

National Survey of Special Constables

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Introduction

The Special Constabulary is receiving more and more attention as pressures on policing persist and the need for policing to engage and involve communities in new and different ways grows. Increasingly, police leaders, practitioners, policymakers and the public recognise the value, impact and potential of Special Constables in supporting and delivering policing services. In particular, our focus is drawn to the specialist skills, abilities and experiences of the diverse individuals that make up the Special Constabulary and the blurring of the boundaries of the frontline roles they have traditionally played. This is reflected in both the Policing Vision 2025 and the Neighbourhood Policing Guidelines published by the College of Policing, which recognise the importance of engaging volunteers in preventing crime, building resilient communities and strengthening police-community relationships.

The development of the National Citizens in Policing Strategy and growing workstreams across innovation, piloting new practice, developing new partnerships, capturing value and expanding communications demonstrates the rapid growth in interest and investment in this area of the police family. The support of the Home Office Transformation Fund to build research evidence and to pilot new practice across eighteen forces has contributed significantly to speeding up progress in this area.

This report provides the findings of a National Survey of Special Constables conducted in Spring 2018, capturing the views and experiences of individuals across all forces in England and Wales. It draws comparisons to a previous survey undertaken in 2016 and uses the analysis to point to opportunities to improve the experience, contribution and impact of the Special Constabulary.

These findings sit alongside a partner report presenting the findings of the National Survey of Police Support Volunteers, which also reflects participation across all forces in England and Wales.

These survey reports accompany the National Benchmarking of Citizens in Policing, capturing the scale, scope, contribution and investment across the portfolio of volunteering in policing in England and Wales, including the Special Constabulary, Police Support Volunteers, Volunteer Police Cadets, Mini Police and those who volunteer for Police and Crime Commissioners.

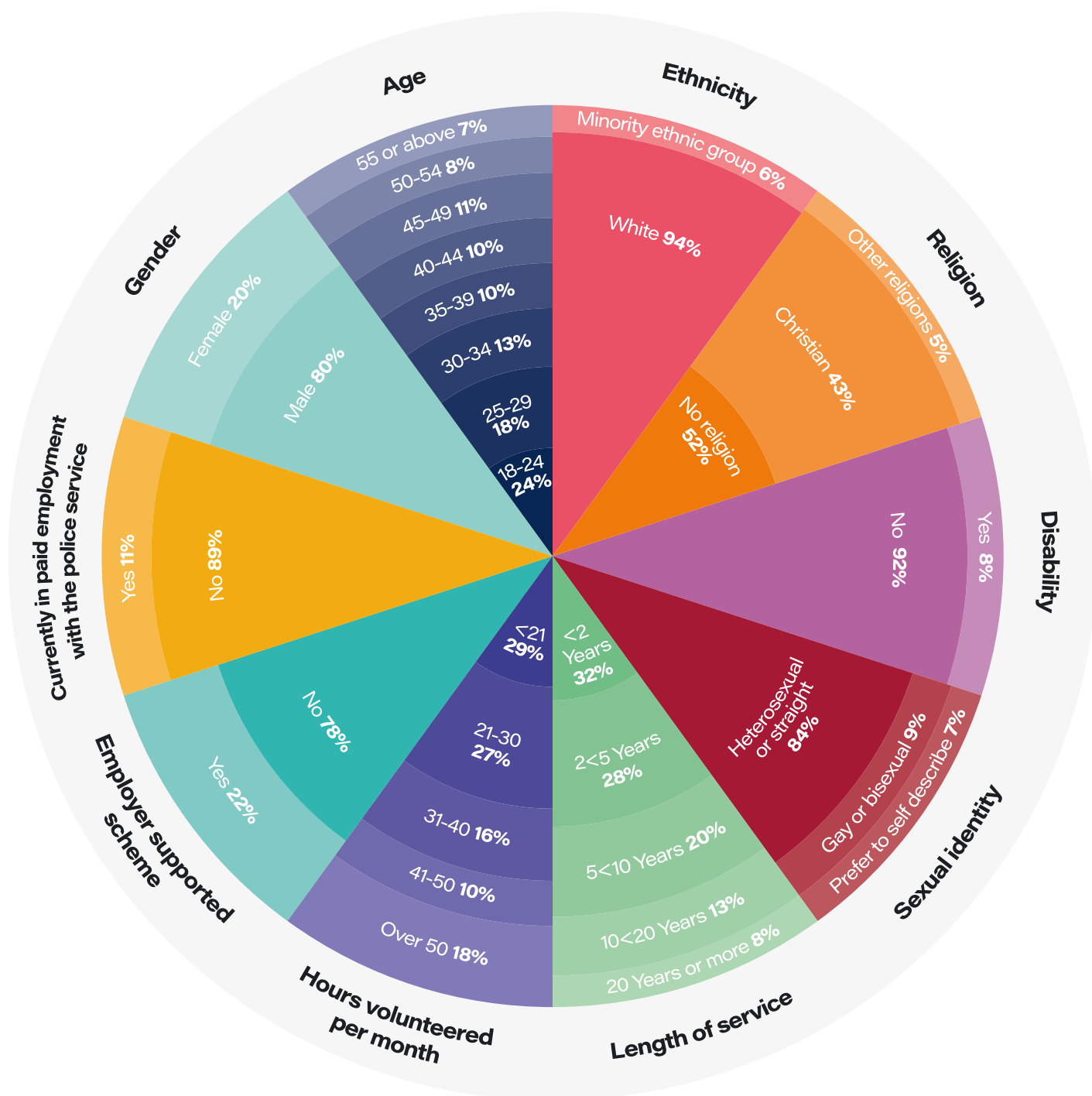
These national research exercises were commissioned by Chief Constable Dave Jones, the previous National Police Chiefs' Council's business lead for Citizens in Policing, working with the national Citizens in Policing Strategic Board. This governance structure brings together key stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, including the Home Office, College of Policing, Association of Special Constabulary Officers, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, Neighbourhood Watch, and representatives of the wider voluntary sector.

This report will inform the strategic development of the national Citizens in Policing agenda and the emerging plans to deliver the Special Constabulary Strategy 2018 – 2023.

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Survey Sample



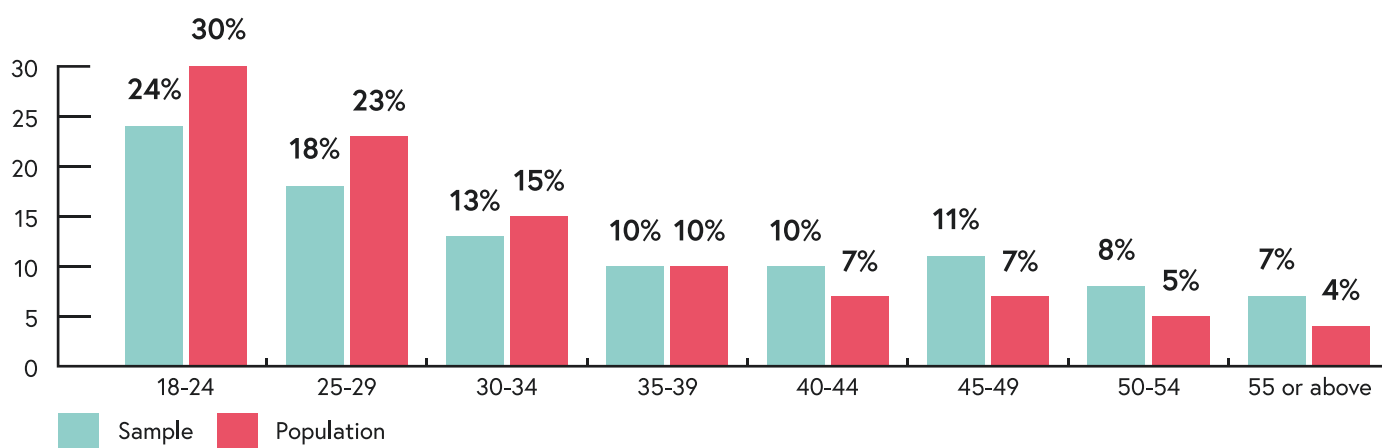
There were 1,829 Specials who completed the survey, which represents a 16% response rate. National benchmarking data (Britton et al., 2018) show that there are 11,539 Specials nationwide. This section outlines the survey sample in terms of who took part and how that compares to the population of Specials as a whole obtained in the national benchmarking exercise.

As can be seen from the infographic on the previous page, females represent a minority within the sample (20%). This,

however, is relatively reflective of the actual population of Specials where females comprise 28%.

The figure below shows the age range of the sample as compared to the actual population. It illustrates that while the younger age groups are under-represented (18-34), the older age groups are over-represented (40 and above). It should be noted that data concerning age profiles from 16 forces were missing in the benchmarking exercise.

Age representation of sample compared to national benchmarking



Specials from a minority ethnic background are also under-represented in the sample as they constitute 6% of the sample compared to 11% of the population. The largest minority group in the sample was Asian or Asian British (2.7%) followed by those from a mixed or multiple ethnic group (1.7%), those from an 'other' ethnic group (0.9%) and Black or Black British (0.8%). Unfortunately, due to small numbers, differences between these individual minorities could not be compared and so, like many studies, they are combined into one group and compared against the majority group of White respondents.

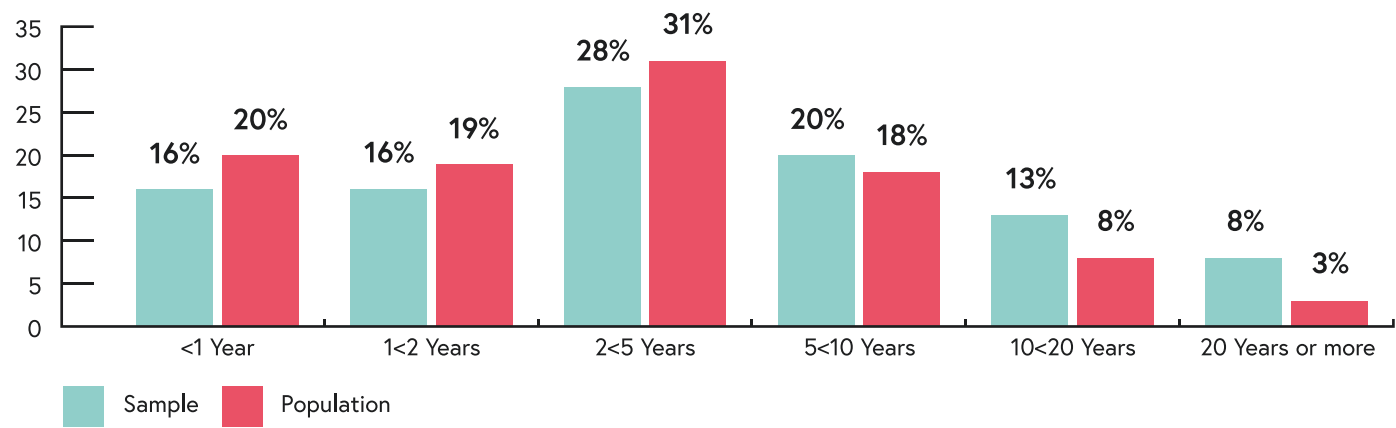
The infographic also illustrates that about half of Specials (52%) in the sample stated that they are of 'No religion' and 43% indicated that they are 'Christian'. As with ethnicity, those from minority religions were too small in number to allow for reliable analysis of differences in experience and were therefore combined as 'Other religions'. There are no benchmarking data to provide an understanding of

the representation of different religions in the sample as compared to the actual population.

The infographic shows that 8% of Specials considered themselves to have a disability and there are no benchmarking data to allow a comparison with the actual population. The infographic also illustrates that 9% of the sample described their sexuality as 'gay' or 'bisexual', a further 7% would self-describe and the remaining described themselves as heterosexual or straight (84%). There is no benchmarking data to allow a comparison with the actual population.

The figure below shows how long participants in the sample have served as a Special as compared to the actual population. Although the sample largely reflects the distribution of service in the actual population, those newer in service (<5 years) are under-represented and those older in service are over represented (5 years and over).

Length of service of specials in sample compared to national benchmarking

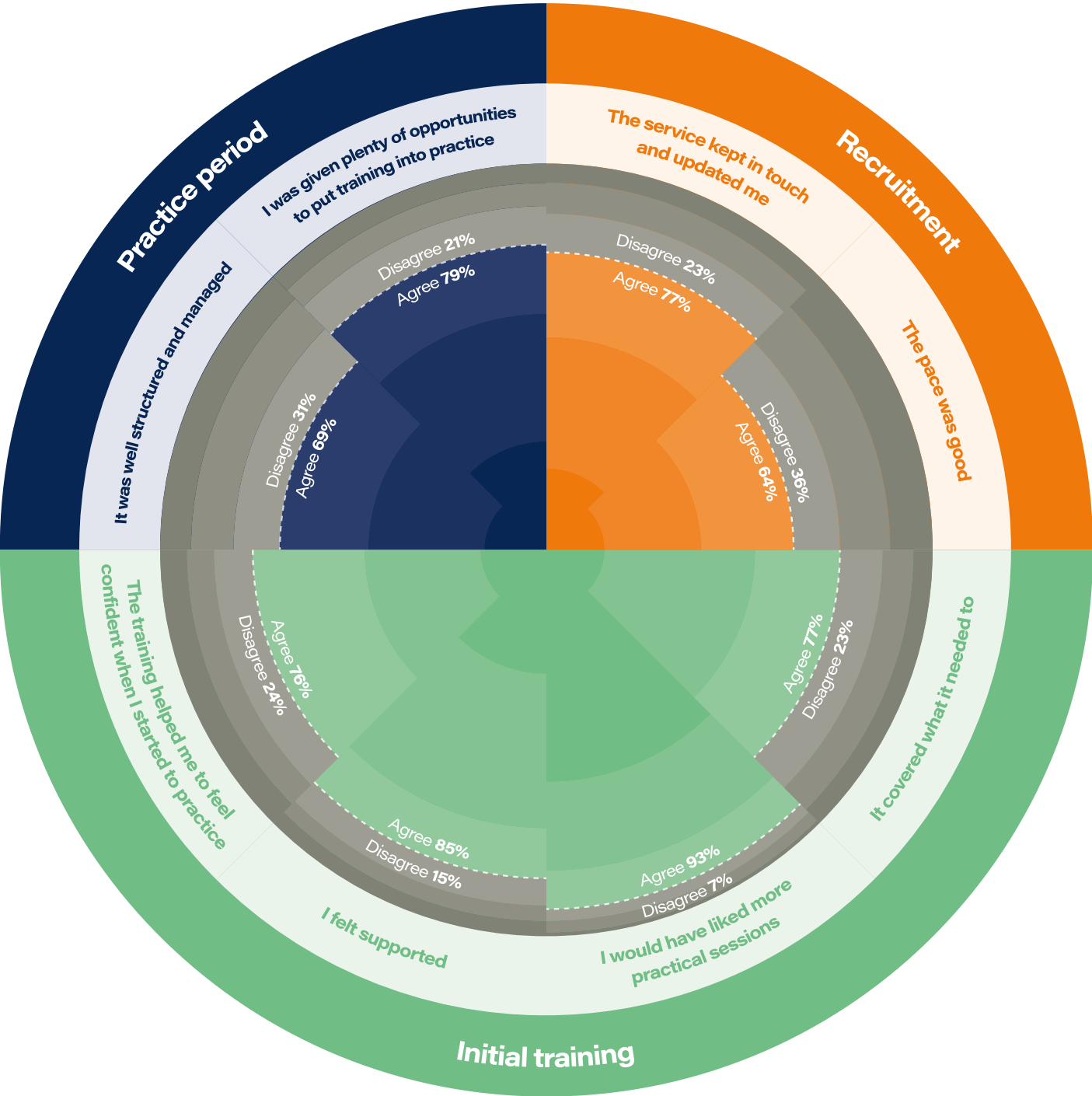


The infographic illustrates that 29% of the sample volunteer 20 hours or less a month, with a majority volunteering between 16-20 hours (22%) and the remaining do less than 16 hours (6%). The next largest proportion within the sample volunteered more than 20 and up to 30 hours (27%) and nearly a fifth (18%) stated that they volunteered over 50 hours. The sample comprised a high proportion of active Specials, compared to benchmarking data which suggests that 27% of Specials are inactive and 19% do less than 16 hours. This is expected as those who are 'dormant', for example on a leave of absence, or are

not completing a large number of hours, are less likely to complete a survey about their experiences.

A fifth of Specials (22%) within the sample were Specials who were registered as part of an Employer Supported Scheme. This is higher than in the actual population which is estimated to be around 12%. It is noted that around 1 in 10 (11%) of the sample were also currently in paid employment with the police service and it is unknown if this is representative of the actual population.

Recruitment, Training and Competency Development



Recruitment, Training and Competency Development

Recruitment

The recruitment, training and initial practice periods are critical stages within the lifespan for Special Constables. During recruitment, two key issues were identified: pace of recruitment and keeping recruits informed. Over a third (36%) of recent recruits, those recruited in the past 2 years, disagreed that the pace of recruitment was good and nearly a quarter (23%) disagreed that the force kept them updated.

"Needs to be faster to capture the candidate's enthusiasm. Six months from application to training start runs the risk of a candidate losing interest"

Suggested improvements included better communication about how long each stage would take, acknowledgement that recruits are in the process, regular correspondence, creating an online tracking system and better communication of practical information for when training will be held. Recruits commented that the long periods of 'radio silence' meant that some recruits lose interest and 'moved on with their lives'.

"Better communication on status of application. 3 years from application to starting training!"

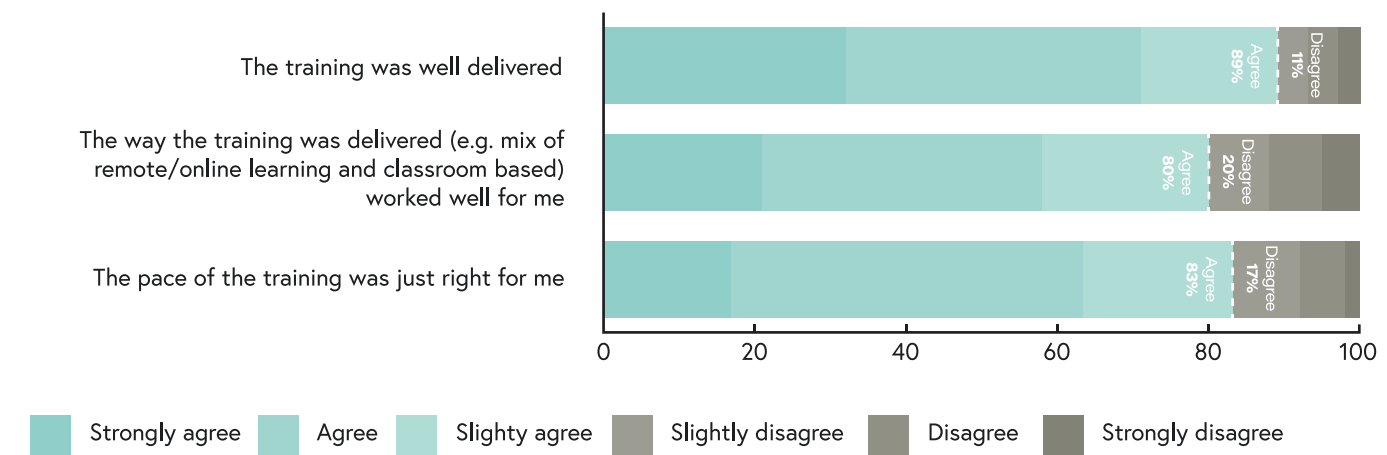
Comparing the results for 2018 with those captured in the 2016 survey, there was no significant change to the proportion (83%) of those who felt supported through the process, though recent recruits were less likely to agree that the recruitment process was managed well, 78%, compared to 83% in 2016. Agreement that what was involved in being a Special was well explained from the start was also lower at 91% compared to 95% in 2016.

Training

The results for training were very positive, with 9 in 10 (89%) Specials agreeing that their training was well delivered, with 3 in 10 (32%) of these strongly agreeing. However, as can also be seen from the figure below, a fifth of Specials disagreed that the way the training was delivered (e.g. a mix of remote/online learning and classroom based) worked well and that the pace of the training was right for them, 20% and 17% respectively.

"Delivered well, although I felt some topics/stages well a little rushed through whilst on-site training"

Perspectives on training



A very high proportion of Specials, 93%, (with 60% 'strongly agreeing') would have liked there to have been more practical sessions during their training (see the infographic on the previous page), with identified improvements being more role play and scenario-based sessions to consolidate their learning and prepare them for the reality of being on the front line.

"I feel for myself I would have liked a lot more practical sessions, for the fact that when I finally got out on the streets to real life jobs, I struggled in situations as most of my training was sat in a classroom only talking about it when coming face to face with the reality, I felt I wasn't too sure what I should be doing."

About a quarter of the sample disagreed that the initial training covered the things it needed to cover (23%) and that the training helped them to feel confident when they started practicing as a Special Constable (24%).

"Focus more on the things that matter to Specials. It's pointless training on burglary packs, investigating sexual offences etc. when Specials are never utilised in this way. I feel more time should be spent on core powers that will be used day in, day out."

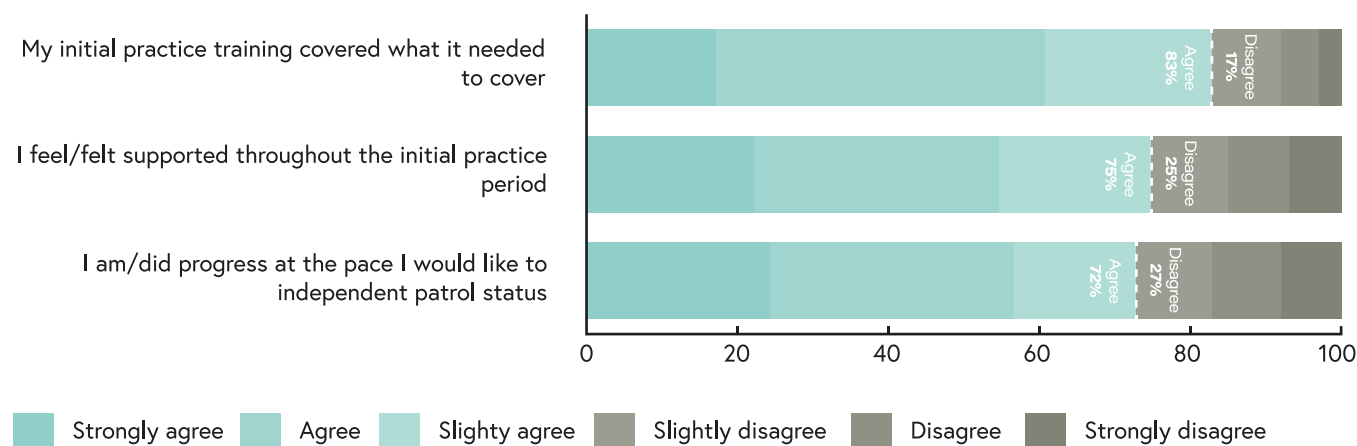
Competency Development

For the first time in the survey, experiences of competency development were captured, and the results were less positive compared to recruitment and training. Nearly a third of recent recruits (30%) disagreed that their period of initial practice and competency development was well structured and managed. One fifth (20%) also disagreed that once they began the training they were given plenty of opportunities to put training into practice. Suggested improvements included ensuring that Specials have a dedicated mentor or supervisor, that what each team and Special was provided with in terms of support and opportunities was consistent and that this phase was well managed and organised in terms of being assigned appropriate shifts.

"On my first day I turned up at the station and nobody seemed to be expecting me (despite me having informed the right group about my start). My introduction into the team felt disorganised and unmanaged, and I was left to myself to set things up."

Levels of disagreement with statements for initial practice as a Special were also notably high for progressing at the pace they would like to towards independent patrol status, 27%, support through their initial practice period, 25%, and the training covering what it needed to cover, 17%.

Perceptions of initial practice and competency

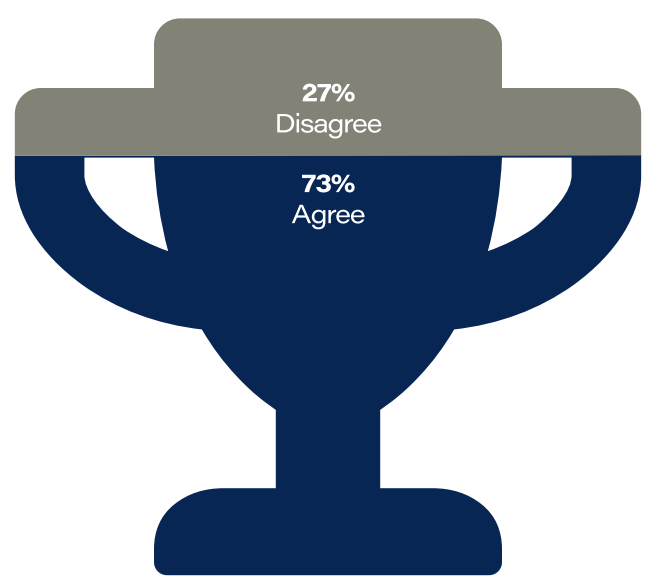


Key Points and Implications

- The results regarding the recruitment of Specials were broadly positive and did not significantly differ to the results in 2016, though the evidence suggests there is a need to better engage, and at a faster pace, with individuals when they express an interest in becoming a Special, capitalising upon their initial interest. Moreover, once engaged within the recruitment process, more information is required to keep recruits appraised of progress on a more regular basis.
- A key challenge raised within the initial training is the development of skills and confidence to practice skills, which for many was lacking. Specials suggest that more practical sessions in terms of role play and scenario-based sessions could improve confidence when embarking on their initial practice and competency period.
- Finally, the results concerning initial practice and competency development received more negative results compared with recruitment and training, representing a key transitional period in need of attention. The findings indicate that this phase within the life span of being a Special was less well managed and more structure and consistency is required in terms of supervision and having a dedicated mentor.

Reward, Recognition and Relationships

My efforts as a special constable are well recognised



Efforts are well recognised by age and length of service

	Less than 2 years	Over 2 but less than 5 years	Over 5 but less than 10 years	Over 10 but less than 20 years
18-29	86%	63%	57%	56%
30-39	87%	74%	61%	60%
40-49	85%	79%	72%	65%
50+	91%	85%	79%	74%
All groups	87%	70%	66%	66%

Reward, Recognition and Relationships

In the 2016 national survey of Specials the results relating to reward and recognition were found to have the strongest association with morale. In the 2018 survey, three quarters of Specials felt that their efforts were well recognised (73%), which is not significantly different to 2016 (72%), although this leaves one quarter feeling their efforts were not well recognised (27%). In addition, of those who did agree, only a small proportion strongly agreed (16%). The picture is similar for the proportion of Specials who felt that the service appreciated their contribution.

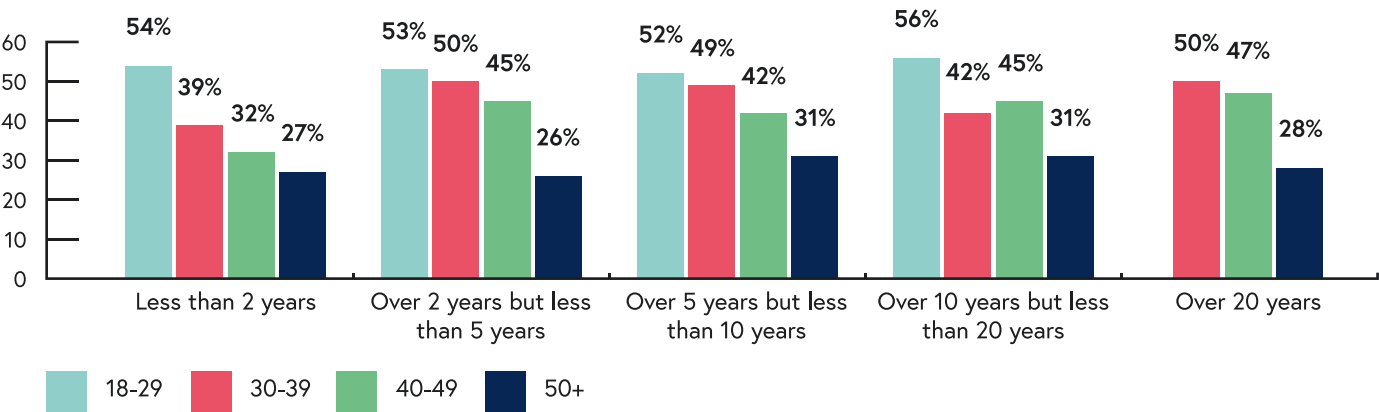
Analysis shows that length of service is associated with feelings of recognition, where in the first two years of service 87% felt that their efforts were well recognised, which decreased significantly to 68% for those with service over 2 years. The infographic on the previous page illustrates the extent to which feeling recognised decreased after the first 2 years of service varies between age groups, with the most significant decreases being identified for 18-29 years from 86% to 63% and 30-39 years from 87% to 74%.

The analysis demonstrates that Specials feeling that their efforts are recognised is important to retention, as nearly a quarter (23%) of those who did not feel that their efforts were recognised were planning to leave in the next 6 months compared to 9% of those that did feel their efforts are recognised.

"I don't feel like the effort I put in is being rewarded. I feel like I'm being taken for granted."

Nearly all Specials, 94%, agreed that they had good relationships with the regular officers that they engage with, with 8 out of 10 who felt part of a team (83%) and a similar proportion who felt that regular officers were perceived to respect and value the contribution they make (81%). However, almost half (46%) agreed that they were sometimes made to feel like a burden rather than a help by regular officers. Within each length of service, the youngest age group (18-29 years) were most likely to feel a burden, a trend that decreased consecutively by age group.

Perspectives of feeling like a burden rather than a help by regular officers, by age and length of service



A quarter of Specials (24%) disagreed that they are treated with respect and a fifth (19%) disagreed that they are treated fairly. Again, Specials feeling that they were treated fairly and were respected also significantly decreased

after the first 2 years of service. Of Specials who were in a leadership role, 8 in 10 (79%) agreed that Regular Officers are supportive of them in their current role and this did not significantly change across ranks.

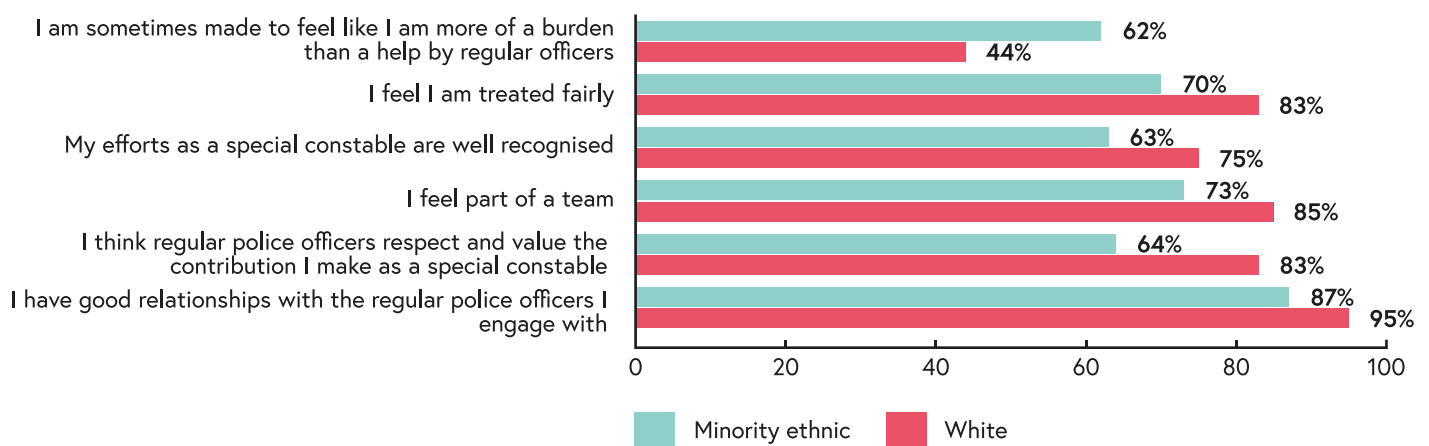
"Fed up with poor management and being seen as a second-class individual by the force. All regular officers are equipped with a mobile smart phone, body cam, taser (if they choose) and as a special we have none of these items issued. I don't understand how a special is less needy of a taser than a regular!!! We are obviously disposable!!"

Those from a minority ethnic group were significantly less likely to feel that they have good relationships with regular officers, that their contribution was valued and respected, that they felt part of a team, that their efforts were recognised and they were treated fairly. They were

significantly more likely to agree that they are sometimes made to feel like a burden.

Furthermore, those with a disability were significantly more likely to indicate that they were sometimes made to feel like a burden than those without (54% to 45% respectively) and were less likely to agree that their efforts are recognised (67% to 74% respectively). These results demonstrate the heterogeneity of experience within the Special Constabulary, signifying the importance of better understanding the experiences of minority and marginalised groups.

Ethnic differences in perspectives of treatment and relationships



It is important to note that over half of the sample (53%) of Specials from an ethnic minority background are located in the Met, which was impactful within the national analysis. When considering variation within the results concerning ethnicity for all forces outside of the Met, a reduction in significant results was expected given the reduction in

sample size. However, significant differences remained for Specials feeling like a burden and having good relationship with regular officers, which provides assurance that the results presented above do not entirely derive from a 'Met effect'.

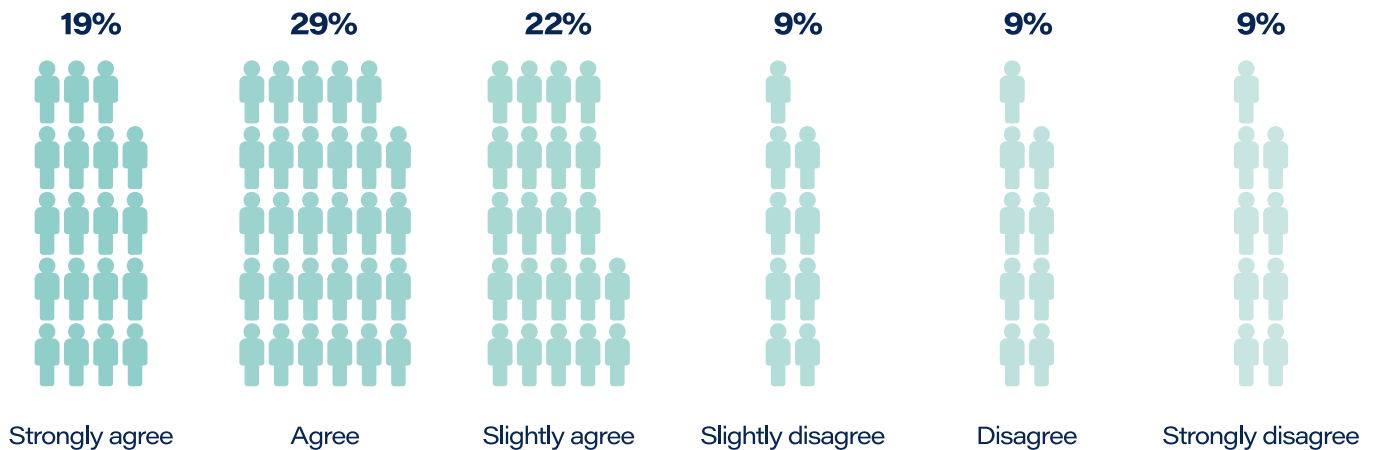
Reward, Recognition and Relationships

Key Points and Implications

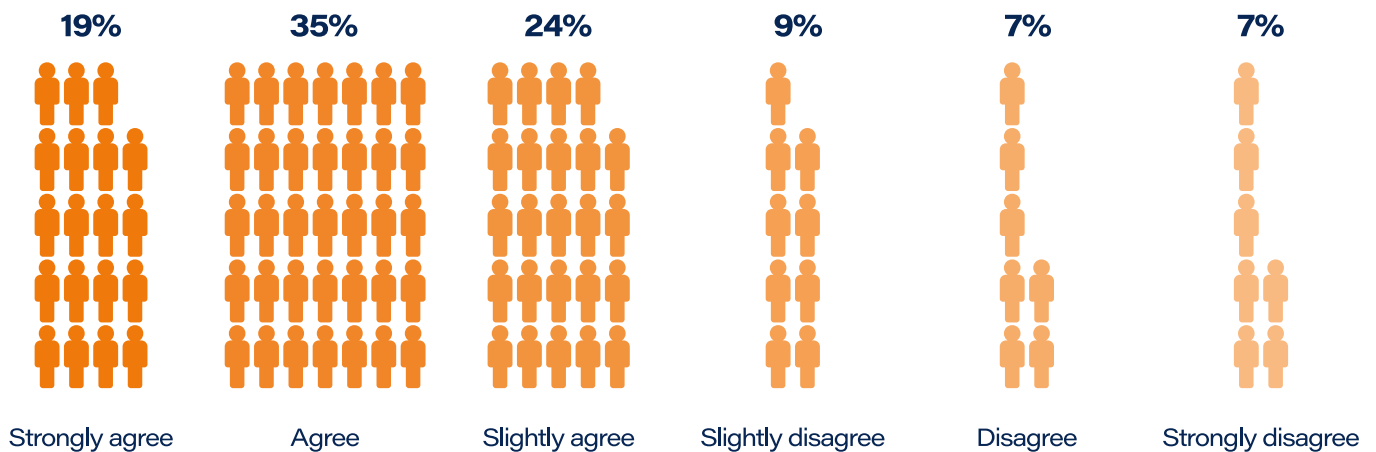
- The results in relation to recognition, fairness and respect were largely positive, particularly during the initial training and practice period of being a Special. However, the results significantly decline for those with service over 2 years and most notably for those aged 18-29.
- Feeling recognised and appreciated for their contribution is associated with intentions to leave the Special Constabulary in the next 6 months and therefore plays an important role in the retention agenda.
- A half of Specials have felt like a burden at times, which is more likely for those aged 39 and under but persists throughout length of service.
- Specials from a minority ethnic background are more likely to feel like a burden and less likely to report positively against all measures of recognition, value and relationships with regular officers. This is explored further in a subsequent section on Discrimination and Differences in Experiences.

Management and Support

I receive emotional support (trust, care, compassion) within my role



I receive practical support (tangible support with tasks or duties) within my role



3 in 10

Specials did not feel they receive emotional support such as trust, care or compassion within their role

2 in 10

Specials did not think they receive practical support such as tangible support with tasks or duties within their role

2 in 10

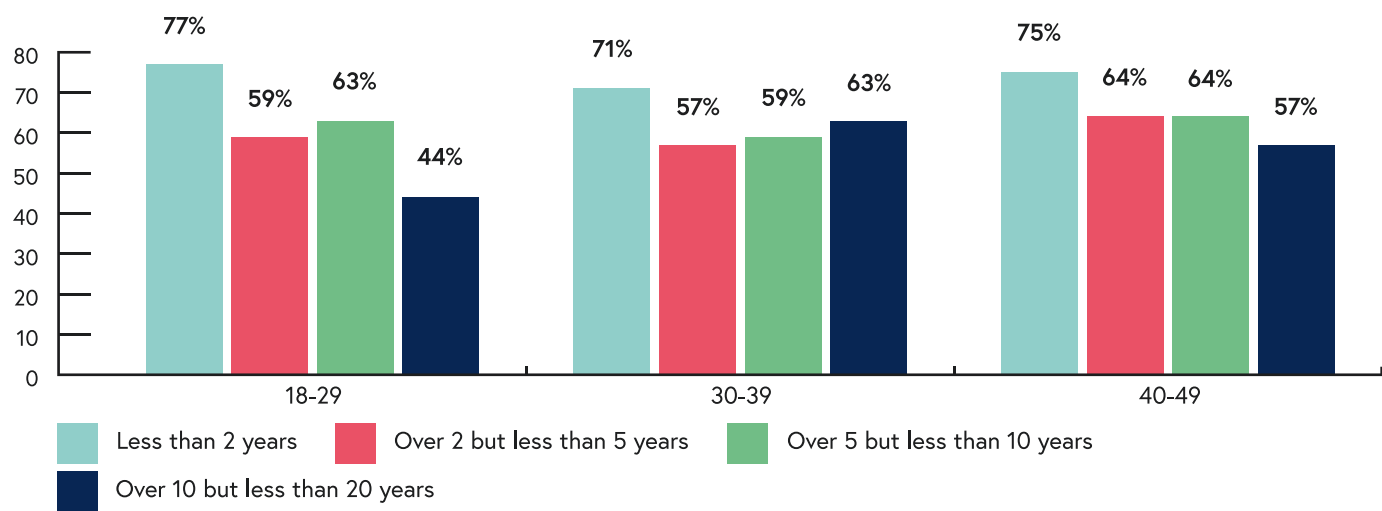
Specials did not agree that they would be provided with appropriate support if they experienced a traumatic event on duty

Management and Support

Management and support were key factors which influenced morale and recognition for contributions made. The results of the survey demonstrate that those with less than 2 years in service were most likely to be satisfied with how well they are managed, 75%, whereas those with over 2 but less than 5 years' service were significantly less

satisfied at 60%. The fall in satisfaction with management after 2 years in service was most notable for the 18-29 age group, decreasing from 77% to 59%, a drop of 18% (see graph below).

Satisfaction with management, by age and length of service



A key area for improvement identified in the results was the extent to which Specials received feedback on their performance, with 40% feeling dissatisfied. As reflected across other measures, those with less than 2 years in service were more likely to rate feedback positively, however nearly a third (31%) were dissatisfied with feedback. Within age groups, Specials aged 30-39 years were least satisfied with feedback (54%), followed by 40-49 year olds (58%).

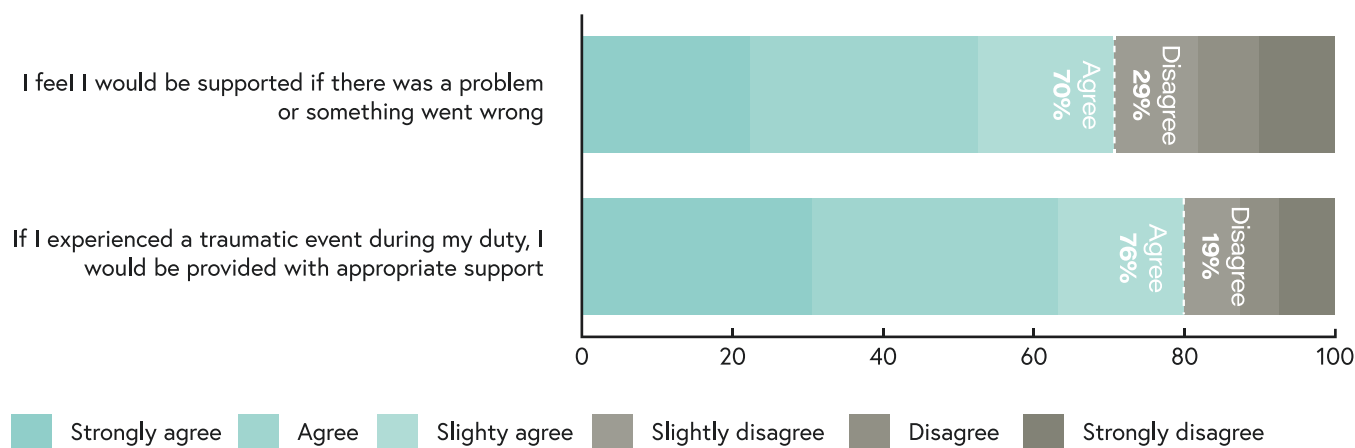
How well Specials are managed is significantly related to their morale, with 93% of those satisfied with management indicating that their morale was good, compared to 62% of those who did not. Furthermore, these results were related to their likelihood to leave, with 57% of those who disagreed that they are well managed planning to leave in the short-term (i.e. next six months) compared to 40% of those who agreed they are well managed. The contribution

of management in their reasons for leaving was mentioned by approximately 1 in 5 leavers (17%).

"Frustrated with the management of the Special Constabulary - Communication is one way and very negative. Feel ignored."

About three quarters (73%) of Specials agreed that they felt sufficiently supported in their role. As illustrated in the infographic at the outset of this section, Specials were more likely to agree that they received practical support (77%) than they were emotional support (72%). Moreover, nearly a third of Specials (30%) did not feel that they would be supported if there was a problem or something went wrong and 2 in 10 (20%) did not believe that they would be appropriately supported if they experienced a traumatic event on duty.

Perceptions of support



Confidence in support significantly falls after the first 2 years of service, with 85% of those who have served less than 2 years indicating that they feel they would be supported if they made a mistake, compared to 68% of Specials who have served between 2 and 5 years and 60% of Specials who have served between 5 and 10 years. As with management, providing and maintaining appropriate levels of support is key to retention. Indeed, the most

common reason for leaving given by Specials, after joining to be a regular officer (47%), was lack of support (22%) to carry out their role and/or achieve Independent Patrol Status.

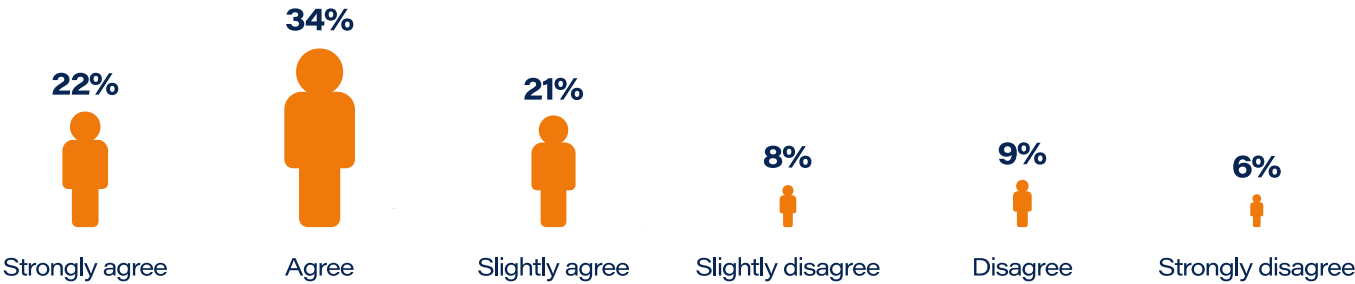
"I am not supported. I feel demoralised and why should I keep going out of my way to contribute when I keep coming up against obstacles."

Key Points and Implications

- Management of Specials was found to be a key factor shaping morale and closely linked with reasons for leaving the Special Constabulary. These results contradict a prominent discourse that Specials leave due to changes in circumstances and emphasise the impact of the experience in role upon retention.
- Following the first couple of years, in which Specials are typically undergoing their training and initial practice, levels of satisfaction with management and support decreased significantly. Specials aged over 30 years were less satisfied with supervision and support compared to Specials aged 18-29 years, which is an important consideration in the agenda to attract, recruit and train an older demographic of volunteer.
- Perceptions of the support available to Specials is associated with retention, showing that lack of support was the second highest reason for intentions to leave the Special Constabulary (after joining to become a regular officer).

Involvement and Maximising Effectiveness

I have been given opportunities to develop new skills and abilities



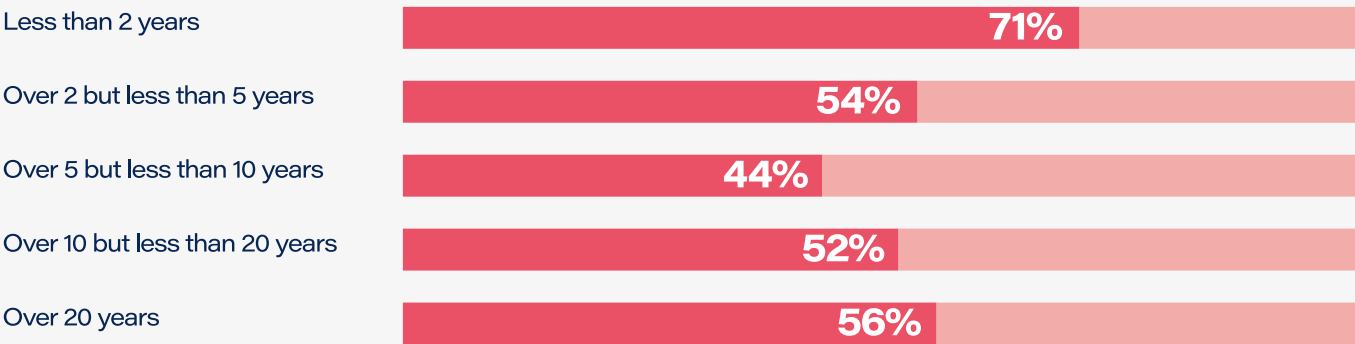
Skills I have gained in my current role are useful for me in other work or personal contexts outside of policing



The force has given me opportunities to utilise the full range of my skills and experiences



The service understands the particular skills and experience I bring



There is scope to increase understanding of skills Specialists possess and and involve the more effectively. The infographic on the preceding page illustrates that 8 in 10 (77%) Specialists felt that they had been given the opportunity to develop new skills. However, 60% felt that the Force had given them opportunities to utilise the full range of their skills and experience and 56% agreed that the Force understood the skills and experience they have.

Similar to many other aspects of Specialists experience, agreement was relatively high (71%) for those young in service but significantly lower for those with longer service. Whether on an Employer Supported Policing (ESP) Scheme or not, agreement was high that the skills they have gained were useful for them in other work or personal contexts outside of policing (91%). This is crucial as both development opportunities and the use of pre-existing skills were key reasons given why Specialists were planning to leave in the short term (identified by 12% of those

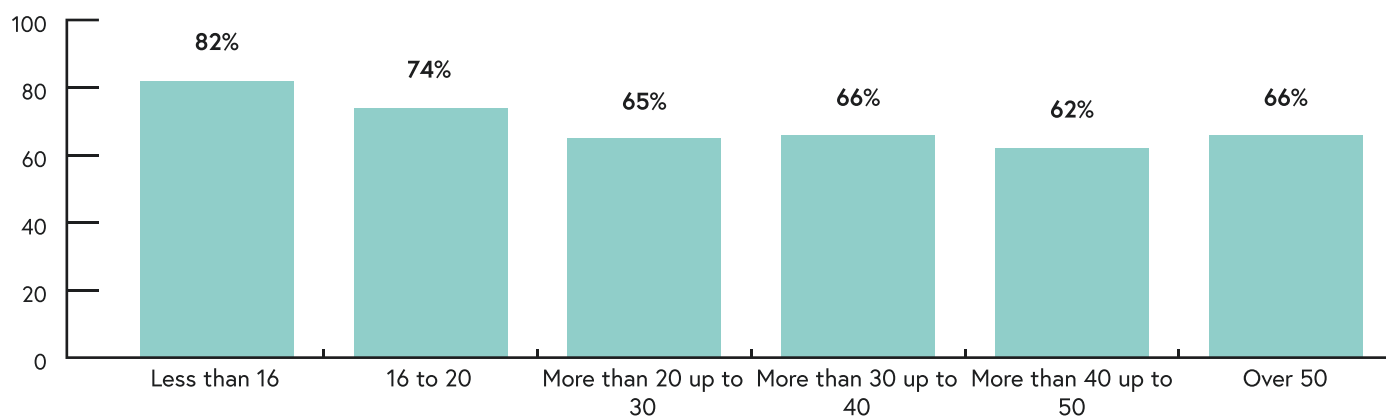
intending to leave).

"Poor leadership, lack of recognition of wider skills and lack of progression opportunities due to the leadership culture in the Special Constabulary."

Whilst the results indicate that Specialists gain valuable skills in the role, a third of Specialists (33%) did not feel that they are given sufficient ongoing training to remain effective in their role.

Although there was a reasonably high level of agreement that when Specialists were on duty they were tasked effectively, 78%, there was lower agreement that the service maximises the use of the time they give them, 68%. Critically, the results suggested that nearly two-thirds (68%) of Specialists felt that some of their time was wasted, with those who volunteered less hours on average per month more likely to indicate perceptions of time wastage.

Perceptions of time wasted, by number of hours volunteered on average per month



A higher proportion of those doing less than 16 hours (41%) were more likely to be leaving in the short term compared to all other groups (22%). The issue of time wastage, however, requires more investigation, as further knowledge is needed to understand the relationship between involvement and hours volunteered. For instance, volunteering less hours may mean that it is more difficult for supervisors to involve them or that they may be less

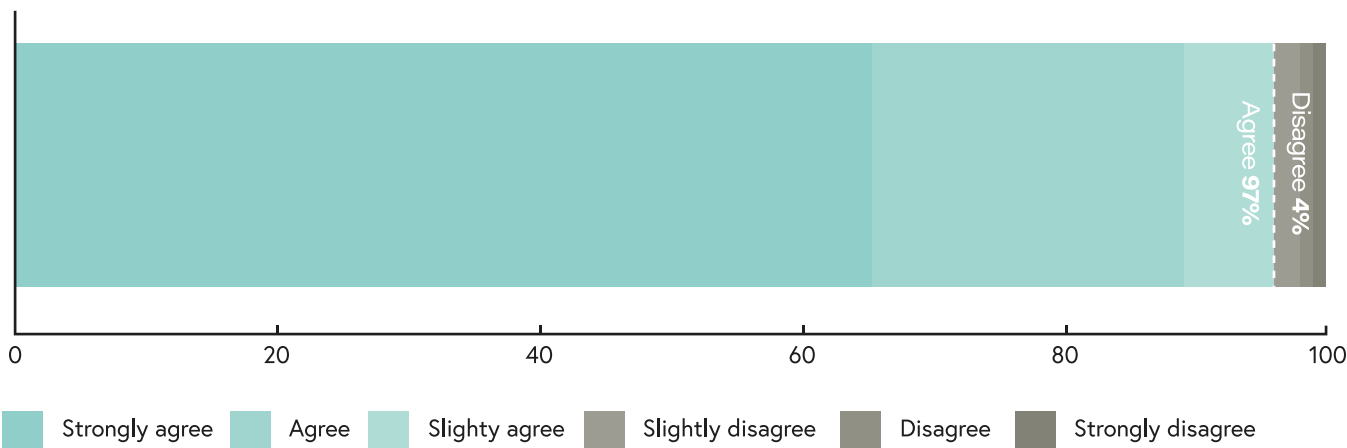
likely to work independently or they may volunteer less hours because they feel under-involved.

Nearly a third (31%) of Specialists disagreed that they were provided with the equipment and resources they needed to carry out their role effectively and nearly all (97%) Specialists agreed that regular officers and Specialists should be equipped in an equivalent way.

Involvement and Maximising Effectiveness

"[I'm] not supported enough in the role, two tier system, not equivalently given equipment, makes the job more difficult as everything is recorded on camera"

Regular officers and specials should be equipped equivalently



9 in 10 Specials (93%) felt that with appropriate and specialist training some Specials should be able to carry

Taser and, of those, 7 in 10 (66%) strongly agreed with this statement, indicating the strength of feeling on this matter.

Key Points and Implications

- The experience of being a Special is linked with the development of new skills and abilities that are valuable to other contexts outside of policing, but there were many Specials who felt that their skills were poorly understood and utilised within their role. There is considerable scope to acquire a better understanding of the skills that Specials possess and, where appropriate, align skills and motivations to maximise impact against policing objectives.
- The results demonstrate that a lack of developmental opportunities is closely linked with retention, indicating the importance of having robust and continuous development throughout the life span of a Special career. Crucially, a significant proportion indicated that they did not receive enough on-going development to remain effective, which impacts upon both experience and contribution to policing demand.
- Nearly a third of Specials indicated they were not sufficiently equipped for the role and there was strong support for a greater equivalency with their Regular counterparts.

Being a Leader



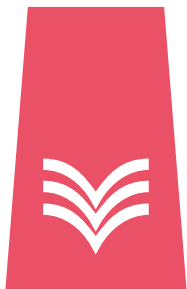
Chief Officers



Chief Superintendents and Chief Inspectors



Inspectors and Senior Section Officers



Sergeants and Section Officers



I feel that I can influence the future direction of the special constabulary



The voice of special constables is heard effectively in shaping thinking within the force about the future of the special constabulary

Being a Leader

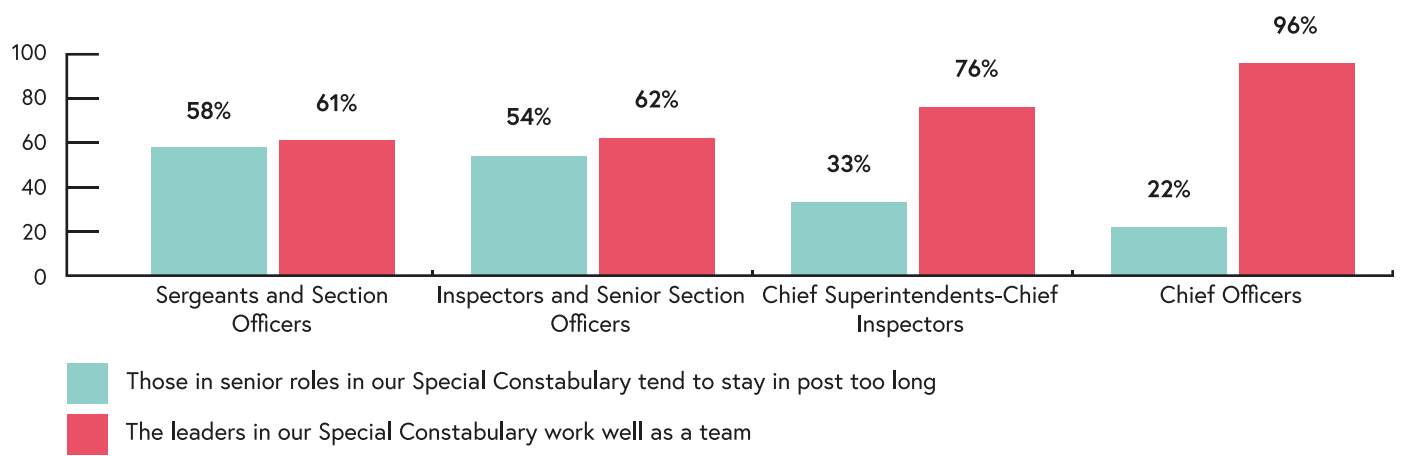
This section focuses on Specials who hold the rank of Sergeant and above to understand their experiences of being a leader within the Special Constabulary. Those in leadership roles felt able to influence the future direction of the Special Constabulary and believed that the voice of Specials was heard effectively in shaping thinking within the force about the future of the Special Constabulary, but such influence decreased with rank. Leaders were also asked about whether they feel they can influence the future direction of the service, agreement ranged from 88% of Chief Officers to 35% of Sergeants/Section Officers.

Being heard and influencing the development of the Special Constabulary are important aspects of being a leader, though the results indicated that less than 6 in 10 Sergeants/Section Officers (55%) and Inspectors/Senior Section Officers (56%) felt that their ideas were listened

to compared to 7 in 10 Chief Superintendents to Chief Inspectors (71%) and all Chief Officers (100%). The impact of not being heard was linked to morale, with 70% of those who felt that their ideas are listened to agreeing that they have good morale compared to 22% who did not. In terms of retention, 39% of leaders planning to leave in the short term (within the next year) agreed that they are listened to compared to 52% who were planning to stay more than 1-3 years and 65% who were planning to stay for over 3 years.

Less than two thirds of leaders (64%) thought that the Special Constabulary worked well together as a team and about half (53%) agreed that those in senior roles tended to stay in post too long. The following image illustrates that while the level of agreement that senior roles tend to stay in post too long decreased with rank, levels of agreement that leaders worked well together increased with rank.

Perspectives on being in post too long and working well as a team, by rank



While about 7 in 10 (73%) Constables agreed that the Special Constabulary was well led, agreement was lower from those in ranks above Constable except for Chief Constables. This reduction in confidence in leadership in ranks above Constable was linked with a higher proportion of Constables with less than 2 years' service being more positive. Although 7 in 10 (67%) Specials agreed the leadership/rank structure in their Force worked well, a similar proportion (69%) also agreed that they would like to

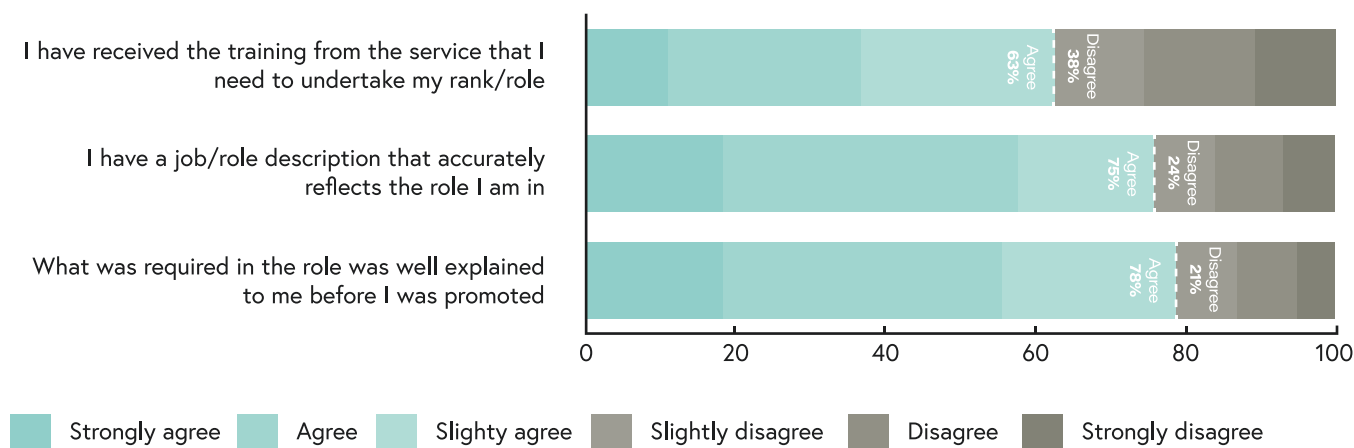
see greater role equivalency between the same ranks for the Specials and Regulars.

Encouragingly, a very high proportion (92%) of those in leadership considered being in their promoted role as being a good experience and would recommend seeking promotion to other Special Constables (84%). However, of those that have been promoted, a fifth (21%) disagreed that the role was well explained to them before they were

promoted and a quarter (25%) disagreed that they had a job role/description that accurately reflected their role. Furthermore, over a third (37%) disagreed that they had

received the training that they need to undertake their rank/role.

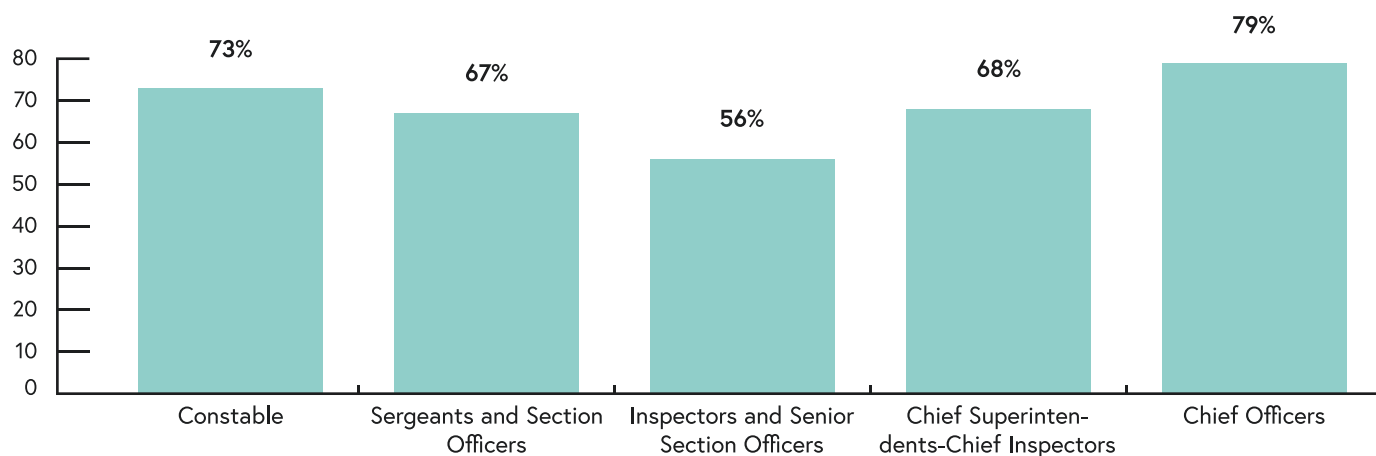
Perspectives of training, role description and role explanation



Most leaders found their current role very demanding on their time (84%) and over half felt that the requirements of their promoted role made it difficult for them to perform front line duties as much as they wish (57%). There was also a significant difference across the ranks

in the proportion that felt that they would be supported if something went wrong, with Inspectors/Senior Section Officers (56%) being least likely to agree and, although the most likely to agree, 2 in 10 Chief Officers disagreed (21%).

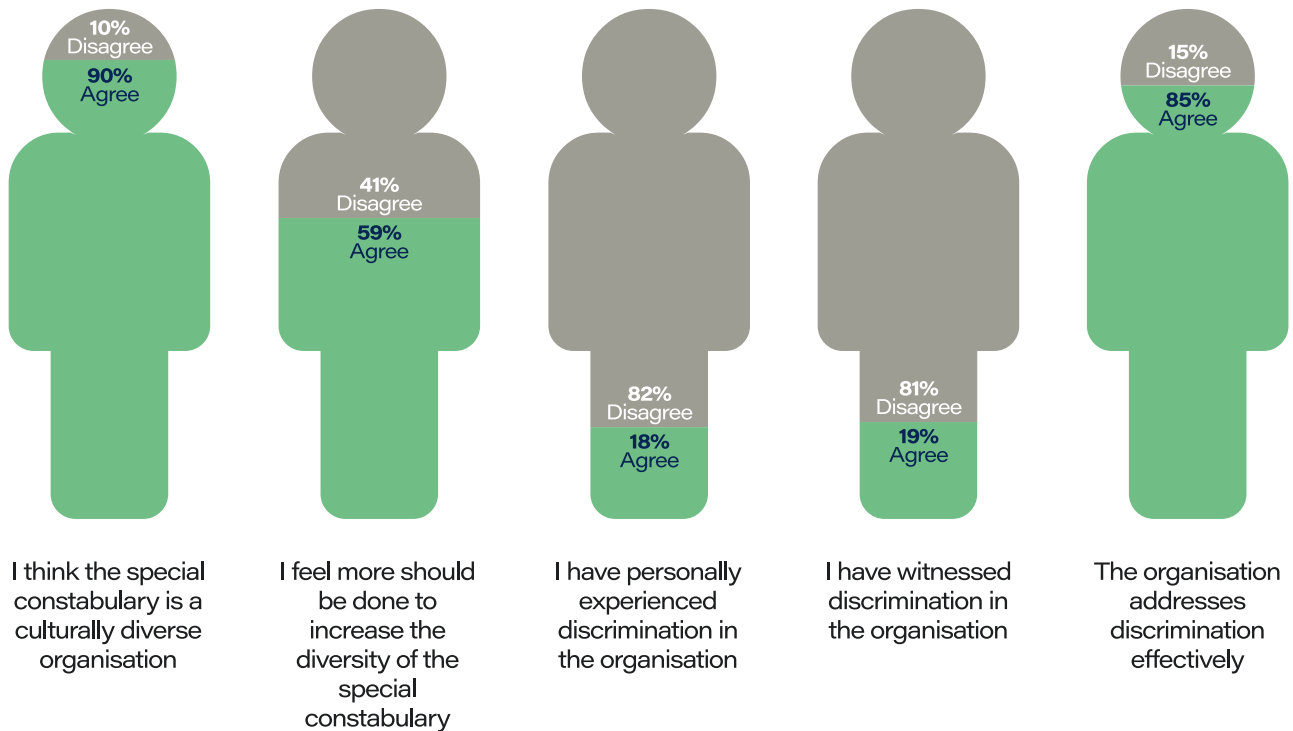
Perceptions of support if something went wrong, by rank



Key Points and Implications

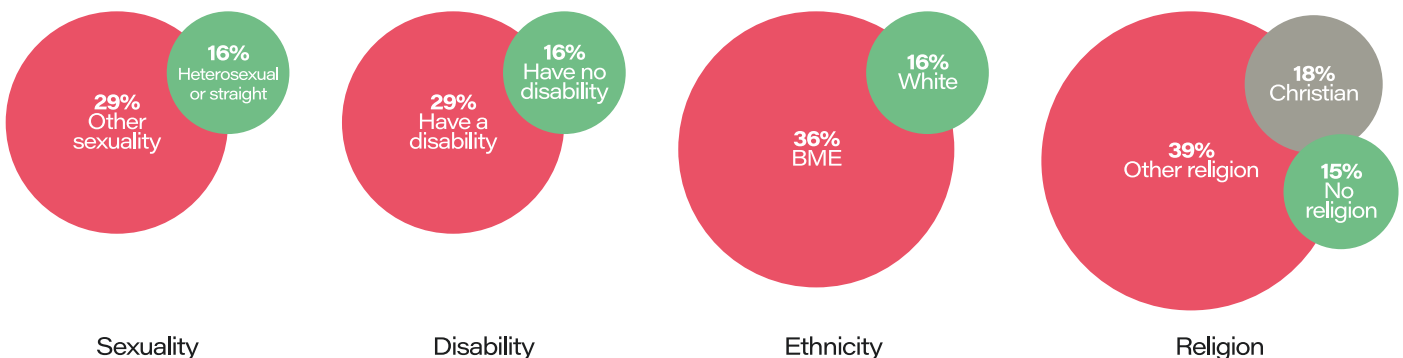
- Empowerment of officers to influence the direction of the Special Constabulary as well as perceptions of voice being heard were experienced differently by different ranks of leaders, with Sergeants to Inspectors holding less positive viewpoints to others. The impact of not being heard was associated with morale and retention, indicating the importance of empowering Specials ranked from Sergeants to Inspectors within the development of the Special Constabulary.
- The results demonstrate that the experience of being a leader in the Special Constabulary was positive. However, greater clarity about the role and duties involved in leadership is required and improved training is needed to better prepare new leaders. Balancing leadership duties and frontline duties is also an area for consideration, recognising that many leaders wish to engage in frontline work, which is important in providing a positive volunteering experience to retain talent within the Special Constabulary.

Discrimination and Differences in Experiences



54% of those who had experienced discrimination said that the organisation addresses discrimination effectively compared to **92%** of those who had not experienced discrimination

Certain groups were more likely to say that they had experienced discrimination:



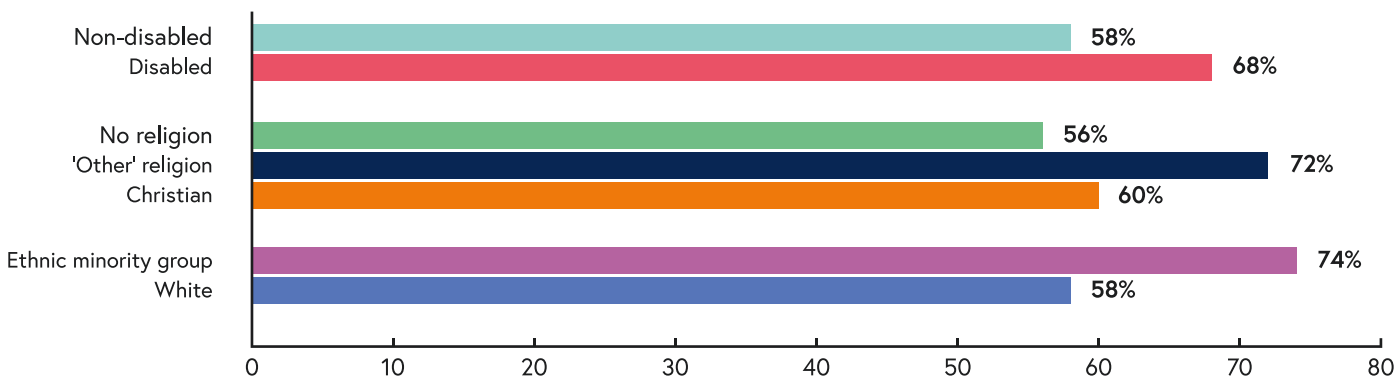
Discrimination and Differences in Experiences

Nearly a fifth of Specials (18%) indicated that they had experienced discrimination within the police force in which they volunteer. Illustrated in the infographic on the previous page, Specials from a minority ethnic group, those with a disability, those whose sexuality was not heterosexual and those from a religion 'other' to the most common ('Christian') were significantly more likely to state that they had experienced discrimination. All Specials who had experienced discrimination were less likely than those who had not to agree that the organisation addressed discrimination effectively, 54% compared to 92% respectively. Alongside these results, 1 in 5 (19%) Specials had witnessed discrimination in the organisation, with

about a quarter (23%) of Specials having had experienced or witnessed discrimination in the organisation, showing that there was some overlap within the sample.

In relation to cultural diversity, whilst most Specials (90%) agreed that the Special Constabulary was culturally diverse, 6 in 10 (59%) agreed that more could be done to increase diversity. Those from a minority ethnic group, compared to White, were less likely to agree that the Special Constabulary was culturally diverse (84% to 90% respectively) and were also more likely to agree that more should be done to increase cultural diversity in the force (74% to 58% respectively).

Agreement that more should be done to increase the diversity of the special constabulary



The following sections discuss differences based on a range of demographic factors.

Length of Service and Age

A range of results presented in the previous sections have highlighted clear distinctions in perceptions and experiences between those who have served less than 2 years, which reported more positively across measures, compared to those with 2 years or more service. Also prominent was the relationship between length of service and age where, for example, decreases in feeling supported, well-managed and recognised for contributions decreased most observably for Specials aged 18-29 once

they had served 2 years or more. Such results indicate the need for a strategic focus on the transition from the initial practice period into the first stages of building a career in the Specials.

Ethnicity

As outlined above, there were notable differences in levels of discrimination based on ethnicity, with those from a minority ethnic group being significantly less positive about their experiences in relation to reward and recognition, fairness and respect, support, development opportunities and belonging. Whilst the Special Constabulary was perceived as being more culturally diverse compared to

the wider force, it was desired by Specials to increase diversity within forces and the results emphasise the need to improve the experience of those from an ethnic minority background.

Disability

In terms of the sample, there were 144 Specials who indicated they had a disability, long term illness or health condition and were more likely than their non-disabled colleagues to have served more than 2 years. Those who had a disability, compared to those without, who had served more than 2 years, were significantly less likely to agree that the level of supervision and support they receive is appropriate to their duties (64% to 74% respectively). Though small in number, Specials with a disability who had served less than 2 years (n=22) were more likely to agree that they are made to feel more of a burden than a help by regular officers (68% to 46% respectively).

Gender

Females were more likely than their male counterparts to be in the first 2 years of service (47% to 29% respectively) and, considering the significant differences in perceptions and experiences for those in their first 2 years of service compared to those with 2 years or more, these groups were considered independently to identify key gendered differences. Females compared to males who had served under 2 years were significantly less likely to feel that they were being sufficiently supported in their role (77% to 85% respectively). For those with more than 2 years' service, females were significantly more likely to agree that the service understood their skills and experience (64% to 49% respectively) and that the Force has given them the opportunity to utilise their skills (63% to 53% respectively). For both service lengths, males compared to females were less likely to agree that they had the necessary equipment and resources to carry out their role (67% to 79% respectively).

Sexuality

There were 175 Specials who indicated that their sexuality was not heterosexual, who were significantly more negative about a number of aspects of their experience. For example, they were significantly less likely to feel appreciated (65% to 73% respectively), feel they were treated with respect (70% to 78% respectively), feel that they were treated fairly (76% to 82% respectively) and the level of supervision they receive was appropriate to the duties they are asked to do (69% to 77% respectively). Such differences illustrate the heterogeneity of experiences within the Special Constabulary and further work is needed to improve experience for individuals whose sexuality is not heterosexual.

Religion

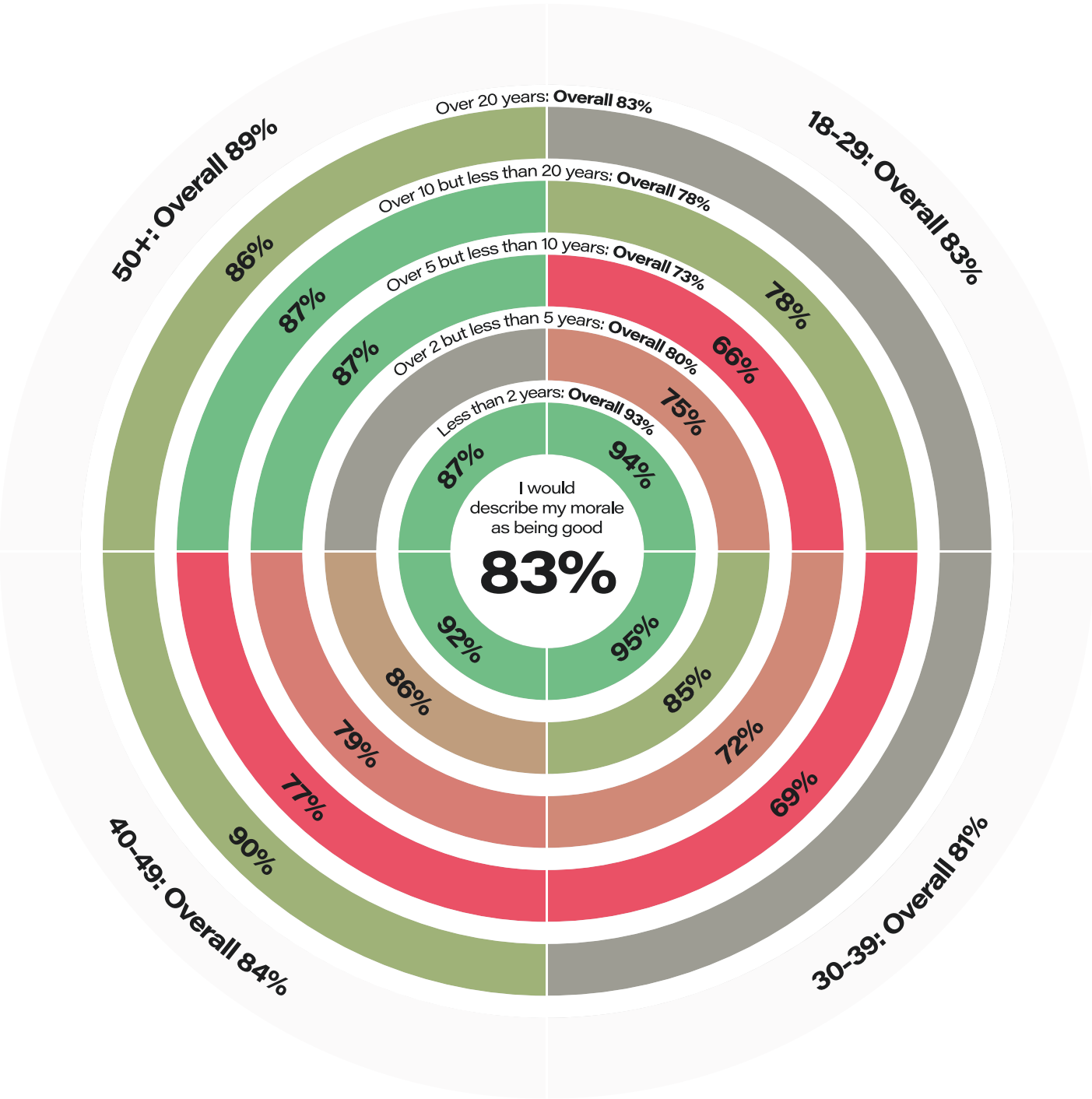
Those from any 'other' religion to 'Christians' and those of 'No religion' significantly differed in perceptions of experience on a host of key indicators. For instance, they were significantly less likely to feel that they were treated with respect, sufficiently supported in their role, that they receive emotional and practical support, that their contribution was respected and valued, that they felt part of a team and that their time volunteered was maximised by the force.

Discrimination and Differences in Experiences

Key Points and Implications

- Recognition that one quarter of Specials have witnessed or experienced discrimination is needed in policing, to transparently address and investigate discriminatory behaviours, practices and policies. This will help to build confidence in reporting such experiences.
- When looking across demographic factors, length of service and age are critical factors within which key lines of difference in experiences are identified, namely between those who have served less than 2 years with those serving over 2 years and between those aged 18-29 and over 30 years respectively. Better understanding why there are such profound and impactful differences would enable forces to address issues which affect retention and the ability for Specials to build a meaningful volunteering career.
- Overall, the results presented throughout this report and within this section bring into question a homogenisation of the experience and perspectives of 'Specials'. As demonstrated above, there is rich diversity within the Special Constabulary which presents immeasurable value to engaging with and serving communities. However, having an identity which includes minority ethnic background, a disability, a non-Christian religion and/or being non-heterosexual significantly decreases positivity about experience and opportunity in the Special Constabulary and increases experiences of discrimination. Research and policy development needs to address the key differences identified in this report for 'Other' identities in the Special Constabulary, drawing on existing literature about cultures in policing.

Outcomes and Positive Impacts



Outcomes and Positive Impacts

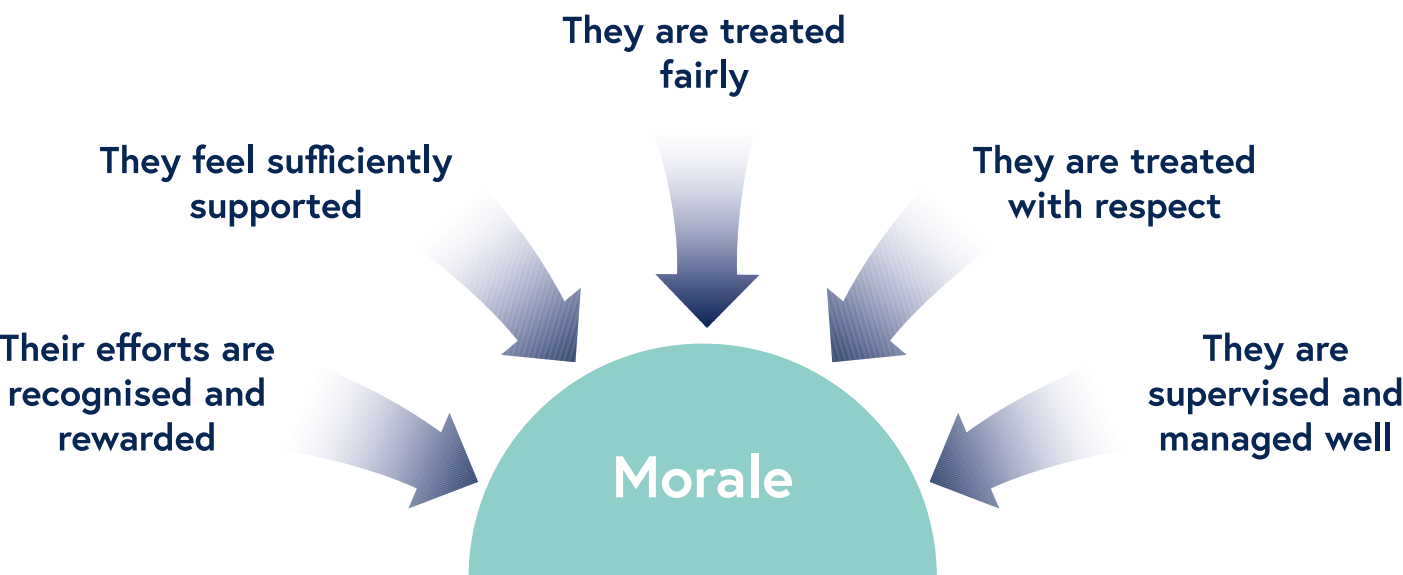
The Relationship between Experience, Morale and Retention

Most Specials (83%) described their morale as good, which is slightly lower compared to 2016 (86%). As has been highlighted throughout this report, positivity falls after the first 2 years as 9 in 10 (93%) Specials had good morale in this initial period. The infographic on the previous page also illustrates how the fall in morale is particularly noticeable after 2 years' service for the 18-29 age group, falling 19% and for 30-39-year olds falling 10%.

Encouragingly over half of Specials (55%) considered themselves to be committed for the "long-term" (i.e. more

than 3 years) and a fifth (22%) were planning to continue for at least a year but less than three. However, a quarter of Specials (24%) who took part in the survey were planning to leave in the next year.

Morale is important to retention, with only 6 in 10 (61%) of those who are planning to leave in the next 6 months describing their morale as good, compared to almost 9 in 10 (86%) of those staying beyond 6 months. Many aspects of Specials experiences are related to their morale but those that have the strongest relationship are illustrated below and are displayed in order of strength from left to right :



The importance of getting the organisational structure right for Specials was also highlighted in the reasons imminent leavers gave for leaving, as two thirds (67%) of those who were not leaving to join the Regulars gave organisational reasons for leaving, a further 16% indicated that they would prefer not to say why they were leaving

while only 16% stated that they were leaving for personal reasons such as moving area or spending time with family. The key organisational reasons they gave, which have been referenced throughout the report, were perceived lack of support, poor management and supervision, and insufficient training and development opportunities.

Making a Difference and Encouraging Others to Join the Special Constabulary

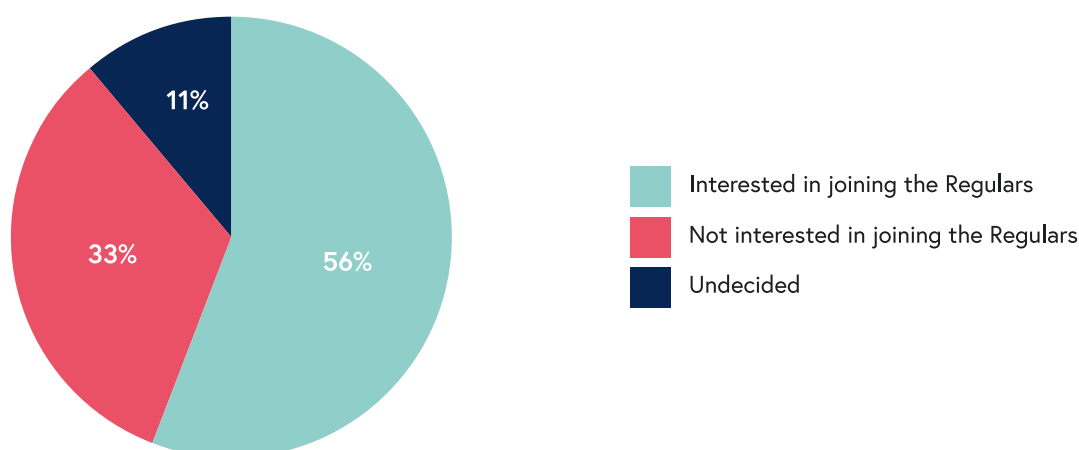
Nearly all Specials, over 9 in 10, felt that they have made a difference to the community (96%), supported their local police service (96%) and would recommend volunteering as a Special Constable to other people (91%). These findings demonstrate how volunteering in Special Constabularies can be a rewarding and positive experience. Such findings, however, mask experiences from marginalised groups within the Special Constabulary. For instance, those from a minority ethnic group (85% compared to 92% of white Specials) and those from an 'other' religion (85% compared to 93% who have 'no religion' and 92% from an

'other' religion) are significantly less likely to say that they would recommend volunteering as a Special Constable to others. Achieving a parity of experience for those from minority ethnic communities is crucial within the ambition to increase the ethnic and religious diversity of the Special Constabulary and indeed of policing as a whole.

Joining the Regulars

A third (33%) of Specials surveyed were interested in joining the Regular Constabulary. Moreover, of those who were leaving in the next year, almost half (45%) stated that they were doing so to join the Regulars. Though it must be noted that the majority of the sample did not express an interest in joining the Regular Constabulary.

Interest in joining the Regular Constabulary



Joining the Regular Constabulary from being a Special represents a critical transition to be accounted for within the development process of many Specials' careers. However, of those who were interested in joining the Regulars, 4 in 10 (40%) felt unsupported in doing so. Taking into account the role that motivation and morale plays to retention, the support and guidance provided to Specials to realise their ambitions requires further attention.

"No support for Special Constables wanting to progress to becoming a regular. Seen as just another member of the public applying for the role and not afforded any other support or coaching."

"There is no support or initiative for current Special Constables looking to become a regular officer."

Outcomes and Positive Impacts

Key Points and Implications

- Overall, morale in 2018 decreased slightly compared to 2016. The findings challenge a prominent discourse within many forces that rationalises Specials as leaving because they are either not committed or have changes in their personal lives. The evidence presented in this section, as well as the wider report, demonstrate that organisational factors or having a poor volunteering experience are more evident reasons for leaving, indicating the need to improve organisationally and operationally to improve the experience of support, management and development.
- Whilst the results show that most Specials feel like they make a positive difference to the community, that they have supported their local police and would recommend becoming a Special Constable to others, such positive headlines obfuscate a terrain of negative experiences from marginalised groups within the Special Constabulary. It is important that volunteering as a Special is a positive experience for all and more attention is needed to improve the experiences of those whose voices are seldom heard.

Conclusion

The Special Constabulary brings together active, engaged and committed volunteers with diverse backgrounds, skills and experiences. Evident from the high morale, enjoyment and overall positivity about experiences and opportunities, the first two years as a Special in policing tends to meet or exceed expectations for an exciting and rewarding role. Making a real difference to communities, learning new skills and engaging in new experiences provides an environment with huge potential for self-development and 'giving something back' to help keep people safe.

The processes for recruitment and training, whilst varied across forces, demand patience and long-term commitment from enthusiastic applicants and it is evident that many potential Specials are lost along the way. The need to streamline, professionalise and make processes user-friendly is not new news, but plays an important role in the 'on-boarding' of new recruits and shapes their perceptions and experiences of policing. In short, communication about recruitment and initial training needs to be simple, timely and informative about the next steps and what to expect.

Equipping Special Constables appropriately to maximise their contribution and impact is about more than training and Taser, but these two points were highlighted by Specials as fundamental to improving confidence, competence and parity with regular officers (where appropriate). Initial training needs to involve more practical, scenario-based and role-relevant activities, which will lead to improved first operational experiences and first impressions amongst regular colleagues. Half of the Special Constabulary have felt like a burden to their regular counterparts at times, which needs addressing from both within the Special Constabulary and across the wider policing family.

Levels and quality of support, management and supervision play a significant role in retention, alongside, and inherently connected to, feeling recognised and valued. However, positive ratings across these measures drop significantly after two years in role and particularly so for Specials under 30. Various models of organisationally and operationally managing, deploying and supporting Specials are being tested across forces. The most important factors to consider in assessment of these are ease of communication, provision of feedback and support and actively managed plans for skills development. Use of existing skills and reduction of perceptions of time being wasted should be key areas of focus for leaders and supervisors.

For those in leadership roles in the Special Constabulary, feeling listened to by senior leadership and regular counterparts is a significant factor in their experience in role and willingness to continue. Effective training for leadership roles requires investment and the design of these roles needs to balance strategic and administrative duties with frontline experience to offer an engaging and rewarding voluntary experience.

Finally, the experience of discrimination in the Special Constabulary raises concerns regarding the cultures, policies and processes that may create an environment in which minority identities are treated differently. The strategic ambition to build a Special Constabulary that truly reflects the diversity of communities in England and Wales, and pushes the wider policing family to do the same, requires significant improvements in these cultural, attitudinal, behavioural and organisational issues.

This reflection on the perceptions and experiences of the Special Constabulary provides an opportunity to direct attention, innovation, investment and commitment to the continued improvement of this invaluable voluntary contribution to policing and public safety.

