

# **Attracting people to join the Special Constabulary**

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# Contents

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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Approaches to attraction and recruitment</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Attracting more 'career' Specials</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Attracting a greater diversity of applicants</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>30</b>

# Introduction

# Introduction

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## Introduction

One of the key challenges identified by forces in respect of their Special Constabularies is how to more effectively attract and recruit Special Constables.

This report briefly summarises findings from research work undertaken by the IPSCJ over the past 18 months which has focused on issues of attraction and recruitment. The report draws upon:

- Nine focus groups engaging Special Constables in Hampshire, Thames Valley and Surrey;
- A national benchmarking exercise of forces, which asked each force to identify examples of practice which they felt was innovative, different or otherwise worth sharing in respect of attraction and recruitment, and also asked questions specifically in relation to attracting and recruiting a greater diversity of people into the Special Constabulary;
- IPSCJ has also undertaken more detailed surveying and analysis of recruiting approaches across several forces, including those in the South East of England and in Wales;
- Learning taken from a variety of reviews, surveys and research in forces undertaken by IPSCJ, (much of this work has focused specifically on issues of attracting, recruiting and retaining 'career' Specials).

This report sits alongside the practical piloting of new models of recruitment being undertaken, including the new recruitment process developed by the Merseyside Special Constabulary and innovative new models being piloted in Wales.

## Challenges

From discussions across forces, there seem to be four primary challenges facing Special Constabularies in respect of recruitment.

***Recruiting skills and experience*** – Central to more strategic future approaches to attracting Specials will need to be a clearer sense of the skill and experience forces are looking to recruit.

There is interest across a number of forces in developing more focused models of recruitment that identify and recruit specific skill-sets and experience that would be particularly beneficial to deliver specialist areas of capability, e.g. in relation to cyber security. Such considerations of skills requirements are also leading some forces to reconsider their models for attracting ex-regular officers into the Special Constabulary, in recognition of key skills gaps and the scale of skills and operational experience departing the service in terms of retiring and resigning regular officers. Many forces are participating in CSCV (Cyber Specials and Cyber Volunteers) which is a national initiative focused on drawing in cyber expertise to provide volunteer contributions in policing. Some forces are also considering 'direct-entry' models for Specials with particular skills sets. In several forces there has begun to be a refocusing of ESP activity, based upon thinking of future skills and experience forces wish to attract into the Special Constabulary.

***Recruiting more 'career' Specials*** – When asked to identify their priorities for future recruitment, recruiting more 'career' Specials was the most prominent strategic priority identified across forces.

Attracting a higher proportion of 'career' Specials to balance out what is a predominantly regular pathway current recruitment profile is viewed as key to achieving:

# Introduction

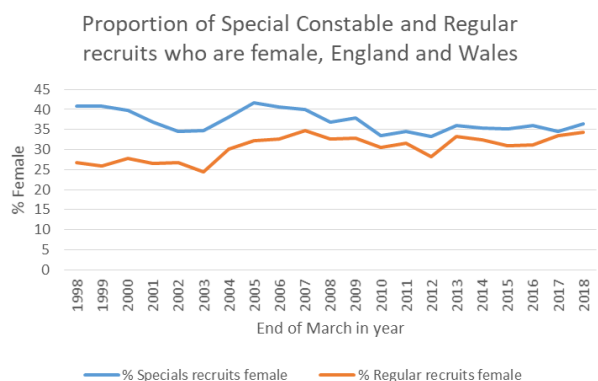
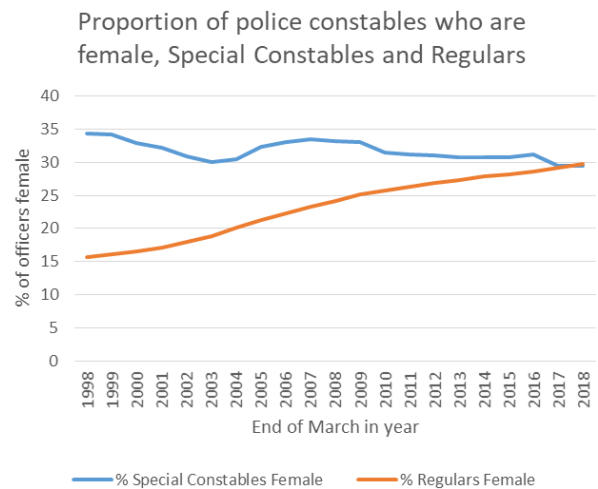
- Improvement of the current experience profile across the Special Constabulary cohort, which is skewed towards younger-in-service Specials;
- Linked to the above point, reducing attrition and consequent to that delivering better value, by reducing the churn of cohort and thus the front-end costs of attraction, recruitment, initial training and equipping of new Specials;
- Building capability, including in specialist roles, but more broadly than that in terms of the accumulated levels of policing skills, training, experience and expertise developed across a longer-in-service cohort;

Attracting and retaining more female and ethnic minority 'career' Specials is also seen as one critical foundation to improving diversity and representation. The relatively low numbers of both female and BME 'career' Specials means that there are in turn fewer longer-serving female and BME Specials, which is one factor driving very low representation in aspects such as specialisation and leadership.

***Increasing the diversity and the gender inclusion of the Special Constabulary*** – The Special Constabulary nationally faces some strategic challenges in respect of further increasing the reach into all communities, and the diversity of Specials.

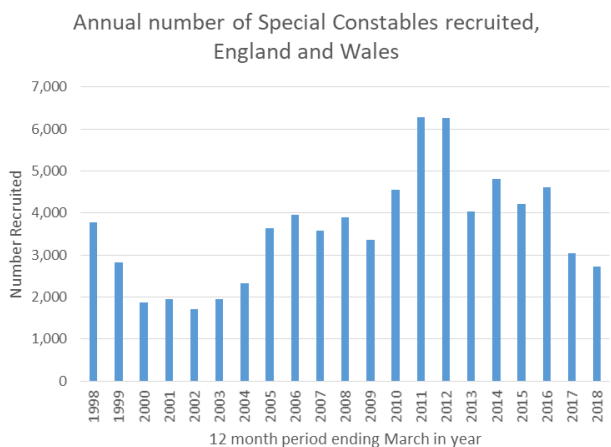
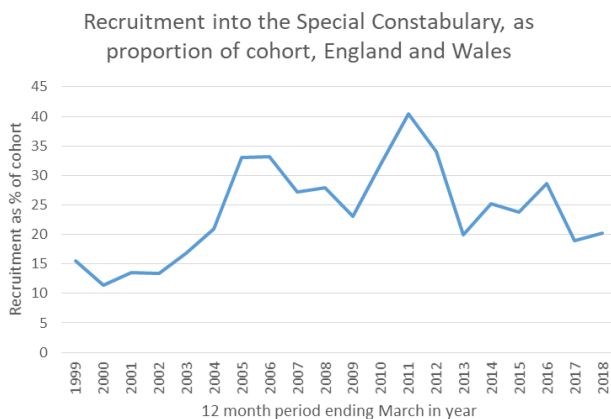
The proportion of BME Specials is slightly higher in national figures and across a majority of forces, than the BME representation of regular officers. However, the proportion still sits well below being representative of communities and well below the BME representation in some other aspects of policing, such as the Volunteer Police Cadets.

In respect of gender, nationally only approximately three in ten Specials are female, with a slightly higher proportion of females in initial recruitment. Neither of those figures (recruitment proportion and cohort proportion) for gender representation is on a rising trajectory. Both the below graphs reflect that whilst gender representation is showing a slow but improving trend for regular officers, the trend is stable or slightly falling for gender representation in the Special Constabulary. Gender representation is particularly low for specialist roles, for leadership roles, and for longer-serving Specials (typically in the region of only one in eight Specials for those groups), which links to challenges mentioned above of attracting and retaining female 'career' Specials.



# Introduction

**Increasing the volume of recruitment** – the volume of individuals being recruited nationally into the Special Constabulary is currently low, when looked at in the context of historical trend data.



This pattern of lower recruitment is one factor which has driven historically low numbers in the Special Constabulary more generally, with an almost halving of numbers since 2012.

Any work nationally to stabilise, or in particular to grow the numbers of Specials, will require levels of attraction and recruitment which are significantly higher than those seen in recent years.

## The limitations of current approaches

The work undertaken by the IPSCJ reveals much that is positive in terms of current models of recruitment in forces, and that in several police forces there has been development and innovation of approaches.

However, there are overall several problems that, whilst they all do not manifest in every force, seem broadly characteristic of many Special Constabulary attraction and recruitment models. These can be briefly summarised as follows:

- The absence of a recruitment strategy for the Special Constabulary, both locally and nationally;
- A reliance on largely passive models of recruitment, accompanied by relatively low investment in pro-active marketing, and with most pro-active approaches (e.g. utilising force social media) having some limitations of reach;
- Linking to the above, a tendency to 'do what we have always done, and get what we have always got' in respect of Specials recruitment. This produces a recruitment pattern which has remained quite consistent in most forces over a period of time, with the lion's share of applicants being in their young twenties, and being driven at least in part by an interest in a pathway via the Special Constabulary into the regular service;
- This recruitment pattern in turn then drives problems of a less experienced cohort, which then draws a greater demand from regulars and experienced Specials in respect of initial competency development. The recruitment pattern also reduces value given the context that a sizeable proportion of the costs of Special Constables are focused in the

# Introduction

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- early stages of recruitment, training, and equipping;
- Slow progression of, and negative attrition from, recruitment processes. The most common criticism from Specials about their recruitment is that it is 'too slow';
  - The second most common criticism from Specials of their recruitment process is that communication is poor;
  - It is these two factors which seem to primarily drive what appear to be high rates of attrition during the recruiting phase;
  - There is often a lack of confidence in new recruits to the Special Constabulary, with such perceptions held both by regulars and by more experienced Specials. Often driven by beliefs that attraction and recruitment processes are insufficiently selective, and also that there is insufficient briefing at recruitment stage of the nature and expectation of role;
  - Low levels of recruitment into the Special Constabulary from ex-regulars;
  - A patchy and poor execution of schemes which might support improved attraction and recruitment, such as Employer Supported Policing.

## What forces want

Police forces seem generally quite 'self-aware' of the above challenges and current limitations. A large number of forces have commitments, or are already engaged in projects, to improve their recruitment models, to improve their capability to attract 'career' Specials, to improve the diversity of their recruitment, and to build numbers.

As such, forces state that their main desire is to be better supported by a clearer sense of 'what works', in terms of developing smarter models of recruitment to the Special Constabulary, and

within that particularly in respect of diversity and 'career' Specials.

This short high-level report represents a first step in terms of an attempt at gathering together available evidence of 'best practice' and thinking on attraction and recruitment across forces. The report recognises that recruitment into the Special Constabulary remains an under-researched area, and concludes by pointing to further work that should be undertaken to better support forces going forwards.

Forces also identify two broader challenges, which require policy consideration at a national level:

- The absence of national coordination, scaling and resourcing of Specials recruitment. There are seen to be obvious benefits to a pooled and coordinated approach, particularly in respect of pro-active marketing and engagement aimed at expanding the reach of the opportunity to be a Special beyond those that are currently aware and engaged;
- The need to better integrate and embed Specials recruitment more effectively with wider police recruitment (for regulars and police staff), with wider attraction models into other 'CiP' volunteering opportunities, and with wider volunteer recruitment infrastructures beyond the police. Whilst this is recognised to require action at local level, it is also felt that nationally more could be done to support forces in these aspects.

## Pathways and progression

Whilst this report is focused upon the 'front-end' initial recruitment element of the Special Constable journey, it is clear that more strategic and effective approaches to recruitment in the

# Introduction

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future will need to form part of a wider workforce planning of Special Constable pathways and careers.

The report then concludes with a small amount of recommendations.

In an ideal future vision, forces would develop a workforce planning approach, including a development plan for current and future Specials, based on the force's strategic vision of the role and contribution desired from the future Special Constabulary. Presently, in reality, most force Specials recruitment is little more than an agreement to recruit to a numerical target, and lacks this broader sense of a holistic or planned approach to future workforce and capability.

There are some emerging examples of career planning for Specials commencing at the attraction and recruitment stage, including current work being undertaken as one of the national pilot projects in Hertfordshire. This model includes opening up options for pathways into specialisms from the point of initial recruitment, and producing a more planned approach for end-to-end career planning and support.

## The structure of this report

This report is intended as a short briefing document. As such it provides a high-level overview of thinking and practice, rather than large amounts of detail. The substance of the report is summarised in the following three sections:

- The next chapter briefly looks generally at approaches to attraction and recruitment into the Special Constabulary;
- This is followed by a chapter which focuses on approaches to recruiting 'career' Specials;
- A third short chapter then considers, at a high-level, issues of recruitment in terms of diversity.



# **Approaches to attraction and recruitment**

# Recruitment approaches

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This chapter of the report discusses general approaches to attract and recruit Special Constables.

## Strategy and planning

Many of the Specials in the focus groups undertaken by the IPSCJ felt that their force did not have a planned approach to recruitment, and was not clear enough what its recruitment objectives were. This linked to aspects of 'career' Specials and to diversity (both discussed in more detail later in this report); many Specials felt that their force talked about focusing recruitment on those two aspects, but in practice had not done so, and had no plan to do so.

These perspectives from Specials themselves seem to reflect the reality in many force settings. Beyond a broad sense of desired numbers, there seems to be a lack of a purposive and planned approach to recruiting in many force settings.

Discussions with senior stakeholders point to a desire, in future, to move towards approaches which:

- Begin with a strategic understanding of future role and desired capability, and then work back to a planned approach to recruitment;
- Bring a more systematic and targeted approach, with pro-active recruitment to achieve desired make up of recruits such as proportion of 'career' Specials and improved diversity;
- More joined up planning and recruitment activity with neighbouring or regional forces, and ideally nationally. There seems to be little planned coordination of marketing or attraction efforts currently, regionally or nationally;
- A stronger sense of investment and financial planning, with clarity of business case for increased investment in targeted recruitment, e.g. in respect of

'career' Specials, where the up-front cost of a more targeted recruitment of 'career' Specials can be balanced against their enhanced whole-career value.

In reality many of the strategic stakeholders interviewed reflected that their current approaches are in effect just repeating legacy practice, and in many force contexts there has been little recent refreshed thinking or redesign.

## 'A role like no other': Focusing on the experience and the nature of the role'

A predominant theme across the focus groups with Specials was that what is most important in marketing the role and attracting future Specials is to focus on the *experience* of being a Special, and on the *contribution* that Specials make. Being a Special was variously talked about as being 'a role like no other' and 'the real thing'. Specifically, Specials felt that attraction and marketing should emphasise:

- That Specials are police officers, and are on the front-line undertaking the 'real' role of being an officer. In several focus groups positively referred to recent recruitment materials by Durham Police which foregrounded the realities of the police officer role using body-worn camera footage. They felt that marketing material for the Specials role should emphasise the sorts of roles Specials perform, the incidents they attend, and the responsibilities and authority that they exercise;
- Building on the above point, Specials in several focus groups felt that 'joined up' marketing of volunteer and paid constable roles would be beneficial, emulating marketing materials for armed services roles which combine reserve and regular opportunities;
- The impact of Specials should be emphasised, such as saving lives,

# Recruitment approaches

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catching criminals, working with people in their hour of need, and impacting on things that matter in the community;

- Specials felt that sometimes there was a tendency to try to make the role seem less demanding than it is. They felt that, in contrast, emphasising the role as a challenge, as a serious commitment, and as a role where you will always be learning, would actually be attractive to the right future recruits;
- It was felt that the nature of the role is a major attractor. Policing is exciting, interesting, and no two shifts are the same. Volunteering as a Special can bring experiences, insights and challenges that are markedly different to other aspects of work or personal life;
- Many Specials felt that the feeling of being part of something bigger and worthwhile, together with the sense of camaraderie, and the development of lasting friendships, were important attributes of the role that again would be attractive;
- Being a Special helps develop you personally and professionally. Building confidence and assertiveness. Building skills such as team work, communication, negotiation, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. Broadening insight, maturity and experience. Providing specific training and life skills, such as first aid.

## Getting the message out

There is little or no data available on public awareness of the Special Constabulary. Specials themselves reflect that many people they come into contact with have no idea about the role, and often confuse it with other policing roles, in particular PCSOs. Overall, it seems the Special Constabulary has a relatively low profile, given its relatively large scale.

Specials in the focus groups suggested two key things that they would like to see:

- Advertising of the role, particularly advertising which reaches beyond those who may be already aware, or who are already engaged with police social media;
- Achieving greater media, and social media, coverage of the work of the Special Constabulary and of its achievements.

## Presenting the opportunity professionally and pro-actively

It is recognised that there is a very wide variation in marketing and projection of the Special Constable role nationally across forces.

At one end of current practice, in some police forces the outward display of the role to the public is: low profile, hard to locate, not presented professionally, providing dated material, and sometimes lacking a descriptive clarity of what is involved. In contrast, in some other police force areas there has been a re-launch of campaigns which have been innovative and brought a high profile and level of professional execution to projecting the role.

Those police forces with best practice, which could be emulated by others, have:

- An up to date online presence and related marketing materials;
- Readily accessible and professionally presented material which explain the role and what is involved, ideally 'bringing it to life' and signposting to ways of finding out more or accessing 'taster' experience;
- Clarity of how an application is made, an opportunity to express interest and ideally to apply online, and a clear presentation of what happens next with an application.

# Recruitment approaches

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Nationally, material presenting to the public on the role feels dated and is quite hard to locate. There has been no coordinated national pro-active campaign for several years.

## Being open

At the risk of stating the obvious, perhaps the most fundamental of all barriers to attracting and recruiting into the Special Constabulary is not having an open recruitment process.

Many police forces have recruitment processes that are closed for long periods, which cater significant constraints to numbers that can be recruited, and for some forces presently are not open at all.

The practice of running a recruitment process based upon narrow recruitment windows is an interesting and debatable one. This seems to be the legacy practice in a majority of forces, albeit there is also a sizeable minority of forces who have permanently open recruitment. Looked at through the lens of those potentially interested in volunteering, periods of closed recruitment are likely to be a constraining factor on applications, and can have a tendency to further lengthen what is already in many cases experienced as a very slow and drawn out process of recruitment for a volunteer role.

## Getting initial familiarisation, introduction and orientation right

Whilst practice has varied across England and Wales, in many forces the model of Specials familiarisation evenings or events has seemed to grow a little stale. There is a lot of feedback that such events can be somewhat 'flat' and 'uninspiring'. In a number of forces there have been shifts in practice to refresh the model of such events. Some of the traits of such emerging new models include:

- Changing the style and thinking around Specials 'familiarisation'. In some forces

Specials familiarisation events are becoming more interactive, and there is a more active 1-1 engagement of individuals at such events;

- Opportunities to observe front-line settings (e.g. ride along opportunities) are being more actively encouraged;
- Linked to this, some forces are enhancing the way they draw upon real-life experience of Specials, helping to personalise and bring to life what otherwise can feel a somewhat abstract presentation during recruiting processes of what the role actually involves;
- There is more emphasis in some forces on making sure the reality of the role is understood early in the process.

## Reducing 'wastage' during recruitment processes

Inevitably some individuals will apply to be a Special Constable and then for a variety of reasons withdraw themselves from the process before recruitment is completed. However, at present, the proportion doing so in many of the force contexts that the IPSCJ has worked within has been high.

Whilst many will leave for what might be seen as the right reasons (such as finding when they have become better informed that the role is not for them or re-assessing whether they can make the commitment, or changes more widely in their circumstances, etc.), it seems very clear that a sizeable proportion fall out of recruiting processes because of problems within the experience of those process itself. These chiefly fit into three problematic areas:

- Slow progression of applications;
- Lack of communication and ongoing contact during recruitment;
- In some contexts, other barriers within front-end processes, such as expectations to travel long distances, or inflexibilities in timings.

# Recruitment approaches

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There are now several examples across England and Wales of forces who have shown that processes which still typically take as long as 6 months, or even as long as 9 to 12 months, in many forces between initial expression of interest and commencement of training, can be managed well and professionally (at least for most cases) in 4-6 weeks, or less. There are sometimes perceptions that such achievements have been about lowering standards. This seems, in the bulk of cases at least, not to have any truth to it, with such changes simply being about re-engineering of, and better investment in, previously poorly designed and executed legacy processes.

Communication is key, and again there are now several force examples where applicants are managed and communicated with in a proactive, professional and engaging manner, akin in many contexts to a professional, private sector recruiting environment. Forces who are not achieving this would benefit from visiting and learning from those that do.

From the data the IPSCJ has obtained, there is indication that those who are most likely to withdraw as a consequence of slow and poorly communicated processes are the potential Specials that forces are most keen to attract, particularly 'career' Specials. Those who are shaped by a regular pathway ambition seem much more likely to be resilient to experience of poor communication or slow progress at recruiting stage. Those interested in longer-term volunteering careers, and who may often be older and more professionally established, may be more likely to view such poor treatment as being indicative that the police are not interested enough in them. They are also perhaps more likely to see such treatment of applicants as a 'red flag' in terms of the status, culture or support of the volunteering experience of being a Special more generally. In addition, 'career' Specials may also be more in a position of choosing between different options for volunteering, and if the Special Constable

route is slow or incommunicative will end up pursuing other options.

## Getting the focus and style of selection right

Based on the focus group discussions, the elements which Specials themselves feel are most important to test at selection stage include:

- Values;
- Maturity;
- Practical 'common sense';
- Communication skills.

Specials feel that more reliance should be made on practical, scenario-based models of selection, which aim to focus on the above. They would like to see less emphasis on 'scoring' of words on application form, on some styles of what they perceive as formulaic or overly structured formal interviews, and more generally on methods which seem to be 'tick box' rather than representing a rounded assessment of the individual.

## Maintaining standards

A key element of recruitment and selection processes is that of maintaining standards, and very closely linked to that, of maintaining confidence of regulars and of the existing cohort of Specials that selection is sufficiently rigorous and that the 'right people', who are suited to and capable of undertaking the role, are selected.

Some pointers to practice in forces which seems helpful in achieving this include:

- Elements where forces seek to reflect standards of selection of regular recruitment seem to represent 'best practice' (albeit with the caveats discussed below, in the section entitled

# Recruitment approaches

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'Getting selection right to avoid 'false negatives'');

- Selection models which engage directly with both more experienced Specials and also regular officers. Processes which directly involve existing officers seem to be most supportive of building the trust and confidence in selection of both groups;
- Communicating the detail (and rigour) of selection processes. In some cases, a lack of confidence in selection may be as much about perceptions as it is of reality about how selective processes are (e.g. perceptions that 'they'll take anyone', whereas in fact sizeable proportions of applicants are not selected).

## Getting selection right to avoid 'false negatives'

In many force settings, there appears to be an issue around the need to reduce 'false negatives' in selection, i.e. the failure of candidates to be selected who could have developed to be good Special Constables.

Selection processes, especially when mirroring some aspects of regular recruitment (hence the caveat mentioned above), can appear idiosyncratic. They can be particularly difficult to navigate, for example, by those unfamiliar with public sector recruiting, or for people for whom English/Welsh is not first language. Some processes can also seem to be geared to sift out large numbers of applicants (applications for regular roles typically far exceed available recruitment volume, and many Specials processes are modelled upon them) as much as to maintain their a standard.

During the IPSCJ's research over recent years, numerous individual examples have been heard. Such as the example of an individual who had army combat command role experience being screened out at shortlisting stage based on his written application because he had used 'I

rather than 'we' in the evidencing on his form. There remains a tendency in some forces to quite robustly screen out applicants at a stage of paper-based 'shortlisting'. This practice includes patterns of screening out based upon aspects such as presentation, spelling etc. which seem to reflect quite old-fashioned and outdated HR practice, and may risk being ignorant of factors such as dyslexia which may be playing a part. Many forces have moved now to a process which does not involve a 'paper sift', with the progression of all applicants to selection in person, with the only exceptions being applications where there are details which preclude progression of the application (e.g. in respect of previous convictions).

Whilst there does not appear to be one 'right' model in respect of selection, the basic principle would be that selection should set a standard based on the right selection elements (as discussed above, of values, maturity, practical 'common sense' and communication skills), and should not be about selecting those capable of navigating the idiosyncratic nature of various stages of the process.

## Who is best involved in Specials recruitment?

As has been said above, approaches across forces vary widely in respect of Specials attraction and recruitment. Such processes vary quite markedly in terms of who they involve. Some indicators of 'good practice' for involvement, looking across the practice in forces, would seem to include:

- Involving regulars more actively in recruitment events and processes. This enhances the reach of Specials recruitment, as well as helping in building internal trust and confidence in Specials recruitment;
- Involving Specials in all aspects of the recruiting process. This is routine in many force settings, whereas there is



# Recruitment approaches

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relatively little direct Special Constable involvement in recruitment in other forces.

- Make use of Specials' skill sets when attracting and recruiting, e.g. there are Specials who bring a range of expertise across marketing, communications, media, HR, etc.;
- There are interesting volunteer roles that have been developed in several forces which support Specials attraction and recruitment.

## Managing the whole experience end-to-end more professionally

Bringing many of the above points together, some forces have been trialling fundamental rebuilds of their 'front-end' processes for Specials. The latest example being Merseyside, who are currently trialling their new online recruitment platform. Such focused approaches to wholesale review of the front-end process do seem to be able to reduce the time taken for successful applicants to commence training after applying, to improve communication, and to improve overall experience.

Many forces are now recognising the need to professionalise the experience of applying to be a Special, and are developing more active management of, and communication with, applicants during their application phase, including:

- More usage of case management/client management tools, to provide better structure and actively managed progression of applications, and to support the ongoing and pro-active engagement of applicants;
- Mentoring of applicants, particularly focused on under-represented groups;
- Coaching to help applicants 'navigate' the selection process, again often focused on supporting under-represented groups;

- Seeking feedback from applicants, and engaging Specials who have recently gone through the process in its continual improvement.

## Broader links

Currently many Specials recruitment processes operate in relative isolation. Specials in the focus groups felt there were advantages in 'things being more joined up', and the practice in some forces is beginning to point in this direction.

There would appear to be benefits in achieving greater linkages, such as:

- Broader links with other volunteering opportunities in policing, e.g. PSVs. Whilst it is acknowledged the Special role is distinct and different from other roles, more joined up approaches might facilitate better identification of those applicants who may not be suited or successful in their applications for the Special Constabulary but who may well fit and thrive in a PSV role, or vice versa;
- Creating better pathways between the Volunteer Police Cadets and the Special Constabulary. Some forces have fast-track models of recruitment into Specials for Cadets, and others are trialling models of incorporating some aspects of Specials training into the Cadet curriculum. The picture of support for Cadets looking to join the Specials however still feels patchy nationally;
- Linking with partners in respect of volunteer recruitment and support, e.g. the Lancashire partnership model.

## Incentives

There has been much discussion over the years in respect of 'Bounty' payments, Council Tax concessions, public transport concessions, and

# Recruitment approaches

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other elements of incentives of a financial nature for Special Constables.

The truth is there remains an absence of an evidence-base in support, or otherwise, of such approaches. The focus groups with Specials mainly saw views from them that whilst some financial benefits might be welcomed, and might help 'around the edges' in terms of sustaining their volunteering, they were not seen as pivotal to decisions to become involved or to stay involved in the Special Constabulary.

For some Specials, they also worried that it might undermine the volunteer ethos of the service.

Overall, it seems from the very limited available evidence that financial incentives such as Bounties and Council Tax are in themselves unlikely to majorly shift volume or nature of applicants, but as said that remains largely untested.

Perhaps the most significant current benefit for Specials is the Oyster Card provided for Specials in London. This can amount to a quite significant financial benefit. Again, it seems unlikely that many individuals become Specials driven by the receipt of this benefit, but it may be an enabling or encouraging factor for some. It seems that such benefits are more significant in respect of ongoing engagement and retention than in respect of initial attraction.

What does seem to be the case is that for many existing Specials who are 'career' Specials, one driver for not pursuing a regular officer career is that they are earning quite highly, and therefore could not manage the reduction in salary. For existing 'career' Specials engaged in the focus groups, many had quite high earnings, and generally they felt that the effect of such financial benefits would be marginal at best for them personally, and most believed that they would in effect be offset in terms of taxation. Some also worried that the taxation implications

of such benefits might make them 'more trouble than they're worth'.

What does seem a challenge in terms of such incentives influencing recruitment, is that they are mostly currently very patchy and uneven in their distribution and implementation. Whereas the Oyster Card benefit is relatively straightforward, even in force areas where there are Council Tax concessions these are typically only for some participating local authority areas, and lead to complexities of eligibility in terms of where Specials are resident, and where they are serving as a Special. The experience of the IPSCJ working with Specials in areas with such concessions is that such benefits are often not well understood by the existing Specials cohort who may be eligible for them. As such the currently very patchy picture seems highly unlikely to have any influence on the majority of new applicants, who are likely unaware or at least not fully understanding of it.

## Employer Supported Policing

The developing evidence-base in respect of Employer Supported Policing seems to point more to its effects on retention and on enabling increased participation and better experience, than specifically on the ESP effect in encouraging application. Recent research into ESP suggests that many Specials engage with ESP after the initial recruitment stage, and therefore it is something that happens later in their volunteering journey, rather than shaping initial decisions to apply.

Some forces, with dedicated ESP resources, are looking to develop more active recruitment models based on ESP (e.g. through active recruitment in ESP employer's premises); it is early days for such models being pursued at any scale, and too early to assess the effectiveness. In theory, such models should be supportive of recruitment of 'career' Specials.



# Recruitment approaches

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## The need to develop better data and research

This report provides a look across available evidence and some indications of challenges and of 'best practice' for Special recruitment. However, it very much does so within the wider context that there remain significant gaps in our knowledge-base in respect of Specials recruitment.

As with most aspects of the Special Constabulary, there are as many different models of attraction and recruitment as there are Special Constabularies; this highly variable picture across different forces makes developing understandings of the national picture complicated.

There is a need in the future to progress on three aspects:

- Better capture and understanding of the front-end recruitment data (e.g. number and nature of applicants, patterns of attrition during application processes, etc.);
- Evaluations of new approaches;
- Research work with the wider public in respect of knowledge and understanding of the Specials role, and marketing research to better understand what messages and channels might best engage potential applicants, particularly in respect of diversity and of 'career' Specials.

# **Attracting more 'career' Specials**

# Attracting more 'career' Specials

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This chapter discusses the challenge of attracting and recruiting more 'career' Specials. This is identified as an objective in the majority of forces. As previously discussed, current approaches to attraction primarily draw in recruits who bring a motivation to subsequently join as a regular; it is not uncommon for forces to identify 90% of their intakes of new Specials as falling into that category. In contrast, most forces have struggled to recruit 'career' Specials in the numbers that they would wish.

In part, whilst many forces discuss wanting to see a significant uplift in 'career' Special attraction, there have been relatively few dedicated and resourced recruitment campaigns with that aim. By and large forces have continued to do what they have done traditionally for Specials recruitment, therefore continuing to have intakes dominated by regular-pathway Specials.

There is limited evidence or evaluation specifically in relation to 'what works' in recruiting 'career' Specials. Based on the research that has been undertaken, and the fieldwork and focus groups undertaken by the IPSCJ with 'career' Specials, there are key differences to what is likely to be effective in attracting 'career' Specials in contrast to approaches which are successful in growing the volume of recruits. Whilst limited, this evidence-base points towards the need to do things differently and to prioritise 'career' Special recruitment, if future efforts to raise the numbers and proportion of 'career' Specials are to be successful.

## What aspects may need to be considered when targeting 'career' Specials

Whilst it is important not to over-simplify in terms of target profile for 'career' Specials (there will, for example, be cases of younger recruited 'career' Specials and older recruited regular-

pathway Specials), there are a handful of potential differences across the cohorts as a whole which may assist when thinking about how to more effectively reach and attract potential 'career' Specials in the future:

- On the whole, the current cohort of 'career' Specials were older at point of recruitment than regular-pathway Specials. Recruitment in their thirties and forties into the Special Constabulary has traditionally been primarily of 'career' Specials. It seems likely that future recruiting patterns of 'career' Specials will be similar, with an age profile that is older than the young twenties-dominated demography of regular-pathway Specials;
- Linked to the above factor of age, 'career' Specials are much more likely to be professionally established, and likely to be significantly better remunerated and in more senior or responsible work roles than are regular-pathway Specials. Many 'career' Specials will be in an earnings bracket which effectively precludes a translation into the regulars for them, even if they desired it, due to considerable reduction in salary;
- 'Career' Specials are on the whole less likely to be actively searching for how to apply to become a Special. They are also at point of recruitment on the whole less knowledgeable about becoming a Special Constable and what it will involve. As such they are 'harder to reach' and less likely to apply without more pro-active engagement;
- 'Career' Specials are more likely to be considering other opportunities for volunteering, and also more likely to be volunteers in other roles;
- Reflecting again their demographic, 'career' Specials are much more likely to have significant other commitments, in particular caring responsibilities for children and for parents. They tend to be

# Attracting more 'career' Specials

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- less time-rich than their younger regular-pathway colleagues, and to have less flexibility around other commitments;
- Whilst not looking to join the regulars, many 'career' Specials do have a strong and specific vocational interest in being a police officer, Many have had ambitions to become a regular at earlier points in their lives;
- It is often particularly important for 'career' Specials how their volunteering fits with and complements their 'day job'.

## Potential challenges when seeking to attract 'career' Specials

Again, it is important not to over-generalise, or to over-simplify the differences between 'career' and regular pathway Specials. However, in very broad terms (and accepting, again, not universally), there are some general challenges in terms of reaching, engaging and attracting individuals who may be interested in becoming 'career' Specials. These include:

- There is a challenge that for many older applicants they do not feel that the Specials 'looks like them' and is made up of 'people like them'. They can often find themselves as a thirty or forty-something (or older) person surrounded by students in their young twenties who have come along to a recruitment event with their parents, who they still live with, and who all seem to be interested in a pathway into the regular service;
- Some older applicants may also be put off by the emphasis on the physical side of the role, fitness tests, and an anxiety of being the only older person in a group of new recruits in terms of the physical side of training;
- 'Career' Specials may on the whole be more evaluative about the role, and thus more in need of information and insight into what it involves. Firstly in terms of

- concerns about whether they will be 'up to it' and 'good at it'. And also in terms of whether it is a worthwhile thing to do;
- 'Career' Specials may be more concerned about the risks involved in the role, particularly of injury that may impact upon earnings;
- 'Career' Specials are likely to be more concerned about time commitment and flexibility, particularly within the training phase;
- Some 'career' Specials may have different preferences and interests in terms of what role they would like to perform to their typically younger and regular-pathway focused fellow recruits. As with all these points, it would be wrong to over-generalise, but on the whole there may be more 'career' Specials interested in neighbourhood roles and specialisms than is the case with their regular-pathway recruit colleagues, who tend to predominantly be interested in gaining experience in frontline response settings as a precursor to a regular application;
- Some 'career' Specials may be more discerning or intolerant in respect of the professionalism of recruiting and how they are treated as applicants. On the whole, older 'career' Special applicants seem much less likely to 'stick it out' in scenarios where recruitment takes several months, and/or communication is poor.

## Tailoring recruitment to 'career' Specials

These challenges point towards a need for attraction and recruitment strategies which are more tailored to the needs of 'career' Specials. Such approaches might include:

- Running dedicated 'career' Special-only recruitment campaigns;

# Attracting more 'career' Specials

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- Adapting initial marketing materials, recruitment information and familiarisation processes to better answer the questions and address the concerns of 'career' Specials;
- Hearing from existing 'career' Specials about their experience directly. An opportunity to meet 1-1, or accompany on a 'ride along' shift, might well be particularly beneficial;
- 'Career' Specials are more likely to be reached by pro-active campaigns, such as engaging through employers and ESP, and active public-facing advertising. They are less likely to be engaged solely through force online or social media channels. As unlike regular pathway recruits, they are less likely to be as actively looking for the opportunity;
- Utilising the networks of existing 'career' Specials seems an effective route to attract others;
- More professionalised recruitment, including a better pace and good communication, are more likely to be successful at recruiting 'career' Specials;
- Care should be taken to avoid marketing and recruitment materials for the Special Constabulary which seem to emphasise young recruits, and instead marketing materials should reflect the demography and diversity that forces wish to recruit;
- More focus should be given in initial recruitment to setting out all the opportunities that a career in the Specials can bring, for example in terms of training available, specialist roles that can be undertaken, leadership opportunities, etc. All of these aspects are likely, on the whole, to be more resonant with 'career' Specials than with regular-pathway applicants;
- Recruitment approaches are needed that focus on the individual applicant, and upon the skills and experience that those applying to be 'career' Specials bring, as well as how those skills-sets are valued and will be utilised. There is a need to avoid 'one size fits all' approaches that emphasise what the applicant will receive from the force, but don't seem invested and interested in what the applicant is bringing;
- Linked to the above point, recruitment focused on attracting specific skills-sets, e.g. cyber, youth engagement, legal, etc. may well be more effective than recruitment that is generalist in terms of what it is looking for in recruits.

## Experience of existing 'career' Specials drives future attraction

Whilst the ideal is to expand the reach of 'career' Specials recruitment, in reality a sizeable proportion of applicants are still likely to have been drawn in through some direct relationship with someone already in the Special Constabulary or the wider police service, or they will consult people they know in policing about the experience through the course of considering whether to apply.

Clearly, the experience of being a 'career' Special is critical in terms of those in role thriving and remaining in role for longer periods. However, the experience is also important in how it shapes decisions to apply. Key aspects of experience, which are likely in turn to influence application decisions, are likely to be:

- Opportunities to develop and to do different and specialised things, and the availability of CPD;
- Reducing any downsides of the experience of being a Special. In respect of 'career' Specials, particularly pertinent will be tackling any aspects of poor deployment or wasted time; improving aspects of appreciation; being valued; and addressing any issues of negative culture and status;

# Attracting more 'career' Specials

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- Recognising and projecting the good work and achievements of the Special Constabulary. 'Career' Specials will, on the whole, be more sensitive as to whether Specials are fulfilling a worthwhile role and having impact. A strong sense of the achievements and impact of the Special Constabulary is therefore supportive of 'career' Special applications.
- Creating a nationally agreed protocol and policy for fast-tracking ex-regulars into Special Constabularies;
- Forces developing a different posture to ex-Regulars becoming Specials – at present, it seems that such moves are typically little emphasised in retirement and similar processes, there is little proactive recruiting, and such moves are little engaged and encouraged within force thinking and workforce planning;
- Understand and address reluctance or resistance to ex-regular recruitment within Special Constabularies;
- Growing leadership and specialist opportunities within Special Constabularies appealing to ex-Regulars.

## Attracting in more ex-Regulars

One potential type of 'career' Special are those ex-regular officers who might be interested in joining as longer-term volunteers following on from a paid career in policing.

All Special Constabularies across England and Wales are currently limited in the number of ex-regular officers they have volunteering. This is the norm, but doesn't have to be the case. It contrasts with some international settings, such as the USA, where some policing organisations have most of their reserve personnel having histories of being ex-officers.

It has to be accepted that a move into the Special Constabulary upon retiring or otherwise leaving the service is not going an attractive and desirable option for many ex-Regulars. However, changing the approach might significantly uplift the numbers for whom it is of interest. This, in turn, would markedly shift the capability and experience profile of the Special Constabulary, and likely bring other knock-on effects in terms of profile and culture.

In order to increase the numbers of ex-Regulars flowing into the Special Constabulary, it would seem that one or more of the following might prove useful:

- Improving and simplifying processes by making the bureaucracy more effective and eliminating barriers;

Alongside such developments, there will need to be shifts in culture and positioning of the Special Constabulary. In many force contexts, the prevailing cultural position of the Specials is as a precursor to a Regular career, with many Specials seen as being more limited in both practice and life experience, and the predominant demographic being in the young twenties. Whilst an influx of ex-regular officers would play its part in shifting that cultural positioning, such perceptions risk being a constraining factor on regulars choosing to join the Specials in any volume.

A development of more of a 'reserves'-based thinking, incorporating opportunity for a mixed economy of paid/volunteering role, might significantly enhance opportunities to draw upon retiring and departing Regular officers.

# **Attracting a greater diversity of applicants**

# Attracting greater diversity

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This chapter considers the challenges of enhancing the diversity of recruitment into the Special Constabulary. There is a less developed research base for diversity and attraction into the Specials than is the case across the rest of this report.

The challenge of recruiting a more diverse Special Constabulary encompasses all aspects of diversity. National data shows the challenges of needing to improve BME and female recruitment. Local research work in forces by the IPSCJ points to lower rates of recruitment in more socially deprived areas. Beyond those specific elements of diversity, there is little reliable data available, for example in respect of recruitment of LGBT+ Special Constables, or in respect of disability.

This report briefly summarises some pointers to 'best practice' based upon the research work that the IPSCJ has undertaken. It also emphasises the key knowledge gaps that exist and the importance of further research, such as the evaluation of different approaches aimed at addressing the diversity gaps within the Special Constabulary, and the need for better data in respect of diversity across Specials attraction, recruitment and selection processes.

Given that the Special Constabulary is a conduit into other policing roles, (most obviously regular officers, but also PCSOs), the diversity of the Special Constabulary is not only important in and of itself, but is also important in terms of shaping wider patterns of diversity and representation across the police service more generally.

## Improving inclusion and diversity

Looking across current 'best practice' in forces, it seems that one key pointer is the engagement of force inclusion and diversity expertise directly in the activity of Specials recruitment.

Most forces have some degree of specialist investment and activity in terms of their reach and engagement across all communities. Within that, most forces have targeted resources deployed to assist in terms of the diversity and representation of their recruitment and workforce. There seems to be a variable degree to which such resources are engaged specifically with Specials recruitment. In some forces, the resources are fully integrated and active across Specials recruitment; in others it sits separate to and seemingly largely unengaged. Best practice would seem to reflect contexts where such resources and activities are fully engaged in the recruitment of Specials.

The kinds of approaches that can be achieved around Specials recruitment include:

- Community engagement and outreach activities and events, seeking to reach communities and individuals who would not typically come forward into application and recruitment processes, and who may not even be aware of the Special Constable role;
- Wider engagement across aspects such as job fairs, schools, colleges and universities, work places, community associations and religious contexts, broadening awareness of career opportunities within the police, including volunteering in the Special Constabulary;
- Models of positive action and direct support, including 1-1 coaching, buddying and mentoring, development and recruitment programmes, and workshops for under-represented groups, and 'taster' opportunities;
- Developing specific material to communicate the role of Special Constable and to market the opportunity, e.g. in languages other than English/Welsh;
- Identification of community 'champions', who can support recruitment efforts into



# Attracting greater diversity

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the Specials from less reached communities;

- Communication and engagement from staff associations, made highly visible to potential applicants from the earliest stages of attraction and recruitment.

## Enhancing the reach into all communities

Current available data suggests that volunteering in the Special Constabulary tends to have a lower 'take up' from communities which are more socially deprived, ethnically diverse, and with higher crime. Some of this may reflect very similar challenges for the Special Constabulary as are experienced more broadly in achieving reach and diversity of recruitment within policing as a whole.

In respect of those who have origins or heritage in countries outside the UK, some individuals and communities may have experienced models of policing very different to those in England and Wales, including policing traditions which do not have a volunteering or community engagement aspect, and policing approaches which may have been experienced as very separate from, and sometimes hostile to, the wider community. There are also communities in which a career or involvement in the police has historically not been seen as desirable, professional or of high status. Other communities have a level of distrust or hostility towards the police, meaning that involvement may result in a negative reaction from family and peers. Achieving positive community engagement and recruiting across diverse communities can thus present significant challenges. In essence, attracting Specials is part of a bigger picture of the challenge of achieving a wider and more inclusive reach for police recruitment more generally. At the heart of such endeavours is positive and pro-active community engagement.

Some Special Constabularies have begun to consider their recruitment in terms of reach into communities, and geographically. A first step in developing targeted approaches to address gaps is to understand where those gaps are, so mapping exercises to understand which communities do, and do not, produce applicants for Specials roles is a good starting point.

## Specific barriers

There are some specific, more concrete, barriers and challenges to enhancing diversity of recruitment. These include three main challenges:

- Residency requirements and vetting procedures, which in effect remove the ability of individuals who have recently lived outside of the UK to participate. This clearly primarily impacts upon minority populations;
- Where English/Welsh is not a first language, there seems to be a mixed picture in different forces as to how much support is provided, or how much flexibility is given, in respect of English/Welsh capability;
- Some aspects of current application processes are, as has been discussed earlier in this report, somewhat nuanced and idiosyncratic, and likely (without additional support) to discriminate against those less familiar with a British public sector recruitment culture.

## Attracting more female Specials

It seems likely that the challenges for the Special Constabulary of only circa 30% of Specials being female are linked in part to wider challenges of the police officer role being seen as attractive to females more generally, as the proportional figure is similar for regulars.

# Attracting greater diversity

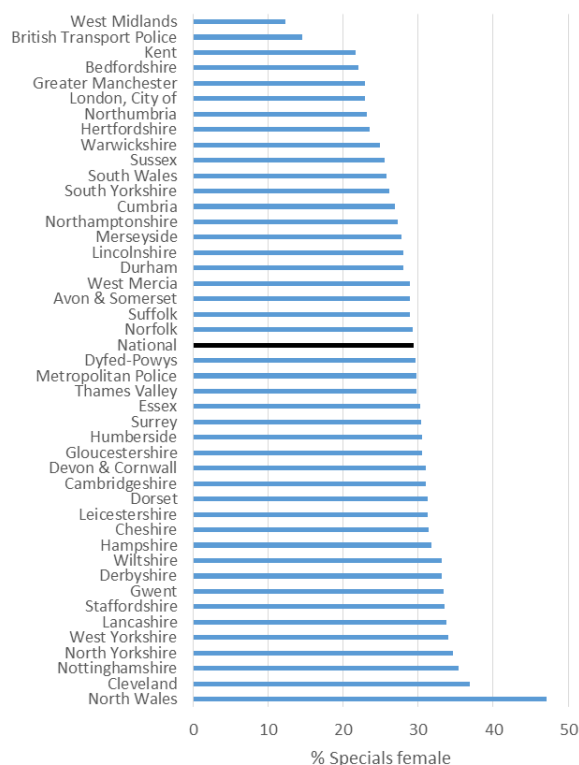
Historically, being a police officer has been a male dominated profession. Positively, over recent years, the representation of regular officers in the regulars has (albeit slowly) been steadily increasing. This has not been the case for the Specials, which has not seen improvement in gender representation in recent years.

There would seem to be some potential learning from forces which have achieved greater proportions of female representation in their Special Constabularies, as the national picture across forces is quite variable in that respect. The graph below summarises the proportion of female Specials in each police force in March 2018 (the latest available national statistics when this report was produced).

Some aspects of potential 'best practice', which seem to have been engaged by those forces with higher female representation, include:

- A focus on positive imagery and narratives in respect of existing female Specials, including production of case study material of female Specials, having female Specials speaking at familiarisation and recruitment events, and celebrating achievements by female Specials;
- Aspects of positive action engagement and development with female Specials;
- A sense of a virtuous cycle – that increased female recruitment and a larger female cohort of Specials has a reinforcing, uplifting effect of future rounds of recruiting.

Proportion of female Special Constables



Based on discussion with Specials in focus groups, key aspects for improving female recruitment that participants in those groups felt should be considered include:

- Recognising that for *some* (not by any means all, but some) females, there may be questions or concerns they have in terms of their perceptions of the physical and confrontational nature of the role. Addressing and helping dispel such concerns for them may be important;
- The Special Constabulary is seen, at times, as "very male"; Specials leaders visible during recruitment and leading familiarisation sessions can be (in some force contexts) predominantly or exclusively male;
- Again for *some* female applicants, particularly those applying when a little older or as parents, there may be particular concerns regarding how flexible the role is. The reality is, in

# Attracting greater diversity

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broader society females still tend statistically to disproportionately shoulder care commitments, and may be on the whole more concerned about how they can fit the role in around those other elements of their lives;

- (Whilst being very careful not to foster or promote stereotyping of gendered roles and preferences within policing), some female Specials participating in the focus groups did discuss that *they* felt the specialisms that Specials in their forces were able to develop into were mainly, as one female Special put it, “those involving fast cars, public order vans and other boy’s toys”, and that they felt it was possible that for *some* female Specials other areas of specialism may be of more interest, but had been less developed, particularly in respect of investigation. Developing a broader spectrum of specialising opportunities might be attractive to some female applicants to the Specials;
- Specials felt that there remain elements of ‘banter’ and sexist behaviours which may put off some female applicants when hearing about them from others already in the service.

There are interesting questions about what can be learnt in respect of female recruitment from other sectors, in terms of volunteer recruitment, paid employment recruitment, and other contexts of improving female participation. Possible areas of practice elsewhere which might be considered and emulated in the Special Constabulary include:

- The ‘this girl can’ campaign, which seeks to increase female participation in sports and other physical recreation activities;
- Various programmes to encourage female participation in sectors which have traditionally been male dominated, particularly IT, physical sciences, and engineering. In those settings, there

have been some focused and well executed campaigns to boost female participation, aiming at more effectively engage and communicate with females as to the opportunities available, the benefits, and the contribution of such roles and careers. There is much that is interesting and can be learnt from such programmes.

Looking across data for gender and the Special Constabulary analysed by the IPSCJ as part of research work in a number of forces, there are three key trends which present challenges, and potential areas of focus for future efforts at enhancing female recruitment:

- There appear to be fewer female applicants than male applicants aged thirty and over, even more so for female Special recruitment of over forties, which seems very low;
- In part linked to the above, ‘career’ Specials have lower female representation than regular-pathway Specials. This is also reflected in the low proportion of female Specials who are longer-serving (and linking to that, lower proportion of females who are in specialisms, and who are in leadership roles);
- The numbers of female BME Specials are lower compared to proportion of female non-BME Specials. 25.7% of BME Specials are female, compared to 29.8% of White British Specials. This appears to be particularly the case for specific ethnic minority groups, where female representation is particularly low.

## Transition from Cadets to Specials

There are two key strategic elements which point to building better transitioning of Cadets into the Specials, in respect of enhancing Special Constabulary diversity:

# Attracting greater diversity

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- The Volunteer Police Cadets have very much higher BME and female engagement than Special Constabularies currently do, and also have a much better reach into communities that have traditionally not been the recruitment ground for volunteer or paid roles in policing;
- Broadly three quarters of Cadets, in recent national surveying, indicate that they are interested in future roles within policing.
- Data which suggests both BME and female Specials have, on average, shorter careers;
- Data which suggests that both BME and female Specials are less engaged (in terms of proportion who are active, and in terms of hours) than male and White British Specials;
- Very low levels of participation by BME and female Specials in leadership and in specialisms.

Therefore, in broad terms the strategic aim is to achieve the Special Constabulary being 'more like' the Cadets in terms of diversity and reach, the right place to start might be to focus on the transitioning from the one to the other.

## **The current experience of Specials can influence future attraction**

As discussed earlier in this report, the current experience of being a Special Constable does impact back, positively or negatively, into endeavours to improve diversity of recruitment.

There are some key broader diversity challenges in the Special Constable experience, indicated from the research work undertaken to date, that need to be addressed:

- A quite high proportion of BME Specials who stated in the national survey that they had been discriminated against, and that they had witnessed discrimination in the organisation;
- Survey data that points to much lower than desirable levels of confidence in force response to discrimination;
- Qualitative research by the IPSCJ, which points to enduring problems of sexism and gendered 'banter' in some forces within the Special Constabulary;

The challenge is that if such underlying problems are not addressed, there will tend to be a negatively reinforcing cycle of communication back to potential applicants, which may in turn discourage them from applying. Conversely, positive experiences across diversity for current Specials will tend towards encouraging future recruitment that leads to a greater diversity of cohort, and creates a virtuous cycle of change.

# Recommendations

# Recommendations

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The findings across this report point to a range of changes in practice which forces might consider. This section does not seek to summarise all of those specific aspects.

This final section instead provides a small number of key overarching recommendations for the future of Specials attraction and recruitment.

## **Recommendation 1:**

A Recruitment Strategy could be developed nationally, and in each force, in respect of the Special Constabulary. Such a Recruitment Strategy could encompass:

- Clarity of objectives for recruitment, set against the strategic context of future role and capability;
- Setting out the high-level approach to future recruitment, and linked to that issues of resourcing and investment;
- Identifying opportunities for collaboration between forces;
- Identifying opportunities for nationally coordinated approaches, and with other elements of recruiting nationally both to paid roles and other volunteer roles.

In many force contexts the tactical and operational execution of recruitment seems largely to exist in a strategic vacuum, at least in the sense of there being little or nothing formally written down in terms of recruitment strategy. As such, the development of a written articulation of recruitment strategy, even if it is in a short-form and very brief, would represent a big step forward in many force contexts.

Linked to this point, there would also be advantage in ensuring such strategy is embedded and linked up with wider strategic workforce planning and recruitment strategies.

## **Recommendation 2:**

The NPCC Specials workstream lead, the College of Policing and the IPSCJ could work together with forces to help develop a more practical form of online guidance for forces - built initially from the foundations of evidence within this report and then regularly kept up to date - in particular relating to recruitment of 'career' Specials and relating to improving diversity in recruitment.

## **Recommendation 3:**

A national recruitment campaign could be designed and developed.

This would mirror previous coordinated national surges in recruitment activity that have been seen at previous low points in Specials numbers (for example, in the mid-nineties, and again circa 2004 onwards). As well as the broader numbers context, such a campaign could reflect the national collective need to reach out to new audiences from an attraction point of view, most pressingly both in terms of 'career' Specials and in terms of diversity. Such needs would seem to suit a more coordinated, national model of designing, procuring and delivering media advertising and wider projection of the opportunity.

## **Recommendation 4:**

Further research would help close the data and knowledge gaps in respect of Specials recruitment, and help refine and evaluate new approaches. Such research should include:

- Better capture and understanding of the front-end recruitment data (e.g. number and nature of applicants, patterns of attrition during application processes, etc.). It is proposed that ideally there is national agreement about what data forces collect, with common data

# Recommendations

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definitions, so that national patterns can be understood as well as the data being understood and utilised at force level;

- Evaluations of new approaches. It is specifically proposed that there be a further piloting programme, involving the evaluation of a series of initiatives across different forces which are particularly focused on recruiting 'career' Specials, and in improving the diversity of recruitment. This would enable a 'what works' evidence-base to be developed rigorously, and then rolled out across forces nationally;
- Research work with the wider public in respect of knowledge and understanding of the Specials role, and marketing research to better understand what messages and channels might best engage potential applicants, particularly in respect of diversity and of 'career' Specials.

## **Recommendation 5:**

The focus groups that have underpinned much of this report point to the value of engaging Special directly in terms of thinking about and shaping future models of attraction and recruitment.

It is proposed that a key emphasis in future approaches to the design and development of Specials attraction and recruitment should be to actively engage Specials in that work.

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