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THE EXPERIENCES AND MORALE OF METROPOLITAN SPECIAL CONSTABLES.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH VOLUNTEER OFFICER JOB

MOTIVATION AND RETENTION

by

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# <u>Abstract</u>

Special constables have a long established history within British policing. Today, they hold full police powers and are an important part of the police workforce across all areas in England and Wales. The Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC) is the largest in the country. One in four special constables nationally belong to the MSC and in 2015 they provided London with over half a million policing hours. Since 2012, the number of special constables in the MSC has fallen by 40 per cent. Despite their longevity, special constabularies are under researched and the factors associated with volunteer officer motivation and retention are pooly understood. In spite of the high levels of attrition, successive governments have promoted the benefits of special constabularies in terms of increasing legitimacy, fostering responsibilisation, and reducing costs, and encouraged forces to run regular recruitment campaigns to boost the size and capability of their special constabularies. This study uses qualitative interviewing to explore the experiences and motivations of current and former MSC officers and to understand the factors that impact upon retention. The thesis uses Clary et al.'s (1998) functional multifactor model of volunteer motivation, widely accepted in the volunteer field, as a lens through which to analyse the results. The study highlights varying degrees of satisfaction with being a special constable and suggests that training, deployment, integration and recognition are all important factors in the morale of special constables and their commitment to further service. The study suggests that functional motivational principles are not being applied to the special constabulary. The thesis concludes by making a number of recommendations to the Metropolitan Police Service to assist in improving the morale and retention of MSC officers.

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

**Introduction**

This chapter highlights the motivations underpinning the current study. It introduces the key theoretical perspective and provides an overview of the structure of the thesis. Special constabularies represent a unique form of volunteerism. The extensive training, a commitment to provide at least 16 hours policing duties a month, and a willingness to face the same risks and abuse as regular police officers demands a high degree of dedication and motivation. Despite being championed by governments from across the political spectrum, retention has been a longstanding issue within special constabularies. This has led to forces not achieving value for money and losing the benefits that more experienced volunteer officers would potentially bring. Recognising the lack of research in this area, this thesis examines the experiences and motivations of Metropolitan Special Constables and how they relate to volunteer retention.

**Research context and problem identification**

Special constabularies have a very long history in British policing. The office of special constable is likely to have originated in the eighteenth century (Leon, 2018, p.29) and today, these volunteer police officers are almost indistinguishable from their regular counterparts, holding full police powers and wearing an almost identical uniform (Bullock and Millie, 2018a, p.1). Despite their longevity, special constabularies are under researched and have seldom featured in media representations of the police; they are as Leon (1991, p.5) puts it, the 'hidden feature of the British policing landscape'.

The special constabulary has fluctuated in strength over the course of its history due to wider political, social and economic factors that have impacted policing as a whole. In 2017, there were 13,503 members of the special constabulary, down from 20,343 in 2011/12 (Home Office, 2017, p.5), and a

height of 130,00 during the Second World War. The current climate of austerity has seen reductions in public expenditure since 2010, with the police service in England and Wales suffering a 20 per cent reduction in funding by 2014/15 (HM Treasury, 2010). This has increased the importance of volunteers to policing, with hopes that they will fill the void that is left as the state withdraws (Millie and Bullock, 2013). Since the 1980s, there has been an annual special constable turnover of approximately 20 per cent (Mirrlees Black and Byron, 1994, p.viii). Despite this wastage, successive governments have encouraged forces to increase the size and capabilities of their special constabularies, with impressive claims that volunteer officers increase legitimacy, foster responsibilisation, facilitate neighborhood renewal, reduce costs and increase efficiency (Bullock, 2014). This reflects a tendency of volunteer organisations more widely to concentrate on recruitment rather than retention despite the operational and financial costs of high volunteer turnover rates (Watson and Abzug, 2010). This is consistent with a recurring theme over several decades that policy and strategic decisions regarding special constabularies are taken without an evidence base on which to locate them. Relatively few studies have appraised the impact of the organisational context on volunteer retention, or how the perception of volunteer work affects individuals (Studer and von Schnurbein, 2013, p.403). Consequently, the work environment factors associated with job satisfaction and retention remain a largely neglected area of volunteer research (Wilson, 2012, p.1). This study will start to address these gaps in the literature through the following research aims and questions.

**Reseach Aims**

1. To understand the factors that impact upon the motivation of Metropolitan special constables.

2. To understand the factors that impact upon the retention of Metropolitan special constables.

3. To suggest recommendations to the Metropolitan Police Service to assist in improving Metropolitan special constable motivation and retention.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the experiences of Metropolitan special constables?

2. How do these experiences impact upon the morale and continued service of Metropolitan special constables?

3. How can the needs of Metropolitan special constables be satisfied in relation to a functionalist understanding of motivation?

**Theoretical Approach**

Many theories have been advanced to explain why people give up their time to volunteer. Most explanations of volunteer motivation adopt a functionalist viewpoint. The functional approach is a motivational perspective derived from theories concerning attitude and explores the personal and social processes that initiate, direct, and sustain action (Katz, 1960). Clary et al. (1998, p.1517) applied this functional theory to volunteering to understand 'the reasons and the purposes, the plan and the goals, that underlie and generate psychological phenomena – that is, the personal and social functions being served by an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions'. Through extensive analysis of the empirical research on volunteering, Clary et al. (1998) identified six primary functions or motivations that are served through volunteering:

- Values – the individual volunteers in order to express or act on important values like humanitarianism

- Understanding – the volunteer is seeking new learning experiences and to exercise knowledge and skills that are often unused

- Enhancement – one can grow and develop psychologically through volunteer activities

- Career – the volunteer has the goal of gaining career-related experience through volunteering

- Social – volunteering allows an individual to strengthen his or her social relationships

- Protective – the individual uses volunteering to reduce negative feelings, such as guilt, or to address personal problems

Clary et al.'s (1998) multifactor model, as it is known, has become one of the most widely accepted in the field for explaining volunteer motivation (Widjaja, 2010, p.12). Okun et al. (1998, p.608) describe it as the most extensive and sound set of scales for determining volunteer motives, whilst for Esmond and Dunlop (2004, p.15) it is one of the few measures of volunteer motivation to undergo extensive testing. Due to its widespread acceptance in understanding volunteer motivation, this thesis draws primarily on Clary et al.'s (1998) functional multifactor model. Clary et al. (1998) argue that people can engage in the same volunteer activity to fulfill different motives, that an individual can be motivated by more than one function, that motivations can change over time, and that important events such as deciding to volunteer and then maintaining that activity depend on matching the motivational concerns of individuals with situations that can satisfy those concerns. In this study, Clary and et al.'s (1998) motivational functions are used to understand how certain work environment factors impact upon the morale of special constables and their intention to continue volunteering. This motivational theory, although widely used across many voluntary sectors, has not been applied to volunteer policing before.

**Thesis overview**

Chapter 2 examines the literature relevant to this study. Chapter 3 highlights the methodological approach adopted during the research. Chapters 4-7 outline the key findings from the study. Chapter 4 considers the issue of foundation and continuation training for Metropolitan special constables.

Chapter 5 examines the deployment of Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC) officers. Chapter 6 considers the integration of special constables into the MPS in terms of recruitment and induction processes, and the relationship between MSC officers and the regular service. Chapter 7 deals with the recognition of special constables within the MPS, examing the utilisation of skills and capabilities that special constables bring into policing, the infrastructure supporting volunteer officers, and the importance of recognition to the retention of MSC officers. Chapter 8 summarises the study findings, and makes a number of recommendations to the MPS to assist with improving the motivation and retention of special constables.

# Chapter 2 Literature Review

**Introduction**

This chapter examines the literature relevant to this study. It starts by drawing on extant literature on the history of volunteering. The history of volunteering within policing and contemporary arguments about the value of special constabularies to public policing are then considered. Popular theoretical perspectives as to why individuals volunteer are then discussed, in particular functionalist theories and the multifactor model developed by Clary et al. (1998), which forms the theoretical foundation for this research. Finally, previous research into the special constabulary is examined with a concluding view that the role and motivation of special constables is under researched, resulting in a significant gap in knowledge and understanding. This study aims to offer a significant contribution to knowledge in this field.

**The History of Volunteering**

Volunteering is an ancient (United Nations Volunteers, 2011, p.2) and global (Dover, 2010, p.238) phenomenon; what Widjaja (2010, p.4) has described as an essential aspect of human nature. In her research of nineteenth century Britain, Prochaska (1980) found that thousands of societies depended upon voluntary work, whilst according to a more recent study across 37 countries, at least 12 per cent of the adult population volunteer, equating to 20.8 million full-time workers (John Hopkins Centre, 2009, p.238).

There have been many attempts to define volunteering. The National Council for Volunteering Organisations (NCVO) has described volunteering as 'any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives' (NCVO, 2016). The NCVO (2016) argue that a central tenet of

volunteering is that the act must be a free choice by each individual. Similarly, Cnaan et al (1999, p.221) consider the four principal dimensions of volunteering to be free choice, the nature of remuneration, the context under which the activity takes place, and the intended beneficiaries of the activity. The United Nations General Assembly (UNV, 2011, p.3) define the fundamental rules of volunteering as activity carried out according to an individual's own free will, and not as an obligation stipulated by law, contract or academic requirement, not undertaken primarily for financial reward and for the common good.

Despite these efforts, the definition of 'volunteer' is controversial (Brudney, 2000, p.220). There is little consensus amongst scholars as to what is, and is not, volunteerism (Cnaan et al, 1996). One possible explanation for this is that volunteerism is a category of human activity so varied that it defies adequate description (Horton-Smith, 1972). In support, Bussell and Forbes (2002, p.247) agree that it is difficult to define what is meant by a volunteer as there is no standard practice in volunteering. In spite of definitional difficulties, the NCVO (2017) estimate that 21.9 million people formally volunteer at least once a year, and 14.2 million people formally volunteer at least once a month. The next section explores the history of volunteering within policing.

**A Brief History of Volunteering within Policing**

In a number of countries across the world, police organisations allow citizens to volunteer to become unpaid police officers. Such volunteers are known as police reservists, auxiliary police, volunteer police, or in the United Kingdom, special constables (Ayling, 2007, p.75). Special constables are warranted officers who wear identical uniform, carry the same personal protective equipment and hold the same powers as their regular colleagues (Bullock and Leeney, 2016, p.483). They are utilised in all police forces across England and Wales (Wolf et al., 2016b, p.211).

Special constabularies have a very long history in British policing (Bullock and Millie, 2018a, p.1), although quite how long is open to debate. Whilst Gill and Mawby (1990, p.3) claim they have played a significant role in the maintenance of law and order for the last four hundred years, Mirrlees-Black and Byron (1994, p.1) date the use of volunteers in the policing of local communities back to at least the thirteenth century. For Greenberg (2005), the origin of people giving their time freely to assist in law enforcement can be traced back to early Anglo-Saxon times, whilst Wolf et al (2016b, p.211) argue that the use of volunteer community members for public safety purposes can be traced back to the dawn of civilisation. For Leon (2018, p.29), the office of special constable probably originated in the mid-eighteenth century to assist during times of crisis. A fact not in dispute is that the office of special constable was legalised by the Special Constables Acts of 1820 and 1831, although the Acts only allowed for their temporary appointment during 'riots, tumults and felonies' (Leon, 2018a, p.50).

The nineteenth century saw the emergence of a paid full-time police. In 1829 the Metropolitan Police were established and in 1856, the County and Borough Police Act attempted to encourage local authorities outside the capital to establish permanent police forces (Leon, 2018a, p.46). Whilst salaried police officers began to displace volunteers they did not entirely supersede them (Bullock, 2015, p.2), as some boroughs resisted the costs of using paid police, relying instead on special constables when the need arose (Mirrlees-Black and Byron, 1994, p.1).

The transformation of special constables from temporary emergency officers to permanent peacetime constables occurred during the twentieth century. A further Special Constables Act in 1914 allowed the establishment of special constabularies (Leon, 2018a, p.50), with the Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC) having over 67,000 members by 1915 (Ward, 1920). Following the war, special constables continued on duty throughout regular police industrial action in 1918 and 1919, which Leon (2018a, p.52) claims had a long lasting and detrimental effect on their relationship with the

regular service and Police Federation. This is an important point in terms of the aims of this study. The Police Federation is the statutory staff association for police officers up to the rank of Chief Inspector. Their attitude towards special constables may influence the feelings of the officers they represent. Indeed, Ayling (2007, p.87) claims that the use of volunteers still has significant potential to provoke police opposition and affect morale.

In 1947, the Police Post War Committee recommended that professional special constabularies be created nationwide with standards introduced for recruitment, rank, uniform, training and disciplinary procedures (Police Post War Committee, 1947). In 1962, special constabularies were described by the Royal Commission on the Police as a 'valuable reserve of manpower – not only for use in times of emergency' (Mirrlees-Black and Byron, 1994, p.2), and commended as providing a natural link between the police and the public (Leon, 2018a, p.58).

In a 1976 report, the Police Advisory Board approved the deployment of special constables on supplementary duties with regular officers and on routine duty alone to free up regular officers for work that required greater experience and training (Home Office, 1976). A further report followed in 1981 which approved special constables to perform a wider range of general duties as well as more specific tasks after suitable training (Home Office, 1981). In 1996, a Home Office Working Group recommended that special constables were to have the same powers as regular officers and could undertake any act required of a regular officer (Home Office, 1996). Leon (2018a, p.61) has suggested that the report of the Working Group, which contained some 90 recommendations to improve recruitment, training, professional standards and retention, forms the basis on which the special constabularies of today are administered and managed.

As can be seen, there is a long history of volunteering within the British police. Callender et al. (2018, p.1) argue that citizens have played a prominent role in policing since before the development of paid, professional policing. In effect, there has always been what Crawford and Lister (2004) have described as an 'extended policing family'. A relatively recent addition to the 'mixed economy of policing' (Crawford, 2014, p.173) are Police Support Volunteers (PSVs), individuals who do not hold police powers but are engaged in a wide range of activities such as staffing front counters, cadet leadership and restorative justice. According to the College of Policing (2016), there are over half a million volunteers working for the police across England and Wales, including special constables, police cadets, PSVs, and Neighbourhood and Home Watch Schemes. This number may grow with considerable interest being shown in the concept of a specialist special constable. The recruitment of volunteer officers to inject specialist skills into police organisations is seen frequently in the United States but not traditionally in the United Kingdom. Recently, the National Crime Agency (NCA, 2016) have recruited special constables with specific skills to fill niche specialisms. Police forces, grappling with new and emerging challenges in the form of cyber-crime, economic crime, and child sexual exploitation may soon adapt their recruitment processes to follow suit.

Despite the longevity of special constables, there is very little evidence base on what motivates them to begin and continue with their voluntary policing careers. This study aims to assist with addressing this knowledge gap. It is important for communities that steps are taken to address wastage in the special constabulary. Volunteer officers have the potential to bring a number of benefits to local communities, benefits that are more likely to be realised if morale and retention rates are increased, leading to longer periods of service and greater policing experience. It is also important for police organisations, who because of high turn over rates are not receiving value for money from their investment in special constabularies. Imroving morale is also important for individual special constables who make a major commitment to train to become volunteer officers, only to leave

prematurely because some element of the role is not satisfying them. The next section considers the benefits that special constables can bring in more detail.

**The Current Policing Volunteer Agenda**

Special constabularies have been championed by successive governments as bringing a range of benefits to policing. Police forces have been encouraged to bolster the strength of their special constable numbers through regular and well publicised recruitment campaigns. From their inception in 2012, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have continually sought to expand the numbers of their volunteer officers (Whittle, 2018, p.137), whilst in London, the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan 2013-17 set a commitment to double the number of special constables from 5,000 to 10,000 (Bailey, 2015, p.1).

Gravelle and Rogers (2010, p.62) claim that the benefits of police volunteerism relate to confidence, cohesion and economics, whilst Bullock (2014) suggests that special constabularies add value to policing in four main areas: (1) promoting legitimacy, (2) fostering self-policing and responsibilisation, (3) facilitating civic and neighbourhood renewal, and (4) reducing costs / increasing efficiency. These benefits are significant and highlight the importance of forces understanding the motivation of their special constables so that proactive measures can be taken to increase morale and encourage retention. This section considers three contemporary discourses about the value of special constabularies: responsibilisation, efficiency and community.

**Responsibilisation**

Neuberger (2009) suggests that volunteer programmes flourished within successive administrations from across the political spectrum, drawing on the language of self-policing and active citizenship.

According to Bullock and Millie (2018a, p.4), this can be understood '*in terms of dominant neoliberal political discourses which have called for the state to withdraw from supporting the welfare of citizens and instead motivate citizens to organise collectively or individually to promote their own welfare*'. Similarly, Garland (1996) claims that the neoliberal state has sought to control crime indirectly through encouraging non-state agencies and individuals to contribute to the co-production of crime control. This approach was part of New Labour strategies, an approach that Garland (2001) has labelled as 'responsibilisation'.

Policies aimed at strengthening the special constabulary extended into the 2010-2015 Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition and the Conservative government that succeeded it from 2015 onwards. Promoting the benefits of community engagement and participation in policing harmonised well with the responsibilisation agenda, initially with David Cameron's 'big society' and more recently Theresa May's 'shared society' initiatives. As the Home Office (2010, p.5) put it:

> *We want to see more special constables and explore new ideas to help unlock the potential of police volunteers in the workforce, for example as police 'reservists'. They are a clear manifestation of the Big Society in action, demonstrating the role which individuals and communities have in helping to fight and prevent crime.*

For Bullock (2015, p.3), the proliferation of volunteers in policing is an outcome of not just dominant political ideologies, but also, more prosaically, economic pressures. Rogers and Gravelle (2012, p.46) suggest that the 'big society' is only concerned with cutting investment and saving money, whilst Alcock (2010) argues that it is a symbolic device to legitimise excessive cuts on public services. According to Millie and Bullock (2012), the desire to redistribute power to communities coincided with austerity measures, meaning budget cuts were being made to public services, including the police.

Despite academic scepticism, volunteering and public participation remain key themes across political discourse. Citizen involvement is seen as a key factor in delivering world-class public services (Cabinet Office, 2008) and to the functioning of the criminal justice system (Giangrande et al., 2008; Casey, 2008). Comprising 14,864 special constables on 30 September 2016, the special constabulary is almost a third bigger than it was in the mid-2000s (Home Office, 2017). However, as Bullock and Millie (2018a, p.6) have pointed out, the promotion of the special constabulary post-2010 needs to be understood in terms of the economic context.

**Efficiency**

A common justification for having volunteer police is expected cost savings (Dobrin, 2015; Hilal and Olsen, 2010; Wolf, Albrecht and Dobrin, 2015). Policing does not exist in a social, political or economic vacuum (Dolling, 1993), and the global financial crisis of 2008 hit policing and other public sector organisations hard. The UK government response was to reduce public expenditure with the police service in England and Wales seeing a 20 per cent reduction in funding by 2014/15 (HM Treasury, 2010). Bullock and Millie (2018b, p.170) have previously suggested that the size of special constabularies has been shaped by wider political, social and economic conditions. To illustrate, both World Wars saw a rapid increase in the number of special constables. As the need dissipated in peace time, the numbers of special constables fell.

For Fredericksen and Levin (2004, p.118), increased demands and a poor economy have placed pressures on police departments to do more with less. One answer is citizen participation which can be considered an effective means of compensating for the scarcity of police resources (Greenberg, 1979; Zhao et al, 2002). According to Nesbit and Brudney (2010), volunteers are used throughout the world in police agencies to stretch limited finances and provide a better service to communities. The use of unpaid volunteers is only likely to increase as the police attempt to balance traditional demand

with a reduction in resources (Flanagan, 2008; Rogers and Gravelle, 2012, p.48). This situation has been compounded by the scarcity of specialist skills within police workforces to tackle new and emerging threats, which has seen forces contemplate specifically targeting volunteers with specialist skills and capabilities.

In a small scale empirical study, Bullock (2015, p.6) found that the deployment of volunteers was viewed as a pragmatic response to the economic reality. Campbell (2015, p.87) suggests that many police agencies struggle to address increasing requests for police services, with voluntary organisations filling the gaps between public expectations in relation to services and the state's capacity to meet them (Milligan and Conradson, 2006). In the light of falling police numbers, the police inspectorate (HMIC, 2002) have noted that police effectiveness would be compromised if special constables did not turn out for duty, whilst the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO, 2013, p.4) claim that in a period of austerity, the special constabulary is an excellent way of both increasing capacity and reducing demand.

Numerous claims have been made as to how special constabularies provide value for money for financially stretched police forces. When assessing the economic impact of any volunteer scheme, many organisations use the Volunteer Investment Value Audit (VIVA) (Gaskin, 2003a), which shows how much value is generated from each pound invested in volunteering. In 2005, Thames Valley Police were able to show that for every £1 invested, they received a return of £4 (Neuberger, 2009, p.22). However, it is important to recognise that volunteers are not a panacea to the economic crisis engulfing the police service. The most common myth surrounding volunteers in public sector organisations is that they are free and impose no monetary costs on the host organisation (Brudney, 2000, p.219). In support, Bullock (2015, p.3) states that operating volunteer programmes is not free

or even cost-neutral, with costs incurred from the hiring, training and retention of personnel (Sundeen and Siegel, 1986, p.57; Dobrin and Wolf, 2016, p.222).

**Community**

A major theme for the longevity of special constabularies has been the position of policing in the relationship between citizens and the state (Bullock and Millie, 2018b, p.170). Britton and Callender (2016a, p.3) argue that fundamental concepts around the nature of policing, such as the Peelian principle that 'the police are the public, and the public are the police', root an involved community at the heart of policing. For Bullock and Millie (2018a, p.3), volunteers act as a bridge between constabularies and citizens, reducing the democratic deficit in policing and improving legitimacy. Special constables, who are embedded in and representative of local communities, can foster mutual understanding between citizens and police services (Mirrlees-Black and Byron, 1994; NPIA, 2010a). Additionally, volunteers can serve to foster positive relationships between full-time law enforcement officers and the public (Fredericksen and Levin, 2004), whilst providing a greater transparency of policing functions (Gravelle and Rogers, 2009).

Volunteers, including special constables, are seen as a way of strengthening civil society and facilitating neighbourhood renewal (Putnam, 1995; Bullock and Millie, 2018a, p.4). As Neuberger (2009) suggests, by developing skills, confidence and greater democratic engagement, the UK government see volunteering as a way of empowering citizens and building civic renewal and social inclusion. Ren et al (2006, p.467) claim that the community policing movement should be given due credit for the expansion of police volunteerism over the last two decades. Sharp (1999) suggests that a growing number of police agencies have begun to view volunteers as an integral part of community policing programmes. There is an empirical base for suggesting that the use of community volunteers can increase confidence in policing. Ren et al (2005, p.62) found in their study that the effect of

volunteers was the strongest predictor of higher confidence, whilst Wolf (2013) has noted that a robust policing volunteer programme may be symbolic of increased public confidence in the police.

According to Britton and Callender (2018, p.150), special constables are barely visible across the current police professionalism agenda. This may not be all bad news, as Neuberger (2009, p.8) has argued that an unfortunate by-product of professionalisation of the police has been the creation of closed institutions that can seem distant to the communities that they serve. Volunteers increase transparency, accountability and make institutions more representative of communities (Neuberger, 2009, p.8), as well as serving as well informed ambassadors (Volunteers in Police Service, p.1). The reference to representation is a common theme within discourses about the special constabulary; that it better reflects the diversity of communities than the regular service (Scarman, 1981; HMIC, 2014). This is an assumption that has recently been challenged by Hieke (2018). Despite this, Maclean (1996, p.6) claims that special constables are the secret weapon in the British Police Service, that they are the 'elite core of the important partnership between police and the public'. Notwithstanding the purported benefits, the attrition rate of special constables remains excessively high. The next section discusses the reasons why individuals are motivated to volunteer, an understanding that is critical if the retention of volunteer officers is to improve.

**Theories of Volunteer Motivation**

Understanding what motivates individuals to volunteer is extremely important for organisations in relation to recruitment and retention. This has been a recurring theme preoccupying much of the literature on volunteering, although what motivates a person to volunteer is a complex question (Esmond and Dunlop, 2004, p.6). Various theoretical perspectives have been applied to the study of motivation. The first of three classical theories was Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, which proposed that people are motivated by five unmet needs (physiological, safety, belongingness,

esteem, and self-actualisation), with the most fundamental needs at the bottom. Lower needs have

to be satisfied before individuals can be motivated by a higher need.  Herzberg (1959) proposed the

motivation hygiene theory, often called the two factor theory, which focuses upon the sources of

motivation which are pertinent to the accomplishment of work. He separated these into motivating

factors (satisfiers) and hygiene factors (dissatisfiers), with satisfiers defined as achievement,

recognition, responsibility, advancement and personal growth. In 1985, McClelland (1985) put

forward his need for achievement theory. This identified a need for achievement, affiliation and power

and proposed that when a need is strong in a person, its effect is to motivate the person to use

behaviour which leads to the satisfaction of that need. A fundamental understanding of what

motivates an individual to act is crucial to discerning why special constables make the unique sacrifices

that they do, and to achieving the aims of this study:

1. To understand the factors that impact upon the motivation of Metropolitan special constables.

2. To understand the factors that impact upon the retention of Metropolitan special constables.

3. To suggest recommendations to the Metropolitan Police Service to assist in improving Metropolitan special constable motivation and retention.

From the 1980s, studies began to look more specifically at volunteer motivation. Horton-Smith (1981)

developed a two-factor model which distinguished between altruistic and egotistic motives. Frisch

and Gerrard (1981), and Gillespie and King (1985), found support for the concept of a two-factor

model in their studies of Red Cross volunteers. In a study of the motivations of student volunteers,

Fitch (1987) developed a three factor model that consisted of altruistic, egoistic and social-obligation

motivators. Morrow-Howell and Mui (1989) found support for a similar model in their study of senior volunteers. Despite these developments, the early studies into volunteer motivation were not without their limitations. Most involved small sample sizes and were focused upon volunteers within individual organisations.

The 1990s saw the emergence of two further models to understand volunteer motivation. For Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991), the two and three factor models did not consider the inter-relationships between different motives. They found in a study of 362 individuals that volunteers have both altruistic and egoistic motivations for volunteering. They suggest that volunteers do not distinguish between different motives and do not act on a single category of motive. Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) argue that it is a combination of motives that explain why a person volunteers and therefore a unidimensional model is appropriate.

Building on this work, Clary et al. (1998) developed the multifactor model which they based on functionalist theories of motivation by Katz (1960) and Smith et al (1956). They identified six primary functions or motivations that were served through volunteering: values; understanding; career; social; esteem; and protective. They combined the six functions with a series of five statements for each function and a 7-point Likert scale. This resulted in the development of the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI). Clary et al. claim (1998) their model is reliable and valid and has a solid conceptual base. Several researchers have supported the reliability of the model (Esmond and Dunlop, 2004, p.15; Okun et al, 1998, p.608), whilst attention has also been drawn to its quality, and ease and frequency of use (Rokach and Wanklyn, 2009). Clary et al.'s (1998) multifactor model is used as the theoretical foundation for this study. Whilst this model has not been used before to explore special constable motivation, there have been a small number of previous studies on the morale of volunteer officers. The next section considers that research.

**Previous Research on the Special Constabulary**

This section examines previous research into special constable motivation and retention. The studies appear in relation to the three major themes that they identified, rather than in chronological order. The nature of special constabulary deployment features across much of the research. Hope and Lloyd (1984) found during interviews with MSC officers that many considered they were not being used enough or efficiently. Gaston and Alexander (2001, p.69) discovered that 10.3 per cent of serving and 16.0 per cent of former special constables were never or seldom deployed effectively, whilst in research by the National Policing Improvement Agency (2010a), 12 per cent of special constables cited a lack of meaningful deployment as a negative experience.

Other researchers have linked the quality of deployment to the morale and retention of volunteer officers. In a qualitative study, Hedges (2000) concludes that a lack of purposeful deployment, and restricted and unpopular duties destroys the motivation of volunteers. Alexander (2000), in research across five police forces, found uninteresting duties and a perception that special constables are not deployed in a worthwhile manner to be significant underlying factors which serve to accelerate the decision to resign. Whilst these studies highlight factors that impact upon special constable morale, they did not use motivational theory as a lens through which to explain the findings.

Several studies have looked more closely at the type of duties performed by special constables. Leon (1991) discovered that 50 per cent of the duties were general patrols, whilst Bullock and Leeney (2016) found that nearly 75 per cent of special constables in one police service worked for the Neighbourhood Command. The use of special constables for predominantly high visibility patrolling and neighbourhood policing has been highlighted by other authors (Gill and Mawby, 1990; Mirrlees-Black and Byron, 1994; Gaston and Alexander, 2001; Bullock and Leeney, 2016). Conversely, Leon (1991) found an appetite for more specialised work, including in the realms of investigation, amongst

volunteer officers, as did Mirrlees-Black and Byron (1994) in their research in the Metropolitan, City of London and Dorset forces, and a 2016 national survey of special constables and PSVs (Britton and Callender, 2016b). However, Leon (1991) notes that the use of special constables for investigative work was not universally welcomed, 'as they are perceived to lack the specialist legal knowledge of CID officers and have no training in anything other than uniformed work'. These findings are important in terms of the aims of this research. Ninety per cent of all MSC officers are formally posted to Safer Neighbourhood Teams (MPS, 2016). This suggests that opportunities in emergency policing and specialist departments are limited. These studies do indicate a link between the deployment of volunteer officers and their morale, and as Whittle (2018, p.139) warns, volunteers can leave at any time if they are not given meaningful, interesting and at times exciting work. This is a claim given credence by Berg and Doerner (1988, p.88), who found that matching volunteer officers in Florida to certain types of policing tasks heightened satisfaction, and by Gill and Mawby (1990), who identified a key factor in maintaining the enthusiasm of Devon and Cornwall special constables to be the provision of interesting work.

A number of studies have reported on the use of skills that special constables bring into policing. Mirrlees-Black and Byron (1994, p.61) found that between a quarter and a third of special constables were not satisfied with the degree to which the work they were given utilised their particular skills and abilities. A survey in Lancashire (Lancashire Constabulary, 2014) revealed that forty nine per cent (43/88) of respondents believed that the Constabulary did not make best use of their skills. Bullock and Leeney (2016) discovered that just under 60 per cent of special constables agreed that their skills and experience were put to good use, and one third agreed that their skills and experience were matched to their role, whilst a national survey of special constables and PSVs (Britton and Callender, 2016b) reported that 32 per cent of special constables disagreed that the force understands the skills and experience they bring. The significance of these findings for this study is highlighted by NPIA

research (2010b), which concludes that recognition of skills from outside careers has a positive impact upon making special constables feel valued, which in turn impacts positively upon retention rates. These studies highlight dissatisfaction amongst special constables that their skills are not being recognised and used effectively. Thus, there is a need to understand how forces can make better use of officers' skills, whilst balancing these aspirations against service priorities and the practicalities of using skills from outside careers without additional and potentially expensive police related training.

Previous research has also highlighted the problematic relationship between the special constabulary and regular service. Mirrlees and Black (1994, p.38) discovered that a third of MPS special constables thought that regular constables are 'anti-specials', and that only 20 per cent of special constables from the MPS, Dorset, and City of London considered that regular officers held very or extremely favourable attitudes towards volunteer officers. Gaston and Alexander (2001, p.70) found that 26 per cent of special constables felt that they were either 'not accepted' or 'neither accepted nor unaccepted' by regular officers, whilst Whittle (2012, p.31) reports that 20 per cent of Avon and Somerset special constables said there was a divide between the special constabulary and regular service, with 44 per cent claiming a partial divide. Bullock and Leeney (2016, p.495) highlighted that just under 60 per cent of special constables in one police service felt accepted by regular officers, whilst a national survey (Britton and Callender, 2016b) reported that 12 per cent of special constables do not feel that the work they do as a volunteer is valued or respected by regular officers. The relationship between special constables and regular officers is clearly pertinent to this study's aims as several authors (e.g. Mitchell and Taylor, 1997; Wilson and Pimm, 1996) have argued that volunteer retention is enhanced by positive relations with paid staff.

**The Lack of Research into Police Volunteerism**

Despite the studies presented in this chapter, many authors claim that the special constabulary is under-researched (e.g. Bullock and Millie, 2018b, p.169; Callender et al., 2018, p.1). For Ren et al. (2006, p.465), there has been only limited research on the topic despite the rise in police volunteerism. Bullock and Leeney (2016, p.485) claim that there is a dearth of empirical evidence regarding the operation of the special constabulary, whilst Whittle (2014, p.30) suggests there to be an absence of robust and relevant evidence which could be used to inform special constabulary policy. There is very little quality data on the role, authority, responsibilities and duties of volunteer police (Dobrin and Wolf, 2016, p.220). As Hilal and Olson (2010, p.92) put it, the literature is 'quite scarce'.

Pepper and Wolf (2015, p.210) found limited research in relation to volunteers in policing, whilst Wolf et al. (2016a, p.448), and Campbell (2015, p.89), found a lack of empirical research into American volunteer police officers. For Crawford (2014), one possible explanation is that most research into the pluralisation of policing has focused upon the privatisation of functions traditionally conducted by the public police, rather than on the role of civil society.

According to Millie (2016, p.3), the lack of research poses a range of issues for the police's understanding of volunteers, and for making the most of volunteers' contributions. Ren et al (2006, p.476) argue that the effective recruitment, motivation and sustaining of police volunteers requires much more knowledge than is currently available about who prospective volunteers are and how they can be attracted to policing. A better understanding of the motivations of special constables would seem to provide the foundations for ensuring that special constable expectations are properly accounted for in making decisions about how they are deployed (Bullock and Leeney, 2016, p.498). This research aims to contribute towards this understanding, and to offer possible solutions to the high attrition of MSC officers.

**Summary**

This chapter has reviewed the literature relevant to this study. It is patently clear that police volunteerism in general, and the special constabulary more specifically, is under-researched. Furthermore, special constabularies seldom feature in popular or media representations of the police despite being an important part of contemporary police organisations (Bullock and Millie, 2018b, p.169). The motivations of special constables to join the police service and the factors that impact upon continued service are poorly understood. This research helps to start to address these gaps in knowledge and understanding. The following chapter sets out the methodology to be employed during this study.

# Chapter 3 Methodology

## Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach adopted by this study. The research design utilises cross-sectional data collected via semi-structured interviews with current and former Metropolitan special constables. The purpose of the design was to enable an examination of the underlying factors that influence volunteer officer motivation and commitment to continue in the role. The chapter begins by considering the role of the researcher as a serving police officer conducting police research. The philosophical underpinnings of the study are then set out before the research design is considered in depth. An outline of the research method is provided before interview design, data collection and the sampling of research participants are discussed. The approach to analysing the data is then set out before ethical issues are considered. Finally, personal reflections about this project are described.

## Police Research

The role of myself as a police officer researcher should not be underestimated. A number of academics have attempted to categorise the typologies of police research. Brown (1996) has grouped police researchers into four categories. She describes 'Insider Insiders' as police officers who work for periods of time as 'in-house researchers'; 'Outsider Insiders' as former police officers-turned-academics who have provided crucial insights into the inner workings of the police; 'Inside Outsiders' as qualified civilian researchers who work for or who manage in house research departments; and 'Outside Outsiders' as all external commentators and researchers on policing. For Innes (2010, p.128), there are four types of policing research: 'Research by the police'; 'Research on the police'; 'Research for the police'; and 'Research with the police'.

Having been a police officer for twenty-three years, this project is being conducted by an 'Insider Insider'. Although 'Inside Insiders' have been subject to criticism in the past, with their research labelled as 'limited' (Brown, 1996, p.181) and a 'foregone conclusion' (Weatheritt, 1986, p.19), Brown (1996) has noted that as more police officers attain higher education qualifications their experience of research is improving. After leaving full time education aged 16, I am one of the officers referred to by Brown (1996). I completed a three year BSc in Policing in 2014. I then returned to higher education in 2016 to undertake this research MSc. As a Detective Superintendent in the MPS, I am used to reading the results of research projects, however my own experience of conducting research is narrow.

**Philosophical approach**

Paradigms refer to belief systems that are used to organise our reasoning and observations (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p.17). Paradigms therefore define the ways in which a researcher views the social world, their relationship to it, including the tools and methods used to generate knowledge about it (Deshpande, 1983). Traditional debates surrounding research paradigms centre on the distinctions between the quantitative approach associated with the philosophy of positivism and the qualitative stance aligned to paradigms such as constructivism (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004) and interpretivism (Bryman, 2004, p.13).

Johnson (1994, p.105) advises that selecting the research method is a crucial element in the research process. Whether interpretive or positivist research should be pursued depends upon the nature of the phenomenon and the best way to study it (Bhattacherjee, 2012, p.103). According to Bryman (2004, p.23), if the researcher is interested in the views of a certain social group then a qualitative research strategy may be the one to choose. Social scientists tend to use qualitative research aiming

to accumulate a detailed account of human behavior and beliefs within the contexts they occur in (Rubin and Rubin, 2005).

Mason (2018, p.4) argues that social researchers must understand their ontological perspective and epistemological position in order to produce a research design. Qualitative research is associated with a constructionism ontological position (Bryman, 2004, p.17), 'a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation'. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences which are varied and multiple. By following a qualitative approach, the researcher looks for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meaning into a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2009, p.8). Constructionism also includes the notion that researchers' own accounts of the social world are constructions (Bryman, 2004, p.17). Mason (2018, p.5) has listed different ontological properties as seen by social scientists. This study is designed to investigate the motivations and experiences of Metropolitan special constables. Using the work of Mason (2018, p.5), the social scientific ontological elements that are likely to impact upon this research include: understandings, interpretations, knowledge, motivations, ideas, perceptions; attitudes, beliefs, views, and perspectives, experiences and accounts.

Bhattacherjee (2012, p.19) states that researchers who believe that the best way to study social order is through the subjective interpretation of the participants involved are employing an interpretivist epistemology. He goes on to highlight the advantages of interpretive research as being: well-suited for exploring reasons behind complex and multi-faceted social processes, helpful for theory construction in areas with no or insufficient theory, appropriate for studying context-specific processes, and uncovering relevant research questions for further research. These benefits all support the use of qualitative research in this project. Similarly, Mason (2018, p.8) claims that an interpretivist

epistemological approach emphasises the sense people make of their own lives and experiences, where the researcher seeks out and interprets people's meanings and interpretations.

Having considered my ontological perspective, that special constables' experiences, understandings, interactions and interpretations are meaningful properties of their social world; and my epistemological position, that a legitimate and meaningful way to generate data on these properties is to talk to special constables, seeking out and listening to their accounts, I have decided that this study requires a qualitative approach. This differs from much of the current police research that favours a quantitative approach, although this has been criticised for missing context and nuance (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Blaikie, 2007; Bryman, 2015).

**Research Method**

Having decided upon a qualitative approach, different research methods were then considered. Dornyei (2007, p.132) has noted that qualitative data are most often collected by researchers through interviews and questionnaires. However, according to Kvale (1996), interviews are more powerful than questionnaires in eliciting narrative data that allows researchers to investigate people's views in greater depth. Similarly, Cohen et al (2007, p.29) argue that interviewing is a 'valuable method for exploring the construction and negotiation of meanings in a natural setting'. For Johnson (2002, p.105), whether interviewing should be used in research depends on the research question. In his view, where the knowledge sought is often taken for granted and not readily articulated by most members, and where different individuals involved in the same line of activity have complicated, multiple perspectives on some phenomenon, then interviewing is likely the best approach.

Focus groups were considered and discounted. Bryman (2004, p.359) has described the difficulty of analysing focus group data. Krueger (1998) has drawn attention to prominent and reticent speakers in a group environment, whilst Morgan (2002) has highlighted how participants are more prone to expressing culturally expected views in a group rather than during individual interview. On a more practical note, securing agreement for multiple volunteers to turn up at a particular time and location was likely to be difficult. For these reasons, a decision was made to utilise individual interviews in this study.

Having settled upon a research method, it was important to consider the researcher's position in this context. Bryman (2004, p.21) has drawn attention to the impact of values on the researcher. He claims that these can intrude at a number of points in the research project including choice of research area, formulation of research question, choice of method and data collection techniques, analysis and interpretation of data, and conclusions. Warren (2002, p.97) argues that the interviewer and respondent participate in interviews from 'historically grounded biographical as well as disciplinary perspectives'. These biographical perspectives may frame entire analysis or affect which illustrative quotes are selected. Johnson (2002, p.106) warns that interviewers don't necessarily hear what respondents tell them, but what their own intellectual and ethical development has prepared them to hear. To counter these dangers, Ivankova (2015) stresses the importance of reflexivity in the researcher's role, with a continuing need to clarify biases, reflect on the emergent themes in the data and check observations against their own biases and perceptions. These are things that I will need to remain conscious of throughout my research. I bring with me into this study my own predominantly positive experience of special constables, despite some of the negative rhetoric that I have heard at training school and at various police stations over the past 23 years.

**The Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC)**

The Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC) are the focus of this study. They are the special constabulary for the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Being a serving senior MPS officer, I have a vested interest in a well-motivated and functioning MSC. I also have advantaged access to potential participants. However, there is an additional reason why I have chosen to study the MSC. One in 4 special constables nationally belong to the MSC. Low morale and high attrition amongst volunteer officers in London have a massive impact nationally on the number of special constables.

In December 2015, the MSC had 3,253 officers against a target strength of 4,400. Ninety per cent of all MSC officers are formally posted to Safer Neighbourhood Teams. In 2015, MSC officers volunteered 570,078 policing hours, predominantly performing visible patrol and neighbourhood functions within the 32 London Boroughs. The vast majority of operational shifts are completed on Friday and Saturday nights. This is a core demand time period for the MPS across London (MPS, 2016).

Since 2012, the number of special constables has fallen by 13.5 per cent across England and Wales. For the MSC this reduction is 40 per cent over the same period. Twenty per cent of new MSC officers exit in less than a year. Ten per cent of new MSC officers complete no hours before exiting. One in two exits nationally are from the MSC. Between February 2015 and February 2016, 35 per cent of special constables performed less than 8 hours a month, and between December 2015 and February 2016, 26 per cent of special constables completed zero hours. Between April 2011 and December 2015, the total strength of the MSC had fallen from 5,021 to 3,253. During this period the MSC recruited 5,920 new officers whilst 7,325 exited the organisation. Of those exiting, around 30 per cent left to join the regular MPS. The current cost to recruit, train and equip a special constable in London is estimated at a minimum of £2,400. This equated to £2.2m in 2014-15 (MPS, 2016).

The strategic aim of the MSC is to deliver quality policing and make the MSC one of the most desirable volunteering opportunities in London (MPS, 2016). By 2020, 'the MSC will support the Met's vision, through delivering 750,000 policing hours annually' (MPS, 2017, p.3). To achieve these aims and ambitions, the retention rates of MSC officers must improve.

**Type of Interview**

In returning to the interview process, a decision was needed about the type of interview to be utilised in the study. The two main forms of qualitative interviewing are unstructured and semi-structured interviewing. Burgess (1984) has described unstructured interviews as similar in character to conversations, with the interviewer using at most an aide memoire as a brief set of prompts (Bryman, 2004, p.320). According to Alsaawi (2014, p.150), it is very common for social science researchers to conduct semi-structured interviews. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a list of questions or topics to be covered as an interview guide, with the respondent allowed leeway in how they respond (Bryman, 2004, p.321). A semi-structured approach should be followed if the researcher has a fairly clear focus, rather than a general notion of wanting to do research on a topic (Bryman, 2004, p.323).

In the previous chapter, the limited number of studies on the special constabulary clearly showed a multitude of perspectives on the motivation, experience and satisfaction of volunteer officers. This project has a clear focus on these areas, rather than general research into the MSC. For these reasons this study will utilise semi-structured interviews, which will allow the interviews to be guided in the direction of the key topics whilst maintaining respect for the narratives of the participants. Despite this decision, there are drawbacks to qualitative interviewing that it was important to be aware of. Many authors have commented upon how time consuming they are, as the researcher has to go through a long process of establishing access, making contact, conducting the interview and

transcribing the data and making use of it (Robson, 2011; Seidman, 2012; Dornyei, 2007). Establishing access and making contact will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter, although I was hopeful at an early stage that being a member of the organisation I was researching would make this a relatively straightforward task.

Johnson (2002, p.107) has claimed that an important issue is the researcher's relationship to member knowledge and lived experience, whilst Lofland and Lofland (1995) argue that interviews where the interviewer is completely ignorant of the issues to be addressed during the interview are likely to prove worthless as empirical data. For my part, I have experience of special constables that dates back over 23 years but is very sporadic. During my first two years as a police constable in Kingston I worked regularly with special constables, one in particular who was permanently attached to my relief (now Emergency Response Team) and with whom I am still friends to this day. Another friend is a current special constable, coincidentally also at Kingston. I am confident in saying that I will not fall into the category described by Lofland and Lofland (1995).

**Interview Practicalities**

One issue that had to be considered was whether to conduct the interviews in person, online or over the telephone. Telephone interviews have the attraction of being easier to schedule but many researchers have advised against it. Warren (2002, p.98) describes the importance of seeing and feeling, as well as listening, talking and hearing to understand the social world, whilst for Shuy (2002, p.541), in-person interviewing generates more accurate responses than telephone interviewing, owing to contextual naturalness and a greater likelihood of self-generated answers. Taking these factors into account, a decision was made to conduct interviews face- to-face, with a contingency plan of online interviewing if this proved too difficult to arrange. Online interviews negate some of the problems of telephone interviewing, but also bring some of their own. Mason (2018, p.129) has

advised that researchers need to consider their own capabilities and skills, including technical ones, possible technical hitches, and that online interviews are not 'location-free'.

The interviews were to be recorded using a portable device. According to Heritage (1984, p.238), recording has the advantages of: correcting the natural limitations of our memories and the gloss that we might place on what people say; allowing more thorough examination of what people say; and permitting repeated examinations of the respondents' answers. In reaching this decision, it was important to remain mindful of advice that every hour of speech takes five to six hours to transcribe (Bryman, 2004, p.331) and can amount to fifty pages of transcript (Dornyei, 2007).

**How Many Interviews to Conduct?**

One area of qualitative research that has been the subject of much debate is the question of how many interviews to conduct. For McCracken (1988, p.37), 8 in-depth interviews are enough, whilst Spradley (1979, p.51) advises that a research project will involve between 25 and 30. Warren (2002, p.99) has claimed that for a qualitative interview study to be published, the minimum number of interviews required seems to be between 20 and 30, whilst Gerson and Horowitz (2002, p.223) suggest that fewer than 60 cannot support convincing conclusions.

Other academics do not specify a numerical value. Bryman (2004, p.335) argues that the size of the sample to support convincing conclusions is likely to vary from situation to situation. Glaser and Strauss (1967) consider that the researcher should carry on collecting data until you have achieved theoretical saturation. This means, 'until (a) no new or relevant data seem to be emerging regarding a category, (b) the category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation, and (c) the relationships among categories are well established and validated' (Strauss and

Corbin, 1998, p.212). More prosaically, Wolcott (2012) has advised to keep interviewing as long as you are getting different answers, whilst Adler and Adler (2012) suggest the need to reach empirical saturation may be limited by the researchers' time available for data gathering. Becker (2012) too makes the more pragmatic case that time and money are the limiting factors as to where the research stops. The intention of this study, which was realised, was to continue interviewing until theoretical saturation. However, throughout the data collection phase I remained mindful of Becker's advice in terms of my own time limitations, juggling this research alongside a full time job and young family.

**Sampling Approach**

The chapter now turns to the issue of access to volunteers. Although the special constabulary has personal interest for me, I remained cognizant of Lofland and Lofland's (1995) advice that advocates researchers studying social phenomena to which they have ready or advantaged access. As a serving and senior member of the MPS, I did have privileged access to the group I wished to sample. The sampling frame of the project included current and former (recently resigned) members of the MSC. Authority to conduct the study and access to participants was achieved on two levels. This study has been part funded by a bursary from the MPS Evidence Based Policing unit. All requests to conduct academic research within the MPS have to go through and be agreed by this unit. In awarding the bursary, permission was given to conduct this project.

Having gained corporate access, a gateway was needed into the MSC. The MSC coordinator, a full time member of police staff, agreed to assist with the study and in early October 2017, an email, with an attached introductory letter and consent form, was sent to all MSC officers based at Lambeth, Merton and Sutton via Duty Sheet (the special constabulary IT system). The letter introduced the researcher, the nature and aims of the study, and explained that face-to-face interviews that would be recorded and transcribed were desired. Assurances of anonymity and confidentiality were given, as well as

contact details for the researcher should there be further questions or officers wished to participate. A decision had been made that the rank of the researcher, Detective Superintendent, would be included on the email. Mason (2018, p.93) has drawn attention to power relations during qualitative research whilst Johnson (2002, p.109) suggests that achieved statuses can make a difference to some respondents during interviews. I was mindful that potential participants may be reluctant to speak negatively about or criticise the MSC, and in turn the MPS, to a senior officer. Mindful of previous studies where the researcher's true identity has remained unknown (Bryman, 2004, p.511), I wanted to give prospective participants as much information as might be needed to give informed consent to take part.

The decision to focus upon three Boroughs was purely a practical one in terms of locations that were convenient for the researcher. An initial three volunteers responded by email. Whilst disappointing, MSC officers are required to work a minimum of two shifts per month, often averaged out across a year, and so the low number of responses may have related to the fact that many volunteer officers do not log on to Duty Sheet between shifts. At my request, the email was sent again by the MSC coordinator via Duty Sheet to all officers on the South Area (approximately 1100) on 16th October 2017. In total, 27 responses were received indicating a willingness to be involved, from special constable to special inspector ranks and encompassing 12 different Operational Command Units (OCUs) across the MPS.

In relation to recently resigned special constables, contact details were provided on their initial notification to resign forms. A member of the MSC chief officer team agreed that I could make contact with the people on the sample of forms that I had been sent. A number of emails were sent out, only 1 reply was received. This actually turned into an interview. Coincidentally, during an interview with a current special constable they mentioned having two friends who had resigned from the MSC and

provided contact details for them. Contact was made with the two friends, both of whom participated in interviews.

All prospective participants were sent a thank you email, advising that interviews were being arranged over the next few months and requesting location and date preferences. Interviews were then scheduled between October and December 2017 with a number of volunteers, others were held in reserve until the New Year and if required dependent upon whether saturation had been reached. I remained mindful of Johnson's (2002, p.110) advice that not all respondents are equally valuable, they differ greatly in intelligence, knowledge, ability to reflect and motivation to assist and to Geertz's assertion (1988) that the best respondents are those who can provide a 'thick description'. The location of interviews was left to the preference of participants, with all but three taking place in a police building.

An interview plan was produced that featured 11 main questions. This followed Warren's (2002, p.86) advice that in designing qualitative interview research 10-12 specific questions should be generated from the research questions. In reality, as described by Rubin and Rubin (2005), the main questions that began and guided the conversation were used in combination with probes to clarify answers or request further examples, and follow up questions that pursued the implications of answers to main questions. At the end of each interview, participants were asked if they had any further comments or questions and were thanked for their time. In total, 15 interviews were conducted, 12 with current MSC officers and the remainder with former officers who had resigned. Despite Warren's (2002, p.90) warning that setting up the interview and making it happen are two very different things, none of my respondents forgot, delayed or simply didn't show up for a scheduled interview. The demographics of the participants are shown below. The length of service is shown in bands to protect the anonymity of participants:

| Participant number | Sex | Rank | Length of Service |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Male | Inspector | 5+ years |
| 2 | Male | Inspector | 5+ years |
| 3 | Female | Constable | 0-1 year |
| 4 | Male | Constable | 0-1 year |
| 5 | Female | Sergeant | 2-5 years |
| 6 | Male | Constable | 2-5 years |
| 7 | Female | Constable | 0-1 year |
| 8 | Male | Constable | Resigned |
| 9 | Male | Constable | Resigned |
| 10 | Female | Constable | Resigned |
| 11 | Male | Constable | 0-1 year |
| 12 | Male | Constable | 0-1 year |
| 13 | Male | Constable | 0-1 year |
| 14 | Male | Constable | 5+ years |
| 15 | Male | Constable | 0-1 year |

It became apparent fairly early during the course of the interviews that the focus of my initial research questions were not the most important issue for special constables when it came to their motivation and intention to continue volunteering. During the research proposal stage the research questions were:

1. Does the MPS recognise and utilise the array of skills and experience that special constables bring into policing?

2. How does / would this utilisation impact upon the motivation and retention of special constables?

Although external skills and experience formed part of the interviews and for some did impact upon motivation, it seemed for many participants a peripheral topic when compared to the recruitment process, training, deployment and opportunities. The real essence of my research and what I wanted to understand was the experiences of special constables and how they related to motivation and in turn a commitment to protracted volunteering. It appeared from the initial interviews that the research questions as they were would not be the best vehicle through which I could investigate that phenomenon. Heeding Mason's (2018, p.50) advice to design a study that can be fluid, with the capacity to respond to changing contexts, I decided to modify the research questions to better reflect the nature of the study. The modified research questions were:

1. What are the experiences of Metropolitan special constables?

2. How do these experiences impact upon the morale and continued service of Metropolitan special constables?

3. How can the needs of Metropolitan special constables be satisfied in relation to a functionalist understanding of motivation?

**Analytical Approach**

Bryman (2004, p.399) has drawn attention to the large data set that is produced with qualitative research and the difficulties with analysing it. The transcription of the 15 interviews in this study amounted to 359 pages of A4 text. In order to make sense of this vast amount of information, I divided the data up into themes using a process of thematic coding. Charmaz (1983, p.186) describes codes as 'shorthand devices to label, separate, compile, and organise data'. I broadly followed the three levels of coding suggested by Coffey and Atkinson (1996), moving from basic coding to a second level where my themes reflected the language of participants, to a final level where my codes were more concerned with broad analytic themes. I made marginal notes on the paper transcripts during the first phase, moving to an Excel spreadsheet during the second and third phases. During the latter phases, the large number of codes I had produced initially reduced as I combined codes that appeared linked or similar in nature. I did consider using a software package such as NVivo to assist me with the coding process, however, realism about my lack of IT skills set in and I settled upon Excel. This worked perfectly adequately, allowing me to list the themes and sub-themes that I had developed, extract relevant chunks of coded data from the transcripts, and to highlight the relationships between different sets of coded data. The codes were generated by using a blend of the interview data, my research aims and questions, my background knowledge of the special constabulary from my experience as a police officer, and ideas generated through the literature review. I used an abductive approach to analysing the data. This is associated with the interpretivist epistemological approach that I had taken and has been described by Mason (2018, p.228) as 'the iterative process of moving between everyday concepts and meanings, lay accounts and social science explanations, in alternate phases of immersion in data and then withdrawal for interpretive reflection'. For Coffey and Atkinson (1996), the process involves moving back and forth between our own data, our experience and broader concepts.

**Ethical Considerations**

Canterbury Christ Church University (2014) have published a number of documents which outline the ethical principles which students must comply with when conducting research involving human and animal participants. The University are clear that researchers have a responsibility to ensure that they 'recognise and protect the rights and general well-being of their participants' (CCCU, 2014, p.2).

Bryman (2004, p.509) has suggested that harm can to participants can include physical harm, stress, loss of self-esteem, and harm to development. In this study, there were no physical risks to participants. There was a potential although minor risk of harm in relation to any disclosed breaches of professional standards or the police Code of Ethics. I offset concerns by ensuring that participants were given privacy and confidentiality as outlined in the University's ethics guidance (CCCU, 2014, p.4). I provided participants with the research aims in advance, to enable them to have full sight of the areas that were going to be explored. This reduced the risk that an area of questioning would cause them discomfort or embarrassment and also allowed them to start considering their answers prior to the interview. All participants were also informed that they could withdraw their cooperation at any time, and that they could refuse to answer any question if they so wished. In the event, this risk did not materialise.

The ethical codes advocate confidentiality of the identities and records of participants. This means that care should be taken when findings are published to ensure that individuals cannot be identified (Bryman, 2004, p.510). In writing up my research, the names of participants, their rank and the locations where they work were not specified to protect confidentiality. Any other information provided that was likely to lead to a participant being identified was also omitted when reporting this study. The proposed methodology and ethics checklist was submitted to the University's Ethics Committee and the project received clearance. As an additional safeguard, all participants who did

take part in the study were required to read and sign an informed consent form prior to being interviewed.

**Personal Reflections**

This is my first experience of completing an academic research project. My initial plan was to complete the literature review and methodology sections of the study, and gain ethics approval by the end of the first academic year. I achieved this with a few weeks to spare. I then intended to complete the research phase before the end of 2017. This allowed me from September to December 2017 to identify participants, design an interview plan, and arrange and conduct the interviews.

Whilst planning the interviews, I reflected upon my personal attributes to conduct them. I have been a detective for most of my policing service and undertaken a number of interviewing courses. Although I have conducted hundreds of witness and suspect interviews in my policing career, my experience in recent years has been limited as I moved into leadership roles. Despite this, I was still confident in my interviewing skills. I decided to be flexible in my approach to conducting the interviews, leaving the dates, times and locations to the participants. In the event, nearly all of the interviews were conducted during office hours at central London locations, many of which were police buildings where I had access to meeting rooms.

Having completed the interviews before Christmas 2017, I intended to start transcribing in the New Year and then move on to the write up in April 2018, which would allow me 6 months to complete. Despite these best-laid plans, in the early part of 2018 I suffered a serious illness which necessitated several weeks in hospital and then a lengthy period of recovery at home. I wasn't able to return to the project until May 2018, meaning that I had lost 4 months. There were several times when I considered

withdrawing from the process altogether, but I didn't want to waste the effort that I had already put into it. I had purchased a portable recorder to record the interviews. Despite receiving advice from a number of quarters to back up the data, I hadn't done so. When I turned on the recorder in May, none of the interviews appeared on the device. The only explanation that I could think of was that the electronic equipment used to treat me by the ambulance service and hospital, near to the recorder in my bag, had wiped the recordings. I took the device to a data recovery company who after a couple of days reported back to me that there were no recordings present. Again, at this stage I went through the contrasting emotions of wanting to quit and a determination to see the project through. Having decided that I would start the interview process again with those participants that hadn't been utilised first time around (and apologise to the special constables who had taken part), I decided as a last throw of the dice to plug the recorder into an old lap top in my cupboard in the hope that I might achieve what the data company hadn't. Words cannot adequately express my feelings when 15 untitled files appeared on the screen, or when my voice emanated from the speakers reading the first interview preamble. I quickly made a backup copy there and then and resolved always to backup data in the future.

Having lost 4 months, I decided that I didn't have time to transcribe the interviews myself and instead sought the assistance of the MPS typing service. As the MPS were part funding the project this was agreed by the administrative support leadership team. Due to a number of typists working on the project, the transcripts were complete within a couple of weeks which helped me to catch up some of the time that I had lost. From there, despite another trip to hospital for surgery and a short recovery period at home, I made up more lost time, primarily from an extended period of sick leave from work which enabled me to devote more hours over a shorter period than would be otherwise have been possible to writing up the project.

To conclude this reflection, I learnt the benefits of conducting a study in an area where I had privileged access to participants. This undoubtedly made the project easier than it may otherwise have been and ensured that I didn't waste valuable time on arranging access, rescheduling interviews, or failed appointments. The fact that everyone turned up as arranged was a major benefit. Despite this, I was mindful throughout the study of the importance of prospective reflexivity in relation to researcher status and insider/outsiderness (Attia and Edge, 2017, p.35). My rank may have influenced people to attend as scheduled but may also have affected the degree to which participants were prepared to be open. Additionally, my status as a regular officer, in the context of the variable relationship between the regular service and special constabulary, may have impacted upon the nature of my relationship with the participants, data collection, analysis and interpretation. Finally, l learnt that even well-laid plans can go awry without warning, and that it is important to remain as positive and flexible as possible despite setbacks.

# Chapter 4 Training

**Introduction**

This chapter considers the issue of training for Metropolitan special constables. This study found the majority of participants were unhappy with the quality and quantity of training that they received prior to being attested as volunteer officers. Similar discord was evident in relation to the continuous professional development of officers once they had begun operational duties. The chapter is split into two main sections. The first section discusses foundation training for special constables. Initially, the variable quality of instruction is considered. Administrative errors that led to new volunteers questioning how much they are valued are then set out. Finally, the view that foundation training does not prepare special constables for life on the street as fully warranted police officers is examined. The second section deals with the continuous professional development of special constables. The section is divided into three parts. First, the support offered to volunteers to achieve Independent Patrol Status (IPS) is discussed. Second, training and development offered to officers once IPS has been achieved is outlined. The chapter finishes with consideration of improvements suggested by participants.

**Foundation Training**

The foundations of an effective volunteer training programme are identifying what job knowledge needs to be acquired, what skills need to be developed, what organisational values need to be transmitted, and what volunteer motivations can be built upon or enhanced (Lulewicz, 1995, p.83). For Fisher and Cole (1993, p.99), the benefits of a comprehensive training programme for volunteers include: volunteers who represent the organisation in the community in an accurate and positive manner; volunteers who have the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their jobs correctly and efficiently; volunteers who are highly motivated, loyal and committed to the organisation; volunteers who are regular in attendance, who consistently perform well, and who have a positive attitude to work; and volunteers whose training reduces liability to the organisation incurred by their activity.

Although these comments are made about volunteers more generally, effective training for special constables has even greater significance. There is an expectation from the public that special constables can and will provide the same level of service as their regular counterparts (Whittle, 2018, p.136). They are entrusted with full police powers and responsibilities and held to account through the same mechanisms as regular officers (Straine-Francis, 2018, pp.118-127). This research found that foundation training for special constables was not effective. Deploying inadequately trained officers raises important questions about what Holdaway (2017, p.2) has called the contemporary re-professionalisation of the police. This issue will be discussed in detail later in the chapter.

**Variable Quality of Training** `

Inconsistency in the quality of training was raised by a number of participants. The importance of motivated and enthusiastic trainers was described by special constable 8:

> *Some of it was really good and some of the people, some of the trainers were really interested in making us erm, excited to be there, and eventually into good police officers.*

The prevailing view of special constables during the study was one of dissatisfaction with some of the trainers that they encountered. For special constable 15:

> *Trainers weren't very engaged in the process. I don't think they thought they saw…some of them were but I'm talking about the majority, so there were I think, I would say I came across about ten different training staff.  I would say about a fifth of them, about 20%, so two out of ten were really engaged, probably another three or four were so and the rest, so you've got either another three or four who don't really feel that this is a valuable use of my time, so there's that.*

This disparity in the engagement of training instructors was commented upon by several special constables. Some felt that this was a reflection of using staff that were not skilled in training, whether through being utilised because they were on restricted duties or other reasons. This was further

emphasised by special constable 3 who described a vitally important lesson about the Evidence and Actions Book (EAB):

> *We were taught by an IT Instructor who had never been a police officer and was teaching us by getting us to all read a slide from a power point presentation. And then at the end it was 'okay off you go and do your homework'. Well I just thought, if you get this wrong you're gonna get cases thrown out in court. So we all had homework, the scenario we're given is a marked EAB. And then the feedback from the police officer that did mark it, 'this is terrible you obviously didn't listen', erm really critical. 'What were you thinking? no notes at scene' and we all thought, well actually, if you taught the lesson properly in the first place, would have been better.*

For Fisher and Cole (1993, p.116), trainers of volunteer programmes should be selected according to their skills and abilities. Using a trainer who has some direct responsibility to the volunteers conveys the impression that they are of importance to an organisation (Fisher and Cole, 1993, p.117). The functional approach to volunteering is a motivational perspective that directs inquiry into the personal and social processes that initiate, direct and sustain action (Katz, 1960). Adopting a functional approach, Clary et al. (1998) identified six personal and social functions (or motivations) served by volunteering: values; understanding; enhancement; career; social; and protective. If the standard of instructors is considered in the context of functionalist motivational theory, the use of un-skilled and non-engaged trainers will impact upon the understanding and enhancement functions. A desire to feel important and needed are key to individuals who are motivated by these functions (Clary et al., 1998).

For special constable 3, the lack of engagement from trainers had other connotations.

> *But the training is patchy so, sometimes you'll get very very good trainers. Generally the police officers rather than the police staff cos they've been out in the fields. And they obviously really care about training and they're really animated. Other trainers you'll get and you can tell, you think perhaps they don't like specials or they don't wanna work on the weekends.*

The relationship with regular officers has been a recurrent theme within literature on the special constabulary (Gill and Mawby, 1990; Leon, 1991; Millie, 2016) and is discussed in greater detail later on in this study. This comment suggests that new special constables, who are not yet attested, have already formed the view that they are disliked by some regular officers. There was also a view expressed during the study that special constable training was delivered differently than regular officer training, with volunteers encountering different instructors every weekend or even over the course of a single weekend. These issues again raise concerns in terms of functionalist motivational theory for those individuals who are motivated by a desire to feel important and needed by an organisation. The importance of training is highlighted by Bussell and Forbes (2006) who found that training impacts motivation, and in research by Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2002) who conclude that training impacts satisfaction. Hughes (2006) too argues that training is important to enable volunteers to perform their role and motivate them. Since training has a significant relationship with satisfaction (Bradley et al., 2004) and motivation (Fisher and Cole, 1993, p.99), and satisfaction and motivation have significant correlation with retention (Roos and van Eden, 2008), a linkage between training and retention with the intervention of satisfaction and motivation could be construed as a logical step (Al Mutawa, 2015, p.37). Other researchers have also concluded that training affects the retention of volunteers (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Sara and Austin, 2009).

**Administrative Errors**

This research highlights basic administrative errors within foundation training that causes special constables to question the value placed upon them by the MPS.  In special constable 4's training intake, only half of the class had passes to access the training building. Those that didn't had to either wait outside or be given access by one of their classmates who did have a pass. According to this volunteer, the intake before had a similar problem which they put down to simply not ordering enough passes.

Unlike most volunteers, special constables commit to provide at least 16 hours a month to their policing duties and agree to a substantial time commitment to undertake the training required to become a warranted officer (Caless, 2018, p.15). This gift of time did not feel appreciated by some volunteers. Special constable 4 described a wasted journey to training school:

> *Erm, and also one training day, we all turned up and they say 'Oh it's cancelled, we didn't tell you'. Err, but yeah we came from work, we got into our uniform and they said 'Oh it's cancelled' and they hadn't bothered to tell us.*

Special constable 3's voluntary career nearly came to an abrupt end over timekeeping issues:

> *So the training was really terrible. I nearly quit two thirds of the way through sheer frustration. Lesson starting late, I think well hang on, I've got up from Bromley at half past five to get here at nine. And you're starting the lesson at ten to ten. And it's supposed to start at nine.*

Many special constables hold down full-time responsible jobs or are full-time students, and manage their policing duties alongside their careers and family responsibilities. Recent research found that one of the issues that caused people to stop volunteering was not feeling that their efforts were always appreciated (UK Civil Society, 2015). An important study by Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2002) developed the five dimension of volunteer job satisfaction. These five dimensions relate to factors that keep volunteers in organisations. The five dimensions are: communication quality, work assignment, participation efficacy, support, and group integration. An important element of participation efficacy is that volunteers will not be satisfied if they feel they are unimportant in the volunteering organisation (Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley, 2002). This research found evidence that poor use of special constables' time during foundation training did not make them feel important to the MPS. If that finding is considered in relation to the understanding and enhancement motivational functions developed by Clary et al. (1998), it suggests that prospective special constables motivated by a desire to feel important and needed by the MPS will not have their needs met. This is an important consideration for the aims of this project in terms of volunteer motivation and retention. As Clary and

Snyder (1999, p.156) have noted, if volunteers' satisfaction is associated with receiving functionally relevant benefits, it follows that their intention to continue volunteering will also be linked to the matching between experiences and motivations.

**Ready for Operational Duties?**

A key issue that many participants spoke passionately about was how unprepared their training left them to begin life on the streets as fully warranted police officers. Special constable 10 described how they felt:

> *When I look back I think you go out there completely unarmed really, you just don't know enough, I'm just scratching the surface. You don't realise until you go outside you know nothing. You absolutely know nothing.*

Special constable 5 recalled more specifically their lack of knowledge around the administrative side of policing:

> *So you were just shoved straight out, off you go, so you had absolutely no idea, people would tell you about X, Y & Z paperwork and you'd never heard of it, you'd just be expected to know what it was.*

This has been a recurrent theme throughout special constabulary research. In her extensive study, Leon (1991, p.677) found a view from regular officers that special constables had an 'inability to do even the most basic paperwork' and an 'ignorance of proper procedures', whilst Bullock and Leeney (2016, p.493) concluded that after initial training special constables lacked the practical knowledge to complete handover notes and fill in forms or tickets.

Some volunteers criticised a recent decision to reduce the length of the MSC foundation course by two weekends, which only exacerbated concerns about the adequacy of training. As special constable 12 explained:

*So you sort of feel that hold on, I'm going out on to the street not fully prepared. This format is a bit you know, sending a police officer on the streets and not with the knowledge and the skills to actually handle, but on some of the most basic situations that obviously I would cross, I think it's a bit weird.*

Special constable 5 had similar fears:

*Training is a big one and they just cut all the training, which a few of us are absolutely fuming about, so we've got officers that just don't know half the stuff that they're meant to know before going out on the street.*

The decision to reduce the quantity of MSC training may have been taken as a result of budget pressures in a time of austerity. However, the findings of this study do not exist in isolation. The inadequacy of special constable training has been noted by other researchers. In a Police Review article entitled 'Disband the Specials' (Olsen, 1982, cited in Leon, 1991, p.624), 79 per cent of regular respondents agreed that special constables are inadequately trained. Owen (1984) reported that 45 per cent of regulars found that special constable training was not sufficient for their current duties and responsibilities. In a study of Surrey special constabulary, Clare (1985, cited in Leon, 1991, p.651)) found that 73 per cent of regular respondents agreed that lack of training prevented special constables from being as useful as they could be. McEldowney (1989) found that 78 per cent of regular respondents disagreed with the question 'Do you think that 'Specials' receive sufficient training?'. More recently, Whittle (2012, p.17) concluded that special constables felt unprepared by their learning at training school whilst a Citizens in Policing national survey (Britton and Callender, 2016b, p.20) found that 40 per cent of special constables surveyed did not agree training covered what they needed.

The reduction in the length of initial MSC training has been offset by two weekends of continuation training that take place at various times once an officer has attested and begun operational duties (although evidence from one participant (SC5) suggests that the continuation training hasn't gone

ahead as planned due to the lack of a budget for it). This raised questions from some participants about the wisdom of not educating recruits in basic policing areas until after they may have encountered them for real. As special constable 5 put it:

*They have like a weekend course at Hendon to learn about burglary and robbery and then learn about some other stuff that they cut out of the training course. This should all be done before people are going out on the streets. In my eyes I think that's dangerous to do it that way.*

Several participants reflected upon how not being properly trained would lower the confidence and morale of some volunteer officers which would ultimately impact upon their retention. As special constable 5 put it:

*You're gonna stick people out on the streets, I can guarantee you the numbers will drop like flies because people aren't gonna go out having not been trained as a police officer, if you're expected to know what you're doing on the street.*

Similarly, special constable 1 stated:

*You can see these officers are going out on the street but they don't know what they are doing and they're being told when they ask, Borough training will train you up for that, but it's not the basic stuff being pushed and ok 10 weeks saves money etc, but you know long term that sort of thing, people are getting disillusioned, I don't know what I'm doing and they're going to go.*

According to special constable 7:

*I guess the risk is, if you throw people out too quickly and they're not able to deal with stress that well then they'll panic and be like 'I can't do this'.*

This work found that the reaction of many participants to MSC foundation training is profoundly negative, an important finding for the study aims concerning motivation and retention. If these findings are considered in the context of the value of volunteer training proclaimed by Fisher and Cole

(1993, p.98), then special constables are not provided with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their jobs correctly and efficiently, are not trained so as to reduce the liability incurred by their policing activity, are unlikely to be highly motivated and loyal to the organisation, and unlikely to have a positive attitude towards their work. If the training is considered in relation to the functional approach to volunteers' motivation (Clary et al., 1998), the understanding and enhancement functions are important. Key elements of the understanding function are a desire to learn new skills and knowledge, and an opportunity to exercise skills and knowledge. For those who are motivated to join the MSC in order to satisfy the understanding function, this research suggests that this need will not be met through foundation training. For the majority of participants, their training lacked quality and depth in terms of learning policing skills and knowledge, and did not prepare them to utilise policing skills and knowledge on the streets. A sense of being important to the organisation is an inherent factor within the understanding function. This research concludes that this sense of importance is not being conveyed by the foundation training.

Key elements of the enhancement function are gaining satisfaction from personal growth and self-esteem. It was evident from the comments of many interviewees that foundation training is not satisfying this function. Being made to feel important and needed are also important factors within the enhancement function. The findings of this study suggest that functionalist motivational principles are not being applied through foundation training. The impact upon the motivation of special constables is clearly important when considered in the context of research by Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2002) and Hoyle et al. (2008), who both found linkage between volunteer motivation, volunteer satisfaction and volunteer retention.

From the findings of this study, it is tempting to see increased foundation training for MSC officers as the solution to the problems articulated, both in terms of providing the skills, knowledge and confidence necessary to do the job, and to countering the detrimental effect that poorly trained

special constables have on the relationship with the regular service (this relationship is discussed in detail in a later chapter). The risk of not addressing shortfalls in training was summarised by special constable 13:

> *It's like building a house you know, if you rush, if your foundations are weak and it's not strong then everything you build on top of that is going to be weak. And it will eventually collapse.*

However, as Leon (1991, p.653) has argued, increased training is not a panacea. As part-time volunteers, there are serious practical restrictions on what can be achieved through special constabulary training. Regular officers receive 'up to eight weeks intensive training, development and assessment in role plays, immersive learning (Hydra), classroom training and assessment' (Straine-Francis, 2018, p.129), compared to the 20 days given to special constables. This is already a large commitment of time across 12 weekends, to extend initial training any further is likely to deter many prospective candidates who are not using the MSC as a stepping stone into the regular service. To increase MSC training to reach even a degree of parity with the regular service would require a massive injection of funding, at a time when the police service in England and Wales has been subject to a 20 per cent reduction in funding to 2014/15 (HM Treasury 2010). The return on that investment, if it were made, is questionable given that special constables are required to perform 16 hours of policing duties a month. This equates to 24 standard policing shifts in a year, when a regular officer performs in the region of 230 shifts when leave allocation is taken into account. This study does not recommend increasing the quantity of initial training. However, ensuring that foundation training is delivered by skilled instructors and covers the basic practical competencies of a front line officer is essential if motivational principles are to be followed. The next section moves on from foundation training to consider the development provided to special constables after they have arrived at BCUs and begun life as operational police officers.

**Continuous Professional Development**

All newly attested special constables work towards achieving Independent Patrol Status (IPS). This allows them to deploy alone, which makes them more of an asset to the MPS, and theoretically allows them to apply for specialist training and more specialist roles. Volunteer officers receive 60 hours of coached patrols once they are posted to a BCU, supported by a special sergeant or regular officer (although many participants called this into question). They are generally expected to attain IPS within 12-18 months (cannot be before 12 months), although this can depend greatly upon how many policing hours are volunteered. Each special constable completes a Student Officer Record of Competence (SOROC) book evidencing that they have achieved the competencies within, which is then signed off by a senior officer. This study found that the professional development offered to new volunteer officers was variable at best, with local special supervisors and leaders, the regular senior leadership team, and the attitude of regular officers all being important factors in determining the nature of the support offered. The study also found dissatisfaction with the professional development offered once IPS had been achieved, with many participants feeling that continuous professional development ended at this point in their voluntary policing careers.

**Development to Independent Patrol Status**

As this study has shown, the foundation training for MSC officers lacks depth and does not cover the basic requirements needed to be a warranted police constable. That being the case, there is clearly a responsibility on behalf of Borough Command Units (BCUs) to augment that training and develop capable and confident special constables. As Whittle (2018, p.143) has argued, much of the practical elements of policing are learnt 'on the job' alongside experienced special constables or mentors.

It was clear from the study that many some special constables have pre-existing knowledge of which London Boroughs are supportive to special constables (and which are not) prior to having to make a selection as to where they would like to be posted to. Officers are able to select three preferred BCUs,

although as organisational requirements take priority, there is no guarantee that they will be successful in these choices. This raises an important question about the motivational impact on those special constables who are sent to Boroughs that they believe are not receptive to volunteer officers. These officers are unlikely to feel important or needed by the MPS, inherent parts of the understanding and enhancement psychological functions described by Clary et al. (1998).

Although one special constable commented positively about the support they had received in working towards IPS, the majority of participants were more critical. Special constable 15 described help of an indirect nature which in itself created confidence problems:

> *I kinda create opportunities for myself and there's a lot of encouragement to do that I think, which in many ways that is a kind of support and they won't do things for you. But they'll say just write to the team skipper but if you've never done that before in an organisation like this it can be quite daunting.*

Whilst one participant (SC7) recalled how the IPS process wasn't even explained to them for several months, leading to missed opportunities to record evidence, the majority of volunteers described how they were left to their own devices to engineer opportunities to deal with the breadth of incidents required to demonstrate competence as a special constable. As special constable 4 put it:

> *Err, there's a list of competencies you have to achieve. My case yeah it's been entirely self-driven, I've met my line manager once. I've emailed him a couple of times, there's no, there's no pressure on me, there's no impetus. It's just me.*

For special constable 12:

> *In that essentially I'm very self-motivated, I've been through the process, I know what's required, I'm very independent, so essentially I just, you're left to do your own thing, you're not really provided with any support.*

Some participants described how the Personal Development Review (PDR) process was a missed opportunity to guide and support them towards IPS. Under the IPS scheme, PDRs take place at 6, 12 and 18 month intervals to allow supervisors to monitor progress towards IPS and put development opportunities in place where necessary. Some special constables had not been given a PDR throughout the IPS process, with one volunteer claiming not to have had a PDR in 3 and a half years. For those who did receive PDRs, they weren't always a positive experience:

> *I've done my PDR with my Sergeant, he's not (inaudible) the one I'm going to, he's supposed to be able to tick all the boxes, okay I've done the PDR, he's not interested in what I've actually done, you know and how I'm planning on finishing my IPS, how I'm going, he's, I've just never been asked about what, you know how things are going, is it working well?, are you getting the types of duties you need to get? You know, how can I help you progress? And that type of thing, as I said right at the start you're just left to your own devices, you've gotta make your own way essentially (special constable 12).*

The lack of support offered to officers to reach IPS highlighted by this research may be explained by Whittle's (2018, p.136) claim that there is little appreciation of the resources required to ensure that special constables are trained to be capable to dispense their range of powers and responsibilities competently. Many forces do not fully understand the cost of training and equipping voluntary officers. Whilst some forces can estimate the approximate cost of initially training and equipping special constables, very few understand in detail the full cost of training officers through to IPS. Sussex constabulary suggests that, in addition to recruitment, initial training and equipping (£1870), the cost to tutor a special constable through to IPS is £6700 per person (Sussex Police, undated). This is before expenses are taken into account. However, underestimating the resources needed to support volunteers is not unique to policing (Bullock, 2014).

Training is an ongoing part of participation in an organisation (Stepputat, 1995) and can alleviate problems of volunteer boredom, burn-out and retention (Brudney, 2000, p.239). Independent Patrol Status is the holy grail for new special constables. It elevates their status and provides freedom from

having to be accompanied on patrol by a regular or more experienced special constable. This study found that the majority of participants were given little to no support and encouragement to achieve this status. For those that did, it was through their own self-drive and industry. If this 'hands-off' approach is looked at from a motivational theory perspective, the understanding, social, career and enhancement motivational functions are all relevant here (Clary et al., 1998). If poor foundation training is followed by a lack of personal development on a BCU, then the desire to learn new skills and to learn through direct hands on experience will not be satisfied. Both of these are important elements of the understanding function. Participants' descriptions of being left to their own devices and not supported to achieve IPS all suggest that motivational principles are not being applied. The opportunity to strengthen social relationships and gain others approval which are important to people motivated by the social function are likely to remain unfulfilled. The need to gain others approval was articulated by some special constables as a need to get along with and be accepted by their regular counterparts. Using Chan's (2004, p.332) framework for understanding police culture, which will be explored in greater detail in a later chapter, cultural capital is much valued in policing in the form of information, knowledge and competence. In the absence of a programme to develop special constables to an acceptable professional standard, it suggests that cultural capital will not be accumulated and acceptance by the regular service left unfulfilled. The career motivational function (Clary et al., 1998) includes a desire to gain career related experience to increase job prospects. For those volunteers who have the extrinsic motivation of joining the regular service, poor training in policing skills and knowledge will not lead to satisfaction. The enhancement motivational function (Clary et al., 1998) includes a desire for personal growth, self-esteem, a positive mood and a sense of feeling important and needed. This study concludes that these needs of volunteer officers are not being met in places where there is not a commitment to the continued professional development of special constables.

Special constable 5 compared the development offered to newly attested volunteer officers with their regular counterparts:

> *I don't think officers are very confident going out and knowing what they're doing. And there's little sort of training or even like the coach patrol, 'cos I've got friends that are regulars and they've had these four, six week coach patrols in the middle of their training. Completely skipped for an MSC, it's just assumed you know what you're doing.*

This comparison with the regular service was a recurring theme throughout the study and is dealt with more thoroughly in a later chapter. Whittle's (2018, p.143) claim that special constables receive a fraction of the training of regular officers is certainly supported by this research, both in terms of foundation and continuation training.

Several participants raised concerns about remaining up to date with mandatory National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT) computer based self-learning programmes. Completing these packages was a core requirement for achieving IPS. As special constable 13 put it:

> *NCALTs are a big thing at the moment in policing and I've hardly done any. You know and there are some compulsory ones that need to be done within a very short time and to this day I haven't completed them because of my time and some IT problems at home.*

The lack of time to complete the training was a popular theme and is not unique to the MSC. The regular service also face the difficulty of not having time allocated to complete the training, instead attempting to fit it in around other core aspects of their role. In a recent study, Honess (2016) found officers were not motivated to complete training that was not relevant to their role. He recommended an end to the blanket mandating of training courses, and suggested that courses were recommended based on individual job roles and officers given 'protected time' to undertake training. If implemented, these recommendations would alleviate some of the difficulties faced by special constables in remaining up to date with NCALT training.

**Development after Independent Patrol Status**

The importance of ongoing development to special constables once they have achieved IPS is clear in this research. This is understandable given Smith et al.'s (1969) assertion that training empowers volunteers through the provision of knowledge and skills. Continued development post IPS is also important strategically for the MPS. IPS special constables are a valuable resource, and training is an essential element in volunteer management (Boyd, 2003; Sandra, 2003) that affects the retention of volunteers (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Sara and Austin, 2006). Further support to the importance of training is given by Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley's (2002) five dimension of volunteer job satisfaction. They define the support dimension as containing educational and emotional support, with volunteers who participate in training more satisfied than those who do not (Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley, 2002). Despite the value of continuous development, special constables expressed frustration that there was little available once they had achieved IPS:

> *Now though it seems to be a bit right that's it, I'm IPS, what's the development plan now? And that doesn't seem to be outlined or anything. It's all well managed up until that point you get IPS and then from IPS it's like right that's it you're a bod now that's it and there's nothing, where does this go from here? (special constable 6)*

Similarly, for special constable 5:

> *Development plan. I've never had that, no, other than you need to get to IPS in two years.*

This study found a desire amongst special constables to be allowed to undertake specialist training once they had achieved IPS, such as driver training, public order or within the investigation arena of policing. There are obvious motivational benefits to this, particularly for special constables motivated by the understanding function (Clary et al., 1998) and a desire to learn new skills. Awarding volunteer officers with specialist training would also convey a sense of importance to the MPS which satisfies the enhancement function (Clary et al., 1998). However, there are already delays in accessing most

MPS specialist courses. The addition of special constables will only swell waiting lists and possibly cause resentment amongst regular officers who are waiting for course dates. There is also the question of return on investment. Specialist training is expensive and in limited supply due to reductions in policing budgets over the past few years. A special constable who is required to undertake 16 hours policing duties a month cannot make effective use of newly acquired skills on anything like the level of a regular officer.

**Suggested Improvements**

**Involvement of Regular Officers**

Several participants made suggestions as to how their development post foundation training could be improved. The involvement of the regular service was seen as a key ingredient to make things better. The majority of special constables expressed a preference to be taught by regular officers rather than experienced special constables, which is predominantly what happens in most BCUs:

> *Personally, I think you should have regulars like bringing the new people in and coaching people. I think to have specials looking after the specials is not a good move. In my personal opinion I think you should have regulars. (special constable 10)*

Special constable 5 expressed similar sentiments:

> *I've always said that this should have coach patrols in with the training like the regulars do, so that someone can go out but know that they're with a regular officer, not an MSC officer, in the nicest possible way to MSC officers.*

The preference for a regular officer was articulated by most participants as a desire to learn from someone knowledgeable and experienced, whilst for one volunteer (SC9), special constables training special constables entrenched bad practice.  Some volunteers emphasised the important role that MSC co-ordinators perform. This is a role performed by a regular officer that used to exist on all BCUs until budget cuts caused a need to reallocate resources. According to special constable 12:

*Because we got this MSC coordinator in who was fantastic, she was on the ground, she was a doer, she organised stuff for us, she knew everybody and she knew exactly what we needed to do for our IPS, she was totally on the ball, every month she was tallying up our hours, making sure we were doing our hours, right you need a process, okay, late shift Friday I will be with you then, okay, book with me on Friday and we'll get you a process, bang you get your process on the Friday night.*

The relationship with the regular service is discussed in detail in a later chapter but this study found a clear desire for regular officers to be involved in the training of MSC officers, both at a foundation and post foundation level. This finding supports work by Leon (1991, p.564) who reported that special constables preferred to learn from regular officers' superior knowledge and experience. Pairing a volunteer with a regular officer will ensure an adequate level of supervision for the special constable, although little progress has been made from the earlier research of Mirrlees-Black and Byron (1994, p.20) who found that there were no recorded measures for officers who mentor a special constable. Leon (1991, p.565) found that inexperienced special constables working together could alienate the public by being overly conscientious as a result of trying to prove their worth to regular officers. This raises questions about legitimacy which are dealt with later on in this thesis. The use of regular officers will help to build the relationship between special and regular officers. Time spent together in a patrol car or on foot will allow for a greater understanding of the motivation of MSC officers, whilst dealing with incidents together provides an opportunity for trust in the capabilities of special constables to develop. Conversely, Leon (1991, p.605) suggests that a regular officer may do the majority of the work when deployed with a special constable thereby reducing learning opportunities. The use of a regular officer also abstracts them with supervisory duties which is an inefficient use of resources.

**Coaching and Mentoring**

Several special constables talked specifically about needing a mentor. Lulewicz (1995, p.97) claims that mentoring programmes are important tools to help organisations build and reinforce volunteer skills. Special constable 13 described the perceived benefits of working with a mentor:

> *And if I bring this into this area of work in the specials then again you know one of the things I've asked for is that I need someone to mentor me. Ok it's going to take a bit more time, it's going to be that, it's got to be one-to-one where I'm going to have to go out with another officer and I'm going to have to spend maybe I don't know 3 – 4 shifts, maybe 6, maybe 8 shifts I don't know. You know for me to learn how to be a good police officer and learn the ropes properly you know but I've done this for the last 6 months now and yes I have learnt just like if you learn to drive a car and there's no guidance you will still learn from experience. But I haven't actually learnt a lot of skills in policing.*

This study found poor levels of foundation and post foundation training. In that context, it is not surprising that special constables express a desire to be taught one-to-one by an experienced officer. Whilst this participant mentioned working 3 to 8 shifts with a mentor, the reality is that it will take a great deal more time to develop volunteer officers to attain even a degree of parity with the training provided to regular officers after they leave training school. The use of mentors will abstract regular officers from other duties, however, this needs to be balanced by the comments above. The MPS have already invested significant resources into training this special constable but the officer does not feel that they have learnt many policing skills in their first 6 months as an operational officer. Additional investment in the form of mentors would help to ensure that the MPS get the most out of their special constables and achieve value for money. A more efficient way of mentoring volunteer officer would be the use of a mentoring circle rather than the traditional one-on-one approach. Circles have a maximum of 12 participants and a minimum of 8 participants, with two-thirds of the participants being people to be mentored and the remaining third would-be mentors (Lulewicz, 1995, p.97). Rogers (1992) claims that the mentoring circle can work better than mentoring on a one-on-one basis.

The introduction of mentors would boost the morale of special constables. The participation efficacy and support dimensions of the five dimension of volunteer job satisfaction (Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley, 2002) describe the necessity of volunteers feeling important in the volunteer organisation and the increased satisfaction of volunteers who participated in training compared to those who did not. Each

dimension relates to factors that keep volunteers in organisations (Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley, 2002). These are important points in relation to the project aims of understanding the factors that impact upon special constable motivation and retention.

**Professionalism**

It is evident from this study that MSC officers believe their training is inadequate. The foundation course lacks depth and does not prepare special constables for life as warranted police officers. The existence and standard of continuation training and development is hugely variable across different areas, and is dependent upon the enthusiasm and commitment of local MSC supervisors and regular officers. Policing thus faces the paradox of having a poorly trained special constabulary, whilst making contemporary claims to professional status.

The term police professionalism has been widely contested (Chan, 1997; Sklansky, 2014). According to Norman and Williams (2017, p.197), it may simply mean high expectations in relation to ethical behaviour, performance and the core application of the law. For Stone and Travis (2011, p.3), professionals must have transportable skills, and be committed to a set of ethical precepts and to continuous learning. As the professional body for policing, the College of Policing's objectives include 'setting standards of professional practice' (College of Policing, 2014). The college has stated a wider ambition for the public to be confident that 'police officers adhere to a national code of professional policing practice and receive professional development throughout their careers' (College of Policing, 2015).

Whilst the notion of policing as a profession is not new, Neyroud's (2011) review of police leadership and training is seen as the contemporary reference point of the professionalisation agenda (Holdaway, 2017, p.7). Within the review, Neyroud (2011, p.10) includes 'capable, competent and cost-effective' in his principles of policing in the 21$^{st}$ century.

A common thread running throughout the contested definitions of police professionalism is that of highly and continuously trained capable officers; able to draw on training and knowledge, understanding of the code of ethics, law, policy and guidance when performing their duties (Straine-Francis, 2018, p.123). This notion of professionalism contrasts sharply with the experiences of special constable training found during this research. As Britton and Callender (2018, p.150) claim, the professionalism agenda remains focussed firmly on the regular service. However, the public cannot distinguish between special constables and regular officers, and special constables are held to account through the same mechanisms as regular officers.

For Britton and Callender (2018, p.164), the professional identities of special constables are currently 'ambiguous, contested and confused'. If special constables sit outside the professional identity of police officers, this carries challenges in terms of 'status, professional trust and acceptance within the policing profession' (Britton and Callender, 2018, p.164). Leon (1991, p.638) has previously drawn attention to the adverse effects of 'incompetent' special constables on regular professionalism whilst the Police Federation have regularly expressed disquiet over the usurpation of their professionalism by badly trained volunteer officers. The relationship between the special constabulary and regular service is considered in greater detail in a later chapter.

Whilst Britton and Knight (2016) argue that the College of Policing need to see the support, development and professionalism of special constables as core to their mission and purpose, Leon (1991) has questioned the desirability of increasing the professionalism of a force traditionally celebrated for its amateur nature. Are the special constabulary forces of 'public-spirited amateurs assisting the police as and when they can' or a 'disciplined organised professional volunteer force'? (Leon, 1991, p.557). Irrespective of which view you hold, part of the value of volunteer officers is in being able to foster mutual understanding between citizens and police organisations (Mirrlees-Black and Byron, 1994; NPIA, 2010a).  In his review, Neyroud (2011, p.45) acknowledges the challenge in

developing police professionalism in a way that avoids distancing police officers from the public. For volunteer officers who have traditionally acted as a bridge between constabularies and citizens (Bullock and Millie, 2018a, p.3), this is even more of a challenge.

**Summary**

This chapter examined the training of MSC officers, from the initial foundation course to continuing professional development. The study found evidence that foundation training lacks quality and quantity, and does not prepare volunteers for life on the streets after attestation. The research also illuminates the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) to the morale of special constables, whilst highlighting the contrasting nature of CPD across the MPS. The chapter considered the experience of training in the context of current police claims to professional status, concluding that they are not compatible. The next chapter moves on from training to discuss the deployment of MSC officers, and the ambitions of special constables in their voluntary policing careers.

# Chapter 5 The Deployment of Metropolitan Special Constables

**Introduction**

This chapter considers how MSC officers are deployed. Effective deployment is important for the MPS to ensure that they are getting the most out of their voluntary officers, who they invest time and money in recruiting, training and equipping. Deployment is also important for the morale of individuals. Understanding why people volunteer and placing the volunteer in the right place to make best use of their skills are key factors in sustaining motivation (Caless, 2018, p.21). Pertinent to the aims of this research is Hackman and Oldham's (1975) claim that links between job content and personal satisfaction are important for understanding wastage. The chapter starts by discussing the deployment of MSC officers in areas that are considered the traditional territory of special constables. More innovative uses of volunteer officers are then examined. Finally, the ambitions of MSC officers are considered in the context of new and emerging demands on policing and the economic challenges facing the police.

**Traditional Use of the MSC**

All of the participants in this study were deployed on neighbourhood or emergency response teams. This is not surprising considering that 90 per cent of all MSC officers in 2016 were formally posted to safer neighbourhood teams (MPS, 2016, p.19). Similarly, Bullock and Leeney (2016, p.486) found in their research that special constables are mainly deployed in neighbourhood roles on foot or at big events. Some participants were satisfied with these roles and described how for them they offered plenty of variety:

> *Erm, so with SNT, I've done like special ops with them that they're doing in their communities. Like traffic or erm, if there's a problem with burglary or ASB then we've gone and done that particular stuff around there.  There was an incident involving a dangerous dog that I helped with over the summer as well, like following through into doing interviews (special constable 7)*

Grimshaw and Jefferson (1987) have previously claimed that the work of residential beat officers (now neighbourhood officers) is characterised by its freedom and that as a corollary, a wide range of activities is undertaken. That certainly seemed to be the case for this participant. However, other special constables were not as satisfied with how they were utilised on neighbourhood or emergency response teams. For special constable 4:

*Our sort of standard shift is walking up and down erm, [name given] High Street on a Friday night.*

Special constable 14 highlighted an even less valuable role:

*Because I've seen that quite a lot where the special sits in the back of a panda, in the back of IRV car as a third officer which means a supernumerary role, adding value is thin.*

Leon (1991, p.605) found that in mobile patrols, special constables are less active than regular passengers. The description of special constables utilised as second passengers in the back of vehicles raises serious questions over effectiveness, motivation and value for money. The five dimension of volunteer job satisfaction model relates to factors that keep volunteers in organisations (Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley, 2002). The work assignment dimension stresses the importance of tasks which are seen as a challenge, tasks in which self-expression is possible, and tasks in which the volunteer is given the opportunity to develop abilities and skills. For those participants who described regular shifts patrolling the same high street, or sitting in the back of a car with two regular officers, it is difficult to see how any of this dimension is being met. This is important when considering the morale of special constables and the related impact upon an intention to continue to volunteer. As Caless (2018, p.21) argues, attrition among volunteers may be partly explained by an organisation's incompetent deployment of them.

**More Innovative Use of the MSC**

Caless (2018, p.24) suggests that the default deployment of special constables to uniform patrol and community policing teams may not always make the best use of their skills. Whilst some BCUs did utilise the MSC to bolster front line teams during core demand time periods (Friday and Saturday evenings), other areas deployed special constables in less traditional roles. Special constable 3 explained:

> My special Sergeant does a lot of stuff with the Gang Unit. And I suspect that's just because he said 'Oh I'm interested in gangs can I come out with you'. Erm, I know one of the other Sergeants, she's seconded to CID. Erm, one of them does a lot of stuff on response. So I think if there's something you're interested in, then you can stick your hand up and say 'oh can I have a go'.

For special constable 1, there were a mix of newer opportunities amongst some more traditional deployments:

> We do plain clothes ops sometimes. We'll do taxi touting in plain clothes, we do warrants, you know we get a van and quite a few warrants as well, as I say football's coming up again and there's just general requests, the old standards, the local fete in the summer.

This study found in some BCUs a more transformational approach to how the special constabulary are utilised. In other areas, there was evidence of more traditional thinking which resulted in a lack of opportunities. As one special constable 6 bemoaned:

> There's never any single CID or gangs. It's not something that's offered.

The finding of this study that the opportunities available to special constables differ from place to place is consistent with previous research. Several studies have suggested that special constables are predominantly used for high visibility and reassurance policing (Gill and Mawby, 1990; Leon, 1991; Mirrlees-Black and Byron, 1994; Bullock and Leeney, 2016). Conversely, Whittle (2012; 2014; 2018) found that special constables do regularly undertake specialist policing deployments including fraud,

cyber, dog handling, CID and traffic. Caless et al. (2010) found special constables involved in hi-tech and computer crime, art theft and antiquities fraud. However, Caless (2018, p.24) suggests that despite these pockets of specialist involvement, 'there appears to be no regular training or deployment of special constables in investigation departments, Criminal Investigation Department (CID), detection, or serious and organised crime units'.

The provision of different opportunities for special constables is important for motivation and retention. Citizens in Policing's (Britton and Callender, 2016b) national survey revealed that few special constables indicated high visibility reassurance and community policing as top motivations for joining, despite many forces seeing this as their primary role. Special constable 5 explained how offering a wider range of opportunities within their BCU had led to an increase in volunteer hours, which suggests improved motivation to volunteer:

> *We're still on the first secondment phase, people with CID but it's improving hours slightly, which was the main, one of the main things. We also wanted to keep people's interest up because our numbers were dropping, people were just falling off the radar and not really coming back and we didn't really know why and I think giving people more options and more options for variety like and advertising them has definitely improved peoples enthusiasm for it.*

One of the guiding functionalist motivational principles is that decisions and behaviours of volunteers about beginning and continuing activity are influenced by whether the individual's motivations are matched to the opportunities afforded by the volunteering environment (Clary et al., 1998). The provision of interesting, varied and challenging deployments are closely aligned to the values, understanding and career motivational functions. The values function has been one of the most frequently identified motivators in previous volunteer studies (Clary et al., 1998). A key aspect for individuals motivated by the values function is that they are doing something meaningful. In those BCUs where special constables are offered a choice of duties across a number of policing disciplines,

this need is likely to be fulfilled. For special constables who sit in the back of police vehicles as a third crew member, or conduct high visibility patrols on the same street every Friday, the values motivational principles are not being applied. The understanding motivational function stresses a sense of being important to an organisation, whilst a key aspect of the career motivational function is a desire for challenging work and responsibility. For volunteers motivated by these functions, it is clear in this research that in some areas their needs are not being met. Volunteer motivation is an important factor that needs to be addressed if organisations want to retain volunteers (Hager and Brudney, 2004, p.1).

**Future Ambitions of MSC Officers**

Previous research has highlighted that special constables are keen to become further involved in specialist areas (Bullock and Leeney, 2016; Britton and Callender, 2016b). This study reports a similar finding. Many participants expressed a wish to specialise in areas as diverse as financial crime, professional standards, river policing and traffic. For those special constables who were satisfied with neighbourhood and response policing, many stated a desire to undertake additional specialist training, particularly driver and public order training. One possible explanation for the attraction of specialist policing to the MSC is Reiner's (2010) claim that beat work is devalued in rank and file 'cop-culture'. Special constables have a separate sub-culture within regular police culture, which focuses on achieving recognition as equals in policing terms (Leon, 1991, p.740). If MSC officers perceive that the regular service do not value response and community policing, they may aspire to specialist roles in order to achieve recognition as equals with their regular counterparts, as well as to acquire the social capital described by Chan (2004) in her work on police culture. Social capital requires the cultivation of mutually supportive relationships with fellow officers (Chan, 2004).

This research found differing views as to whether volunteer officers are satisfied with front line policing. Whilst some were content to stay, others wished to diversify into specialist roles. This is

consistent with literature which shows that volunteers are broadly classified into two categories, generalists and specialists (Ockenden and Hutin, 2008). The finding also lends support to the claim made by Britton and Callender (2018, p.157) that there is 'a clear organisational need to move from viewing the special constabulary as a homogenous body of people'. Presently, rather than viewing special constables as individuals with diverse skill sets and experience, and with a range of motivations for volunteering, they are moulded into a 'single, narrow and traditional' interpretation of 'the job' (Britton and Callender, 2018, p.152).

The five dimension of volunteer job satisfaction model (Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley, 2002) suggests that important elements of the work assignment dimension are tasks which are challenging and provide an opportunity for development. It would be easy to recommend that special constables are enabled to undertake specialist roles and training. There is a clear motivational case for such a step, and critically, volunteer motivation and satisfaction are important factors for retention (Hager and Brudney, 2004). However, there are other factors that must be considered, including the professionalisation agenda. A common thread running throughout the contested definitions of police professionalism is that of highly and continuously trained capable officers (Straine-Francis, 2018, p.123), and specialist roles require additional, bespoke training. However, there are waiting lists of regular officers for the majority of specialist roles and training. If special constables take up some of those places then bad feeling and resentment may be the result. The Police Federation have previously expressed hostility about special constables undertaking plain clothes work (Leon, 1991, p.721), which covers all detective work in the MPS.  Additionally, special constables spend limited periods of time on duty, a minimum of 16 hours per month. Investment in specialist training for special constables is unlikely to see a return compared to that of a regular officer. A significant increase in the training budget would be required if special constables were allocated places in addition to that set aside for the regular service, an increase that is very unlikely in the current financial climate. As special constable 6 put it:

*You've got to be realistic you know. You're not gonna spend, invest money in someone who turns up for sixteen hours a month, you know it's a cost in terms of equipment and in terms of training and all that stuff. But there are areas where you think well, I've got some specialist knowledge here, I could be of a benefit here, and I don't think the Met uses that to its best advantage.*

Grimshaw and Jefferson (1987) have also drawn attention to the fragmentation of special constable work. Much detective work requires continuity in terms of the investigator; a special constable who volunteers sporadically does not meet that requirement. Investigators also spend a considerable amount of time at court during prosecution of their cases. Special constables, who have careers outside policing, would rely on the goodwill of their employer to release them on a regular basis to fulfil this function. The answer to this conundrum may lie in the specialist special constable, one recruited to fill specific policing needs (Bullock and Millie, 2018b, p.171). Although unusual in UK policing, there is a history of volunteer officers joining to inject skills in the United States (Gill and Mawby, 1990; Pepper and Wolf, 2015; Wolf et al., 2016a, p.451). The NCA have recently begun to recruit special constables to fill specialisms which have proven difficult to fill (NCA, 2016). This would prevent the 'singular, conveyor belt pathway' (Britton and Callender, 2018, p.152) for special constables to enter and progress within special constabularies, and would instead create a dynamic programme of recruitment and training tailored to individual needs and organisational priorities. According to special constable 15:

*I think if the Met was ready to accept like the National Crime Agency is for example that there are specials with good specialist expertise that could be used in sort of suit type jobs that will be quite interesting.*

**Summary**

This chapter has examined the deployment of MSC officers. The research revealed the importance to special constables of meaningful and diverse deployment. The study also highlighted the appetite of special constables for specialist postings and training. These aspirations were considered in the

context of motivational theory, whilst balanced against the reality of the economic position that the police service are currently in. The following chapter proceeds to discuss the integration of special constables into the MPS, through examining recruitment and induction processes, and the relationship between volunteer officers and paid staff.

# Chapter 6 Integration

**Introduction**

This chapter considers the integration of special constables into the MPS. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section discusses the MSC recruitment process which was not viewed positively by the majority of participants. Initially, the length of time between application and foundation training is set out in the context of volunteer motivation. Concerns about the lack of information and updates provided to applicants are then examined. Finally, the inflexibility of training dates and locations is discussed. The second section considers the induction process between foundation training and operational deployment. Like continuation training, this research found evidence of good and bad practice across different areas of London. The section begins by outlining examples of good and bad practice. The importance of induction processes are then discussed in the context of motivational theory. Finally, improvements suggested by participants are outlined. The final section considers the relationship between MSC officers and the regular service. Examples of good and poor relationships are initially given. The importance of the relationship to the MPS and individual volunteers is set out, and considered in the context of motivational theory, Chan's (2004) work on police culture, and organisational justice. Finally, the section concludes by considering how the relationship can be improved.

**MSC Recruitment Process**

**Length of Time between Application and Foundation Training**

For many prospective special constables, the application process is their first encounter with the MPS and policing more generally. The first impression an organisation makes on a volunteer will be difficult if not impossible to eradicate (Wilson and Pimm, 1996, p.33). Despite this, one of the first themes to emerge during the study was almost universal frustration and unhappiness with the recruitment process. For many participants, the length of time between submitting applications and beginning foundation training was unacceptably long, with the enthusiasm and passion they initially felt

beginning their voluntary policing careers dissipating over time. Special constable 6 described the process as:

*Long, very long. It wasn't as bad as it was for some and you've really got to want to do it because there are times when you just think this is taking forever, I may as well jack it, but I wanted to do it, so for me I just carried on.*

Similarly, special constable 11 agreed that interest could wane over time if applicants were left for too long:

*I mean I was 6 months, yeah slightly greater than 6 months.  I think some people have been a year or so, hence personal circumstances change. That's right, the mood changes.*

Six months between applying and starting training school was quick in comparison to other participants, some of whom waited up to a year to begin training. Although there was an acceptance that the administration around new applicants, particularly vetting, does take time to process, many felt that this couldn't explain or justify their own extended waiting time. Special constable 8 described how this had made them feel:

*Yeah that was a, that was a long process, not a particular, erm. Yeah, not a, not a, it wasn't exciting. It didn't make you think, oh I'm getting closer to this. It made you think, I'm jumping through a lot of hoops. And I'm not getting the feeling that you want me to, to join.*

This is an important finding. The delay in processing applications is causing potential special constables to feel that they are not important to or valued by the MPS. Wilson and Pimm (1996, p.33) argue that first impressions could govern the decision whether to join an organisation as a volunteer. Undoubtedly, many willing volunteers have been deterred by delayed correspondence, off-hand attitudes and apparent inefficiency (Wilson and Pimm, 1996, p.33). This may explain attrition amongst applicants before they begin training. There is no accurate data available as to the number of

volunteer officers who withdraw their applications prior to training so no analysis can be undertaken as to the reasons why. This would be a useful area for future study.

Previous research has also highlighted unhappiness with the slow pace at which special recruitment takes place (Britton and Callender, 2016b). As Caless (2018, p.15) has noted, unlike most volunteers, special constables undertake to give at least 16 hours a month to policing and agree to undertake the extensive training required to become a warranted police officer. Volunteers expect to be appreciated for the time they give up and the work that they do. If they are not, then disillusion may set in, and the volunteers may choose to leave (Hauert et al., 2002).

**Poor Administration and Lack of Information**

This research highlights the importance of keeping candidates informed and updated about their applications. According to special constable 3:

> *You spend a lot of time just waiting. And you're waiting, erm, there's nothing you can do about it, there's no mechanism where you could chase it up.*

A number of participants mentioned this dual-edged problem. Information as to how applications were progressing was not forthcoming, additionally there was no point of contact so that applicants could be proactive and make their own enquiries. This resulted in a particular problem for special constable 5 who was given very little notice of a training course that would disrupt family life for almost 6 months:

> *I didn't really hear much after the sort of fitness test and the Day 2, didn't really hear anything for about four or five months and then suddenly it was like right, you start your training in a month's time.  Give up every Sunday for the next 20 weeks.*

The five dimension of volunteer job satisfaction model developed by Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2002) includes communication quality as one of the dimensions. Person oriented information, adequate information flow and information clarity are important elements of this dimension (Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley, 2002). Particularly pertinent to the aims of this research is that each dimension relates to factors that keep people in organisations (Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley, 2002). Quinton et al. (2015, p.4) claim that 'How open, honest and timely employees feel decisions are communicated' is an element of procedural justice which itself is a key element of organisational justice. The benefits of organisational justice include greater commitment to the organisation, increased job satisfaction and work performance, increased organisational citizenship benefits, and reduced counter-productive work behaviours (Quinton et al., 2015, p.4). For Labov (1997), organisations with strong communication systems enjoy lower turnover of staff.

A number of participants described how poor administration could have caused them to fall by the wayside if it wasn't for their determination to become special constables. One officer (SC8) described being sent away on their first day of training as they weren't on the class list, only to be called back the following day once the error had been rectified. For special constable 2, their application was nearly rejected:

> *And for the day two, you put down a 'please do not have it on this date', this one day and the one day they put on, was that day not to do it. So I wrote in and said, right I can't do it on that day. Never heard anything and I thought, oh I'll get a new one. Then I got a letter saying we are really sorry that you didn't turn up. Your application has been cancelled. Well luckily as a [position given], I was able to go and speak to my equivalent, who ran the whole of the special's recruitment and I said, "Here's the e-mail. Here's what I said. I'm really disappointed that this is the way I am treated." And immediately it was changed. If I had just been a member of the public I would have walked away.*

This raises the question of what impact this kind of mistake has on applicants who are a little more ambivalent. Wilson and Pimm (1996, p.33) argue that inefficiency, ineffectiveness and a lack of

professionalism from organisations are a certain cause of volunteer losses shortly after making a commitment. Running well publicised and wide ranging special constable recruitment campaigns has been a common theme across police services over many years. The inability in terms of resources to handle efficiently the resulting applications is a feature that has been commented upon previously. Leon (1991) noted that an advertising campaign run by one force in the 1980s resulted in large numbers of applications which the force found difficult to manage and process. In the 1990s, a Home Office campaign to increase special constabulary strength by 25,000 officers attracted applications. As no extra resources were given to manage the recruitment process, forces were unable to cope with the increase in applicants, waiting lists grew and applicants were advised to apply at a later date (Leon, 1991). For Wilson and Pimm (1996, p.31), in organisations where recruitment rests with paid officials (as it does in the MPS), 'such dilatoriness is unforgivable'. Bullock and Millie (2018a, p.7) argue that whilst forces are still encouraged to recruit more special constables to increase police strength, they still do not invest resources into managing the recruitment process effectively. Central funding for policing has been reduced by 20% during the four years March 2011 - March 2015 (HMIC, 2013). These budgetary pressures are causing police services to repeat mistakes of the past. The recruitment of 'free' volunteer officers to boost dwindling police resources is an attractive proposition, but there is not the funding to administer the recruitment process effectively.

This study concludes that the recruitment process could be improved very simply by ensuring a regular flow of information to applicants. This would adhere to principles of organisational justice and the dimensions of volunteer job satisfaction model designed by Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2002), which have important implications for retention. As special constable 15 put it:

> In order to stay engaged, they want to know that they've passed that deadline and then they're on to the next one and I think a more goal oriented approach where you involve the applicant in that process is gonna achieve much more in terms of converting applications into people starting at training school.

**Inflexibility of Training Courses**

The current foundation course takes place over 20 days across 12 weekends. According to some participants it previously lasted for as long as 22 weekends. As most special constables undertake this training alongside full or part-time work or study, there is a high degree of motivation and dedication required. Caless (2018, p.15) argues that the major commitment of time and effort given by special constables for training is not recognised as widely as it should be. That is a view supported by this research. Despite Brudney's (1990) advice that flexibility could bring into an organisation very willing volunteers who might otherwise be unable to participate, this study suggests that there is inflexibility about initial training in terms of course location and dates. Special constable 15 explained how they lived a short distance from one of the training centres, only to be selected for a course the other side of London. This entailed 20 one hundred mile round trips:

> *Yeah, so I was at Marlowe House, I lived at the time in West Ealing so didn't like that. You've also got the issue of…so if we look quite granularly at it, you've got to pay to get there and you don't get your expenses reimbursed until you're on Borough. I don't know whether that's changed but that was certainly the case so I paid like fifteen hundred. I didn't like the fact that I couldn't go to Southern Gate (Richmond) cos that would have been ideal.*

When the participant was asked why they couldn't have trained nearer to home they explained:

> *Because they didn't have a course. They did have one but they were like, no it's too far away. I'm not gonna tell you when it is and I was just like well let me decide whether it's too far away you know. They're very revolving door you know, which doesn't make you feel very valued.*

Special constable 10 recalled how their training location was changed at very short notice:

> *I went to Hendon so I had a really long trek for training. I think I was supposed to start and I was supposed to be going to Sidcup, yes, yes, cos that would have been a lot nearer for me. And possibly Richmond might be nearer and then I got a phone call on the Saturday, erm to say that wasn't on and*

*we gonna be going to Hendon and we gonna be starting like the next day. I don't know if we could wait*

*for another start date, I don't think so.*

The importance of flexibility for MSC recruitment is clear in this research. This was illustrated by one officer (SC1) who described an associate who had been forced to withdraw an application as the training course they had been allocated was withdrawn due to the slow progress of vetting. The only options offered were Hendon or Sidcup, neither of which were convenient. Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2002) claim that recruitment practices have significant correlation to volunteer satisfaction whilst Peterson (2004) argues that they have a direct bearing on volunteer motivation. Alternatively, Wymer and Starnes (2001) argue that recruitment practices have direct bearing on retention.

From a functionalist motivational theory perspective, the problems highlighted by participants during the recruitment process impact negatively upon prospective special constables. The understanding and enhancement motivational functions described by Clary et al. (1998) are crucial here. Previous studies into volunteer motivation have shown that the understanding and enhancement functions, along with the values function, are typically reported as the most important functions. The recruitment process therefore impacts upon two of the three most important volunteer motivations. A key element of the understanding function is a sense of being important to an organisation. It is clear from this study that a number of special constables clearly hold an opposing view, that their experience of a poor recruitment process made them question how important they were to the MPS. For special constables motivated by the understanding function, their motives are not being fulfilled at this early stage. This is important for several reasons. Clary and Snyder (1999, p.156) claim that important psychological events, such as embarking on volunteering and then maintaining those activities over extended periods of time, depend on matching the motivational concerns of individuals with situations that can satisfy those concerns. Thus, the successful recruitment and retention of special constables depends upon satisfying their functional motivations for volunteering. It is worthy

of repetition that volunteers may have different motivations for volunteering in the same activity, that any one individual can be motivated by one than one function, and that motivations may change over time (Clary et al., 1998).

To satisfy the enhancement function, volunteering activity needs to create a positive mood, make an individual feel better about themselves, and make them feel important and needed by an organisation. This study suggests that motivational theory principles are not being applied during the MSC recruitment process. The time taken to process applications which causes delay in reaching training school, the lack of information provided to applicants, and basic administrative errors that cause distress and inconvenience to volunteers are not conducive to making individuals feel that they are important, needed or valued by the MPS.

The seeming lack of value placed upon special constables by the recruitment process has wider connotations for how the MSC is seen by the regular service. Previous research has pointed to an uneasy relationship between special constables and regular officers (Gill and Mawby, 1990; Leon, 1991; Mirrlees-Black and Byron, 1994; Gaston and Alexander, 2001; NPIA, 2010a; Whittle, 2014; Bullock and Leeney, 2016). This study has uncovered similar issues which are discussed later in this chapter. Whittle (2014) remarks that a divide between the special constabulary and regular service does little to make volunteers feel valued. Pearce (1993, p.178) claims that there is a better chance of improved volunteer and staff relations 'when volunteers become more employee-like'. For Macduff (1995, P.216), this happens when the selection, orientation, training, and supervision of volunteers is done using standards similar to those used for staff. The finding from this research is that the special constable recruitment process does not make volunteers feel valued. Recruitment for the MSC is not of the same standard as that for the regular service. The impression conveyed by this disparity is that regular officers are of greater importance than volunteer officers. This work concludes that this can

legitimise the notion of special constables as inferior and subordinate across the wider service. The following section considers the induction of special constables from training school to BCU.

**Induction Process**

According to Wilson and Pimm (1996, p.32), more recruits are lost to voluntary organisations because of poor or non-existent induction processes than because of poor selection. Grossman and Furano (1999) identify volunteer orientation as crucial to the success of volunteer programmes. Induction for special constables is the process whereby they transition from 12 weeks at training school to the operational life of a warranted officer on London's streets. This study found mixed experiences of how the transition was handled, with the determining factor being the particular BCU that an officer was posted to. This reflects the findings in relation to continuous professional development. For some participants it was a positive experience. According to special constable 10:

*Yeah regular Sergeant, he was like MSC coordinator I think and he was very good. He came over to Hendon, introduced himself, talked about the OCU, talked about the sort of things we'll be doing, made sure that you had bits of kit that you needed, made sure everything was there, your own radio, your lockers, all that sort of stuff and he was excellent at that. It was brilliant, that transition bit from Hendon to getting to the OCU was excellent.*

Special constable 1 explained how they inducted new special constables onto their BCU. Although a view from the supervisor's side of the fence, the sentiments were very similar:

*I would contact them usually certainly by email to say hello first and then I would phone them and then they've got to come in and do at least one visit. And they were attested so normally they would have a night when they would come in and meet us and chat and I'll talk to them about expectations etc and then once they're attested I'll do a second induction of lockers and shoulder numbers and all this sort of stuff and the practicalities and then hopefully then they're out on the street.*

The behaviour described above is consistent with applying functional motivational principles. The understanding and enhancement motivational functions developed by Clary et al. (1998) are satisfied by volunteers feeling needed and important to an organisation. The simple step of meeting recruits prior to leaving training school conveys a sense that they are appreciated and wanted by a BCU. It is also behaviour consistent with a claim by Lashley and Best (2002) that induction is best seen as a process that commences before the employee starts work and extends through the first two or three months of employment.

Another participant spoke positively about a written guide to their BCU that was given to them. The guide dealt with many of the practical, but initially daunting issues that could be faced when starting a new job (including door codes, station map, organigraph). Although a simple idea, this was the only time that a written pack as part of a wider induction process was mentioned by any of the participants. However, several suggested that this would be a good step forward.

It was clear in this research that for other special constables, the transition process wasn't handled as well. Officers described issues with contacting MSC supervisors between leaving training school and arriving at their designated BCU. Another volunteer (special constable 15) recalled a six week wait after attestation before their BCU had arranged a shift for them, a time in which the participant thought that they could have 'easily fallen away'. The importance of information provision is evident in this study, as applicable to induction as it is for recruitment. One volunteer (special constable 10) recounted how they missed their first operational briefing because no one had made them aware that emergency response teams generally start briefing before their official shift time. The same officer described how they were not introduced to the team when they made it to their first briefing, causing them to feel uncomfortable and insignificant. For special constable 12:

*I don't even know what team I'm aligned with, I've just been given no information, I've just literally been*

*dumped in, I've walked into the station and right you know what do I do now type of thing, so there is*

*no, there is just absolutely no support infrastructure or and no organisation.*

The lack of organisation was picked up by special constable 5:

*I think initially going on your first shift, that was where the gap was. You almost got inducted and it was*

*a case of just sign up to a shift, and it was like okay, what shift? You weren't told that, it was just a case*

*of just sign up to whatever shifts you can and off you go.*

The memory of their first shift was equally unpleasant for special constable 6:

*I remember my first shift and I was paired up with a PC, he was a response driver and I got there on a*

*Sunday morning and it was 8 o'clock and he wasn't there. He was down somewhere else and I didn't*

*know what to do, didn't know who to call, didn't know his shoulder number to call him on the radio so*

*literally had to look him up, find his number, call him and then that was yeah, if I'm brutally honest it*

*was pretty poor.*

The experiences described above indicate that there was little if any induction process in those areas.
For Wilson and Pimm (1996, p.32), the purposes of a good induction process are to:

- Enable the volunteer to understand what will be asked of them and to explain the
  organisation's rules and procedures so that the new member can contribute as soon as
  possible.

- Ensure that new members do not have any worries or concerns about their own role or the
  organisation which could affect the speed of learning, and most important of all their general
  comfort within the organization

- Establish from the very outset an attitude towards the organisation which will develop trust, loyalty, co-operation and flexibility

Poor quality induction processes are not unique to the MSC. Whittle (2018, p.143) has previously suggested that forces do not manage well the gap between training school and becoming operational. In their research, Britton and Callender (2016b) found that just under half of the special constables surveyed did not feel the transition from training school was well handled. The quality or otherwise of the induction process in the MSC is hugely dependent upon the enthusiasm of the local MSC leadership. This research highlights the importance of the efficiency of these processes. In those places where induction is handled well, special constables are met and welcomed whilst still at training school. Expectations are set and practical help is given to make the transition as easy and relaxed as possible, from providing door codes to police stations, to allocating lockers and equipment, to providing contact details of who the first shift will be with. In other areas, there was evidence that induction was minimal or non-existent. Lashley and Best (2002) suggest that well-planned and structured induction can bring down staff turnover. This is certainly a crucial point in the life of a volunteer police officer, coming perhaps 1-2 years after the initial application and following significant investment in training, but without the officer yet being operational. If an officer has had negative experiences during recruitment and foundation training and then arrives at a BCU where they are not made to feel welcome, they may decide to leave before becoming operational. Volunteers do not have strong bonds to an organisation so can – and do – walk away at any time (Whittle, 2018, p.139). There was certainly anecdotal evidence of this during this research.

In those Boroughs where an induction process does take place, it can be suggested that motivational theory principles are being applied. New special constables are being made to feel important to the MPS and MSC and a positive mood from the outset is being created, key ingredients of the understanding and enhancement motivational functions (Clary et al., 1998). The social motivational

function (Clary et al., 1998) is also being met here. For volunteers who are motivated by a desire to strengthen social relationships and/or increase social interactions, a well thought out and delivered induction plan that welcomes them to a local BCU and introduces them to new colleagues helps to satisfy those needs. Conversely, those BCUs where new special constables are left to fend for themselves are not satisfying the understanding, social or enhancement functions. For those officers who are volunteering in order to fulfil those motives, they are likely to be left unsatisfied at this very early stage. Wilson and Pimm (1996, p.32) claim that every organisation who intends to succeed should set down the induction methods they will use in writing and ensure they are complied with. This study concludes that a written, standardised approach to the induction of special constables across the MPS would be a big improvement on the current situation, and have a positive impact upon the morale of volunteer officers. The next section turns to the relationship between MSC officers and the regular MPS.

**Relationship with the Regular Service**

This study found mixed results about the relationship of special constables with regular officers. For some volunteers the relationship was extremely good, even extending beyond working hours:

> It's a really good OCU because the regulars treat you as, you know, one of the group and go to their
>
> drinks, go to Christmas parties. I work predominantly with team 4 and I'm in their WhatsApp group, we
>
> have a laugh and all that sort of stuff so it really works for me (special constable 6).

Other participants also spoke about being treated as one of the team or the same as a regular officer. This sense of acceptance appeared important. According to special constable 3:

> I mean in [name given], my experience, it's not, not so much, but my experience of working with those
>
> regulars is they just treat you like any other police officer.

There were, however, contrasting views expressed by a number of interviewees who recounted negative experiences with their regular colleagues. Special constable 5 described what they perceived to be a lack of support for special constables:

> *Still, we do have times when people do turn up and there isn't anything. But I think that's more, we've tried but we don't get a lot back from the regular side, so we can only do so much on our side but then we do need a bit of help the other side.*

Special constable 2 felt that special constables were given the jobs that regular officers did not want to do:

> *There was some teams in [names given], who would get my specials and put them on constant watches, and so I would be less inclined to give specials that team because you know, and that's demotivating.*

Special constable 10 described their perception of the attitude of some of the regular service towards volunteer officers:

> *It's like 'oh no, another lot', just like we're pain in the arse. Cos I do kinda feel that there is some of that there. That we're just a bloody nuisance.*

For special constable 2:

> *Sometimes the attitude you get from regular police officers, and it's not warranted, you know. Hold my hands up, I'm not as experienced as you and that's because I do this two or three times a month, for a small amount of time.*

The mixed views found during this research as to how special constables perceive their relationship with the regular service is consistent with previous studies. Whittle (2014) found that 20 per cent of special constables expressed that a divide existed between themselves and their regular counterparts, and 44 per cent reported a partial divide. Bullock and Millie (2018a, p.9) attribute a poor relationship between special and regular constables to the view that special constables reflect poorly on the

professionalism of regular officers. Other researchers have suggested different reasons including the poor training, supervision and deployment of volunteer officers (Mirrlees-Black and Byron, 1994), the threat they pose to the pay and conditions of regular officers (Gill and Mawby, 1990; Gaston and Alexander, 2001) and perplexity as to why special constables are prepared to become involved in policing without pay (Caless et al., 2013). Leon (1991, p.631) found in her extensive research that regular officers' criticisms of special constables concerned four broad areas: their motives; their calibre; the economics of deploying special constables; the politics of deploying special constables.

**The Importance of the Relationship between the MSC and Regular Service**

Wilson and Pimm (1996, p.33) claim that full time employees should be seen as friendly, helpful and interested in the individual volunteer. There are a number of reasons why the relationship between the special constabulary and regular service is important to the MPS and volunteer officers. Macduff (1995, p.208) suggests that 'the effective volunteer-staff team is greater than the participation of any one member'. This resonates with Leon's (1991, p.615) claim that without the co-operation of regular officers at grass roots level, for instance in the control room or in the allocation of duties at the beginning of a shift, it is not possible for special constables to be effective. Corporately, the MPS need to make the most out of their volunteer officers as they invest significant money and resources into recruiting, training and equipping special constables.

For individual volunteers, when the relationship is considered in the context of functional motivational theory, the understanding, social and enhancement motivational functions (Clary et al., 1998) are critical. The sense of being important to the MPS which is crucial to individuals motivated by the understanding function will be strengthened through a positive and mutually respectful relationship with full time officers. The need to gain others approval, a core component of the social function, will be enhanced through cultivating a positive relationship with regular officers. The desire to feel needed and better about themselves, key ingredients of the enhancement function, are more likely to be

fulfilled by an effective staff and volunteer relationship. Conversely, those participants who described negative comments and perceptions from the regular service are unlikely to satisfy these particular motivational goals. The importance of this finding in relation to the aims of this research is that several authors have suggested that improving motivation leads to volunteer retention (Clary et al, 1998; Millette and Gagne, 2008; Yanay and Yanay, 2008). More directly, Mitchell and Taylor (1997) argue that retention is enhanced by positive relations between paid staff and volunteers, whilst Caless et al. (2010) claim that the departure of once keen special constables is partly down to 'dismissive hostility' from regular officers.

The work of Chan (2004) on police culture provides further insight into why special constables value the relationship with their regular colleagues. Chan (2004, p.331) suggests that to survive in the field of policing, officers require both social and cultural capital. The accumulation of social capital requires the cultivation of mutually supportive relationships with fellow officers. This study did not always find evidence of such relationships. According special constable 10:

*I think like there is that attitude like this is my day job, I do this properly you're just playing at it.*

Cultural capital is gained in the form of information, knowledge and competence (Chan, 2004, p.345). In order to acquire this, special constables need the support of regular officers who generally hold the components of cultural capital. When volunteers and staff have poor relations there is little information sharing (Macduff, 1995, p.213). As Macduff (1995, p.213) puts it, 'in territorial environments information is seen as power'. Chan (2004, p.345) describes how recruits are at the bottom of the policing hierarchy in terms of capital. Their aim is to accumulate as much knowledge, skills and experience (cultural capital); goodwill, cooperation and camaraderie (social capital); as well as a favourable reputation (symbolic capital) among workmates and superiors. Special constables are regarded as subservient to regular officers (Millie, 2018, p.109), which suggests an even greater need for social and cultural capital to survive in the policing environment.

Leon (1991, p.678) has used Merton's (1938) strain theory to attempt to explain the nature of the relationship between special constables and regular officers. She posits that special constables experience a conflict between their perception of their value, and those of the dominant regular police culture. Many volunteer officers recognise that acceptance within the dominant culture is almost impossible to achieve and so many special constables develop methods of adapting to the strain imposed by this dichotomy. According to Leon (1991, p.681), these adaptions configure themselves in the forms of four different type of special constable:

- Acolytes – attitude to regular officers verges on hero-worship, and they see their role as being to learn and support.

- Pragmatist – respectful but pragmatic attitude to regular officers; they accept the limitations of their role and also that there will be some prejudice against them.

- Rival – very aware of regular hostility and resent it; they adapt by competing, and see the capabilities of the special constabulary as identical to, if not better than, the regular service.

- Cynic – adapt to perceived lack of appreciated from regular officers by becoming disillusioned, cynical and alienated from the regular service.

In the current study, these four archetypes were not in evidence. Each of the participants fell quite clearly into either the 'pragmatist' or 'acolyte' category. Both of these categories convey a sense of special constables playing a supportive role to the regular service. A number of participants in this study believed that their role was to support regular colleagues, and they appeared content to be subordinate to them. Special constable 2 described their view:

> *I said, look, I'm you know, I'll make tea, I'll do any crappy job you want because as far as I'm concerned*
>
> *it's saving money, you guys to go and do some real policing if you like. That's my attitude towards it.*

Similarly, special constable 6 explained:

> *If a skipper says to me do something I'll do it, he's a skipper and I'm there to help out basically. You have*
>
> *to remember that you're an auxiliary and you're there to help out, you're there to give an extra pair of*
>
> *hands.*

Other researchers have reported similar findings. In Lancashire Constabulary, Millie (2018, p.109) found that most special constables saw their job as being supportive of the regular service. Britton and Callender (2018, p.154) also note the ancillary and deferential role that special constables typically play, although they suggest that 'if the special constabulary is to achieve the aims of improving police legitimacy and bridging the divide between the regular service and communities then they need to be regarded as more than just an additional and inexpensive resource that will do the jobs that nobody else wants to'.

The concept of organisational justice provides another reason why the fair treatment of volunteers by the regular service is so important. The large body of research evidence that exists on organisational justice (Colquitt et al., 2001; Colquitt, 2008; Greenberg, 2011) suggests that 'perceptions of fairness and respect within organisations have a significant positive impact on the attitudes and work behaviours of employees' (Quinton et al., 2015). Benefits that have been reported (Tyler and Blader, 2000; Colquitt et al., 2001; Colquitt, 2008; Greenberg, 2011; Tyler, 2011a) include greater commitment to the organisation, increased job satisfaction and work performance, increased organisational citizenship behaviours, and reduced counter-productive work behaviours. Research suggests that fairness on employees has a more positive impact on employees than traditional performance management and disciplinary techniques (Quinton et al', 2015, p.4). According to

Quinton et al. (2015, p.4), organisational justice consists of distributive justice (how fairly employees feel that inputs (e.g. workload, resources) and rewards (e.g. pay, recognition) are allocated across the organisation and procedural justice (related to perceptions of fair decision making, open, honest and timely communication of decisions, and perception of respectful and dignified contact between senior staff and employees).

This research suggests that the perception of regular officers to the MSC also has an impact on the self-legitimacy of special constables. Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) claim that in addition to public acceptance, in order to be legitimate the police must see themselves as having the right to exercise authority (they see themselves as legitimate), what Quinton et al. (2015, p.8) have also described as officers having confidence in their own authority. Self-legitimacy could undermine ethical policing as officers lacking in self-confidence might need to resort to force to manage confrontational situations (Quinton et al., 2015, p.9). In their research, Quinton et al. (2015, p.9) found that those who perceived the organisation to be fair were much more likely to identify with the organisation. As a corollary, officers who identified with the organisation were much more likely to be confident in their own authority.

**Improving the Relationship between the MSC and Regular Service**

The importance of the relationship with the regular service was highlighted by the fact that several participants made suggestions as to how it could be improved. Special constable 10 offered a simple proposal:

> *Erm, but I think, I think you need, I think it needs regulars to be more involved. I would like to see all the regulars sat down and maybe with a few specials in the room. Each set of regulars with specials in the room, new ones, saying 'right, these people coming on, they're coming to help you. They don't want to take your jobs' because there's a bit of that isn't there. And we would like you to do this for us and to help us.*

Leon (1991, p.623) found regular officers' exposure to special constables to be very limited, with a large proportion of regular officers not having the opportunity to increase their understanding of the role of the MSC. This study reached a similar conclusion. The special constables who took part in this research described rarely working with regular officers or working with the same teams all the time. The majority of regular MPS officers do not work with special constables. Consequently, there are limited opportunities for regular officers to learn about the role, capabilities and motivations of special constables. Macduff (1995, p.218) claims that communication between volunteers and staff is critical and it would certainly improve regular officer' understanding of the MSC. Additionally, none of the training provided to regular officers, whether constables, supervisors or managers, covers the special constabulary. This study suggests that frontline officers should have an input on the MSC in their rolling programme of training to increase their understanding of special constables, which in turn may lead to an improved relationship and a greater utilisation of volunteer officers.

Training, covered in greater detail in an earlier chapter, is an important factor when considering the relationship between special and regular constables. Training has long been seen as a major issue in the relationship between the regular service and special constabulary (Leon, 1991, p.647). The longevity of this issue is evident in a recommendation from the Second Working Party on the Special Constabulary (Home Office, 1981) that 'the key to both the job satisfaction of specials and their ready acceptance by regulars is greater proficiency, which is best enhanced by high quality and continuous training'. A few years later, the 1987 conference on special constables stressed the role of training in improving relationships (West Yorkshire Chief Constable, 1987, cited in Leon, 1991, p.650). According to Leon (1991, p.740), all regular officers have doubts about the extent to which special constables impinge upon their professionalism. Current discourses about the re-professionalisation of the police (Holdaway, 2017) emphasise that a professional policing model should have special skills and knowledge that can be written down, taught and continually improved (Sklansky, 2011, p.7). Sklansky (2011, p.7) claims that for the police themselves, professionalism offers status, glamour,

organisational independence and excitement (Sklansky, 2011, p.7). Poorly trained special constables are considered a danger to police professionalism and to any benefits that may arise from such a status. This work concludes that the quality of training provided to volunteer officers can emphasise and legitimise the view that special constables play an inferior and subordinate role to the regular service. The next chapter considers the recognition afforded to special constables in terms of whether the skills and experience that they bring into policing are valued, and the infrastructure that supports them.

**Summary**

This chapter discussed the integration of special constables into the MPS. This study revealed that integration is an important factor impacting upon the morale of special constables. The study also highlighted widespread dissatisfaction with recruitment and induction processes. The nature of these processes suggests to volunteer officers that they are unimportant to the organisation. The chapter also concluded that a positive and mutually respectful relationship with the regular service is important to the self-worth of special constables, and has an important bearing upon morale. The next chapter moves to consider the recognition of MSC officers.

# Chapter 7 Recognition

**Introduction**

This chapter considers the recognition of special constables within the MPS. The basic functions of recognition systems are to recruit, retain, develop and motivate to perform (Peach and Murrell, 1995, p.227). To influence volunteer behaviour, an effective recognition system will match the array of available rewards to satisfy the specific needs of each volunteer (Peach and Murrell, 1995, p.228). Recognition can be both formal (e.g. ceremonies, self-development opportunities, featuring person in a newsletter) and informal (e.g. saying thank you, showing interest in a volunteer) (Fisher and Cole, 1993; Luthans and Stajkovic, 2006). Further literature suggests that recognition is a process that gives individuals some kind of status within an organisation (Danish and Usman, 2010, p.161). The chapter is split into three main sections. The first section considers whether the skills and capabilities that special constables bring into policing from their outside careers are fully recognised and utilised. Next, the infrastructure supporting volunteer officers is discussed in terms of whether it shows that special constables are appreciated by the MPS. Finally, the importance of recognition to the retention of special constables is discussed.

**Making Use of the Skills of MSC Officers**

Special constables often bring skills and expertise into policing that forces would otherwise have to pay for (Caless, 2018, p.25). This research found that some participants, although in a minority, were using their skills whilst volunteering in the MSC. One special constable who worked in media published a local MSC newsletter to improve morale, and also edited the pan London MSC newsletter. Another special constable who had experience in watch repair had been seconded to the Arts and Antiques Unit several years ago after a chance conversation with a supervisor. For another volunteer, their organisational and IT skills were put to good use within a neighbourhood team, building engagement with the local community through publishing newsletters, updating websites, arranging meetings and

writing letters. Conversely, a small number of officers viewed the MSC as an opportunity to do something completely different from their day jobs.

Despite the MPS facing severe financial challenges, several participants highlighted how their skills weren't recognised or utilised. For instance, special constable 7 described possessing minority language skills that are likely to be in high demand in a city as diverse as London:

> *Oh my god, this drives me mad. I have quite good language skills right cos I lived in Syria weirdly. And so I could help out a little bit with language. I would speak French fluently and that hasn't been picked up on at all. And I'd be quite happy to do more of that, happy to be picked up because it just doesn't fit that mould of what my specials would normally do. And I get that, that isn't in place. But it is also a bit frustrating. At times it's like I feel like I have more I could offer.*

This normative description of a special constable is consistent with Britton and Callender's (2018, p.153) claim that rather than viewing volunteer officers as individuals with diverse skill sets and experience, they are moulded 'uniformly into a single, narrow and traditional interpretation of the job'. Similarly, Britton and Knight (2016) suggest that special constables are only seen as additional police officer capability, but with 'less experience, lower skills and a narrower scope of operational activity' than regular officers. This is antithetical to the experience of special constable 5 who knew of volunteer officers with external skills in fraud accounting, forensic accounting, and international bribery and money laundering investigations.

For special constable 7, having their skills recognised and utilised was important to make them feel that they were adding value:

> *I think that the main frustration I've had is the fact that I have this like knowledge and ability that is completely wasted by the work that I'm doing with them at the moment. And that is annoying. I think it's the not asking thing. That never came up in my interviews, in my induction, in any of my conversations while I've been a special which is a shame. And I think that if you feel like you're offering*

*something you can personally give you feel less like number like shoulder number whatever. And for people who are doing it voluntarily they don't wanna feel like that you know. They wanna feel kind of like they can offer a bit of themselves, not just their kind of being a body.*

The findings of this study are consistent with much of the previous research on special constabulary skills. Mirrlees-Black and Byron (1994) found that between a quarter and a third of special constable respondents were not satisfied with the degree to which the work they were given utilised their particular skills and abilities. They suggested that retention could be improved by keeping a central register of specific skills to enable forces to call on individuals for assistance in a particular area. There was an acknowledgement from some participants in the current study that a system (the 'My Skills' section within Duty Sheet – the special constabulary IT system) had been put in place to capture this information, but this study suggests that it doesn't work effectively and isn't known about by the regular service. A contrasting and singular view was given by special constable 1 who had identified and deployed a Romanian speaking special constable via Duty Sheet to tackle Romanian criminals during a pre-planned operation. NPIA (2010b) research found that recognition of volunteer officers' skills from regular jobs had a positive impact upon feeling valued which in turn impacted positively upon retention rates. A 2014 survey in Lancashire Constabulary reported that 49 per cent of volunteer respondents did not feel that the constabulary made best use of their skills (Millie, 2016, p.7). The 2016 National Survey of Special Constables and Police Service Volunteers (Britton and Callender, 2016b) found that 32 per cent of special constable respondents disagreed that the force understands the skills and experience they bring.

If the findings of this study are considered in the context of Clary et al.'s (1998) multi factor motivational model, the understanding and enhancement motivational functions are particularly pertinent. For volunteers motivated by the understanding function, they engage in unpaid activity as a means to exercise knowledge and skills and from a desire to be important to an organisation.

Volunteers motivated by the enhancement function have a desire to feel important and needed. Despite the fairly negative findings about utilisation of volunteers' skills from research across almost a quarter of a century, Bullock and Millie (2018b, p.172) draw attention to how volunteer officers are enthusiastic about using their skills within a policing setting. This study reaches a similar conclusion. With policing facing new and complex challenges such as cyber-enabled crime, safeguarding vulnerable people, and terrorism, combined with severe financial pressures, the traditional interpretation of what a special constable can do is no longer sustainable. This work suggests that the MPS should apply functional motivational principles by recognising special constables as individuals with pre-existing skills and experience. Recognising and making use of these skills and experience would satisfy individual motivations whilst providing valuable and free capabilities to the MPS. The next section considers the infrastructure surrounding special constables.

**Supporting Infrastructure**

It is clear in this research, that for some participants, the infrastructure to support special constables is not up to standard. This is considered by special constables to be symptomatic of how the MSC is valued. This is important when considering Gaskin's (2003b) claim that volunteerism is seriously affected by management practice which includes infrastructure requirement. One supervisor recalled how a newly attested officer couldn't perform a duty for five months due to the unavailability of size 16 shirts. For special constable 2:

> *Great example CARMS. When CARMS was implemented who thought about putting specials on it? No-one. Met duties that was alright and working fine. CARM no. Radios? Could we ever get a radio? There were times when I've had specials and we've not got enough radios and I've said "Really sorry, you'll have to go home." Body worn video. I understand why, no sign of it, I don't like.*

Similarly, special constable 1 described how the provision of a small and inexpensive item would have indicated to MSC officers that they were appreciated:

*Things like the new cameras, we've just got the new cameras, the body one a few months ago and one*

*of them said, can you get one of the clips for me. One officer said I've got a load of them but others were*

*saying I've been trying to buy them on Amazon and stuff, but why should they? These are small things*

*but in the scheme of things when you've got to save a half a billion quid to buy a few extra for them,*

*and it's, that will you do that and make them a bit welcome, I think that goes a long, long way.*

Discontent among special constables regarding the issue of equipment and uniform was also found by Leon (1991, p.576). Under current financial constraints, forces may argue that they cannot afford to provide volunteers with the full range of police equipment. Funding for the special constabulary comes from within the regular budget and Leon (1991, p.694) has previously claimed that any extra equipment for special constabularies is very low priority and generally only considered if there are any funds left after the needs of the regular service have been met. This issue is not unique to policing. According to Hager (2004), one of the challenges faced by the management of volunteers is financial problems related to supporting volunteers.

This evidence from the study suggests that motivational theories are not being considered when equipping special constables. Within the five dimension of volunteer job satisfaction model developed by Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2002), the participation efficacy dimension indicates that volunteers will not be satisfied if they feel that they are unimportant in the volunteering organisation. If the poor infrastructure described by participants is considered in the context of Clary et al.'s (1998) multi-factor motivational model, the desire to feel important and needed that are key parts of the understanding and enhancement motivational functions will not be fulfilled. The poor provision of equipment and uniform also calls into question again how the current professionalisation agenda applies to the special constabulary. The term police professionalism has been held to mean high expectations in relation to ethical behaviour, appearance, performance and the core application of the law (Norman and Williams, 2017, p.197). The next section considers the relation between the recognition of special constables and their retention.

**The Importance of Recognition for Retention**

Many participants spoke about the importance of being valued for the commitment they were making to the MPS. Value was an important issue throughout the study and the career cycle of a volunteer officer, from recruitment to training, the nature of deployments, opportunities available and the relationship with the regular service. All of these issues were interpreted by special constables as a reflection of how much they were valued, whether in a positive way or not. Britton et al. (2016) found similar variety in their study, with approximately 42 per cent of volunteers neither agreeing nor disagreeing that their efforts as volunteers are recognised.

A number of researchers have stressed the importance of recognition for retaining the services of volunteers (Shin and Kleiner, 2003; Esmond and Dunlop, 2004). Looking specifically at the special constabulary, Gaston and Alexander (2001, p.62) claim that demonstrating recognition is a key part of retaining special constables. In support, Whittle (2012, p.36) argues that ensuring managers recognise the contribution of special constables is a cost-effective way of increasing retention. Ensuring that supervisors understand the importance of recognising volunteer contributions is something that the MPS has control over and can easily influence. This study found that recognition is vital to the retention of special constables and can take many forms. A few simple suggestions include saying thank you to volunteers for their service, praising noteworthy contributions, publicising good work across the BCU so that both the special and regular service are aware of it, support and recognition from the local regular Senior Leadership Team, and the provision of different opportunities across a spectrum of BCU work. The lack of training given to regular officers about the special constabulary was noted earlier in this chapter, as was recommending that such training took place. This study recommends that the value of recognition for volunteers should form part of the input, which is particularly important for those with leadership responsibilities. As Whittle (2018) suggests, supervisors of any rank should understand how to recognise volunteer contributions.

A special constabulary that feels under-valued also raises questions of self-legitimacy. As Bradford and Quinton (2014, p130) have noted, when officers feel fairly treated it enhances their affinity to an organisation, the belief that they are supported and self-legitimacy to hold the powers vested in them. Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) suggest that self-legitimacy is the police seeing themselves as having the right to exercise authority, what Quinton et al. (2015, p.8) describe as officers having confidence in their own authority. Self-legitimacy could undermine ethical policing as officers lacking in self-confidence might need to resort to force to manage confrontational situations (Quinton et al., 2015, p.9). In their research, Quinton et al. (2015, p.9) found that those who perceived the organisation to be fair were much more likely to identify with the organisation. As a corollary, officers who identified with the organisation were much more likely to be confident in their own authority.

**Summary**

This chapter examined the recognition of MSC officers. The study highlighted that being recognised for their contribution was important to special constables morale, as it conveyed to them a sense of being of value to the MPS. The research also revealed that recognising and utilising external skills that special constables bring into policing makes them feel valued, with the additional benefit of providing the MPS with capabilities that they would otherwise have to pay for. The final chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the key findings and making recommendations that emanate from the study.

# Chapter 8 Concluding Remarks

**Introduction**

This concluding chapter summarises the major findings of this research in the context of the aims of this thesis. The chapter illustrates how this study enhances the debate around special constable motivation and retention. By drawing on the key theoretical concept applied within the analysis and through a comprehensive insight into the relationship between the role of individual volunteer officers and work environment factors inherent in the police organisation, the thesis makes a new contribution to the current evidence base regarding the problem of special constable morale and attrition. The implications of these findings for wider notions of organisational change are also considered by making a number of recommendations to the MPS to improve the morale of MSC officers.

**Summary of Findings in Relation to the Research Aims**

This research revealed a number of factors that impact upon the motivation of MSC officers. The importance of training to special constables was clear throughout the study. Evidence from participants suggests that MSC foundation training lacks sufficient quality and quantity, and does not prepare volunteers for life on the street as fully warranted police officers. The research also highlights the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) to the morale of special constables. Whilst the study found evidence of good practice in some BCUs, it found in many others a total absence of support and development to enable special constables to achieve Independent Patrol Status, which all volunteer officers aspire to. The multifactor model of volunteer motivation (Clary et al., 1998) highlights the importance to volunteers of learning new skills and knowledge, and of feeling important to the host organisation (understanding function). The enhancement function within the model stresses the importance to volunteers of gaining satisfaction from personal growth and self-esteem, and of being made to feel needed. This research concludes that the current system and

provision of training to MSC officers does not satisfy these needs and negatively impacts upon morale. The evidence provided about training also contrasts sharply with current notions of police professionalism. A common thread running throughout contemporary claims to professionalism is that of highly and continuously trained officers. An important finding of this research is that the training of special constables is neither high quality nor continuous. This casts doubt upon the notion of professionalism, and risks legitimising the historical two tier status of regular and special constables.

The poor level of training given to special constables raises concerns over their contribution to police legitimacy. Police legitimacy has been of concern to policy makers and researchers since the foundation of modern policing. Sir Robert Peel, the founder of the Metropolitan Police Service, formulated the nine principles of policing with a view on enhancing legitimacy and public acceptance of the new force (Pike, 1985; Bronitt and Stenning, 2011). Legitimacy represents a sense of shared values between the public and the police, that they are 'on the same side' (Myhill and Quinton, 2011, p.6). There are two commonly accepted forms of legitimacy. Normative legitimacy relates to the meeting of certain criteria by police organisations such as the absence of corruption, whilst empirical legitimacy is based on the perceptions of civilians (Noppe et al., 2017, p.474). Myhill and Quinton (2011) found in their research that fair and respectful treatment predicted whether the public viewed the police as legitimate. Public perceptions of legitimacy are important as they are associated with people being more likely to say that they would assist the police in tackling crime (Tyler and Fagan, 2008) and being more likely to admit to breaking the law (Tyler, 2006). Public co-operation is a cost effective way of reducing demand for police forces who have seen significant reductions in funding and resources.

Police legitimacy has been linked to procedurally just styles of policing (Tyler, 2006). According to Myhill and Quinton (2011, p.6), this means that 'perceptions of police fairness and good inter-personal treatment – rather than the perception of the police being effective at responding to, and detecting,

crime – enhance trust and confidence and the extent to which the police are viewed as legitimate'. Examples of good treatment include: being friendly and approachable; treating people with respect; making fair decisions; and taking the time to explain these decisions (Myhill and Quinton, 2011, p.6). Whilst training may not necessarily impact upon the ability of special constables to be friendly and approachable and treat people with respect (for many officers these are personal traits that they bring with them into policing), making fair decisions and explaining those decisions are heavily reliant on effective training in law, policy and procedure. This study has found that special constable training falls short in all of these areas. This resonates with the findings of previous research (Leon, 1991; Whittle, 2012; Britton et al., 2016) that also questioned the effectiveness of special constable training.

Another aspect of legitimacy that requires attention is the claim of Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) that in addition to public acceptance, in order to be legitimate the police must see themselves as having the right to exercise authority, what Quinton et al. (2015, p.8) describe as officers having confidence in their own authority. Self-legitimacy could undermine ethical policing as officers lacking in self-confidence might need to resort to force to manage confrontational situations (Quinton et al., 2015, p.9). It is clear from the findings of this research that many special constables lack confidence in their policing ability, especially those younger in service. The implications of this are that those volunteer officers who lack confidence and need to resort to force, may impact upon public perceptions of the police being friendly and approachable, and treating people with respect, which in turn could lead to reduced legitimacy.

The importance to special constables of meaningful deployment and opportunities to specialise were evident in this study. There was evidence from a number of volunteer officers that they wanted to be offered a wider range of policing opportunities, and not just be used to bolster the strength of neighbourhood and response teams. Particular appeal lay in the realms of public order policing, traffic and investigative work. There was also evidence of a desire for specialist training in areas such as

driving and public order. The study highlights that the provision of opportunities creates interest and enthusiasm, and equates to being valued in the eyes of special constables. In considering these findings in the context of Clary et al.'s (1998) motivational model, it is clear from this research that motivational principles are not being applied when it comes to the use of and opportunities available to special constables. A key aspect for volunteers motivated by the values function (Clary et al., 1998) is that they are doing something meaningful. The understanding function (Clary et al., 1998) requires volunteers to feel important to an organisation, whilst a key aspect of the career function (Clary et al., 1998) is a desire for challenging work and responsibility. In those BCUs where special constables are used only as an additional uniform resource, sit in the back of police vehicles as a third crew member, or conduct high visibility patrols on the same street every Friday night, these needs are not being satisfied. One of the guiding functionalist motivational principles is that decisions and behaviours of volunteers about beginning and continuing activity are influenced by whether the individual's motivations are matched to the opportunities afforded by the volunteering environment (Clary et al., 1998). Volunteer motivation is an important factor that needs to be addressed if organisations want to retain volunteers (Hager and Brudney, 2004).

This study found integration to be an important factor impacting upon the morale of special constables. The research highlights widespread dissatisfaction with recruitment and induction processes. Similar to continuation training, this research found in many areas an absence of any kind of induction process in which newly attested officers are transitioned from training school and educated in local norms. The benefits of induction schemes to individuals and organisations are highlighted in the wider volunteer literature (e.g. Wilson and Pimm, 1996, p.32). Evidence from this study suggests that the absence of such a scheme impresses upon volunteers the notion that they are unimportant to the MPS. This is crucial to the understanding and enhancement motivational functions (Clary et al., 1998), where key ingredients include being made to feel important to the MPS and the creation of a positive mood from the outset. The social motivational function (Clary et al., 1998) is also

important here. For volunteers who are motivated by a desire to strengthen social relationships and/or increase social interactions, a well thought out and delivered induction plan that welcomes them to a local BCU and introduces them to new colleagues helps to satisfy those needs.

This research concludes that a positive and mutually respectful relationship with the regular service is important to the self-worth of special constables and has an important bearing on morale. Paradoxically, evidence provided by participants suggests that they are viewed with ambivalence in many areas, with the majority of regular officers having limited contact with the MSC and knowing little about their motivations, capabilities and desires. A good relationship is critical to special constables to enable them to acquire both the social (goodwill, cooperation and camaraderie) and cultural (information, knowledge and competence) capital necessary to to survive in the field of policing (Chan, 2004). The relationship is also important when viewed through the lens of motivational theory. The sense of being important to the MPS which is crucial to individuals motivated by the understanding function (Clary et al., 1998) will be strengthened through a positive and mutually respectful relationship with full time officers. The need to gain others approval, a core component of the social function (Clary et al., 1998) will be enhanced through cultivating a positive relationship with regular officers. The desire to feel needed and better about themselves, key ingredients of the enhancement function (Clary et al., 1998) are more likely to be fulfilled by an effective staff and volunteer relationship. Conversely, those participants who experienced negative comments and perceptions from the regular service will not be able to satisfy these motivational goals. The importance of this finding in relation to the aims of this research is that several authors have suggested that improving motivation leads to volunteer retention (Clary et al, 1998; Millette and Gagne, 2008; Yanay and Yanay, 2008). More directly, Mitchell and Taylor (1997) argue that retention is enhanced by positive relations between paid staff and volunteers, whilst Caless et al. (2010) claim that the departure of once keen special constables is partly down to 'dismissive hostility' from regular officers.

Finally, the importance of recognition to special constables is evident throughout this research. The study found that being recognised for their contribution signified being of value to volunteer officers. Evidence from participants highlights that recognition does not always need to be formal or expensive, a simple thank you or praise for a piece of work well done positively impacts upon morale. This is consistent with Clary et al.'s (1998) motivational theory which stresses the need for volunteers to feel important and appreciated by the host organisation. The research also concludes that recognising and utilising the skills that special constables bring into policing is another way to make them feel valued and improve morale. This is again consistent with applying the motivational principles of Clary et al (1998) as volunteers motivated by the understanding function (Clary et al., 1998) engage in unpaid activity as a means to exercise knowledge and skills, whilst volunteers motivated by the enhancement function have a desire to feel important and needed (Clary et al., 1998).

**Recommendations to the Metropolitan Police Service**

Arising from the findings of this research, the following recommendations are suggested to the MPS to assist in improving the motivation, and as a corollary, the retention of MSC officers. All of the recommendations are consistent with functionalist motivational theory.

1. **Applicants for the MSC to be provided with regular updates as to how applications are progressing** – There was evidence from participants about a lack of information and updates as to how applications were progressing. This caused participants to question how much their offer to volunteer was valued. Regular updates would keep recruits motivated whilst waiting for a start date for training.

2. **Applicants for the MSC to be provided with a named point of contact during the application process** – Participants expressed frustration that there was no mechanism for them to ask questions about or request updates on their applications. Again, regular updates would keep recruits motivated whilst waiting for a start date for training.

3. **The foundation course for the MSC to be reviewed to ensure that it is fit for purpose** – The study found that special constables felt their foundation training lacked quality and quantity, and did not prepare them for operational duties. The course should be reviewed, in consultation with special constables, to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

4. **A standardised approach to the induction of special constables from training school to BCU to be developed and introduced** – An induction process is essential to help the transition from training school to operational duties, to educate special constables in local norms, and make them feel valued and an important part of a BCU. The study found the standard of induction to be variable, and non-existent in places. A standardised approach to induction is required, using best practice from those areas that do it well.

5. **A written guide to each London BCU (including local information and practical advice) to be produced and provided to new special constables prior to their arrival at a BCU** – The guide has proved valuable in one BCU, helping special constables settle in quickly to their new surroundings. Evidence from participants suggests that it would be of value to special constables across all BCUs.

6. **A standardised approach to the development of special constables to achieve Independent Patrol Status to be introduced** – Like induction, the study found the standard of development to IPS to be variable, and non-existent in places. Evidence from this research suggests that a

standardised approach to developing and helping special constables achieve IPS, which they all strive for, would positively impact upon morale.

7. **All departments across the MPS to review their functions to identify potential opportunities for special constables** – Evidence from participants suggests that they would like a wider range of policing opportunities. There may be departments across the MPS where it would be appropriate and beneficial to utilise special constables.

8. **All frontline officers to receive training on the MSC (including motivations for volunteering) as part of the regular training cycle** – The study highlighted the importance of the relationship between special constables and regular officers. The majority of regular officers have little or no contact with the MSC and so have no understanding of their motivations, capabilities and desires.

9. **Supporting and motivating volunteers (including best practice from outside the police service) to become a part of promotion courses for special and regular officers** – Line managers, supervisors and managers have a responsibility to motivate their teams, including special constables. The study found evidence that many lack experience of dealing with volunteers and an understanding of what motivates them. Training as part of promotion would enable line managers to better lead, deploy and motivate their MSC officers.

10. **Face to face interviews to be held with all special constables who have initiated the resignation process, to fully understand the reasons behind the decision and ascertain whether it can be reversed** – A recurring theme across special constabularies has been high attrition rates with no real understanding of why this is so. The standard documentation required to resign is inadequate to fully understand why volunteer officers choose to leave,

often prematurely. Face to face interviews would enable a better understanding, and provide an opportunity to discuss any problems and potentially reverse the decision.

**Summary of Study Limitations**

There are limitations to this study which need to be taken into account when reporting the findings. Participation was voluntary, therefore those special constables who did respond to the researcher's request for assistance may be subject to self-selection bias. It may be the case that those officers who did not volunteer to take part in the project are completely content with life in the MSC, whilst the small number who did take part did so because they have cause for complaint.

The interviews were conducted over a two month period between October and December 2017 and so represent a snap shot over a short period in time. The email seeking participants did not go to all MSC officers, only those working on the South BCUs, which equates to approximately one third of the total number of special constables. The participants cannot therefore be considered representative of the whole MSC. However, participants were based in 12 of the 32 BCUs in the MPS and data saturation was reached which may mitigate this limitation.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

The study could be repeated again with participants from each of the 32 BCUs. Through the MSC co-ordinator, the researcher's email could be sent to all MSC officers and it is likely, judging by the response to this study, that at least one participant per BCU would be forthcoming. This study concentrated on MSC officers attached to BCUs. There are a small number of special constables attached to specialist units and a further study could incorporate their perspective.

A new study could utilise participant observation, followed by semi-structured interviews to gauge volunteers' perceptions of what the researcher had observed. Observations would be particularly useful in terms of assessing the capabilities of special constables, discovering how the question of self-legitimacy played out in reality, how volunteer officers are deployed, and their relationship with the regular service. The study could also incorporate interviews with regular officers to discover directly their opinions and attitude towards the special constabulary.

Finally, an issue that was touched upon in chapter 6 was the attrition of special constables before they reached training school. Qualitative interviews with participants within this sampling frame would add to the findings generated by this study as to how the recruitment process impacted upon motivation.

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# **Appendices**

**Appendix 1**

# **Interview Plan**

- Thank participant for attending
- Explain purpose of the interview
- Read out participant information sheet
- Explain consent form – ask participant to sign (emailed in advance)


1. Age / Highest academic qualification / Duration of servce
2. Why did you join the MSC?
3. How are you deployed by the MPS?
4. What have you enjoyed about your time in the MSC?
5. What haven't you enjoyed about your time in the MSC?
6. What skills do you possess that aren't used by the MPS?
7. What are your future plans in relation to the MSC?
8. In 2012 the Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC) had 5600 officers, in 2017 there are 2600. The number of people applying to join has fallen dramatically. Why do you think this is the case?
9. In 2012 the Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC) had 5600 officers, in 2017 there are 2600. This number is decreasing by 20% a month as people resign. Why do you think this is the case.
10. What do you think can be done to address the recruitment issues?
11. What do you think can be done to address the retention issues?
12. What impact do you think the Policing Education Qualifications Framework will have on the MSC? (Explain if participant not aware of potential plan for PEQF to apply to the Special Constabulary).
13. Do you have any other comments about the MSC?


- Thank participant

# INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM



Canterbury Christ Church University

**Title of Project:** The motivation of Metropolitan Special Constables and the Relationship to Recruitment and Retention

**Name of Researcher**: Jason Prins

**Contact details**
Address: Canterbury Christ Church University,
School of Law, Criminal Justice and Computing,
North Holmes Campus,
Canterbury. CT1 1QU

Tel: 07715 254 094

Email: j.prins370@canterbury.ac.uk

**Please initial box**
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential

4. I agree to take part in the above study.


_____     _____                    _____

Name of Participant                        Date                                         Signature

_____     _____          _____
Name of Person taking consent           Date                          Signature
(if different from researcher)

Jason Prins_____          _____          _____
Researcher                              Date                          Signature

Copies: 1 for participant
1 for researcher

# INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



The motivation of Metropolitan Special Constables and the Relationship to Recruitment and Retention

**Study**
A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Jason Prins

**Background**
In 2012 the Metropolitan Special Constabulary (MSC) had 5600 officers, in 2017 there are 2600. This number is decreasing by 20% a month. This is a picture replicated nationally. The MSC bring a number of benefits to the MPS: increasing capacity and capability, value for money, building social capital and public confidence (which increases co-operation with the police and compliance with the law), providing communities a greater voice in policing and encouraging communities to address some of their own problems, and allowing the Service to more accurately represent London's communities. My research is looking at the motivations of Special Constables and how this knowledge can then be used to address the critical recruitment and retention issues. My research will also examine the proposed introduction of the Policing Educational Qualifications Framework for Special Constables and the impact this will have upon motvation and recruitment / retention.

**What will you be required to do?**
A qualitative face to face interview to investigate the motivation of Metropolitan Special Constables and the relationship to recruitment and retention. The interview will also investigate the potential introduction of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework for Special Constables and the impact of this upon motivation.

**To participate in this research you must:**
Be a serving member of the Metropolitan Special Constabulary or be recently retired (within the previous 12 months)

**Procedures**
You will be asked to take part in a face to face interview for 30-60 minutes
**Feedback**

The results of the study will be published in a report which will be circulated to the MPS National Police Chief Council lead for the MSC. Copies of this report will be available upon request.

**Confidentiality**

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by Jason Prins. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

**Dissemination of results**

The results of the study will be written up into an MSc thesis which will be stored by the University. Also results of the study will form the basis of an operational report which will be disseminated to the MPS National Police Chief Council lead for the MSC. Copies will be available on request.

**Deciding whether to participate**

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

**Any questions?**

Please contact Jason PRINS on 07715 254 094 or Email j.prins370@canterbury.ac.uk or contact the School of Law, Criminal Justice and Computing at CCCU, North Holmes Campus, Canterbury, CT1 1QU.

**Appendix 4 -** Section B:  Ethics Checklist

Please answer each question by marking (X) in the appropriate box:

| | | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Does the study involve participants who are particularly <u>vulnerable</u> or unable to give informed consent (e.g. children, people with learning disabilities), or in unequal relationships (e.g. people in prison, your own staff or students)? | | X |
| 2. | Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to any <u>vulnerable</u> groups or individuals to be recruited (e.g. students at school, members of self-help groups, residents of nursing home)? | | X |
| 3. | Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without usual informed consent procedures having been implemented in advance (e.g. covert observation, certain ethnographic studies)? | | X |
| 4. | Will the study use deliberate deception (this does <u>*not*</u> include randomly assigning participants to groups in an experimental design)? | | X |
| 5. | Will the study involve discussion of, or collection of information on, topics of a sensitive nature (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) <u>personal to the participants</u>? | | X |
| 6. | Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to human or animal participants? | | X |
| 7. | Does the study involve invasive or intrusive procedures such as blood taking or muscle biopsy from human or animal participants? | | X |
| 8. | Is physiological stress, pain, or more than mild discomfort to humans or animals likely to result from the study? | | X |
| 9. | Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences in humans (including the researcher) or animals beyond the risks encountered in normal life? | | X |
| 10. | Will the study involve interaction with animals?  (If you are simply observing them - e.g. in a zoo or in their natural habitat - without having any contact at all, you can answer "No") | | X |
| 11. | Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing? | | X |
| 12. | Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants? | | X |
| 13. | Is the study a survey that involves University-wide recruitment of students from Canterbury Christ Church University? | | X |
| 14. | Will the study involve recruitment of adult participants (aged 16 and over) who are unable to make decisions for themselves, i.e. lack capacity, and come under the jurisdiction of the Mental Capacity Act (2005)? | | X |
| 15. | Will the study involve recruitment of participants (<u>excluding</u> staff) through the NHS? | | X |

Now please assess outcomes and actions by referring to Section C        ➲

**Appendix 5**



15<sup>th</sup> August 2017                                                          Ref:
16/SAS/398CC

Mr Jason Prins
c/o School of Law, Criminal Justice and Computing
Faculty of Social & Applied Sciences

Dear Jason

**Confirmation of ethics compliance for your study** *"The motivation of Metropolitan Special Constables and the Relationship to Recruitment and Retention"*

I have received your Ethics Review Checklist and appropriate supporting documentation for proportionate review of the above project. Your application complies fully with the requirements for proportionate ethical review as set out in this University's Research Ethics and Governance Procedures.

In confirming compliance for your study, I must remind you that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the *Research Governance Framework* (http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/research-and-consultancy/governance-and-ethics/governance-and-ethics.aspx) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines. This includes providing, if appropriate, information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data. Any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course should be notified via email to red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk and may require a new application for ethics approval. It is a condition of compliance that you **must** inform me once your research has been completed.

Wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Carol Clewlow

Carol Clewlow
RKE Co-Ordinator
Tel: +44 (0)1227 922893 (direct line)
Email: red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk

cc:      Emma Williams