

## *Women Police Campaign Committee, 1940*

# Appointment of Women Police

### **Present Conditions Demand Further and Immediate Action**

In October, 1914, women's voluntary patrols were organised, and although the patrols had no legal standing, they gave excellent service among women and girls in preventive and advisory work throughout the last war. Some 5,000 women had served as patrols before the end of the war.

Legally from 1919 women could be appointed as police constables, and since then many tributes have been paid to the value, efficiency and influence of women police.

The Departmental Committees of 1920 and 1924 on the Employment of Women Police recommended that women should come within the scope of the Police Acts.

In 1931 Statutory Regulations for Policewomen were issued by the Home Office, but the accompanying circular made it quite clear that the employment of policewomen was left entirely to the discretion of the local police authority.

Despite frequent representations to the Home Secretary that certain duties should be made compulsory of performance by policewomen, the permissive character of the Regulations remains. Appeals to watch committees, chief constables and other authorities have had little effect, in spite of the widespread agreement on the value of women police where these have been employed.

The conditions which now obtain in many parts of the country make this question one of immediate urgency. To mention but a few new aspects there are now camps in isolated places, small and scattered units, factories springing up in new areas, large numbers of soldiers, sailors, and airmen of our own and other nations.

The principal organisations interested in welfare of women and girls feel that there is an immediate necessity for the following action:—

(1) An amendment of the Statutory Regulation on Strength (Section 4 of the Police Act 1919) either by an order under the Defence Regulations or some other method, making compulsory the employment of women police, and extending the benefit of their preventive and safeguarding work to areas which are now denied such service.

(2) That a Woman Inspector of Constabulary should be appointed at the Home Office to co-ordinate the work of policewomen in provincial boroughs and counties of England, Wales, and Scotland, and to advise chief constables in the selection and training, as recommended by the Departmental Committees.

**Report of H.M. Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland** for year ended December 1939 (cf. xii.)

**Policewomen:** "They give particular attention to the welfare of young women and girls. Their duties in this direction have considerably increased since the outbreak of war. . . They continue to render valuable assistance to the detective staff and plain-clothes officers in the investigation of crimes against females.

The Chief Constables of forces to which policewomen are attached fully appreciate the value of their services. I am very strongly of the opinion that the employment of further policewomen in the cities, large burghs, industrial areas and garrison areas should be considered. Their principal work may be described as preventive in character."

**Chief Constable of Leicester.**

"When women knew there were properly trained Policewomen, understanding and efficient, they came and made statements to them on the subject of assaults which they would never have made to men. . . Many mothers have come up to them and said that since they were patrolling the parks they now feel safe to send their children to play in them in safety."

**Chief Constable of Northampton.**

"Through the Women Police Department work comes to the Police which would never come to the Men Police. Statements in all cases of offences against women and children are taken by the Women Police, and there can be no doubt of the advantage of having a trained woman for this delicate and often difficult task."

**Chief Constable of Glasgow.**

"Experience in Cities like Sheffield and Glasgow proves that Women Police have now definitely established themselves as an invaluable part of the Police Service and are a very necessary adjunct to the work of a Police Force.

In connection with duties relating to females I consider the services of Policewomen to be absolutely indispensable, especially for the detection and investigation of certain types of sex offences where a male officer would be considerably handicapped in carrying out the observations and enquiries peculiar to this type of offence."

**Duties which may be assigned to policewomen** (cf. Appendix Statutory Regulations 1931).

Patrol duty.

Duties in connection with women and children reported missing, found ill, injured, destitute, or homeless, and those who have been the victims of sexual offences, or are in immoral surroundings.

Taking statements from women and children in cases of sexual offences.

Duties in connection with conveyance of women and children to or from hospitals, poor-law institutions, police stations, prisons, places of detention and industrial and reformatory schools.

Watching female prisoners or women who have attempted suicide detained in hospitals.

Attendance on women and children in Court.

Searching and attending female prisoners.

Clerical work.

Plain clothes duty and detective work.

**Forces with Policewomen.**

In answer to a question in the House of Commons on January 18th, 1940, it was stated that policewomen were serving in the following forces:—

**Counties.**

Cardigan .. .. .	4	Oxfordshire .. .. .	2
Dorset .. .. .	1	Salop (Unattested) .. .. .	2
Gloucester .. .. .	7	Sussex, West .. .. .	1
Hertfordshire .. .. .	2	Yorkshire, West Riding .. .. .	2
Lancashire .. .. .	15		

**Cities and Boroughs.**

Bath .. .. .	2	Liverpool (Unattested) .. .. .	3
Birkenhead (Unattested) .. .. .	1	Manchester (Unattested) . Attested	
Birmingham .. .. .	13	December, 1939 .. .. .	6
Bolton .. .. .	5	Newcastle-on-Tyne .. .. .	1
Bootle .. .. .	1	Northampton .. .. .	2
Bristol .. .. .	5	Norwich .. .. .	1
Cambridge .. .. .	3	Nottingham .. .. .	4
Chesterfield (Unattested) Adver-		Oldham .. .. .	3
tising for policewoman .. .. .	1	Oxford .. .. .	1
Colchester .. .. .	3	Plymouth .. .. .	1
Coventry .. .. .	2	Reading (Unattested) . Advertis-	
Derby .. .. .	1	ing for 2 policewomen .. .. .	2
Eastbourne .. .. .	1	Salisbury .. .. .	1
Folkestone .. .. .	1	Sheffield .. .. .	3
Gt. Yarmouth .. .. .	1	Southampton (Unattested) .. .. .	2
Hove .. .. .	2	Stoke-on-Trent .. .. .	2
Huddersfield (Unattested) .. .. .	1	Sunderland .. .. .	1
Ipswich .. .. .	2	Tunbridge Wells (Unattested) .. .. .	1
Leeds .. .. .	2	Walsall .. .. .	2
Leicester .. .. .	2	Wolverhampton .. .. .	1

NOTE.—The above figures were not included in the answer.

**Appointments since January, 1940.**

Bristol	.. ..	Watch Committee asks sanction of Home Office to appoint four more, December, 1940.
Dorset	.. ..	Second policewoman appointed May, 1940.
Hull	.. ..	First policewoman sworn in 11th November, 1940. Another to be appointed and two for clerical work.
Newport (Mon.)	.. ..	Three policewomen to be appointed October, 1940.
Northampton	.. ..	Two more 29th November, 1940.
Peterborough	.. ..	Policewomen appointed September, 1940.
West Sussex	.. ..	One more 29th November, 1940.
Wiltshire	.. ..	Four policewomen to be appointed October, 1940.

Present establishment **Metropolitan Women Police** is approximately 200.

**WOMEN'S AUXILIARY POLICE CORPS.**

Glasgow	.. ..	Fourteen whole-time members sworn-in for police duties December 10th, 1940.
Sheffield	.. ..	Three to be attested and attached to the C.I.D.
Brighton	.. ..	Six women specials—unpaid—with status of constables to be appointed for work in uniform in the streets. September, 1940.

**WOMEN POLICE IN SCOTLAND.**

Answer to a question in the House of Commons, August 15th, 1940.

<b>Burgh Police Forces.</b>					<b>County Police Forces.</b>				
Aberdeen	..	..	..	2	Dumbarton	..	..	..	1
Ayr	..	..	..	2	Lanark	..	..	..	6
Dundee	..	..	..	2	Renfrew	..	..	..	1
Edinburgh	..	..	..	2					
Glasgow	..	..	..	15					
Kirkcaldy	..	..	..	2					
Motherwell and Wishaw	..	..	..	2					
Paisley	..	..	..	2					

**Recent news.**

In Glasgow fifteen more policewomen are to be employed. They will be recruited through the Women's Auxiliary Police Corps and will wear uniform and assist the regular policewomen. (October, 1940).  
Up to date the official policewomen have not worn uniform.

December, 1940.

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