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Mobile Police Hubs to Boost Visibility Across Dorset

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Dorset Police is set to roll out new mobile police hubs in September. These hubs aim to bring officers closer to the heart of local communities and improve the public's interaction with law enforcement.

The move follows a public review into front counter services, which revealed residents' clear preference for more accessible and familiar settings when engaging with the police. These new mobile units will be deployed across the county and strengthen the force's visibility and presence, particularly in areas where public-facing services are being scaled back.

The initiative is part of Dorset Police's broader modernisation programme, which also includes maintaining key station counters at Blandford, Bournemouth, and Weymouth. However, public access to counters in Bridport, Gillingham, Poole, and Sherborne will be phased out in the autumn, though these sites will continue to operate for internal police use.

Assistant Chief Constable Steve Lyne explained the benefits of this new approach, stating: "We are introducing new mobile police stations to be in the heart of neighbourhoods, and we are maintaining our successful Community Contact Points too. This means we can keep offering a comprehensive service for everyone, online and in person, across Dorset, as well as keeping all our local stations open for operational work by our frontline officers, staff, and volunteers."

Community Contact Points (CCPs), which already take place in locations like supermarkets, village halls, and shopping centres, allow the public to speak directly to neighbourhood officers in familiar surroundings. The new mobile hubs are expected to complement these efforts by creating a more flexible and approachable policing model.

This change reflects a significant shift in public behaviour. Increasingly, people are reporting crimes and making enquiries online or through the non-emergency 101 phone service, reducing the demand for traditional front desk services.

David Sidwick, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Dorset, backed the new strategy. He said: "The change to front counter services is happening due to changes in the way people interact with the police, especially over the last few years."

He continued: "There has been a steep reduction in front counter use as we see more people move towards online reporting, using 101 and utilising Community Contact Points. These face-to-face meetings take place in community locations, such as supermarkets, shopping centres, and village halls, allowing people to report matters to their local policing team in person."

Mr Sidwick also addressed the financial pressures facing the force: "It is no secret the financial pressures facing Dorset Police as the second lowest funded force in the country and I want to be clear that I will continue to work with the Force to ensure we balance delivering on the Police and Crime Plan priorities to make every penny count and make policing more visible and connected."

Despite closures to some counters, Dorset Police has emphasised that no police stations will shut entirely. All sites will remain active for internal and frontline operations.

The mobile hubs are expected to begin their rounds in September, serving communities across Dorset in an effort to improve face-to-face engagement and ensure public concerns are heard and addressed locally.

For emergencies, contact Dorset Police via 999. For non-urgent matters, dial 101 or visit www.dorset.police.uk.