

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Northampton		
Unit of Assessment: 17 – Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Driving evidence-based change in 'Citizens in Policing' strategy, leadership and innovation.		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2016 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Matthew Callender	Senior Researcher	2008-2020
Dr Iain Britton	Senior Researcher	2019-2020
Dr Laura Knight	Director	2015-2020
Kathryn Cahalin	Researcher	2014-2020
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		

1. Summary of the impact

The Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice (IPSCJ) at the University of Northampton (UoN) has influenced the development of the 'Citizens in Policing' national portfolio, to develop evidence-based strategy and practice in respect of police volunteering programmes, underpinned by the largest-scale research programme undertaken in this field. Working closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council, Home Office, College of Policing, and individual police forces across the country, the programme of applied research has shaped national strategy across more than 38,000 volunteers in Special Constabularies, Police Support Volunteers, Volunteer Police Cadets and the Mini Police, driving evidence-based changes in strategy, leadership and innovation both nationally and at a local police force level.

2. Underpinning research

The applied research programme centred on:

- 1) Pioneering new research approaches into volunteer experience, addressing major gaps in research knowledge relating to experiences and perspectives of volunteers in policing. This has involved developing new practical insight into motivations, experiences and activities of those who volunteer in order to evidence improvement and innovation in volunteer attraction, engagement, experience and retention.
- 2) Developing evidence on 'what works' in efficacy and innovation across a diversity of different police volunteer programme settings. This developed new knowledge in respect of leadership, culture, integration, and organisation of police volunteering programmes which has served both to drive service innovation and improvement and to create an evidence-base for enhanced strategy and leadership across police volunteering.

There are over 38,000 volunteers in policing organisations in England and Wales, including a wide diversity of voluntary roles as Special Constables, Volunteer Police Cadets, Mini Police, and hundreds of different Police Support Volunteer roles, and with widespread variation in practice across forty-four police forces [5.1]. The IPSCJ programme of work has represented the first national-scale, sustained and comprehensive programme of research undertaken in this field. The research has encompassed over forty individual research projects and has worked directly with every police force in England and Wales, with significant research fieldwork undertaken in sixteen police forces, as well as international fieldwork with Orange County Sheriff's Office, Florida, and Police Scotland.

The research included the first national-scale surveys of Special Constables [3.1] and of Police Support Volunteers [3.2] conducted in 2016. These surveys provided a deeper insight into volunteer motivations and experience, created new understandings of volunteer career 'life cycles' and pathways, provided new data identifying challenges of diversity and inclusion, and advanced thinking on police volunteer support and leadership. Subsequent surveying on a national scale has included a second round of national surveying with Special Constables and

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Police Support Volunteers in 2018, a 2017 Home Office commissioned national survey to develop the first national insight into Special Constable experience and perspectives of representation and wellbeing, and a 2019 survey that provided the first national-scale data on Taser and Special Constables to provide an evidence-base to shape national policy, commissioned by the Less Lethal Weapons Board. In 2019 IPSCJ completed the first national surveys of Volunteer Police Cadets and Leaders **[3.3]**, which fed into the national Volunteer Police Cadet evaluation.

In 2017, IPSCJ, partnering with the national 'Citizens in Policing' portfolio, was awarded a two-year (2017-2019) Home Office Police Transformation Fund grant of £545,000 to deliver research-based transformational change across 'Citizens in Policing'. **[5.1]** This work encompassed nineteen service transformation projects with IPSCJ as the research and evaluation partner. The projects included four initiatives to evaluate different new forms of police volunteer (including projects in Plymouth, Newcastle, North Yorkshire and Avon and Somerset). Other projects worked to identify best practice in Employer Supported Policing, to undertake national data benchmarking surveys across all police forces **[5.1]**, to evaluate practice in specialist volunteer roles across the Special Constabulary, to pilot Paramedic-Special Constabulary collaboration, to pilot career pathways in the Special Constabulary, to research pathways between volunteer and paid roles, to pilot a new Special Constabulary online recruitment platform, and to undertake the first national evaluation of the Mini Police programme.

A further project focused on attraction to the Special Constabulary **[5.2.1]**, innovating a new research methodology of engaging Special Constables in interactive workshops to develop attraction and recruitment approaches. This developed new practical proposals for enhancing the effectiveness of Special Constable recruitment, with particular focus on attracting more longer-serving, 'career' Special Constables and enhancing the diversity of recruitment. The Home Office sponsored project established **[3.3, 5.2.2]**, a national evidence-base for the Volunteer Police Cadet programme, identifying the need to mitigate systemic risks threatening the programme; standardise practice between sites; and to deliver improved training to cadet leaders. The research across Special Constabularies also contributed collectively to IPSCJ research into emotional labour of Special Constables **[3.4]**.

The Police Transformation Fund programme work has developed an evidence-base for leadership in the Special Constabulary **[5.4]** based on a national survey of Special Constable leaders, a national interview-based study of Special Constabulary Chief Officers, and a national survey of police forces, alongside other qualitative research studies. The research developed a new, evidenced 'leadership requirement', identified uneven experiences of supervision deployment and support, the need for more consistency across police forces, the challenges of attracting diversity of volunteers into leadership roles, and evaluated different organisational models and structures, making 23 practice recommendations for improving Special Constabulary leadership.

IPSCJ has been active in undertaking smaller-scale, practice-focused local research projects across many police forces, including work focused on strategic thinking and leadership **[3.5-3.6]**, which has identified key strategic leadership challenges of thinking differently, shifting Citizens in Policing from a peripheral strategic positioning in policing, developing new concepts of positive 'growth', and purposeful, outcome-oriented volunteering models, and rethinking models of 'value' and 'leadership'. The work also involved research focused on regular police officer culture towards volunteers, and four local projects to research Special Constabulary leadership at force level (Gwent, Bedfordshire, Sussex, Northumbria), two evaluations of local Police Support Volunteer programmes (Devon and Cornwall, and Greater Manchester), and numerous research-based reviews of local Special Constabularies. These studies have focused on detailed findings in the different local contexts, feeding into specific improvements in local volunteer experience and service change at the local level.

The national work and profile of the IPSCJ in the field of police volunteering has generated international interest, leading to international collaboration with academic colleagues in the

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United States [3.4], Scotland and Malaysia. In 2019, an ESRC-AHRC SSH Connections Grant was awarded to explore synergies within volunteering in law enforcement and public safety in the UK and Japan. A central purpose was to share knowledge between academics, professionals, and policymakers, with the evidence base being underpinned by research.

This body of research represents a major contribution to, and rejuvenation of, a field of research which has been historically neglected. The scale and range of activity dwarfs any previous rigorous research programme in this area, and has provided a considerable body of research findings that are not only novel, but oriented towards practical application by police forces to impact directly on the efficacy and experience of police volunteers.

3. References to the research

- [3.1] Callender, M., Cahalin, K., Cole, S., & Britton, I. (2018). Understanding the motivations, morale, and retention of special constables: findings from a national survey. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 14(3), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/pay058>
- [3.2] Callender, M., Pepper, M., Cahalin, K., & Britton, I. (2018). Exploring the Police Support Volunteer experience: findings from a national survey. *Policing and Society: an International Journal of Research and Policy*, 29(4), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2018.1432613>
- [3.3] Knight, L., & Britton, I. (2020). Perspectives on the emotional labour of Special Constables. In *Emotional Labour in Criminal Justice and Criminology* (pp. 221 - 235). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429055669>
- [3.4] Britton, I., Wolf, R., & Callender, M. (2018). A comparative case study of Reserve Deputies in a Florida sheriff's office and Special Constables in an English police force. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 20(4), 259-271. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461355718816710>
- [3.5] Callender, M. and Britton, I. (2019) Findings from National Evaluations of the Mini-Police and Police Cadets. Presentation to the National Volunteer Police Cadet Conference, Manchester, England, 8 July 2019
- [3.6] Britton, I., Callender, M., Bullock, K. (Ed.), & Millie, A. (Ed.) (2017). Strategic direction and leadership of the Special Constabulary. In *The Special Constabulary: Historical Context, International Comparisons and Contemporary Themes* (pp. 149-168). (Routledge frontiers of criminal justice). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315441047>

3.1, 3.2 & 3.4 are peer-reviewed articles in leading policing journals. Ref 3.3 & 3.6 are book chapters, peer reviewed by leading academics in the fields of policing and criminology.

Grants: Britton, I. and Knight, L. (2017) Transforming police volunteering: Delivering the national Citizens in Policing strategy, Police Transformation Fund. (GBP545,000) and Callender, M., Hino, K., Britton, I., Knight, L. and Amemiya, M. (2019-2020) Exploring Synergies within Volunteering in Law Enforcement and Public Safety in the UK and Japan, Economic and Social Research Council (ES/S014268/1 - GBP35,475).

4. Details of the impact

Strategically shaping 'Citizens in Policing' nationally in England and Wales

Historically there has been limited strategic direction and coherence at national level for police volunteering. The period 2016-2020 has seen policing build strategically at a national level with the aims of enhancing consistency, experience, efficacy and innovation across volunteering. IPSCJ has played a major role in this national strategic development, directly advocating for research-based policy. The College of Policing national lead for CiP policy [5.5.1] comments that IPSCJ research "has formed a key part of the evidence base used to inform senior decision-makers". This active, embedded role working collaboratively with national policy and practice leads in policing has seen IPSCJ presenting at numerous national meetings and workshops, contributing directly to the development of national strategy documents [5.5]. Examples of direct translation of research evidence into national policy and strategy have been numerous, and have included:

1. **Improving the effectiveness of the national Volunteer Police Cadet (VPC) programme and Cadet's experiences.** In 2019, IPSCJ was commissioned to write the first national VPC Strategy [5.6], which directly reflects research/recommendations of the IPSCJ national

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evaluation [3.3], alongside also embedding findings/recommendations from the first national evaluation of the Mini Police [5.2.4]. Key findings of research directly translated into national Strategy include in respect of Cadet ‘voice’ and ‘belonging’ to the police family; a focus on outcomes of character, confidence and contribution, strategic developments of youth-led social action, and leadership, safeguarding and governance development. The Strategy embeds an evidence-based approach future, signalling ongoing robust national evaluation and creating a new academic network. The Strategy shapes practice across the 500 Cadet Units, comprising 13,000 Cadets and 5,000 Mini Police nationally. The national VPC lead [5.5.2] remarked “Dr Britton and Dr Callender have played a significant role in shaping the VPC through their academic research”.

2. Shaping future strategic development of the Special Constabulary, and the future role and experience of 10,000 Special Constables nationally. The creation of the first national workstream action plan for the Special Constabulary in 2019 [5.3] was founded upon and designed to build from IPSCJ research findings and recommendations [5.5.1]. For example, the data and research in respect of specialist roles in the Special Constabulary [5.2.3] established the foundation for the ongoing national workstream portfolio to develop specialist training and roles in the Special Constabulary, impacting directly on the roles and experiences of 1,800+ Special Constables who occupy specialist roles nationally.

3. Evidencing major changes in Special Constabulary representation and support. In 2017, the national survey undertaken by IPSCJ on behalf of the Home Office [5.4] focused on Special Constabulary representation and wellbeing, and was instrumental in informing subsequent national developments in Special Constabulary representation. This included legislative changes to allow Special Constables to join the Police Federation of England and Wales and informed other national initiatives to improve Special Constable wellbeing and support [5.5.1, 5.5.3]

4. Informing major policy in respect of the Special Constabulary and Taser. The IPSCJ report (2019) to the Less Lethal Weapons Board [5.5] based on a national survey has informed subsequent national decisions about Taser deployment and Special Constables [5.7]

5. Influencing future front-line engagement in policy development. In 2018, the Home Office launched the policing ‘Front Line Review’ (FLR) [5.8] to review existing evidence and seek views from the front line to shape future Government policy. The FLR had two academic partners, Durham University Business School and the IPSCJ. The IPSCJ advised on recommendations, provided research evidence and a Policy Paper [5.8], summarising IPSCJ research findings [3.1–3.3] into four themes: 1. Workload; internal inefficiencies and job satisfaction; 2. Recognition; expertise and discretionary effort; 3. Performance management and innovation; and 4. Leadership and management. The FLR [5.8] Recommendation Report cites how “Academic contributions from [the] team at the Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice, University of Northampton, were also incorporated into the evidence base.”

Improving and innovating police volunteering practice

The Institute has contributed directly to developing and evaluating practice across many police force volunteering programmes. In 2019, IPSCJ hosted six research translation events for police leaders/practitioners, focused on communicating research findings and disseminating practical learning, with over 400 attendees from police forces [5.5.1]; and undertook data benchmarking surveys of every police force [5.1] in 2016 and 2018. The IPSCJ has worked with many police forces to develop practice across volunteering programmes [5.5], including:

1. Directly contributing to strategic development of ‘Employer Supported Policing’ (ESP). The ESP Impact Report 2019 [5.2.6], has shaped the development of the ESP national model [5.5.1]. This national approach will help expand the benefits identified through IPSCJ research that ESP provides to employers, employees/volunteers and police forces to greater numbers and embed evidence of ‘what works’ identified through IPSCJ’s research into the practice of individual forces. IPSCJ has attended the national ESP Working Group and has also supported

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each of five ESP development roles in police forces nationally. The ongoing work will also seek to deliver the IPSCJ research recommendations in respect of sector diversification, expansion of ESP across volunteer roles, and innovation in corporate social responsibility.

2. Actively engaging police volunteer associations, including the Volunteer Law Enforcement Officers Alliance [5.5.4] and the Association of Special Chief Officers [5.5.5], sharing research findings with their leads and members to inform their work supporting and representing volunteers. IPSCJ has presented research at both associations' conferences (ASCO in 2017 & 2018, and VLEOA in 2018 & 2019), and has supported ASCO in the development of its Business Plan. IPSCJ has also fed research into national initiatives to develop a 'Police Friends' network for volunteer officers, work to develop engagement/recognition across Special Constables, and is currently partnering with the ASCO 'Thinking about the Future' national review.

3. IPSCJ is an active partner in developing the ongoing Hertfordshire Special Constabulary 'Career Pathways' Project [5.2.7]. This has further developed and is piloting a new model for supporting and managing careers and enabling more effective specialisation.

4. Impacting practice across Special Constabulary leadership. The IPSCJ has been part of a national working group since 2019 which has developed new national role profiles and is rolling out a consistent and strengthened model of training and development of volunteer leaders [5.5.5]. The IPSCJ research report [5.2.1] has been described as the "foundation" of this work [5.5.5], actively drawn upon throughout to shape this ongoing national change work. The IPSCJ has also undertaken four projects directly focused on reform of leadership models (in Gwent, Bedfordshire, Northumbria and Sussex), each involving ongoing advisory involvement by IPSCJ to support the delivery of change in leadership approach, models, roles and structures [5.5.5].

5. IPSCJ research has an emerging international impact on practice, underpinning the development of new approaches, models and strategy. The President of the Volunteer Law Enforcement Alliance said [5.2.5] "...research being produced by the IPSCJ is serving as a foundation for future research of volunteerism and volunteer policing around the world [enabling] increased... knowledge and understanding of the role, experiences, leadership, and training of volunteer police". In 2019 the IPSCJ hosted the first international Citizens in Policing Research Conference in Birmingham, United Kingdom (UK). In 2020, a project has started led by **Britton** with Police Scotland to develop policy and practice to attract and retain longer-serving Special Constables, shaped by IPSCJ research. Also, in 2020, research has been engaged by leads for crime prevention in Japan nationally and also specifically in the Tokyo Metropolitan Authority [5.9].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5.1] [National Citizens in Policing Benchmarking Exercise](#)

[5.2] Police Transformation Fund project reports: [5.2.1] [National Evaluation of the Mini Police](#), [5.2.2] [Leading the Special Constabulary](#), [5.2.3] [Attracting people to join the Special Constabulary](#), [5.2.4] [National Evaluation of the Volunteer Police Cadets](#), [5.2.5] [Specialisms in the Special Constabulary](#), [5.2.6] [Employer Supported Policing: Impact Report](#), [5.2.7] [Hertfordshire Special Constabulary Career Pathways](#)

[5.3] [Special Constabulary National Workstream Plan 2018-2023](#)

[5.4] [The Representation of Special Constables](#)

[5.5] Testimonials: [5.5.1] CiP national leads; [5.5.2] National VPC; [5.5.3] ASCO; [5.5.4] VLEOA [5.5.5] Special Constabulary leadership

[5.6] [Volunteer Police Cadet Strategy 2020-2024](#)

[5.7] [Perspectives on Taser and the Special Constabulary](#)

[5.8] [The Front-Line Review Reports 2019](#)

[5.9] <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=ES%2FS014268%2F1#/tabOverview>; Report on citizens in policing in the UK and International Competitiveness Enhancement Project.