

E-news

Dear friend,

“Are they filming an episode of The Bill...?”

...was the question put to me by a customer in Tesco's on Upper Tooting Road this Tuesday morning, as he observed the scrum of cameramen and uniformed police officers across the road outside the Community Policing Contact Centre.

“No,” I replied, “it's the Home Secretary. She's come to Tooting to make an announcement about more funding for community policing.”

While he might have been disappointed that he wasn't going to see his favourite tv show being filmed, he agreed that it was good news.

It is in fact great news.

I had brought our Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, to Tooting a few weeks ago to meet local residents and community leaders, and listen to their concerns. She has clearly heard what we were saying as she was keen to come back to Tooting to give us this good news.

The increased funding Jacqui Smith announced this week will see an extra 6,000 Special Constables on our streets over the next three years; with Tooting set to benefit from this increase in officers 'on the beat'.

In case you haven't heard of a Special Constable before, 'Specials', as they're known, are volunteers who serve as police officers in their own time. They have the same powers as permanent police constables, including the power of arrest.

Tooting's 'Specials', headed up by community stalwart Inspector Fred Ahmed OBE, have been based in the Community Policing Contact Centre in Tooting since 2002, and have gone from strength to strength; silencing doubters and becoming a valuable contact point for the police and local community alike.

The £2.25 million in increased funding will be used to improve their training and help places like the Contact Centre grow and have a bigger and better impact on community policing in the area.

The centre is currently open every Saturday from 11am-1pm, and has seen over 12,000 visitors since 2002. You can come and get crime prevention advice, mark property such as mobile phones and report crimes, as well as to meet and talk with the Special Constables about your concerns.

While crime continues to fall, many people have been worried by the recent increase in knife crime, especially in London.

I have been working hard with community leaders, the police and the Home Secretary to find solutions to the problems that lead to these tragic crimes. Increasing the number of Special Constables in Tooting will have a big impact in this area and I am pleased to see my hard work and the work of those I have been working with paying off like this.

The 'Specials' are a real boon for our community. They care deeply about their fellow residents, and are willing to volunteer their time to make it a safer place to live. Because of their unique status, they will play a key role in strengthening community cohesion and bolstering the fight against knife crime.

While Team GB is doing us proud out in Beijing, these people are the real heroes in my eyes. So drop in next time you're passing the Contact Centre (it's in Tooting Islamic Centre, opposite Tescos on Upper Tooting Road) and see what they're doing to make Tooting one of the safest places to live in London.

If you are interested in becoming a Special Constable you can find out more by visiting the Contact Centre or <http://www.policemales.com>.

Until next time.

Best wishes.

Sadiq

To read more about my work in our community and in Westminster, read my diary by clicking [HERE](#)

CONTACTING ME

I hold four advice surgeries every month around the constituency. For more information about making an appointment click [HERE](#).

Whether it's a local issue or government policy, I'm here to help (whatever your politics). Click [HERE](#) for details of how to contact or meet me.

For more details on my work for Tooting constituency residents, please see my website: www.sadiqkhan.org.uk.

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