

The Copenhagen Police  
Bellahøj Station

# - YOUR POLICE OFFICER -

A DYNAMIC HANDBOOK ON A WORKING METHOD OFFERING CLOSE COHERENCE  
WITH THE SURROUNDING SOCIETY FOR THE LOCAL POLICE

Introduction  
Strategy  
The substance and development of the method  
Sector responsible officers  
The target group  
The sectors  
The task  
How to perform the task  
Practical circumstances

## INTRODUCTION

"Your police officer" has been employed as a structured working method at the local police station Nørrebro (Copenhagen) since June 2009. The basic idea of this working method is not new but has previously been employed using other designations such as district policing. The social development in Copenhagen with for instance identification of particularly exposed housing areas, emergence of gangs and gang conflicts and periodical flare-ups of activities and crime in various areas that cause people to feel unsafe have increased the need for closer contact and cohesion between citizens and police.

Three elements form the basis of the description of "your police officer": The original tactical order of 25 June 2009, the evaluation of the project of 23 June 2011 and the report from the working group for the Copenhagen local police of April 2011. The latter recommends that the working method "your police officer" be implemented in all Copenhagen police districts, in which the top management of the Copenhagen Police concurs.

The unifying principles behind this working method are local anchorage and knowledge; The police are familiar with the citizens, and the citizens are familiar with the police. At the same time, it is extremely important that the police maintain their position and role as a respected authority in the sectors. This balancing act is one of the challenges of the task. Furthermore, the correlation between the professional groups at the local police stations is an essential driving force. The possibility of joining a variety of competences in specific efforts is meant to ensure backing and support for "your police officer". Likewise, "your police officer" may offer the same efforts the other way around.

## STRATEGY

The strategic purpose of "your police officer" is to create familiarity and close coherence with the surrounding society as a tailored and offensive working method. The police officers within the sector must be both accessible and proactive in respect of the task, which must be carried out without prejudice and adapted to the demography of the respective sectors. Irrespective of the conditions of the sectors, measures must be taken to ensure that the police stand as a respected authority capable of performing both pragmatic and offensive tasks. It should be possible to apply means adapted to cover anything from dialogue to charges and arrests. Local knowledge and establishing of networks must be exploited the best way possible in respect of both internal and external partners.

## THE SUBSTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE METHOD

The work of the local police is very varied and different from district to district - some times from street to street. Demographic circumstances, culture, geography and infrastructure are external factors, but also competences, experience and views from within the local police play a part.

The basic idea of "your police officer" is that the local police are close to the population and vice versa. Familiarity between people creates the basis for trust and the desire to form part of the confidence-building interaction that is vital in order to create security and safety where the citizens live and move about. The police are unable to perform the task without the citizens, and the citizens are unable to perform the task without the police. Consequently, networks - both formal and informal ones - constitute an important element of "your police officer". Both formal meetings in tenants' associations, with tradespeople and in clubs and informal talks with citizens in the street form part of the task. "Your police officer" must act in a guiding and consultative way in the many ordinary conflicts that should be stopped before developing and not necessarily end with a report being made. At the same time, there must be a will and ability to intervene using whatever necessary sanctions when somebody has crossed the line. The assessment of the need for a pragmatic solution - versus punitive measures - is a balance that "your police officer" must be able to exercise on the basis of both the immediate effect and the consequences in the long run.

In case "your police officer" chooses pragmatic solutions only and evades bringing charges and making reports, there is a marked risk that he/she will lose authority in the community, both among those who ought to be fined and the surrounding society. This will result in people thinking that "nothing is going to happen" and "all they do is talk". Subsequently, the respect that otherwise surrounds "your police officer" will be reduced enabling disturbing individuals to take advantage of the situation.

On the other hand, if "your police officer" solely chooses offensive solutions with charges being brought and reports made in all cases, there is a marked risk that he/she becomes opposed to all citizens in the district. Subsequently, "your police officer" becomes a feared element - an object of hate and a "glowing hot pencil" who will find him-/herself in a difficult situation in respect of the interaction and communication with the surroundings.

Therefore, none of the above two "extreme solutions" should be applied as the only consequent means. "Your police officer" must master and use both possibilities in a varied and shifting form. In this way, "your police officer" will appear an authority who is able to act both pragmatically and consequently.

"Your police officer" must form part of a very close interaction with the other professional groups at the local police station, both in respect of the daily activities and during targeted efforts. Local knowledge constitutes an important element of the confidence-building efforts, and in relation to the cross-disciplinary co-operation at the local police station "your police officer" may contribute with important knowledge and propose useful solutions.

Acknowledging that the task of "your police officer" is very varied from one sector to another, this handbook has built-in dynamics. It is composed of a basic part (introduction and strategy) that is fixed and will not be directly changed. The dynamic part (sectors, target group, how to perform the task etc.) is described as starting points but should be continuously supplemented with officers working on the task as "your police officer". Thus, for the officers involved in this task, it is possible to forward contributions. Contributions should be forwarded to Benny ØCHKENHOLT, who is the editor of the handbook and who will insert the various contributions under the corresponding headings.

Contributions from "your police officer":
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### SECTOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICERS

A responsible officer is appointed in each of the defined sectors in the district of the station (19 sectors belong to Bellahøj Station). The responsible officer personifies "your police officer" in the sector. An evaluation has demonstrated that the citizens find it most easy to relate to one person only. The sector responsible officer acts as the connecting link to the surroundings and is known as "your police officer". This officer will typically dispose of a number of colleagues to assist him/her in patrolling, dealing with enquiries and targeted efforts etc. The sector responsible officer has the general overview of his/her sector and co-operates with sector responsible colleagues from neighbouring sectors and the other competences present in the local police. Contact information for the sector responsible officer must be publicly available in the form of a telephone number, an e-mail address and personal contact. The sector responsible officers must be prepared to work for the local police for a long period of time as frequent replacement of this function frustrates the surroundings and is not ideal working conditions for "your police officer".

Contributions from "your police officer"
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### THE TARGET GROUP

There is a risk that the focus in a sector may automatically be directed to where the problems are visible. When this happens, citizens in districts with small, but still existing problems that also demand police efforts are "overlooked". For this reason, "your police officer" must have a keen eye that he/she is there for all citizens within the sector - also those who do not pose daily, recurrent challenges or are constantly referred to in the media. As specific target groups may be mentioned (not exhaustive):

- Children and young adults
- Residents of particularly exposed housing areas
- Gang-related individuals
- Tradespeople
- Clubs and associations
- Road-users
- Housing associations and co-operative housing societies
- House owners' associations
- Homeless people

Each sector must keep a "sector log". In this log, the target groups must be described in order to continuously follow the status. In the same way, it can be ensured that focus is directed to all target groups - adjusted to the estimated needs, of course.

Contributions from "your police officer"
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## THE SECTORS

Each local police district is divided into sectors. In principle, these have a size and a variety of tasks that make them manageable. The following criteria have made the basis of the sector manning:

- Crime strain
- Particularly exposed housing areas
- Special circumstances and places
- The population figure

Thus, a small geographical area may require high manning and a vast geographical area may require reduced manning. Basically, a minimum of two persons have been allocated to each sector. The sector manning is dynamic. Changes to the basis of the manning may lead to the numbers being adjusted.

Co-operation with the neighbouring sectors is expected (including across local police district boundaries), both in connection with targeted efforts, suddenly emerged challenges and during holidays. Carrying this task into effect rests with the sector responsible officers. The division of the sectors will be shown on a map for both internal and external publication.

Contributions from "your police officer"
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## THE TASK

This is the task:

- To carry out visible and confidence-building police efforts in the allocated sector
- To develop and carry out proactive police efforts in co-operation with the other elements of the local police (special teams, DKA (the Crime Prevention Division) and first-line case supervisors)
- To have dialogues with individuals and groups within the allocated sector to involve and advise citizens in the effort to ensure safety and security in the sector
- To uncover, build and form part of all relevant networks within the sector with the purpose of strengthening the cohesion and the ability and will to work jointly together for safety and security in the sector
- To plan, perform and form part of tasks with targeted efforts, including e.g. in co-operation with the Burglary Group, the Gang Division and the Traffic Division etc.

Contributions from "your police officer"
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## HOW TO PERFORM THE TASK

1. The task is anchored with the local police at Bellahøj Station. The local police are divided into three local police districts - North East, North West and Frederiksberg. Each local police station is divided into a number of sectors: North East: 9 sectors, North West: 5 sectors, and Frederiksberg: 5 sectors.
2. The heads of the local police stations will see to it that each sector has assigned a sector responsible officer and that additional officers are attached to the sector in accordance with the analysis of the district.
3. The head of the local police station will ensure the existence of cross-disciplinary coherence and correlation in the total efforts to create safety and security in the district.
4. The head of the local police station is responsible for contact to and communication with external parties within the district - including SSP (co-operation between schools, social services departments and the police), press and media, but according to the overall press politics of the Copenhagen Police.
5. The efforts as "your police officer" are carried out adapted to the general activities all weekdays from 0700 - 2300 hours.
6. The patrol form is primarily officers on foot or cycling, secondarily driving a uniformed patrol vehicle.
7. The surroundings must be continually informed of "your police officer" - through the press, folders, websites and orally at meetings and assemblies.
8. "Your police officer" must ensure to visit tradespeople, housing associations, institutions, clubs and other relevant parties with the purpose of disseminating knowledge of "your police officer". Business cards with contact information must be made and handed out to any interested party.
9. For contact purposes, it must be ensured that contact over the telephone can take place between "your police officer" and the citizens. In this context, the possibility of leaving a message for "your police officer" must be ensured should he/she not be available when a non-urgent approach is made.
10. Each sector must keep a schematic sector log. For this purpose, the local police managers must draw up uniform specific forms. The object is to document information on the sector's parties of interest, challenges and progression, partly for recording the state of affairs and partly in order to hand out the forms to new officers in the sector.
11. "Your police officer" must form part of a close interaction with the other professional groups at the local police station. This is ensured through briefings, meetings and participation in teams with a view to producing joint co-ordinated solutions to planned or suddenly emerged tasks.
12. In sectors with special gang activities, contact persons must be appointed for the Gang Division with reference to continuous exchange of information and planning and implementation of joint targeted efforts.
13. For analytical material on the individual sectors, OPA (Operative Planning and Analysis) can be contacted.
14. Whenever possible, "your police officer" must be present during major events in the sectors in order to establish and increase familiarity between citizens and police in the district.

15. Should "your police officer" receive any information or details on criminal activities or groups in the sector etc., such information must be handled in accordance with the rules of source handling in the Copenhagen Police. The head of the local police station will make sure that these requirements are met.

Contributions from "your police officer"