



Institute for
**Public Safety
Crime and Justice**

Volunteer Police Cadets National Census

Report of Findings, 2021

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Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from the annual Volunteer Police Cadet Census, undertaken in early 2021. The annual Census exercise comprised a survey of all police forces undertaken in early 2021. Since 2015 this process of an annual Census of the VPC programme has represented the foundational source of data on the Cadet programme nationally.

Key data findings from the annual Census include:

- In early 2021 there were **11,397** Cadets, across 512 Cadet Units, with the programme active in every police force. This represents a reduction of 7.6% in the number of Cadets in the two years since 2019.
- Whilst overall nationally there has been a reduction in the number of Cadets, at regional and local level there is a very mixed picture. There is considerable variability in trends between different police forces. Most of the volume of recent national reductions have occurred within the Metropolitan Police (which has by far the largest numbers of Cadets in a single force, constituting a third, 32.4%, of all Cadets nationally). Numbers in the Met fell by -15.7% between 2020 and 2021, compared to only a -1.1% fall collectively across other police forces.
- In the 2021 Census returns, there were 8,048 Mini Police, with the Mini Police active in 16 forces and 494 schools. This represents a growth in the number of schools (+106) between 2019 and 2021, and growth in the number of children involved (+2,531), a 45.9% increase in numbers of Mini Police.
- 19,445 children and young people were engaged across the VPC programme as a whole.
- There were 2,867 Cadet leaders. 111 (4%) leaders were paid full-time, 503 (18%) were paid part-time, and 2,258 (79%) were volunteers (This does not include those engaged in delivering the Mini Police programme).
- Overall, the Volunteer Police Cadet programme engaged 19,455 children and young people and 2,258 adults as volunteers, a total of 21,703, meaning that it is larger in terms of headcount of volunteers in policing than the other two key components of 'Citizens in Policing' (Special Constabularies, and Police Support Volunteers) combined. The VPC also represents the largest national police youth engagement initiative.
- The VPC programme continues to be strong in terms of engagement of BAME Cadets, with a quarter (25.5%) of Cadets from forces that collected data being recorded as BAME. This is significantly higher than for other roles within the police family. However, there are significant data gaps, with 10 police forces providing no data on ethnicity.
- Approximately half of Cadets identified as female. This contrasts with a third or less for regular police officers and for Special Constables.
- As with previous years of the annual Census, there remain significant data gaps (missing data for 13 police forces) in respect of 'vulnerability' and disability.

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings from the annual Volunteer Police Cadet Census. The Census comprised a survey of all police forces undertaken in early 2021. Since 2015 the annual Census of the VPC programme has represented the foundational source of data on the Cadet programme nationally and plays a key role in informing strategic planning and resourcing across the VPC. The report sets out findings and identifies some key conclusions from the data. The VPC is the largest element of 'Citizens in Policing', and the single largest police youth engagement initiative. The report finds that numbers of Cadets have reduced slightly nationally, albeit this is in the context of the Covid-19 period during which VPC programmes have not been able to operate normally, and there is also a widely varying picture in different regions and in individual forces.

1.1 Methodology

Since 2015, data has been gathered annually at a national level across the VPC, via a data survey distributed to each police force. The Census was not undertaken in 2020, due to the Covid-19 context, so this Census Report covers two years of data, 2020 and 2021. There are now seven years of the annual Census data available, showing trends as the programme has developed across police forces.

The Census questionnaire is distributed in January each calendar year, and covers:

- Number of Cadets and Cadet Units
- Demographics, gender, ethnic diversity, disability, and vulnerability of Cadets
- Numbers of Mini Police and Mini Police schools
- Cadet Leaders.

2. The Number of Cadets and of Cadet Units

2.1 The Number of Cadets

The most recent 2021 data shows there to be **11,397** Cadets, a small drop off from the previous three years, which had each seen a figure of slightly over 12,000.

There is a need for some caution that this Census may underestimate the full scale of departure of Cadets during the Covid-19 period. When the data surveying was undertaken, many Cadet Units had not gathered actively back together due to Covid-19 restrictions, which may well result in some Cadets who had in effect left the programme not being recorded as such in this annual data set. There is therefore a possibility that a Covid-19 'draw down' in numbers has not been fully reflected in this Census.

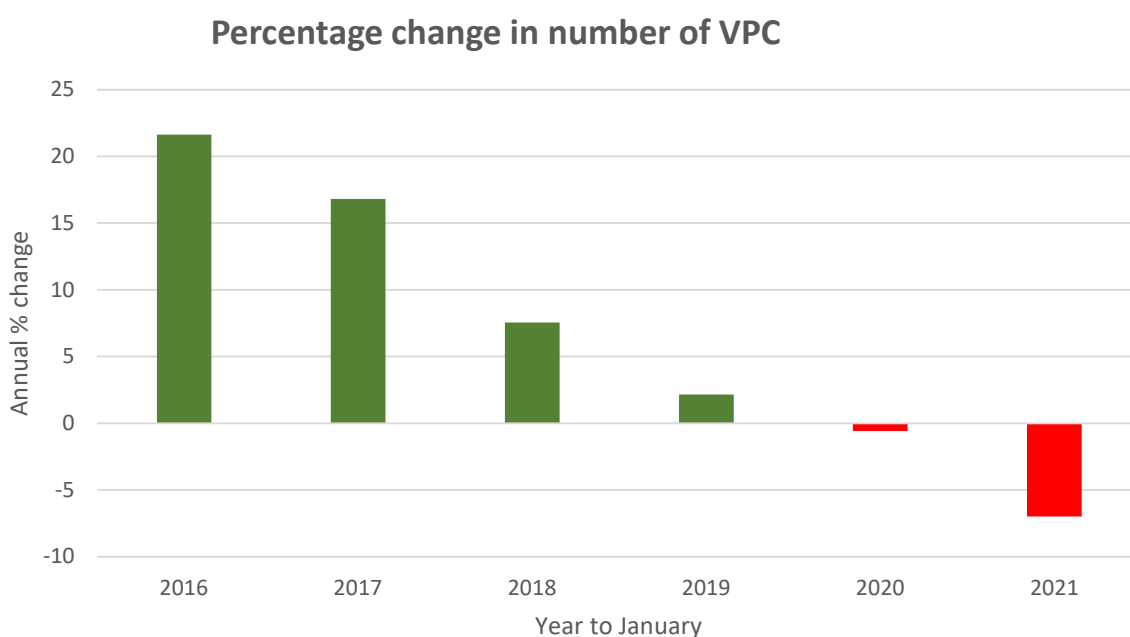
Overall, the trend over the past years has been one of a slowing rate of growth (between 2015 and 2019) followed by relatively small -scale reductions in numbers (2019-2021)

Headcount and Annual Change in Number of Cadets

Year	Headcount	% Change
2015	7,894	
2016	9,603	21.6
2017	11,219	16.8
2018	12,068	7.6
2019	12,329	2.2
2020	12,256	-0.6
2021	11,397	-7.0



The graph below shows clearly the national trend, with a slowing rate of growth each year between 2016 and 2019, followed by a continuing trend into reductions in 2020 and 2021 data.

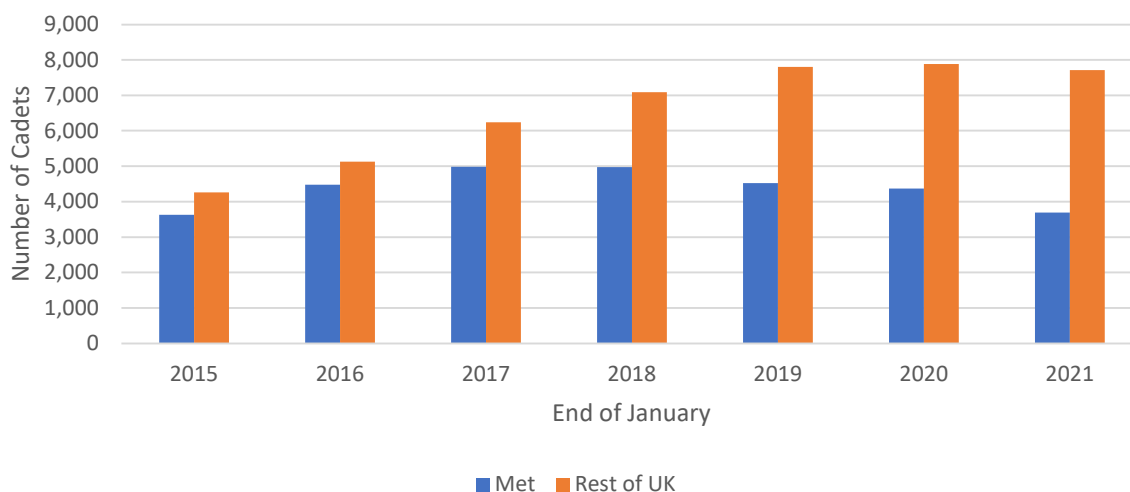


There has been some shrinkage of VPC numbers in the Metropolitan Police since 2019, a reduction of 839 Cadets (-18.5%) across the two years between 2019 and 2021. Figures for the rest of the UK (apart from the Met) have been essentially stable over the past three years, with a small fall (-1.1%) between 2019 and 2021. The falls in London represent the bulk of the reduction in Cadet numbers nationally over the past two years.

Number of Cadets in the Metropolitan Police and in Other Police Forces

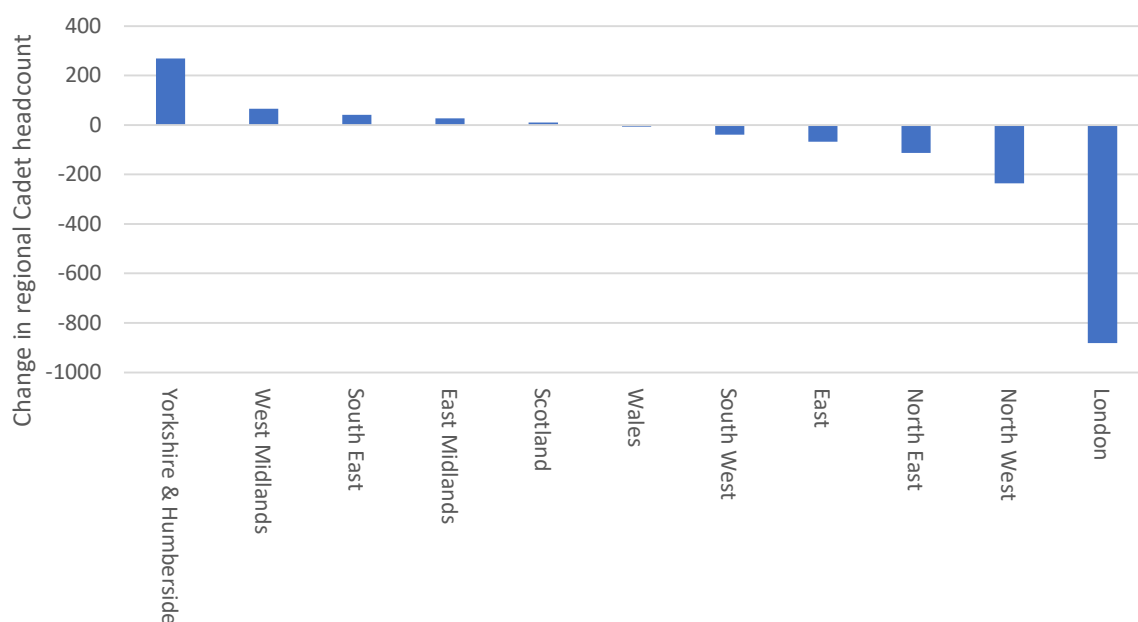
	All Cadets	Met	Rest of UK	Met as % of all Cadets
2015	7,894	3,630	4,264	46.0
2016	9,603	4,479	5,124	46.6
2017	11,219	4,981	6,238	44.4
2018	12,068	4,978	7,090	41.2
2019	12,329	4,527	7,802	36.7
2020	12,256	4,373	7,883	35.7
2021	11,397	3,688	7,709	32.4

Number of Volunter Police Cadets - Metropolitan Police and Rest of UK



There is a mixed picture across individual police forces, with some forces showing growth in numbers and some showing reductions. For example, the data reflects growth in numbers in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Dyfed-Powys, Humberside, Kent, Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, and Warwickshire. There have also been falls in numbers in other forces, including (as reflected above) the Metropolitan Police, and also Cheshire, GMP, Merseyside, Avon and Somerset, Hertfordshire, North Wales, and Derbyshire. This variability in individual forces reflects through to a widely varying picture across regions. As reflected in the graph below, several regions have seen growth (albeit in most cases to a small extent) in the past two years, whereas the North West, and particularly London, have seen larger falls. The national picture of trend in numbers is therefore made up of a highly variable picture regionally and in individual police forces.

Change in Number of Cadets, by region, 2019 to 2021



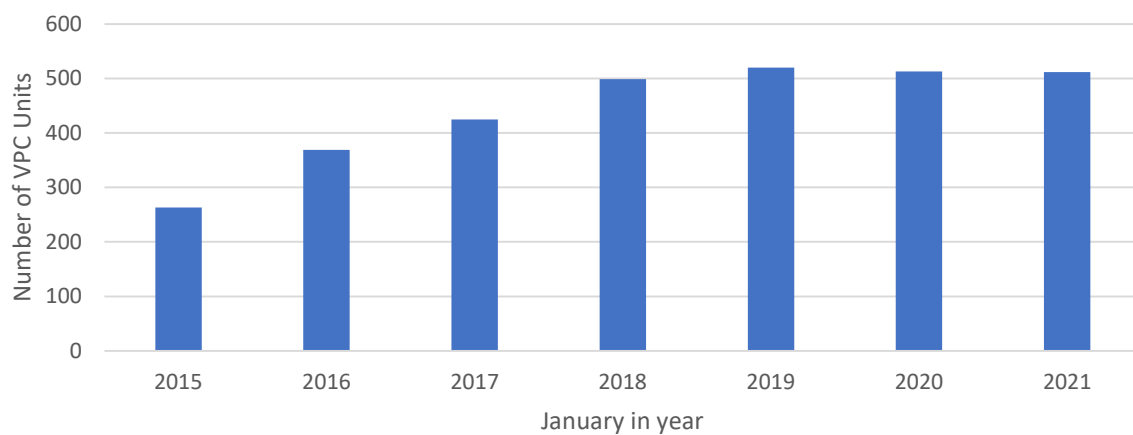
2.2 The Number of Cadet Units

The 2021 Census data identified there to be **512** Cadet Units nationally, in effect reflecting little or no change to the number of Cadet Units in 2018, 2019 and 2020. The figure of 512 Units is almost double the number of Units that there were in 2015. The number of Cadet Units has been broadly stable both within the Metropolitan Police and across the rest of the UK.

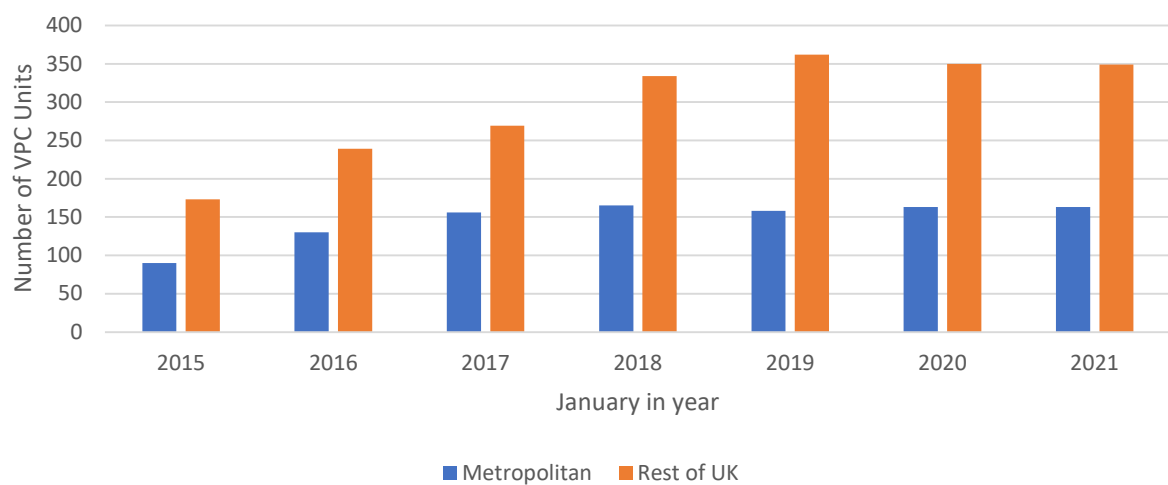
Number of VPC Units

Year	All Forces	Metropolitan	Rest of UK
2015	264	90	174
2016	369	130	239
2017	425	156	269
2018	499	165	334
2019	520	158	362
2020	513	163	350
2021	512	163	349

National Number of Volunteer Police Cadet Units

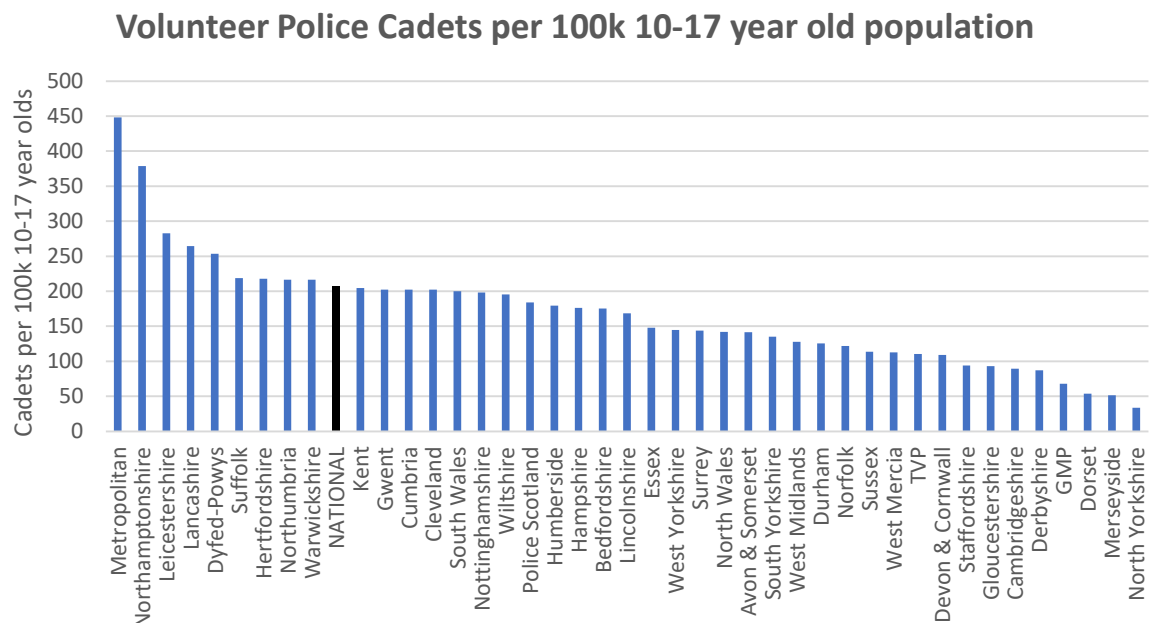


Number of VPC Units - Metropolitan Police and Rest of UK

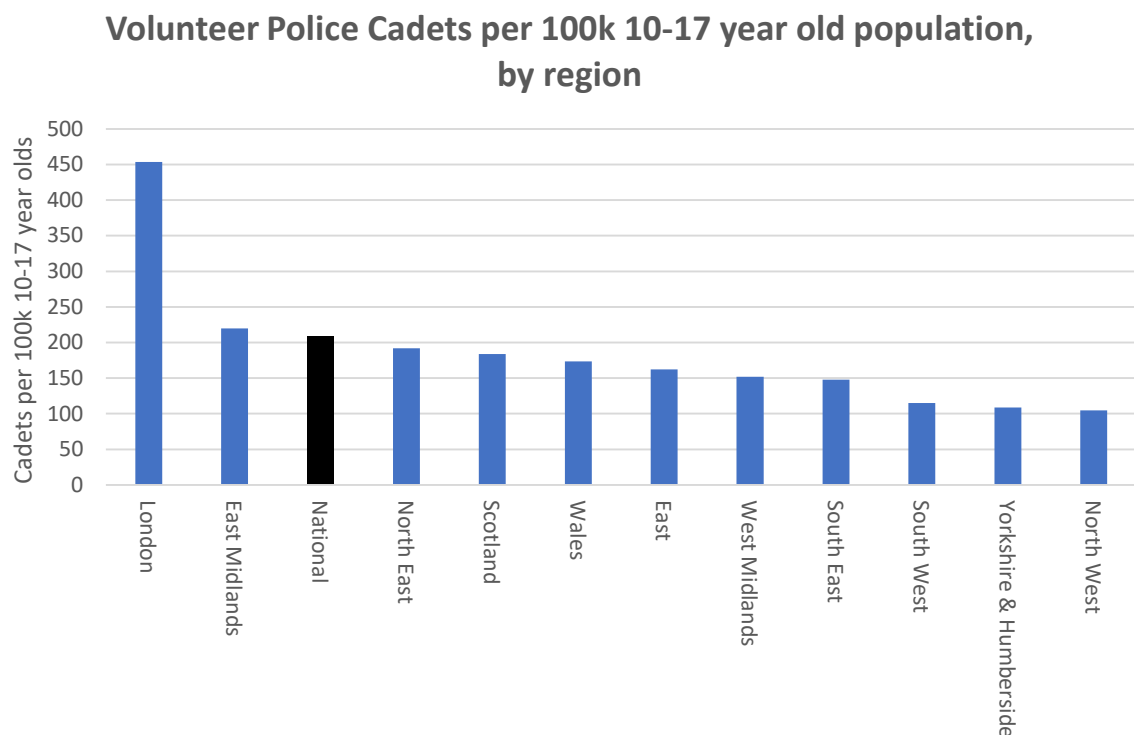


2.3 Comparative scale of programmes across police forces and regions

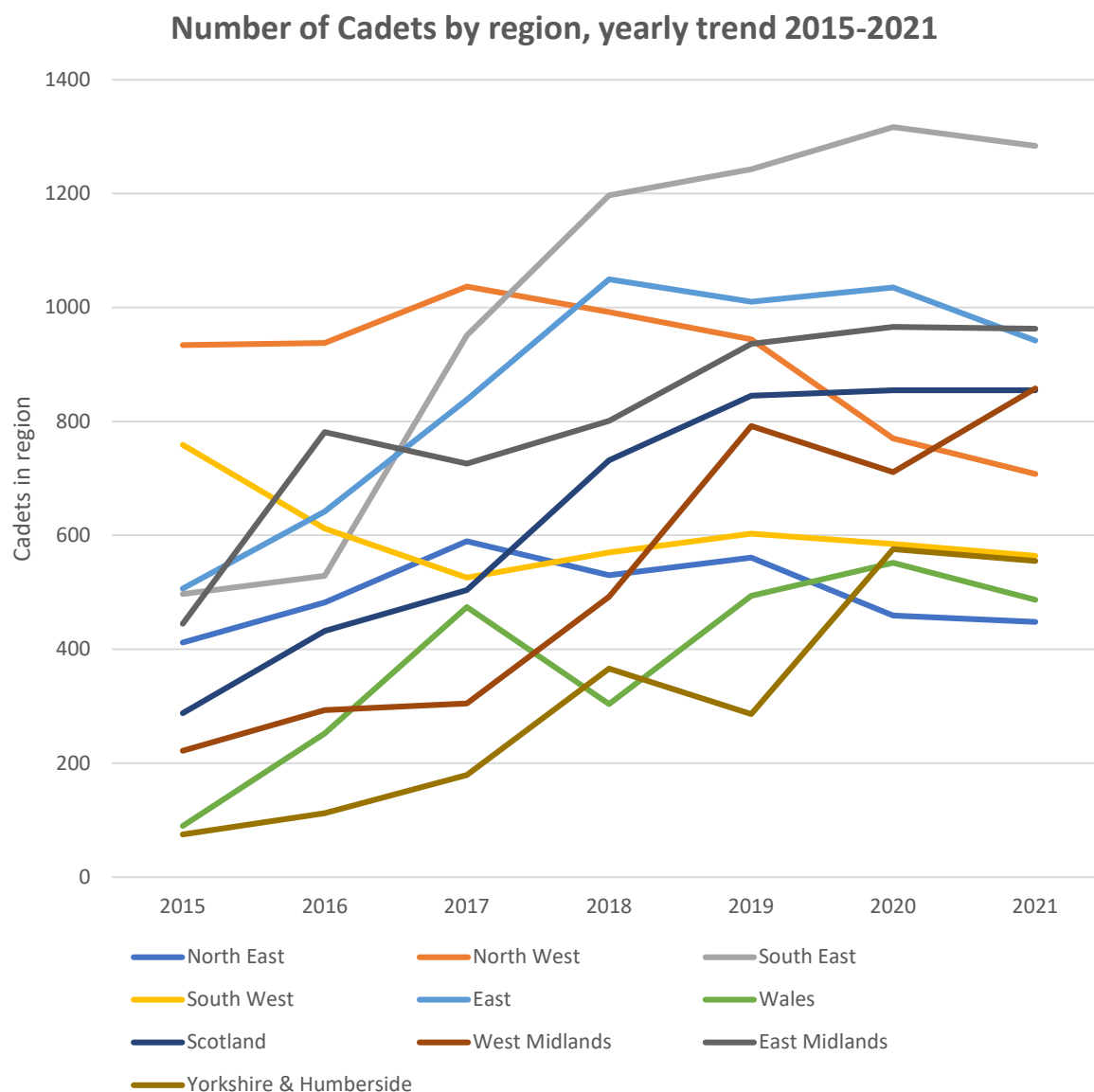
There is widespread variation in scale of Volunteer Police Cadet programmes across police forces. The programme in the Metropolitan Police, and in Northamptonshire (Northamptonshire Emergency Service Cadets) are significantly larger comparatively to other programmes across the country. Similarly, quite sizeable patterns of variation are reflected across regional differences.



Regionally, there have been varying patterns of growth and development across the VPC over the past seven years of data since 2015.

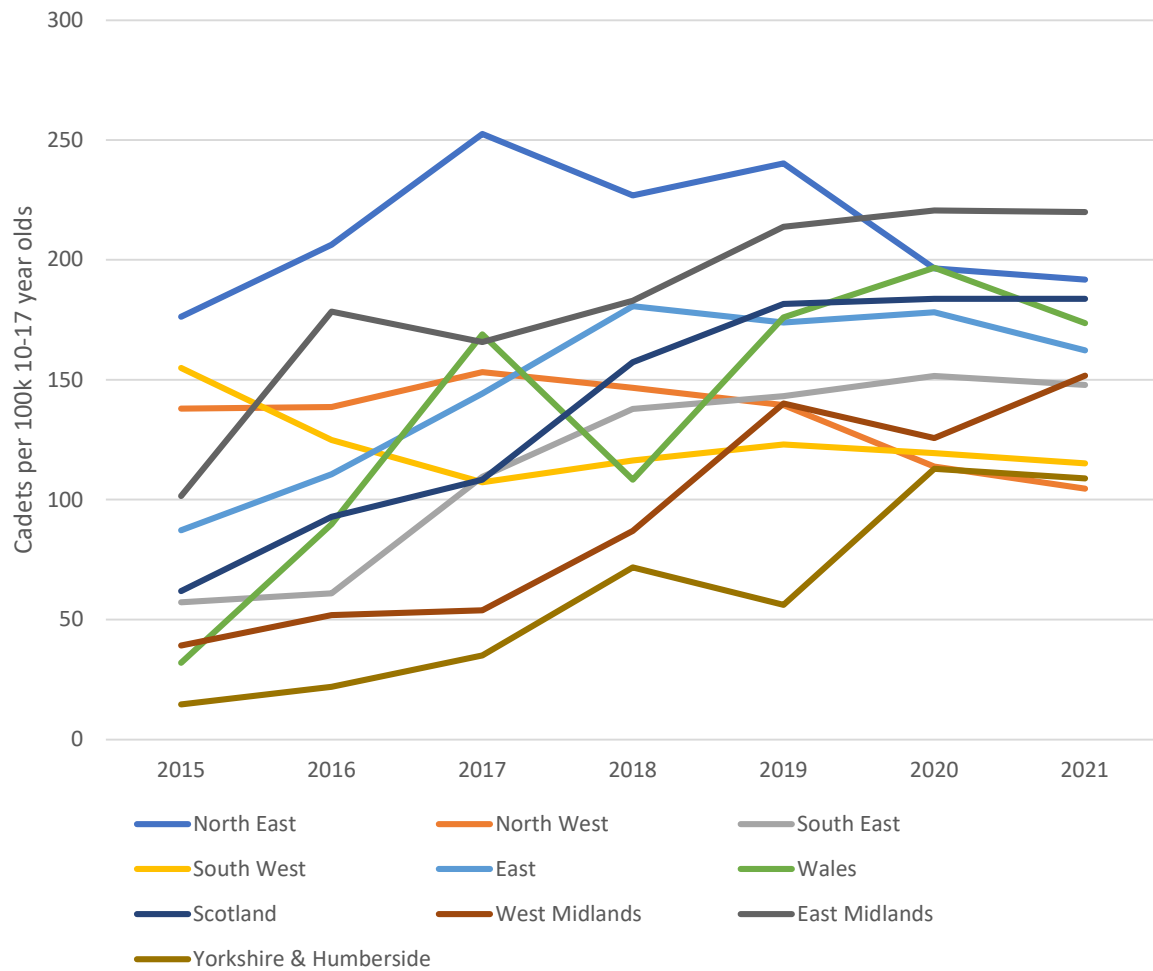


The first graph below shows change since 2015 in each of the regions (excepting London, as the raw numbers are too large to 'fit'), shown as numerical headcount of Cadets. The graph reflects some significant differences in trends of Cadet numbers since 2015. The South East is the fourth largest region outside of London in terms of Cadet numbers in 2015, but by far the largest by 2021. In contrast the North West shifts from largest, to sixth largest. Most of the regions show an upward growth in numbers, with a tendency to flatten off over the past year or so.



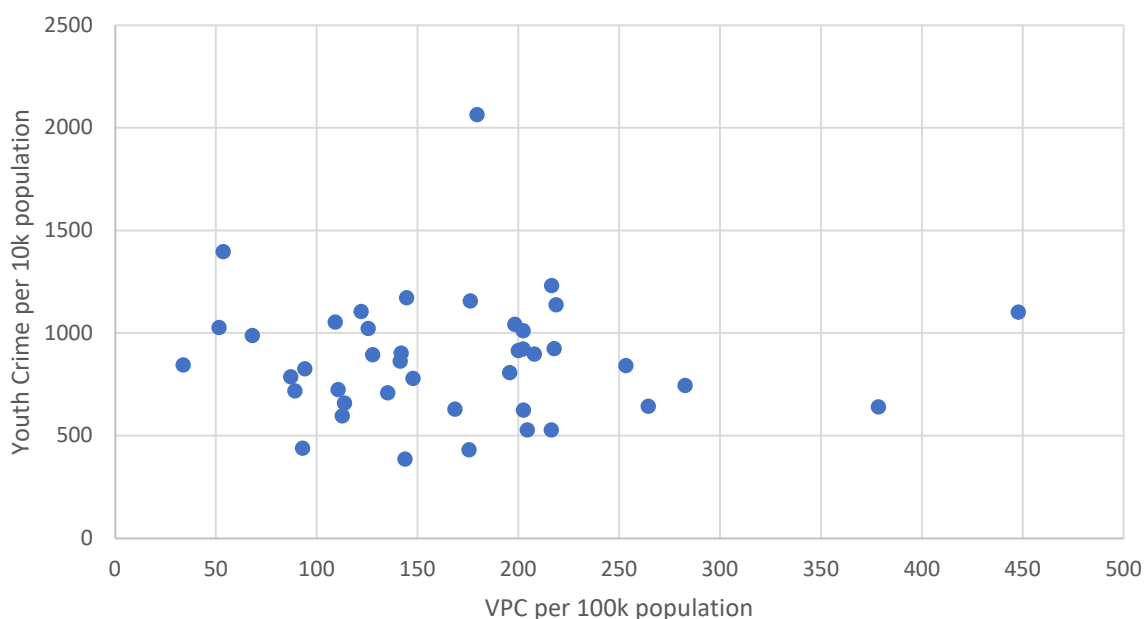
The second graph, below, similarly shows the same period and same regional trends, with the difference being that this graph is expressed in Cadets per 100k 10-17 year-olds in the region, to provide a picture of comparative scale of VPC programmes at regional level. As can be seen, as with the first graph, there has been a significant degree of change between region in terms of comparative scale of Cadet programmes in the period since 2015. The North West has shifted from having comparatively the third largest programme shown in the graph (again, not including London) in 2015, to having the smallest in 2021.

Cadets per 100k 10-17 population, by region, 2015-2021



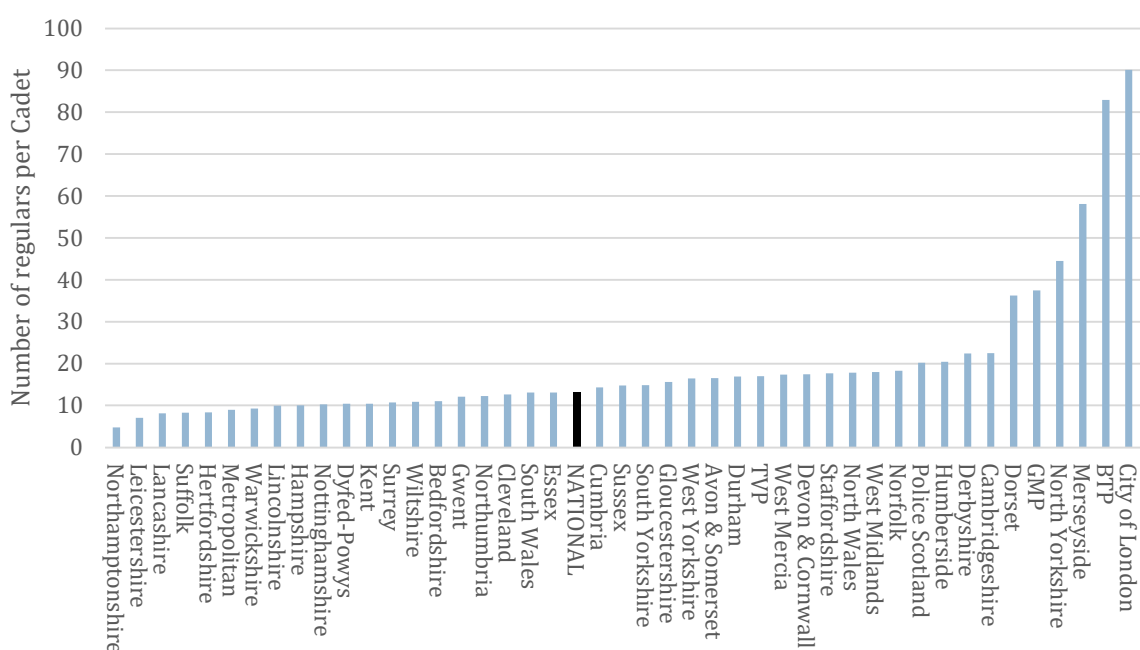
Another way to consider comparative scale of programmes is to look at the number of Cadets, set against the scale of youth crime. Whilst the VPC programme has a broad range of youth engagement, youth-led social action, and trust and confidence objectives, and is not simply reduceable to being seen as a crime prevention initiative, it does however have objectives to help prevent youth crime and anti-social behaviour. The scatter-graph below, at force level, in effect shows there to be little or no relationships between the level of recorded youth crime in a force area, and the size of the local Volunteer Police Cadet programme. However, it should be emphasised that this is only at the geography of police force level – it may well be that analysis at a more local level would show a greater degree of relationship.

Comparing rates of youth crime and number of Cadets, by force area



A different way of looking at comparative size of VPC programmes across police forces is to compare the number of Cadets to the number of regular officers, as a broad proxy of the scale of host police organisation for the Cadet programme. Again, there is widespread variation in the data. The two police forces that are less 'territorial' in nature (City of London, and British Transport Police), have by far the smallest Cadet programmes looked at in terms of this ratio. Looked at in this way, Northamptonshire has the largest Cadet programme.

Ratio of Regular Police Officers per Volunteer Police Cadet



2.4 Comparing scale of different elements of Citizens in Policing programmes

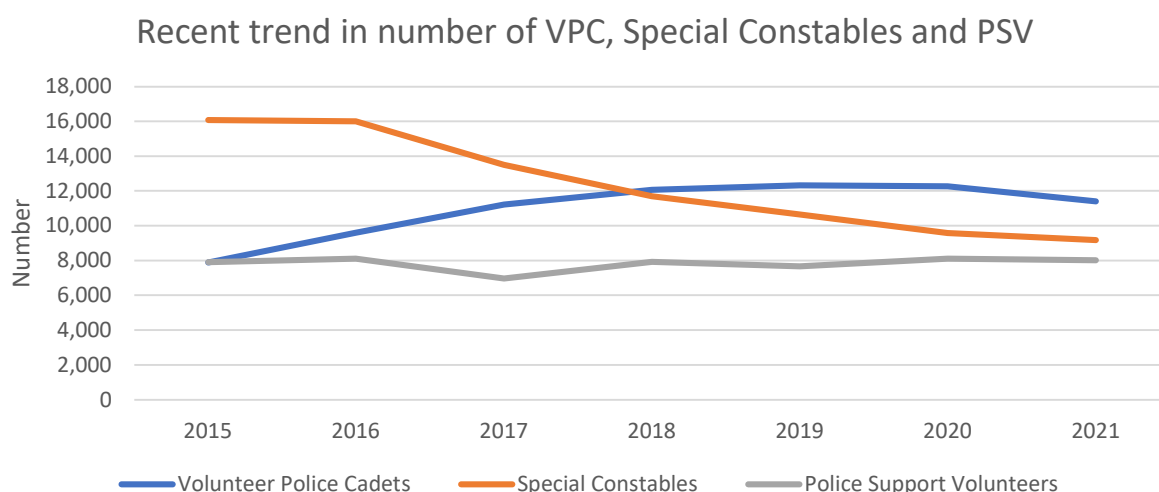
There have been some key shifts in the overall shape of ‘Citizens in Policing’ programmes over recent years. The most marked changes are twofold: a substantial shrinkage of Special Constabularies, and significant growth in numbers of Volunteer Police Cadets. In 2015, the Special Constabulary was 16,074 strong in England and Wales, and the VPC programme had 7,894 Cadets, less than half the scale in basic headcount to the number of Special Constables at that time. In 2021, the VPC is much the larger programme, with 11,397 Cadets compared to only 9,174 Special Constables. Whilst not even considering the significant number of adult volunteers across the programme (discussed later in this report), the VPC has become the largest single element of ‘Citizens in Policing’, in terms of volunteers within policing organisations.

Annual percentage change across difference elements of CiP programmes

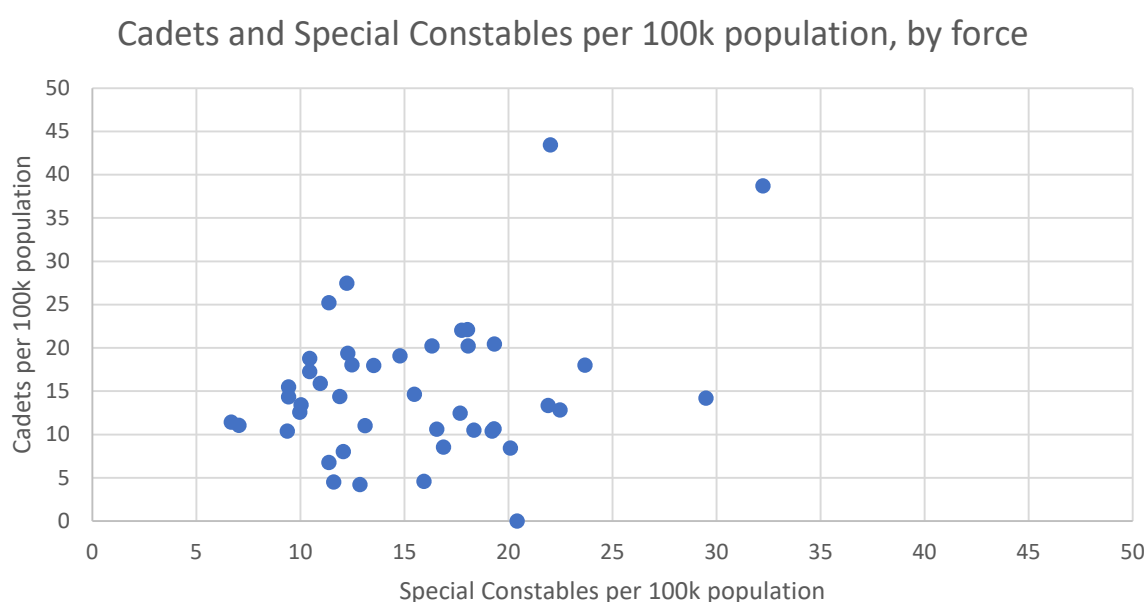
Year ending	Volunteer Police Cadets	Special Constables	Police Support Volunteers
2018	7.6	-13.4	
2019	2.2	-9.0	-3.1
2020	-0.6	-10.0	9.1
2021	-7.0	-4.1	-1.1

Headcount across the three key elements of CiP

	Volunteer Police Cadets	Special Constables	Police Support Volunteers	Total - CiP
2015	7,894	16,074	7,900	31,868
2016	9,603	15,996	8,106	33,705
2017	11,219	13,503	6,964	31,686
2018	12,068	11,690	7,918	31,676
2019	12,329	10,640	7,670	30,639
2020	12,256	9,571	8,106	29,933
2021	11,397	9,174	8,014	28,585



At individual force level, there appears (as reflected in the scatter-graph below) to be only a very loose relationship between sizes of the different components of Citizens in Policing programmes, i.e. there is not a simple trend that those forces with smaller or larger Cadet programmes also tend to be the forces which have smaller or larger Special Constabularies, and smaller or larger PSV programmes, etc. The picture is instead, again, a very mixed one. There are some forces (e.g. Kent) tending towards larger programmes across each of the different dimensions of CiP. But more commonly, the picture is variable. Of the two standout forces for larger-than-typical Cadet programmes, the Metropolitan Police has a broadly average comparative scale of Special Constabulary, and a much smaller than average PSV programme. Northamptonshire has a larger than average Special Constabulary, but a slightly smaller than average PSV programme.



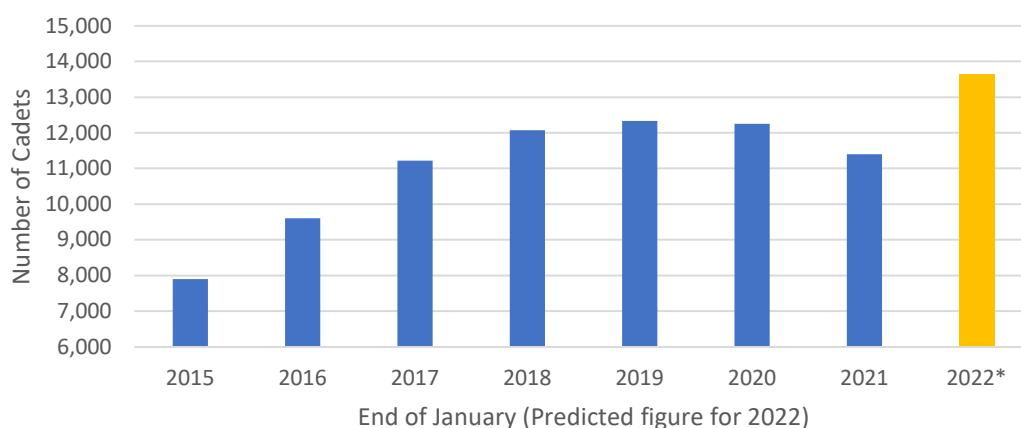
2.5 Plans for Future Growth

Police forces were asked in the Census about their plans for growth, or shrinkage, of their Cadet numbers over the coming year. The widespread pattern across most forces was a prediction for further growth in numbers over the next year. Collectively the police force returns predict a 19% growth in Cadet numbers between 2021 and 2022.

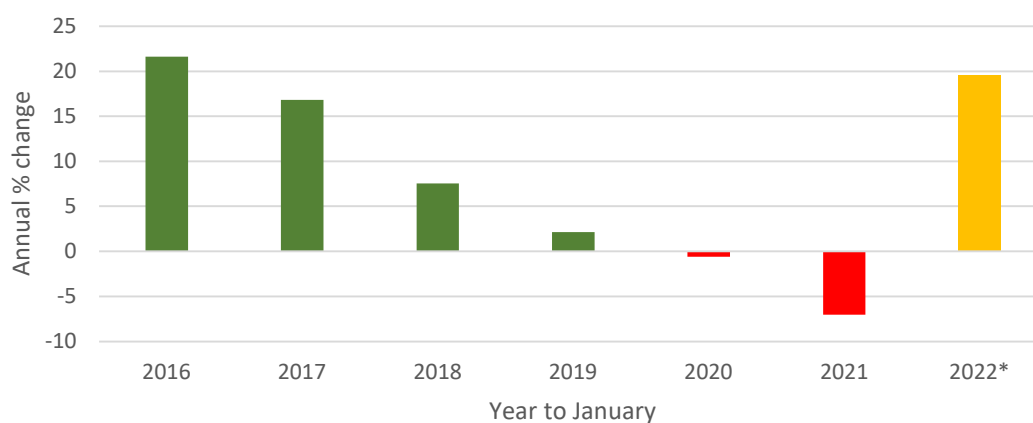
Headcount and Annual Change in Number of Cadets

Year	Headcount	% Change
2015	7,894	
2016	9,603	21.6
2017	11,219	16.8
2018	12,068	7.6
2019	12,329	2.2
2020	12,256	-0.6
2021	11,397	-7.0
2022*	13,632	19.6

National Headcount of Volunteer Police Cadets



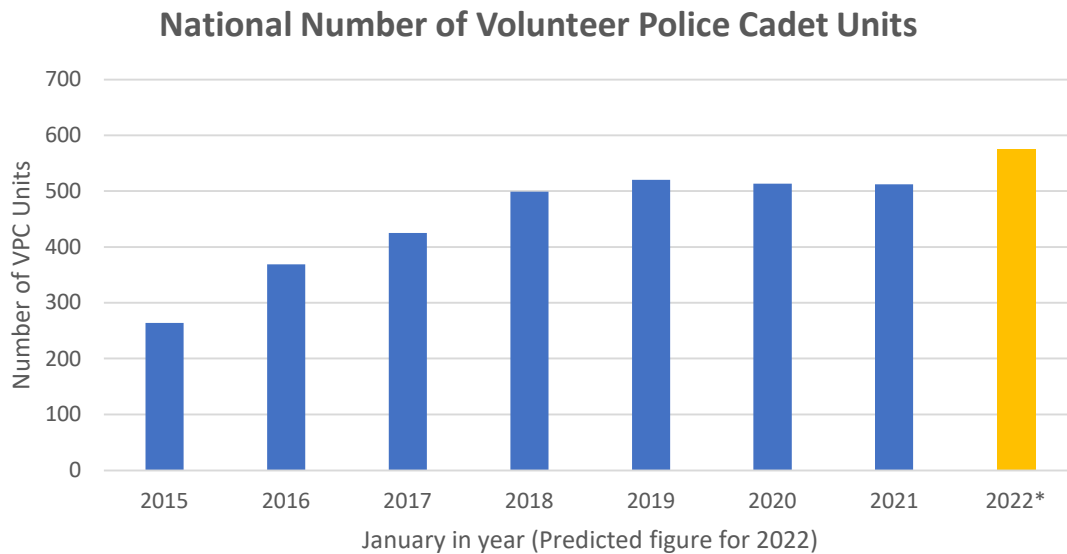
Percentage change in number of VPC



In a similar vein, police forces predicted an expansion of a further 63 additional Cadet Units.

Predicted growth in Cadet Units

Year	All Forces	Metropolitan	Rest of UK
2015	264	90	174
2016	369	130	239
2017	425	156	269
2018	499	165	334
2019	520	158	362
2020	513	163	350
2021	512	163	349
2022*	575	163	412



Looked at regionally, there is planned growth in numbers of Cadets reflected across forces in each of the regions.

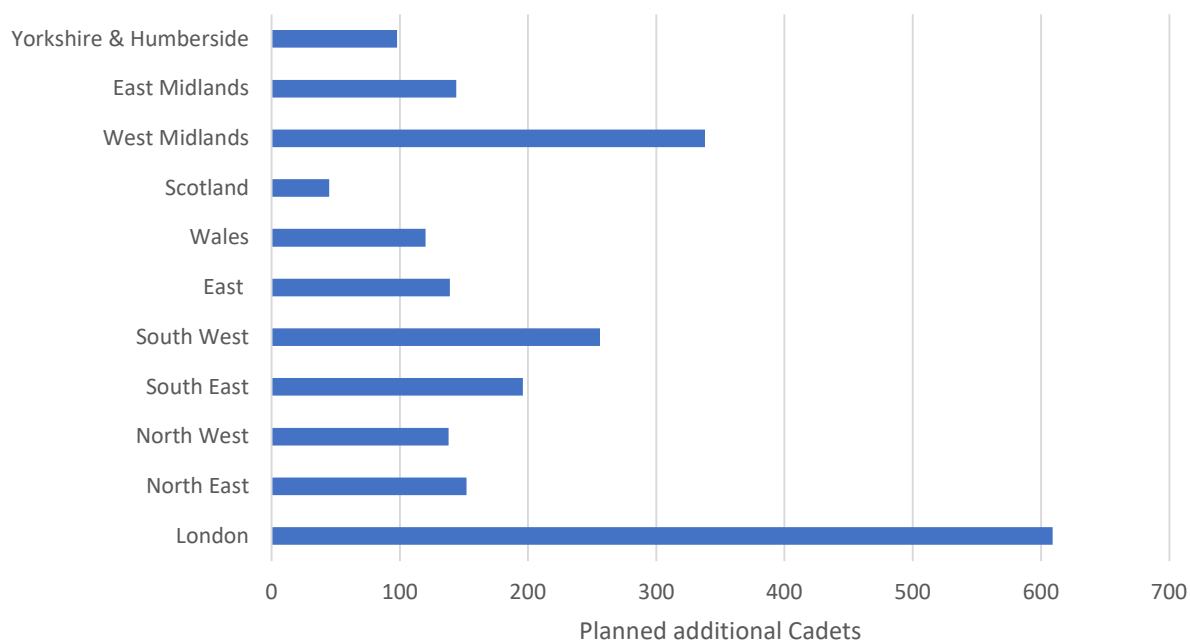
The scale of predicted growth in percentage terms varies between different regions, but in some cases (e.g. the South West, West Midlands, and the North East) it is substantial, with growth predicted of a third or more in numbers in each of those regions within a single year.

Predictions of planned growth by forces in previous VPC Census exercises have proved overly ambitious and have generally, at the level of individual forces, not been realised.

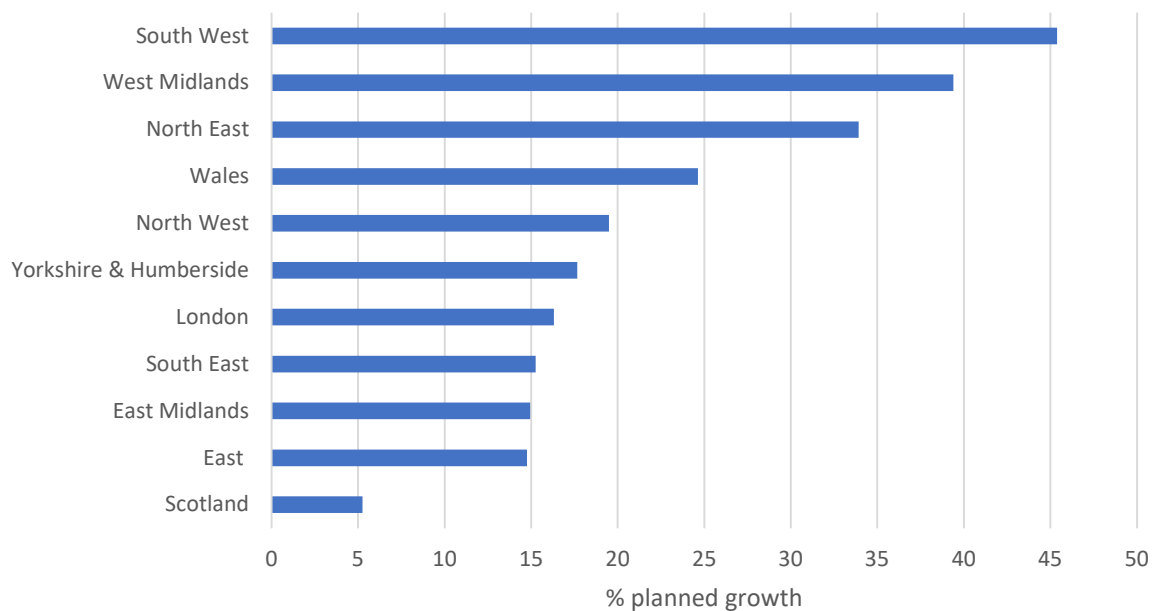
Looking at growth predictions nationally, in 2019 forces predicted growth from 12,329 to 15,398 Cadets by 2020. The outturn position was markedly different, with a largely 'standstill' position of 12,256. Similar large errors of prediction, overestimating growth, are also evident in the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Census returns, reflecting a consistent pattern over time of over-predicting future growth.

Interestingly, in terms of the location of VPC programmes within the wider context of 'Citizens in Policing', the prediction exercises of future growth of Special Constabularies undertaken as part of national Benchmarking Exercises in 2016 and 2018 demonstrated a very similar pattern. Most forces predicted growth in their Special Constabularies, in some cases by quite large amounts, and in virtually all cases instead numbers fell significantly.

Planned growth in Cadet numbers by region, 2021 to 2022



Planned percentage growth in Cadet numbers, 2021 to 2022, by region



3. The Reach and Diversity of the VPC Programme

3.1 Gender

The Volunteer Police Cadets have, consistently, across each of the Census exercises since 2015, demonstrated a broad parity between male and female representation (for those Cadets who would describe themselves as either male or female). The data of female representation in the Cadets has been highly stable over the years, barely shifting in percentage terms from one year to the next,

Percentage of Female Cadets

Year	% VPC Female
2015	47.8
2016	47.9
2017	48.2
2018	49.2
2019	50.4
2021	48.4

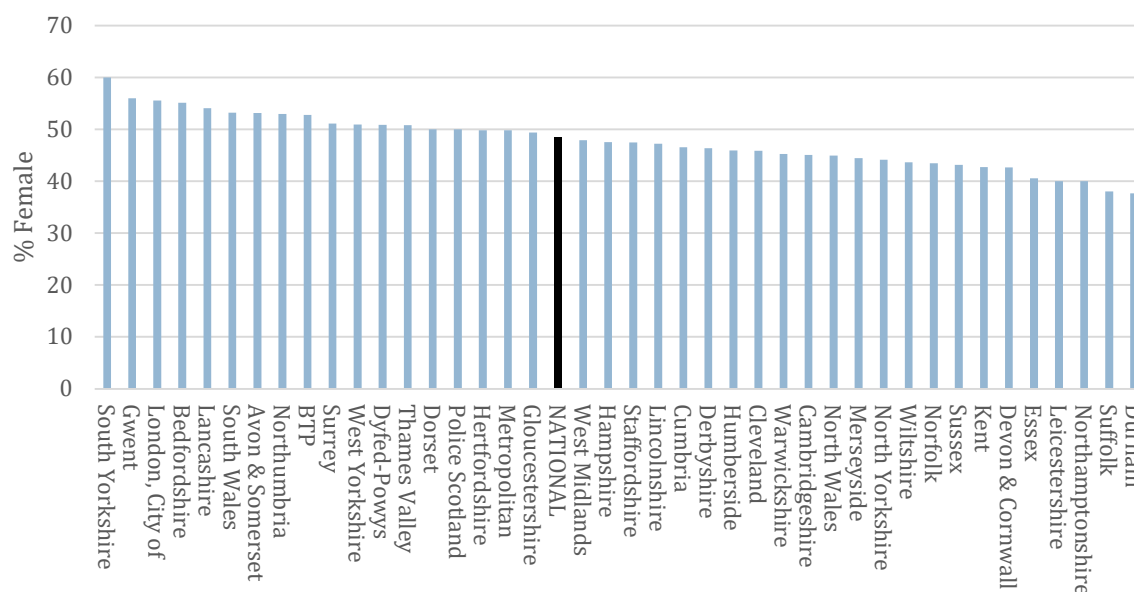
Comparing the female representation in Cadets with other aspects of the police family, the VPC stands out as having a much higher representation of females than is the case for regular officers and for Special Constables.

Female representation across the police family

	% Female
Police staff	61.2
PSV	53.0
Volunteer Police Cadets	48.4
PCSO	46.7
Regular officers	33.4
Special Constables	27.9

Looking across individual police forces, there is quite significant variation in female representation, ranging from under 40%, to 60%.

Percentage of Female Cadets



3.2 Ethnicity

The Volunteer Police Cadets has consistently reflected across Census exercises since 2015 a high proportion of BAME Cadets. In part this has reflected the large-scale programme within the Metropolitan Police, which operates in highly diverse areas and has also been particularly strong in its engagement and reach across the diversity of communities.

This geographical pattern of the VPC programme does not in itself fully 'explain' the strong BAME representation across VPC. In many forces outside of London, the BAME representation of Cadets is significantly higher than that for regular officers, and for other elements of the police family.

Nevertheless, the bulk of BAME Cadets are concentrated within a relatively small number of forces. The Metropolitan Police accounts for 1,625 BAME Cadets, a sizeable 72.5% of the 2,239 BAME Cadets nationally. Other forces with sizeable numbers of BAME Cadets include the West Midlands, where 47.8% of Cadets are BAME, four times the BAME representation of regular officers.

Number of BAME Cadets

Year	% VPC BAME
2015	29.4
2016	29.6
2017	28.4
2018	30.9
2019	27.2
2021	25.5

Looking across the police family, the VPC compares very favourably to other policing roles in terms of BAME representation.

BAME representation across the police family

	% BAME
Volunteer Police Cadets	25.5
Special Constables	11.5
PCSO	10.1
Regular officers	7.4
Police staff	7.3

There remain challenges of data collection in respect of ethnicity of Cadets. Ten forces have partial data (and in some cases, no data at all) in respect of ethnicity.

3.3 Vulnerability

Since the conception of the VPC programme, there has been a focus on attracting and retaining a proportion of young people experiencing 'vulnerability' as part of the wider programme. There has always been some degree of challenge in attaining a stable and consistently applied definition of 'vulnerability', and through the years of the annual census data collected in respect of 'vulnerability' has always remained patchy.

The 2021 data is no exception, with 12 forces not reporting any data in respect of 'vulnerability'. Nevertheless, those forces that did report data identified relatively sizeable numbers of cadets identified as being 'vulnerable', with 1,101 Cadets identified across the police forces returning data, representing 22% of Cadets from those forces that provided a response.

3.4 Disability

Again, there is significant missing data in respect of disability, with thirteen forces not returning any data.

Of those that did, they identified a total of 290 Cadets identified as having a disability. Due to the data gaps, this will be a significant undercount of the actual figure nationally, with a best estimate extrapolated from the limited data being 7-9% of Cadets.

4. Supporting and Leading the VPC programme

The annual Census identified **2,867 leaders** as being actively involved in delivery of the VPC programme.

This comprised of:

- 975 regular police officers being directly involved in delivering the Cadet programme, including 60 being paid full-time to deliver Cadets, 385 being paid part-time, and 530 undertaking Cadet leadership as volunteers in their own time (in reality, a large proportion of those paid to lead Cadets will also be undertaking some activity in their own time as well).
- 224 PCSOs, consisting of 12 being paid full-time, 92 being paid part-time, and 120 volunteering in their own time.
- 226 police staff, with 39 being paid full-time, 26 being paid part-time, and 161 volunteering in their own time.
- 163 Special Constables volunteering their time to lead and support Cadets.
- 1,180 PSVs volunteering their time, and 104 other (non-designated PSV) volunteers.

Overall:

- There were 111 full-time paid leaders.
- 503 part-time paid leaders.
- 2,258 volunteers.

The number of leaders identified in 2021 is a little higher than the figure for 2019, which was estimated to be between 2,300-2,500. However, this may be partly due to an improved methodology for collecting the data in this respect compared to previous Census returns.

The figure of 60 full-time police officers in 2021 is very close to the 62 identified in 2019. In terms of full-time PCSOs and police staff, the methodology of how these figures are collected has been improved, reducing potential for double-counting. In this context, given this methodological change, the 51 identified in the 2021 Census is similar to the 63 in 2019. Broadly speaking, the number of full-time officers and staff deployed to Cadets has therefore remained stable, perhaps falling very slightly. There appears to have been some (again, relatively small) reduction in number of part-time paid roles.

Beyond this, the figures for previous years are hard to compare with the 2021 figures in detail, because of changes in methodology for collection. However, there does seem potentially to have been some growth in volunteer roles, and possibly some reduction overall in the number of police officers directly involved.

5. The Mini Police

The Mini Police has grown significantly over the past five years, from its origins as a programme in Durham Constabulary.

Most Mini Police programmes have had to be paused during the Covid-19 period, meaning that there is some degree of estimation in police force returns in respect of their programmes. Most Mini Police programmes will commence again in earnest in September 2021 when the new school term begins, and pupils are all physically back in school.

The Census in 2021 shows there to be 18 active forces (up from 16 in 2019) in respect of the Mini Police programme. These active forces were:

Wales Gwent, North Wales,

South West: Wiltshire, Devon & Cornwall. Avon & Somerset

South East: TVP

Eastern: Suffolk, Hertfordshire

West Midlands: Warwickshire

East Midlands: Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire

NORTH WEST: Merseyside, Cumbria, Cheshire

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER: South Yorkshire

NORTH EAST: Northumbria, Durham, Cleveland

The largest programme was in Lincolnshire, with the next two largest programmes in Durham and Gwent. Collectively these three programmes account for over half of Mini Police schools nationally.

In addition, Leicestershire and Kent indicated that they were considering Mini Police programmes.

Overall, the scale of the Mini Police programme collectively across the 18 active forces was:

- **494 schools** (up from 388 schools in 2019). This represents growth of 106 schools, 21.5%. This is slightly less than the growth of 160 schools projected by police forces in 2019.
- **8,048 Mini Police** (up from 5,517 Mini Police in 2019, a rise of 2,531 Mini Police, growth of 45.9% between 2019 and 2021).

By 2022, police forces indicated growth plans for an additional 102 schools, with plans to grow into new schools in 12 different police force areas. Such growth would take the number of Mini Police schools to 596.

6. Conclusions

The report had summarised findings from the 2021 VPC Annual Census. The data reflects that whilst the number of Cadets has reduced in the past two years, the Volunteer Police Cadet programme is an important, large-scale, strategic national programme engaging 19,445 children and young people – 8,048 Mini Police and 11,397 Cadets – across 513 Cadet Units and 494 Mini Police schools, delivered with the support of 2,867 leaders.

The final section of this report draws together some key reflections and considerations based on the data.

(1) It remains important to systematically collect annual data

There is no other source of basic data on the numbers and scale of the Volunteer Police Cadet programme. Having seven years of annual Census data provides a valuable data resource in terms of strategically understanding the scale and direction of the programme as a whole across police forces. The basic numbers across the programme will only ever provide part of the picture, and it is important that other data collection and research also continues to be undertaken to provide richer insight. Nevertheless, having this basic data available will be a critical success factor underpinning future resourcing and funding, and informing the ongoing strategic growth of the programme.

(2) Diversity and community reach of the programme

The VPC Census data has consistently over the years reflected the ethnic diversity of Cadets, which in turn reflects the strong community reach of the programme. Underlying the positive statistics of BAME representation is a VPC programme that is very impressive on the ground engaging across communities, many of which policing has traditionally found it difficult to reach, build trust, and engage. This dimension of the VPC programme is a real strength, and strategically can represent an important asset for policing.

(3) Covid-19 and recent trends in numbers

The past year has been highly untypical due to the Covid-19 context, and it is difficult to interpret recent trends in Cadet numbers within this context.

In one interpretation, it appears that over recent years the engine of growth across VPC has been steadily weakening, and the draw-down of numbers in the past year can be seen as being consistent with a continuing trend. However, there is likely also some specific Covid-19 impact reflected in the 2020-2021 reduction, and it may be that some of that reduction is a temporary product of the Covid-19 period and will be recovered once Cadet programmes get fully 'up and running' again, in a more normal, face-to-face operating environment.

There is also uncertainty as to whether the full reduction in Cadet numbers during the Covid-19 period will have been accurately reflected within the 2021 Census data. It may be that reductions have been greater, but that the 'paused' state of many Cadet programmes at the time that the data was collected has resulted in not fully capturing in the data all the young people who have left during the period.

(4) Variation nationally

As has been the case in past years' data from the VPC Census, once again the data this year reflects considerable variation across regions and within individual police forces. At individual force level, there are contexts of significant growth and contexts of significant shrinkage.

There is not a nationally coordinated, collective model of growth evident across the data. Whilst there are patterns of growth and ambitions of future growth in many police forces, it isn't clear from the data that these have been brought together into a single, coordinated national growth strategy.

(5) Plans and predictions for future growth

The Census returns reflect considerable ambition for future growth in the current period 2021-2022. Collectively this represents growth of almost a fifth in terms of Cadet numbers. However, looking across past Census data, previous predictions of growth have consistently proven to be over-estimates of the actual resultant growth patterns. In essence, over the past six years many police forces have repeatedly predicted planned growth in their VPC programmes that has mostly not then materialised.

This may prompt some questions over the strategic planning of growth within police forces and in respect of resourcing and execution of growth plans within individual Cadet programmes at a force level. It may be that some national good practice guidance or advice could be developed, to support police forces in the effective development and execution of future plans for growth of their VPC programmes.

(6) VPC and wider 'Citizens in Policing' strategy and growth

The Volunteer Police Cadet programme has grown to be the largest single component of 'Citizens in Policing' nationally, and this is also the case in many individual police forces.

This is not only through the large number of young people volunteering as Cadets, but also that Cadet leaders are the largest single category of Police Support Volunteers in many police forces. As many as a third of active adult volunteers (not counting the Special Constabulary) in police forces may be involved in the VPC programme. Given the 2,258 adult volunteers involved in VPC, their support and development need to remain a prominent aspect of wider strategy for the future of Police Support Volunteers.

(7) Mini Police

The Mini Police programme has grown to a significant scale, in almost 500 schools and engaging over 8,000 children. After the junior and senior Cadet elements of VPC, the Mini Police represents the second-largest police youth engagement programme in the country, and with well over a third of police forces actively engaged.

Given that the programme has grown significantly and relatively quickly from its small-scale roots in North-East England and is now becoming a key element of policing strategy to engage children and young people in many police forces, there would be benefit in better defining and developing strategy, at national level, across the programme, and in building models of evaluation.

(8) Gaps in the data

There remain important gaps in the data collated through the annual Census, not least in respect of ethnicity, vulnerability, and disability. These elements are not just important in the strategic understanding and development of the programme, but they are also potentially very important in demonstrating the strategic value of the VPC programme, and to evidencing future resourcing, and particularly bids for finance from outside of policing.



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