2,500 trained volunteers spanning several counties. The system has improved the accuracy of recording speeding drivers and brought consistency and clarity to the process. It has generated over 20,000 educational letters in Sussex alone in the last year and helped raise the profile and effectiveness of Community Speedwatch as a way of local residents supporting the police to tackle this important issue.

[News story: Event to help the public sector embrace space a success](#)

More than 100 people attended the BEIS conference centre [on Thursday 23 November], for sessions on how space data and services can help with the environment, infrastructure and disasters, with speakers from the UK Space Agency, DEFRA, Ordnance Survey, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, ESA and UK industry.

Sara Huntingdon, SSGP Manager, said: "Our SSGP showcase is now in its third year and we have grown bigger and bolder in our ambitions. This year, we had a vast array of knowledge and experience in the room. The mix of inspiring presentations, exhibitors and debates provided a great opportunity for sharing ideas and chance for people to talk to companies, innovation bodies and public sector organisations and find out about the latest policy delivery challenges and the support we can provide."

SSGP was established in 2014 and is a UK Space Agency led and funded programme, which is delivered in collaboration with the Satellite Applications Catapult. It exists to help the public sector understand how data and satellite enabled applications can be used to make public services more effective or deliver them at less cost. As well as raising awareness through training and education events, the programme works with public sector organisations to show how to best access, use and deploy satellite data and

applications. The programme team helps UK Government embrace space and embed it as just another tool into business as usual operations. Presentations from companies on the innovative ways they are using satellite data to work with the public sector included:

- Using Earth Observation for efficient and effective peatland assessment and tree health monitoring
- Assessing air quality hotspots using imagery and ground based sensors
- Satellite enabled decision support tools , which provide answers as a cost effective service for Local Authorities, and
- A National Flood Warning & Mitigation Service

With public sector and intergovernmental organisations setting out the latest developments, progress on space service adoption and policy updates associated with:

- DEFRA's Earth Observation Centre of Excellence
- Digital Twins of National Infrastructure
- Decommissioning challenges in the energy sector
- Copernicus Services, the latest Sentinel earth observation satellites and the International Charter for Space and Major Disasters

You can contact the SSGP team by emailing SSGP@ukspaceagency.bis.gsi.gov.uk

[Speech: 22nd Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention](#)

Thank you Mr Chair,

The United Kingdom supports the statement made by Mr Jacek Bylica on behalf of the European Union.

First, I must thank our Director General, Ahmet Uzumcu for his committed, tireless leadership of the OPCW. He has been a true champion of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of the rules-based international system, at a time when it is under significant challenge. We are fortunate that he will continue to lead the OPCW into the year ahead. The Executive Council has nominated a worthy successor in Fernando Arias of Spain. He will be a strong leader and brings great knowledge of this Organisation and a proven commitment to achieving its goals.

Under Ahmet Uzumcu's leadership the OPCW's Technical Secretariat has made significant progress. Among achievements this year, the OPCW has:

- enhanced its Africa Programme. The United Kingdom was pleased to support the OPCW's work to strengthen national capacity building, including training for East African States Parties in Kampala
- developed the OPCW Mentorship Programme so it is an established platform for sharing experience, knowledge and ideas. The UK has now participated in two fruitful partnerships, first with Malawi and now with Nigeria
- passed a landmark decision on steps that the Technical Secretariat and States Parties should take to address the chemical terrorism threat
- begun preparatory work for the fourth Review Conference, through the Open Ended Working Group on Future Priorities. Under the able co-chairs the Ambassadors of Canada and South Africa, the group has provided a helpful forum to identify the challenges ahead for the Convention and the OPCW
- approved the addition of data on non-scheduled chemicals to the OPCW Central Analytical Database. This will reduce wasted inspection time, and increase the capability of the Technical Secretariat in inspections to confirm and identify the presence or use of chemical weapon agents; and finally
- marked the completion of the verified destruction of Russia's declared chemical weapons programme, and just last week, the completion of the destruction of Libya's declared precursor chemicals

And yet, the Convention is under unprecedented attack. The excellent work that the OPCW does to build capacity among states parties will be meaningless if we do not stand up now for its fundamental tenet: to rid the world of chemical weapons. As we have celebrated the 20th anniversary of its entry into force, it is shocking that in 2017 the world has witnessed repeated chemical weapons use:

- as an illegal weapon of war in Syria
- as an instrument of terrorism in Iraq and Syria and
- as a means of assassination in Malaysia

The case of Syria should weigh heavily on the conscience of this Conference. This year the Fact Finding Mission has confirmed three chemical weapons attacks in Syria between September 2016 and April 2017. It is investigating many more. The OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism determined that Syria was responsible for sarin use at Khan Sheikhoun in April 2017, and Da'esh used sulphur mustard in September 2016. Despite the huge volume of compelling evidence before it, the Executive Council has yet to take any action on Syria this year.

All states parties have taken on a duty to uphold the Convention. That requires action, from us all, here in The Hague. Some have tried to argue that the JIM's findings should only be discussed at the UN Security Council – after, of course, the renewal of its mandate has been vetoed. Those who shout loudest that we should avoid politics, and stick to technical matters, are those who choose to ignore the findings of the technical bodies we have all built.

We must view chemical weapons use in Syria through a technical prism. We must allow the technical experts to do their job, and then we, as states parties, must act on the findings they present to us. The JIM was an expert technical body. The Fact Finding Mission is an expert technical body. Dismissing their findings because they don't fit with the political world view a country happens to hold is hypocrisy.

False argument must not undermine the role of this Organisation. Myths and conspiracy theories have been circulated about the JIM's work. We should stick to facts. The JIM was established in 2015, after careful debate, with the unanimous support of the UN Security Council. Its working methods and practices were made known. It has carried out its work, in the most challenging circumstances, to produce serious, thorough, technical and compelling reports. The JIM's most recent report into Khan Sheikhoun made clear that they considered the full range of alternative hypotheses. They discarded those narratives that were not supported by the evidence. The Syrian Government itself provided samples from Khan Sheikhoun, and confirmed these as sarin.

Those who now challenge so aggressively the working methods of the JIM and FFM appear to have done so only when it became clear what conclusions those bodies would draw. They have chosen to play politics with these technical bodies, because their findings do not support their global political narrative. As we have seen, Russia has mirrored its three vetoes on the report in the Security Council with attempts at the OPCW to discredit the work of the Fact Finding Mission's investigators. Russia is determined to protect its Syrian ally, whatever the harm that causes to the ban on chemical weapons use and to the wider international system.

But Russia does not have a veto in the OPCW Executive Council. That's why it resorts to filibustering and unacceptable personal attacks on people of integrity, as happened in the Executive Council last Friday. Bullying is wrong, and it is also – always – a sign of fundamental weakness.

The Executive Council is composed of 41 countries. To take action requires 28 members to clearly say that it is the right thing to do. Abstaining, under these circumstances, has the same effect as saying "no" to further action – and is an abdication of responsibility. Each member state has a duty to decide for itself. And to answer the question – what are we doing here, what are we for, if as an organisation we fail to take action on the basis of the findings of the bodies that we all agreed to support, to end chemical weapons use in Syria?

The UK is committed to uphold the global ban on use of chemical weapons. We

urge all States Parties to unite in defence of the Chemical Weapons Convention and hold to account any who use chemical weapons, without fear or favour. This must include not only the Asad regime, but Daesh too. Let us not define the OPCW's 20th Anniversary year as the moment when States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention chose to do nothing. Instead, let us come together to take action to hold those who use chemical weapons to account. Let us send a clarion call that the Convention, and its fundamental tenets, will be upheld by us all.

[Press release: Environment Secretary streamlines support for farmers](#)

Support for farmers will be simplified under plans announced by Environment Secretary Michael Gove today, with the country's decision to leave the EU providing a once in a lifetime opportunity to refocus how we support farmers and landowners.

Speaking at the Country Land and Business Association's (CLA) annual Rural Business Conference, the Secretary of State set out how Defra will make practical and pragmatic changes to existing farm support systems, streamlining the process to free up farmers to focus on what they do best.

Speaking after the conference, Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Today I have set out plans to improve our current schemes, starting with simplifying support for farmers to protect and enhance our landscapes and countryside.

But these measures are just the beginning – the first steps towards a simplified system of support. Over the coming weeks and months, we'll be working closely with our farmers to make sure we listen to what they want as we design a new approach and realise our vision for the future of UK food and farming outside the EU.

Acknowledging the daily challenge farmers face within the EU's burdensome Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the Secretary of State said the current system of farm support is inefficient, ineffective, inequitable, and environmentally harmful. He outlined the need to change the way we invest in our countryside so farmers can more readily access support to protect wildlife, enhance the environment and improve land use.

As a first step, the Environment Secretary announced simplifications to the Countryside Stewardship scheme through the creation of four new streamlined offers which will launch in January next year. These new offers will have a

much simpler application process – half as much paperwork as before – so it will be easier for farmers and land managers to apply and deliver environmental benefits on their land. Further details on this will be shared later this week.

CLA President Tim Breitmeyer said:

Farmers and landowners want to continue providing the country with high quality, affordable food while protecting the environment and supporting wildlife. We welcome the Secretary of State's commitment to streamlining and focusing support into the areas most needed, and we look forward to working with him to drive up participation in crucial schemes to protect and enhance landscapes and the environment.

Jenna Hegarty, Head of Land Use Policy at RSPB said:

We welcome the Secretary of State's ambition to make Countryside Stewardship more effective, which will allow more farmers to help wildlife on their land. This is a crucial step towards realising his aim to refocus agriculture policy to provide clear benefits for people, nature and the future of farming.

The Secretary of State also spoke about the opportunities for UK farmers and food producers to take advantage of changing consumer tastes and reap the rewards of quality and provenance in production. He celebrated measures set out in the government's Industrial Strategy to work towards a food and drink sector deal and announced further support including a further £45 million top up to the RDPE Growth Programme to help rural business development, food processing and rural infrastructure projects.

The government will look to publish an Agriculture Bill in 2018 and will consult with all those who have an interest in the success of the UK food and farming industry in the New Year.

We have already pledged to match the support farmers currently receive from the CAP until the end of this parliament and set out the intention to go on supporting farmers where the environmental benefits of that spending are clear.

[News story: Government launches review](#)

into future telecoms infrastructure investment

The cross-government Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review – led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport – will explore what makes investment in full fibre and 5G networks attractive. It will establish what, if anything, government can do to promote the right conditions to achieve widespread coverage.

The review will underpin government's strategy to remain a world leader in connectivity in the coming decades – raising productivity and creating the balanced economy of the future. The aim is to create the conditions for connectivity that is ultrafast, reliable, long-lasting and widely available to UK homes and businesses.

Matt Hancock, Minister of State for Digital said:

Government has already committed more than £1 billion to supporting a business case for investment in full fibre and 5G networks through investment programmes and initiatives like our Barrier Busting Task Force.

We'd like to build on what has been achieved so far, by removing future barriers before they arise, and ensuring that market and policy conditions are as good as they can be to maximise investment in new technologies.

The Review will consider the types of competition that different parts of the telecoms market in different areas of the UK can support, with implications for the level and makeup of investment. For more information, please see [Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review: Terms of Reference](#) (PDF, 82.4KB, 2 pages)

DCMS will be seeking a wide range of evidence, including from across industry and the investor community, and will shortly be issuing a Call for Evidence.

A report, to be published in Summer 2018, will identify options available to government to promote an attractive and stable environment for investment.