Introduction

This national benchmarking report presents data across ‘Citizens in Policing’ in England and Wales. With a focus primarily on Special Constables, Police Support Volunteers, Volunteer Police Cadets and volunteers within OPCCs, the report aims:

- To present the most comprehensive available data picture of Citizens in Policing;
- To identify strategic opportunities and challenges, in respect of the ongoing delivery of the Citizens in Policing national strategy, based upon the data;
- To identify key gaps in data.

The data within the benchmarking report is derived from three principal sources:

- A benchmarking survey distributed to the 44 police forces in March 2018 by the Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice (IPSCJ) and completed by all 44 police forces;
- An annual census survey completed by all police forces in January 2018, distributed by the Volunteer Police Cadets national hub and analysed by the IPSCJ, covering Volunteer Police Cadets and the Mini Police;
- Analysis of the national police workforce statistics for England and Wales, which have been published since 1998. The latest iteration of this data was published by the Home Office in July 2018 relating to 31st March 2018. This data set primarily relates to Special Constables, but for the first time includes overall PSV numbers for each force as part of the national data set.
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The scale of Citizens in Policing

The scale of Citizens in Policing is substantial. Delivering (at a very conservative estimate) £70-80m in value per year to policing and with an annual spend estimated in the region of £25-30m. Several hundred people are employed across the delivery of CiP and over 4m voluntary hours are served in policing each year. There are over 38,000 volunteers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special constables</td>
<td>11,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPCs</td>
<td>11,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini police</td>
<td>2,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSVs</td>
<td>8,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers with OPCCs</td>
<td>2,550</td>
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There are additionally many volunteers not directly in police forces but who help deliver policing outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tr>
<td>NHW Coordinators</td>
<td>20,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street pastors</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community speedwatch</td>
<td>13,502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers chaplains</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPC volunteers</td>
<td>1,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim and witness support volunteers</td>
<td>6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other volunteers (lorry watch, horse watch, pooled)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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operating within policing organisations, including 11,992 Special Constables, 8,265 Police Support Volunteers, 2,550 volunteers in OPCCs, 11,995 Volunteer Police Cadets and 2,910 Mini Police. There are also an estimated 40,000+ volunteers in other volunteer roles closely working with policing, including Community Speedwatch, Neighbourhood Watch, victim support services, street pastors and similar roles.

159, and growing to over 300 in next year
Numbers of mini police schools

£70-80 million value

3.2 million
Hours served by Specials

£25-30 million budget

1,089 SCs in specialisms

Over 500 PSVs and SCs
Volunteers in cyber

346 SCs specialising in roads policing

Over 1,100 PSV roles

718,095 Social action hours delivered by VPC per year

886 + Cadet leader paid roles

499 VPC units

300-350 Staff directly employed in delivering CiP
The range of contributions delivered across Citizens in Policing

The benchmarking report reflects the huge range and diversity of roles that volunteers perform across policing, and reflects an expanding role in terms of contribution by volunteers.

There are 1,120 PSV role profiles across the forty-four police forces. This reflects the breadth of activity and contribution of PSVs across forces and significant innovation at the local level. However, there also seems to be considerable duplication of very similar but different PSV roles across forces and considerable scope for consolidation.

The most commonly recurring PSV roles across police forces are:

- Community/neighbourhood engagement, support or consultation;
- Communications support, including newsletters, community messaging, social media, etc.;
- Youth engagement;
- Volunteer Police Cadet related roles;
- Administrative support roles, and within that a number of events organisation or support roles;
- Independent Advisory Groups (overlapping with OPCC volunteers, where this role also commonly sits);
- CCTV;
- Front-counter and similar contact-based roles;
- Chaplaincy, and related roles of chaplaincy coordination and support;
- Support roles relating to the Special Constabulary;
- Support roles in relation to training, including role players;
- Vehicle related roles – cleaning, servicing, volunteer driver schemes, etc.

Key areas of recent growth in roles for PSVs are:

- Cyber;
- Safeguarding, child sexual exploitation, sexual violence prevention, healthy relationships, and similar fields of activity;
- Rural-related roles;
- Victim-related roles, particularly around support and feedback;
- Hate crime related roles.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 legislates for Chief Constables to be able to designate formal policing powers to volunteers (beyond Special Constables) for the first time. Police forces were asked within the benchmarking survey both if they had begun to engage in work to develop volunteer roles involving new powers, and whether they had plans to do so in the future. This is a moving picture, as forces consider and develop their plans. At the time of the benchmarking survey returns in Spring 2018, only one force (Kent) identified it had current activity in this regard. Further to that another three forces indicated that they have more concrete plans for further development (Durham, City of London and Leicestershire). An additional 11 police forces say they are considering it, and a handful of others say they are keeping a ‘watching brief’. The national Citizens in Policing portfolio, working with the College of Policing and IPSCJ, is aiming to develop and then keep updated on the Citizens in Policing national website an overview of those forces who are designating powers to volunteers, to help collate a national strategic picture of the developments, and to develop evaluation across such new initiatives.

In the benchmarking surveys police forces identified 26 Specials and 504 other volunteers relating directly to ‘cyber’, 400 of whom were classified by their force as PSVs. The roles performed in relation to ‘cyber’ vary widely, with some very technical in nature, and some less technical-based and primarily about supporting victims or working with vulnerable people to reduce vulnerability. The ‘Cyber Special Cyber Volunteer’ CSCV scheme has provided some degree of national umbrella and coordination. However, having said that, a sizeable number of local initiatives have also developed separately. As with just about all aspects of CiP, there is a sense of a patchy and inconsistent pattern of development of cyber, with a number of volunteer initiatives developed locally.
There is a positive, expanding picture of specialist roles across Special Constabularies. The number of specialist postings occupied by Special Constables is 1,089. This is a sizeable scale for specialist contribution, albeit it also reflects a very varied picture of the pace and scale of specialist role development across individual forces. The figures would represent broadly one in ten Special Constables having a specialist role, and as the available evidence suggests Specials with longer service are much more likely to be in specialist roles, the proportion of longer-serving Specials in specialist roles is likely to be significantly higher even than that one in ten figure. The largest specialist areas nationally across police forces presently for Special Constables are specialist roads policing (346 Specials), public order roles (140), public protection and safeguarding specialisms (68), specialist training roles (68), and rural crime (57). Investigation is an area of recent expansion of specialist officers, with 42 Specials nationally.

There are some very positive examples of joint working and collaboration highlighted within the report, both across force boundaries and with other organisations. There are some strong examples of collaborative work between police forces, and engaging other partner agencies, including emergency service partners. There are also some strong examples of CiP activity engaging students and colleges/universities. Employer Supported Policing, where employers directly support their employees to volunteer in policing, already exists at some scale across forces, involving an estimated one in eight Special Constables, and over 250 organisations, and there are significant strategic developments ongoing at a national level to further evolve the ESP model.

**Decline in scale of the Special Constabulary**

The Special Constabulary has seen a significant reduction in scale over the past six years, reducing in headcount since 2012 by 41.2%.

**Number of Special Constables, England and Wales**

The reduction in numbers of Special Constables is a product both of the level of recruitment of new Specials being low against the longer-term historical trend, and the scale of resignations from the Special Constabulary being above historical trend.
Annual number of Special Constables recruited, England and Wales

Change in number of Special Constables, by region, 1 year (2017 to 2018)

Annual number of Special Constable resignations, England and Wales

Change in number of Special Constables, by region, 6 years (2012 to 2018)

These reductions have been seen across the majority of police forces, and all regions; albeit the pattern nationally is quite uneven.
Special Constables served 3.22m hours in 2017, which represents a fall of 15.5% from the figure of 3.79m for national hours in 2015. The average hours served per Special Constable has remained stable over the past three years, and the reduction in hours mirrors reductions in the headcount of Special Constables.

Total hours served by Special Constables, England and Wales

There was a slight reduction from 52% in the 2016 benchmarking data to 49.1% in the 2018 data, for the proportion of Special Constabulary cohort undertaking 16 hours or more per month. 11.1% of Specials were dormant (not serving any hours), 9.4% were pre-attestation and 13.4% unfit or on leave of absence.
There continues to be substantial growth across the Volunteer Police Cadets, and also significant future planned growth over the next two years. The growth of the VPC has been rapid and substantial, growing to a figure of 11,995 VPC across forces in January 2018. The number of VPC Units across forces has doubled since 2015 to 500 Units. There are significant plans for future growth, with an increase to 15,000 Cadets planned by 2020 across police forces. The pattern of growth nationally in the VPC is also shifting. Whilst the Met remains the police force with the highest concentration of VPC per population, the bulk of growth over the past two years, and the bulk of the planned increase in numbers over the next two years, is outside of London. In terms of percentage growth, the VPC has been the fastest growing uniformed youth organisation in the country.

Stability in the numbers of Police Support Volunteers

Nationally, the number of Police Support Volunteers seems to have remained broadly stable over the past two years. The 2018 benchmarking survey recorded 8,265 PSVs, a slight increase on the 8,106 recorded by forces in 2016. Whilst the 2018 figure in the national workforce statistics (the first time PSVs have been counted in this national statistical publication) is missing data from two forces, extrapolated to represent all forces, that figure comes out very similarly to the benchmarking survey based national total, at 8,093.
Bolstering further the growth in numbers of young people engaged across Citizens in Policing, the Mini Police has expanded rapidly, in terms of number of young people engaged, number of schools and number of participating police forces.

### National (UK) trend in Volunteer Police Cadets

![National trend in Volunteer Police Cadets graph](image)

The 2018 figure of 2,550 are estimations based on data which is missing returns from some areas. The 2018 data set is much more complete than was the case in 2016 (37 OPCC responses in 2018, 22 in 2016). Given the gaps in data, whilst the estimated number has fallen, it is difficult to know whether this represents a real reduction. There are also some indications, from other data sources, that the actual figure may be significantly higher than 2,550. This clearly reflects that there remains a challenge of gathering comprehensive data in respect of OPCC volunteers.

### Length of Service

A majority of PSVs, OPCC volunteers and Special Constables are relatively 'new in service', within the first 2 or 3 years of their voluntary careers. Overall, the data reflects clear challenges in effectively retaining volunteers longer-term. To put this in context, approximately 5,000 of the current cohort of Specials and 3,800 of current PSVs have commenced their voluntary roles in policing since the previous data for the 2016 CiP benchmarking report was collected. Likewise, roughly 9,000 Specials and roughly 3,700 PSVs have left their voluntary roles in the same period. This reflects a considerable 'churn' across the policing volunteer population. Nevertheless, there is also a sizeable minority of longer-serving volunteers in each volunteer category.

A majority of the Special Constabulary cohort are in the relatively early years of service, with 55% in their first three years of service. 30% of current Special Constables have served five years or more, and only 10% ten years or more.

### Number of OPCC volunteers

Both the 2016 and 2018 benchmarking surveys have had incomplete returns from OPCCs in respect of OPCC volunteers. As such, both the 2016 figure of 2,900 and...
Over a fifth of PSVs are in their early years of service, with 22.9% in their first year of service, and a further 21.3% in their second year of service. Less than one in five PSVs (18%) have served five years or more, whilst that figure reduces to one in twenty (4.9%) for ten years and over.

The length of service profile for OPCC volunteers is interestingly different to that for PSVs. Whilst a similar proportion (just under one in five, at 19.4%) have served less than one year, the proportion of the volunteer cohort who have served over five years is much higher, with 38.3% of volunteers having served five years or more, and 11.1% (one in nine) having served over 10 years. This data suggests that there is a greater proportion of longer-serving OPCC volunteers than is the case for PSVs or Special Constables.
**Age of Volunteers**

The age profile of different volunteer roles across Citizens in Policing varies widely. Special Constables have a skew towards younger age groups, with a peak in numbers in the early twenties. This is reflective of patterns of recruitment of Specials who are interested in a pathway into paid careers as a Regular officer. In contrast, PSVs and OPCC volunteers engage a large number of 50+ volunteers.

**Age of Special Constables**

![Age Profile of Special Constables](chart)

**Age Profile of Police Support Volunteers**

![Age Profile of Police Support Volunteers](chart)

**Diversity of volunteers**

Representation of black and minority ethnic backgrounds tends to be higher across CiP than for other elements of the policing family. The Volunteer Police Cadets have a very positive BME representation, markedly higher than any other aspect of the policing family, at 30.9%. The Special Constabulary has higher BME representation than is the case for Regular officers. The data for PSVs and for OPCC volunteers is insufficiently complete to identify a reliable sense of the national picture.

The BME representation across CiP in different police forces needs to be understood in the context of wide differences in diversity of the communities that different police forces serve.
2018 Benchmarking Exercise Summary

Proportion of BME Special Constables, BME Regular officers and BME population

Proportion of BME Volunteer Police Cadets and BME % of force area population

% BME Specials | % BME Regulars | % BME Population

% BME - VPC | % BME - Population
Gender of volunteers

Female engagement is high across PSVs, OPCC volunteers and the VPC, but women are less well represented amongst Special Constables. The proportion of female Specials has changed little in the past two decades, and female Specials are under-represented across promoted ranks, in specialisms and amongst longer-serving Specials. Two decades ago, the Special Constabulary had significantly higher proportions of female officers and recruits than was the case for Regulars. Over the past twenty years the Regular service has closed that gap, increasingly female representation of Regulars as the Specials Constabulary has ‘stood still.’

Proportion of Police Constables who are female, Special Constables and Regulars

Wider elements of engagement and diversity

There remain fundamental shortcomings to the data available in respect of volunteers who are registered disabled or who consider themselves to have a disability. The national survey responses reflect a far higher proportion identifying as disabled than force data provided in the benchmarking surveys suggests. Data in relation to LGBT+ similarly remains very limited.

Supporting and resourcing Citizens in Policing

There are in the region of 300-350 paid posts nationally directly supporting Citizens in Policing. In addition, several hundred paid and voluntary roles also provide some support across CiP. The VPC is particularly heavily staffed, involving over 2,000 roles (some paid and some voluntary) across the 500 Units nationally. It is challenging to identify overall spend in respect of Citizens in Policing, but a working estimate of overall budget might be somewhere in the region of £25-30m.
**Wide variations across police forces**

There remains a very high degree of variation of practice across police forces in almost all aspects of Citizens in Policing. National averages typically conceal an enormous variation and inconsistency of practice across police forces. In terms of both total hours served, and hours served per officer, the 44 Special Constabularies reflect wide variation across both measures.

**Hours Served by Special Constables (per 100k population, 2017)**

![Histogram showing variations in hours served by special constables across police forces.](image1)

**Average hours served by each Special Constable (per month, 2017)**

![Histogram showing average hours served by special constables across police forces.](image2)

For Special Constables, PSVs and VPCs, the overall numbers vary widely across police forces.

**Headcount of Specials (Specials per 100k population)**

![Map showing headcount variations across police forces.](image3)

There remain some inconsistencies in terms of the working PSV definition across forces, and there also remain some data quality assurance issues at force level in respect of PSV numbers, so comparisons of numbers across forces are challenged by both the data quality and the definitional issues.
There is a wide variation in VPC numbers across police forces. The Metropolitan Police retains the greatest concentration of Cadets. In terms of the distribution of VPC per 100k population, only eight forces sit above the national average (reflecting the ‘pull’ on that average caused by the large figures within the Met), and a sizeable proportion of forces have numbers of Cadets well below that national average position. At the time the data was collected in January 2018 Cumbria and Dorset stated they had no Cadets; Cumbria has since commenced an extensive roll out of its VPC programme.

Strengthening national and regional arrangements
Over the past two years there have been some significant steps taken towards strengthening national and regional arrangements, and some significant developments of national strategy.

However, CiP essentially remains primarily resourced and focused at force-level, with a comparatively small national core, an (albeit growing) limited regional infrastructure, and a very wide divergence across local practice.

Building the data
Whilst this benchmarking report reflects some significant improvements in the quality and availability of data across CiP over the past two years, data collection and management still needs to be improved. to enhance understandings of ‘value’ and performance across CiP. Data remains particularly limited in respect of Police Support Volunteers and OPCC volunteers.
There remain key limitations to understanding 'value' and contribution across Citizens in Policing. It is more important to understand the outputs and outcomes of Citizens in Policing than it is to understand the headcount of volunteers. However, the current availability and quality of data limits such outcomes-based analysis.

The approaches to review exercises, evaluations and consultancy across police forces in respect of Citizens in Policing remains disjointed. 52 review or research projects were identified as having been undertaken in police forces over the past two years. There is very little coordination or collaboration exhibited across these review exercises, and very little if any wider sharing and dissemination of findings.

There is significant ongoing activity coordinated at a national level to strengthen approaches to data in respect of capturing and understanding outcomes and benefits of CiP, and to develop national models of 'value frameworks' across CiP. There is also ongoing work to quantify the financial worth of CiP. This work includes a pilot project led on by the IPSCJ and engaging Essex Police and other partners which is aiming to develop value and financial data across the Special Constabulary.