

New funding to expand specialist patrols

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£5 million funding boost to increase deployment of highly trained officers to identify and disrupt criminals and terrorists in key public spaces.

Communities across the country, particularly Jewish and other faith communities, will be supported by additional specialist officers on the streets thanks to £5 million of new funding.

New funding will increase deployments under Project Servator, a national policing tactic which disrupts criminal activity and protects communities through highly visible and unpredictable deployments.

The specialist officers are trained to spot suspicious activity and identify individuals who are preparing to commit serious crimes, including acts of terrorism.

Funding will be initially focused on supporting communities in London and Manchester, with the Metropolitan Police Service and Greater Manchester Police expected to step up patrols to stop potential terrorist threats and reconnaissance.

It comes during a period of increased concern for some communities across the country as both antisemitism and anti-Muslim hate crime have reached record highs.

Security Minister Dan Jarvis said:

At a time of heightened concern for some communities, it is vital that we step up our support.

Project Servator has a proven track record of stopping criminals and terrorists through highly visible, unpredictable deployments that vary in time and location, deterring those planning harm and reassuring the public.

This new funding will back the police with the resources they need to step up patrols, protect communities, and keep people safe in the places where they live, work and worship.

The uplift in Servator deployments follows the arson attack on the Hatzola ambulances in Golders Green, the charging of individuals under the National Security Act for alleged surveillance of Jewish sites, the terrorist attack at Heaton Park synagogue and arson attack at Peacehaven mosque last year.

Project Servator officers disrupt crime through highly visible and unpredictable deployments, consisting of uniformed and plain clothes officers, as well as specialist units. Previous deployments have led to arrests, seizures of drugs and weapons, and the collection of critical intelligence to support counter-terrorism investigations.

Officers also engage with the public and businesses to further heighten awareness, encouraging everyone to stay alert and act swiftly on anything unusual.

Matt Jukes Deputy Commissioner at the Metropolitan Police Service said:

Our communities are the heart of policing, and everything we do is focused on keeping people safe and feeling protected where they live, work and worship. Servator deployments are an important way we deliver that, by placing specialist officers at key locations to deter criminal activity and provide visible reassurance.

In recent months, we have increased our presence around faith and community sites, strengthened the way we support victims and investigate hate crime, and continued to build strong relationships with faith leaders and local representatives. We welcome this funding, which will help us go further in working alongside communities and safeguarding what matters most to them.

This new funding forms part of a package of measures to protect communities across the country, including a record £73.4 million in funding for protective security at Jewish, Muslim, and other faith sites.

It also follows a fundamental reset in how we approach countering extremism so that the government can keep the public safe, with new measures introduced to expand our visa taskforce to stop foreign extremists from ever setting foot on UK soil and bolster our disruption capability to dismantle extremist networks nationwide and keep the public safe.

Greater Manchester Police Inspector Chris Hadfield, our Tactical Lead for Project Servator said:

Project Servator plays a vital role in our approach to public safety, by providing a combination of police visibility, community engagement and partnership working to protect our people across GM.

This additional funding strengthens our commitment to Project Servator and will allow us the opportunity to expand the work we do in disrupting criminal activity. Our specially trained officers spot the tell-tale signs that someone is planning to commit an act of crime, while maintaining a strong and reassuring presence within the local communities.

Since launching at GMP in 2016, Project Servator has continued to work in busy areas across the city, as well as maintaining safety at wider public events that visit Manchester, such as the BRIT Awards earlier this year.

Our patrols are highly visible, but deployments are unpredictable, and can happen at any time, in any given location. The teams also regularly conduct deployments in and around local faith communities, supporting with cultural events and holy days.

It is our aim that this funding will continue to support this mission and ensure the public always know the best places to report any suspicious or unusual activity.

Project Servator was devised by the City of London Police.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-funding-to-expand-specialist-patrols>