



Institute for  
**Public Safety**  
**Crime and Justice**

# **Analysis of Special Constabulary National Statistics**

## **Briefing Paper 1**

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**July 2017**

## Special Constables – Graphs from national data March 2017 (published July 2017)

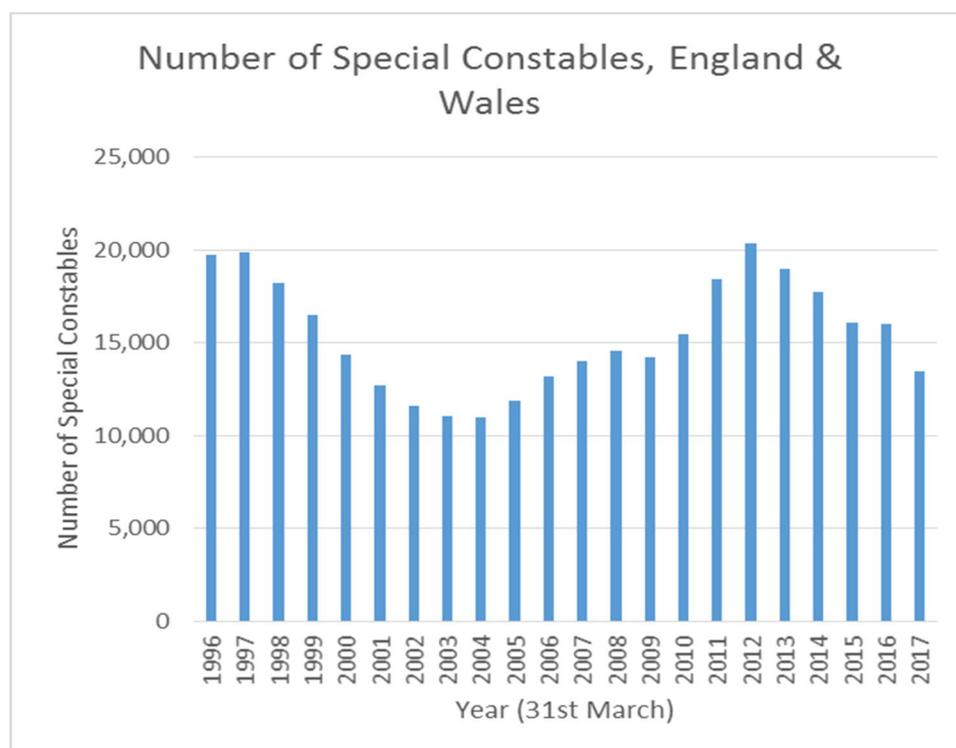
This brief note updates some of the graphs shared in the National Benchmarking Phase 1 report. A number of the graphs in that report were based on the national workforce statistics, drawing on what was then most recent data set available (March 2016). The March 2017 workforce statistics have now been published on 17<sup>th</sup> July.

### The number of Specials

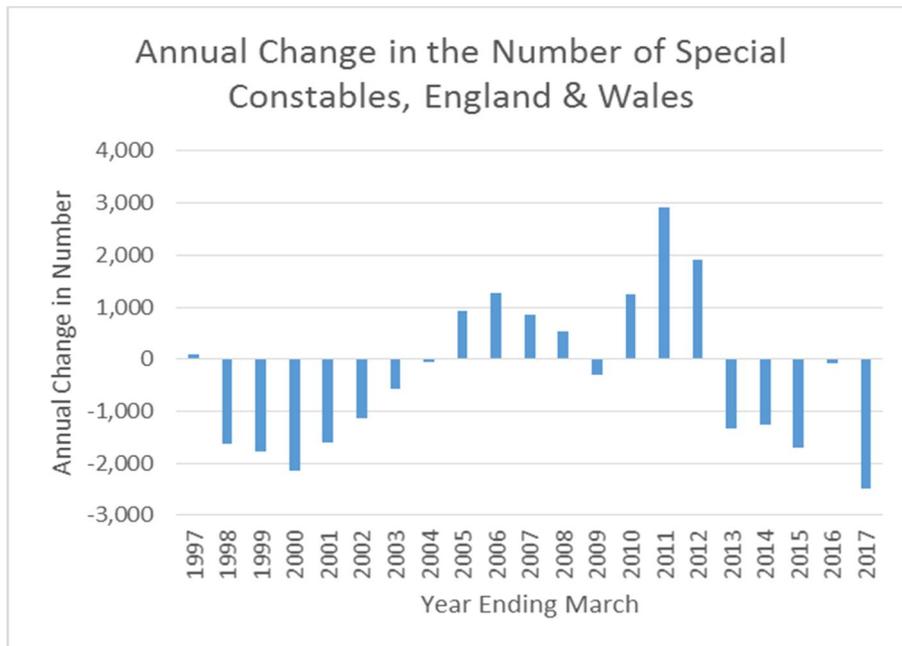
The total number of Special Constables in England and Wales (including British Transport Police) has reduced from 16,279 in March 2016 to 13,818 in March 2017; a 15.1% reduction representing 2,461 fewer Specials. This constitutes the lowest number of Specials since 2006, and brings the number of Specials nationally to broadly at the level before the national increase in numbers related to national campaign and Olympics in the period 2007-2012.

The figure for England and Wales (excluding BTP) of 13,503 at March 2017 is a third down (33.6%, representing 6,840 fewer Specials) on the peak figure for Specials reached in 2012 of 20,343.

The average for Specials numbers nationally across the period 1996-2017 has been 15,438. The March 2017 figures are 12.5% down from this average for the period. Having said that, the March 2017 figure is broadly in line with numbers for 2000 and for the years 2005-9, and still stands 23% (2,515) higher than the lowest year for Specials numbers during the recent period, which was March 2004.

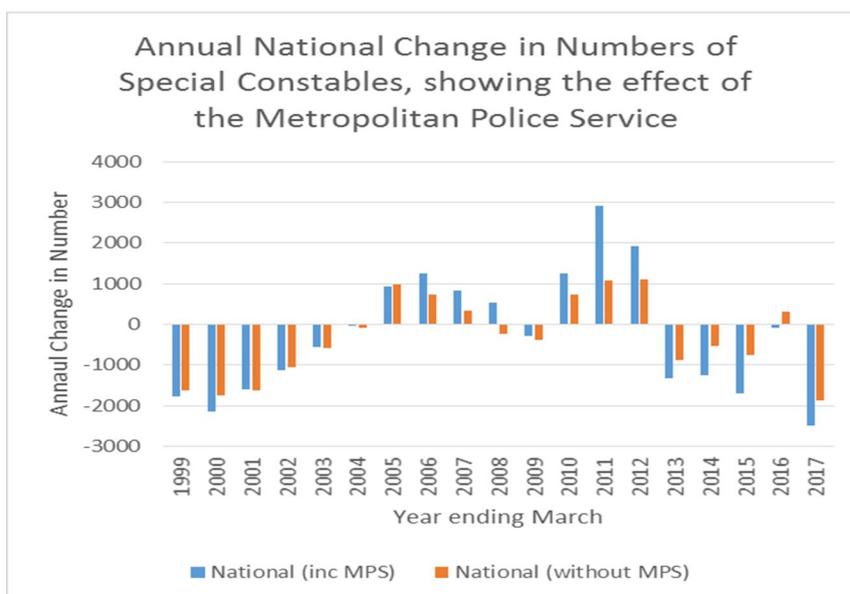


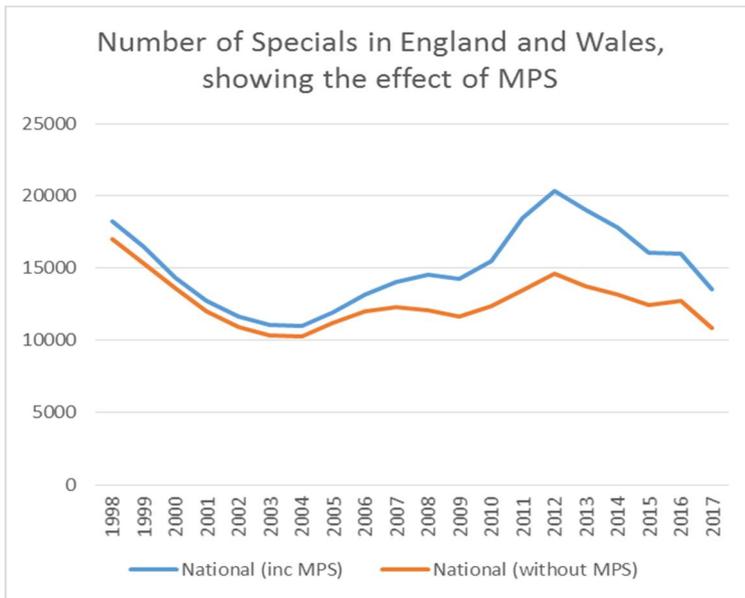
Looking at annual change in the numbers of Specials nationally, the period March 2016-March 2017 reflects an ongoing broadly consistent downward trajectory since 2012. The change is the largest annual fall in numbers during the past two decades.



### The Metropolitan Police effect on national figures

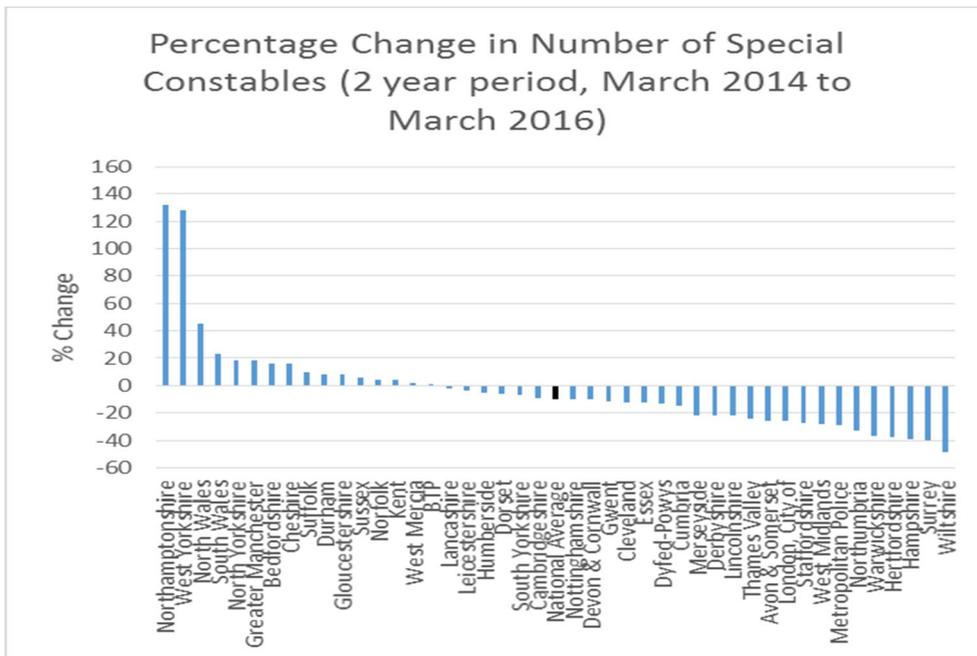
The Met has 19.7% of national Specials, and therefore trends in MPS numbers for Specials can impact significantly on national figures. In terms of the change over the past 12 months, the MPS has seen a slightly larger reduction (18.6%) than the national average, but this doesn't particularly materially impact on the overall national trend; taking the MPS out of the national figures, the number of Specials across the other England and Wales forces has still reduced by 14.8%.

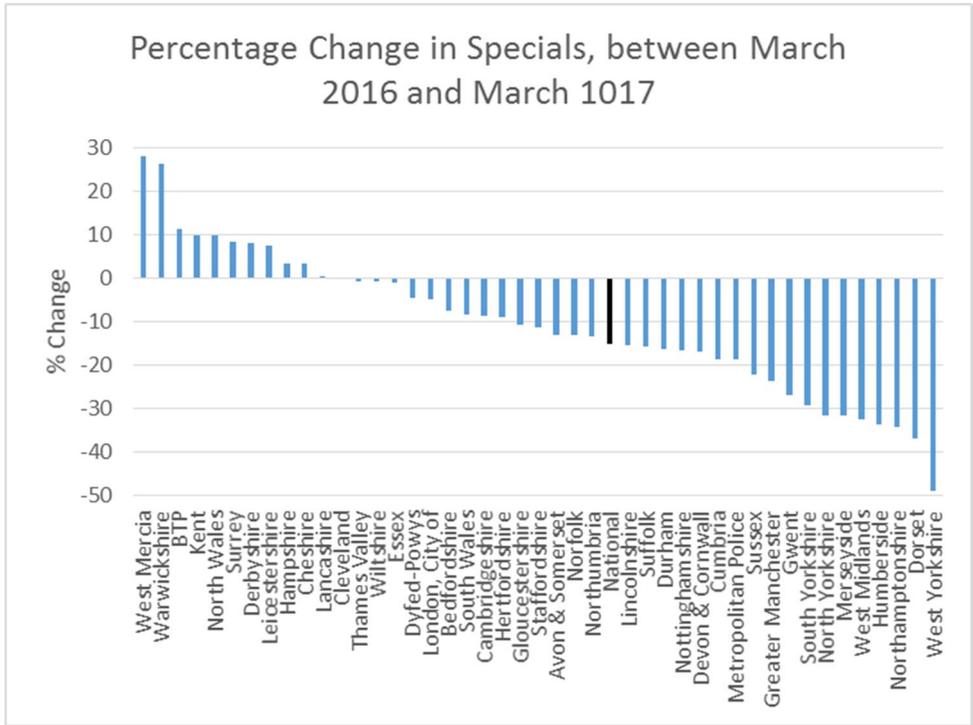




**Variation across forces**

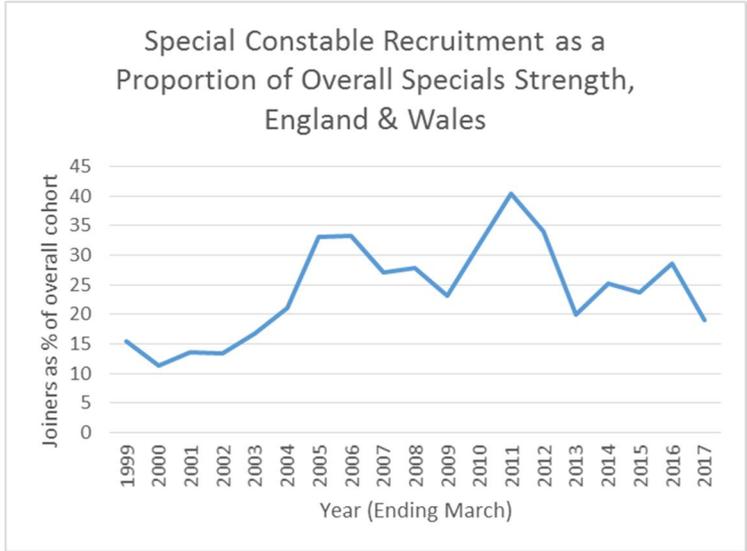
The first graph below, taken from the benchmarking report, shows the change in Specials number by force, for the previous 2 year period (March 2014-March 2016). The second graph on the following page shows the percentage changes by force for the period March 2016-March 2017. The latter graph shows that for most forces there was a reduction in the number of Specials in 2016-2017, which continues a trend of a majority of forces experiencing reductions in the preceding two year period 2014-2016. The two fastest growing Special Constabularies in 2014-2016 (Northamptonshire and West Yorkshire) were two of the three fastest shrinking Specials cohorts in 2016-2017.





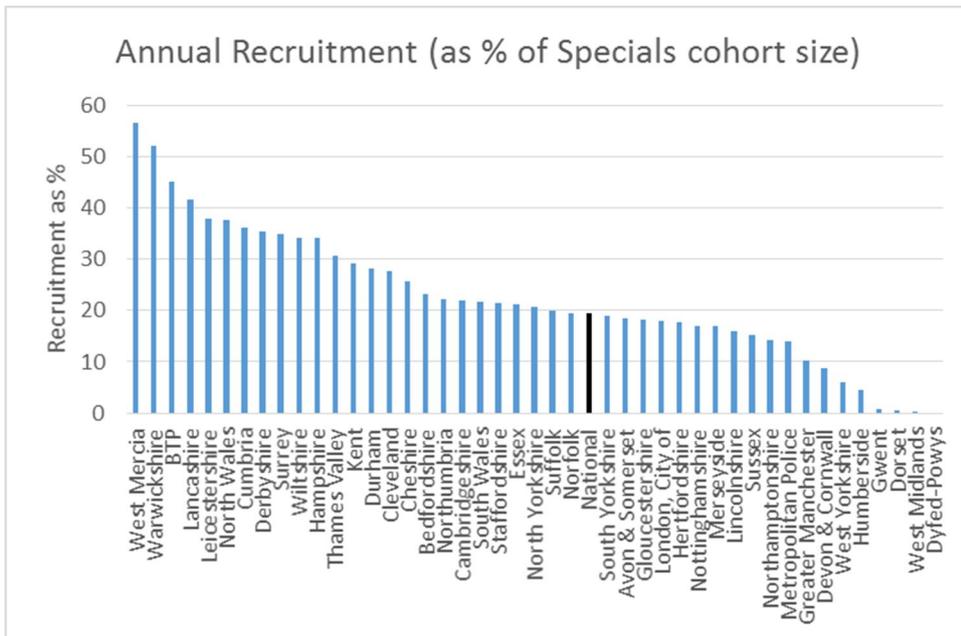
**Specials recruitment (numbers joining)**

There has been a fall in the past 12 months in the number of Specials recruited nationally, with the 3,041 Specials recruited April 2016-March 2017 representing a 33.9% reduction (a third) from the 4,606 Specials recruited in the preceding 12 month period (April 2015-March 2016).



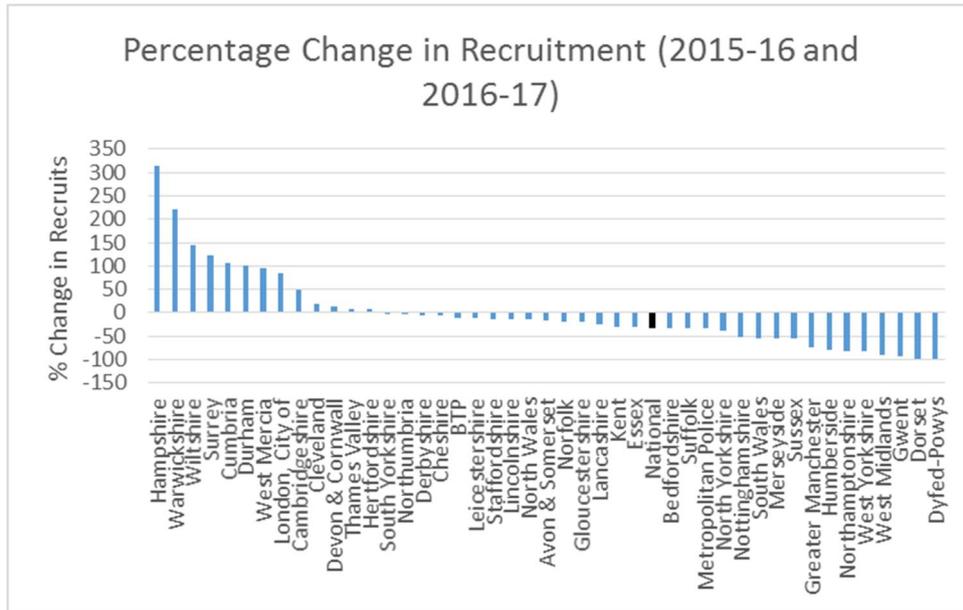


As with most statistics relating to Specials, these national figures average what is a mixed and diverse picture across individual forces. The recruitment 'rate' (i.e. the numbers recruited as a proportion of current cohort) varies widely across the country. On the one hand some forces have recruited to 50%+ of current cohort, whilst on the other hand several forces had not recruited during the 2016-7 period.



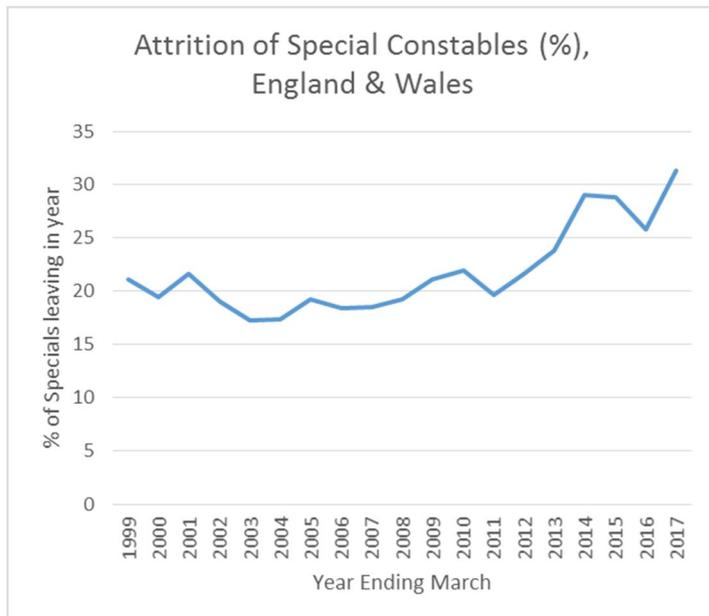
The graph below looks at shifts in recruitment between April 2015-March 2016, and April 2016-March 2017. Those forces with a positive % change have recruited more in the more recent period,

those with negative change less. As can be seen from the graph, the majority of forces have seen a reduction in Specials recruitment comparing the two years.

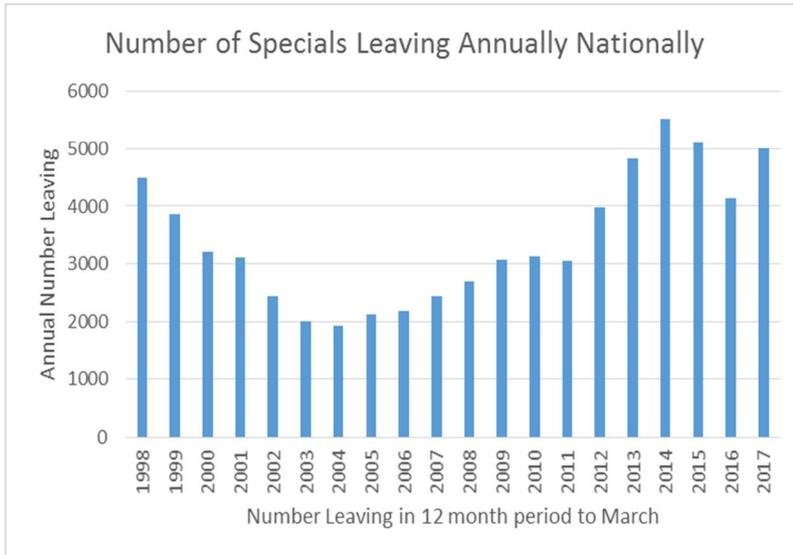


### Specials attrition (numbers leaving)

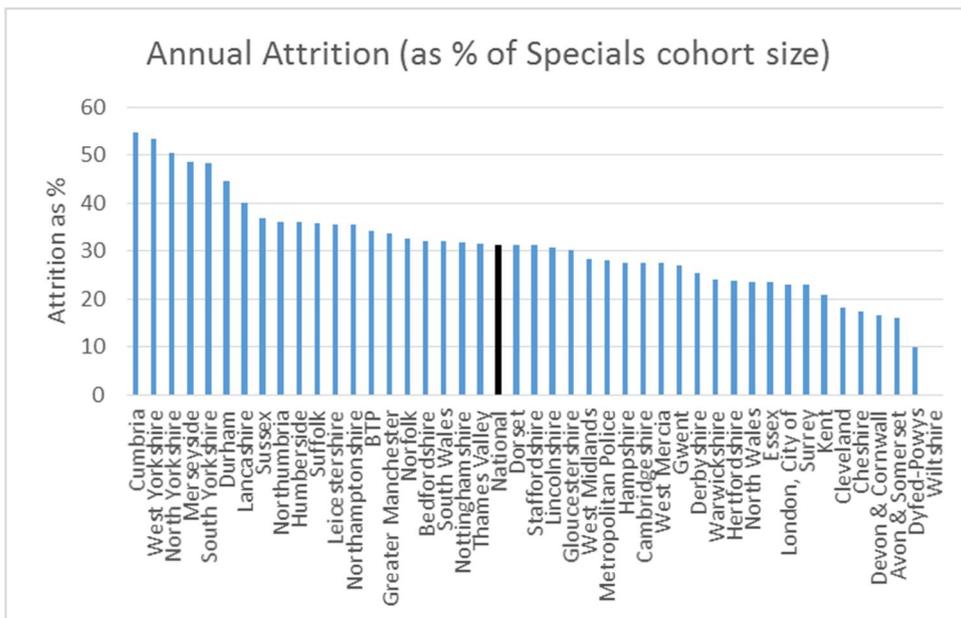
The annual attrition 'rate' (the numbers of Specials leaving during the year as a proportion of overall Specials cohort) was at its highest for the past two decades in 2016-7.



In terms of raw numbers, the number of Specials leaving is not as high as some recent years, but the overall Specials cohort has been getting smaller, so the proportion leaving is still higher.

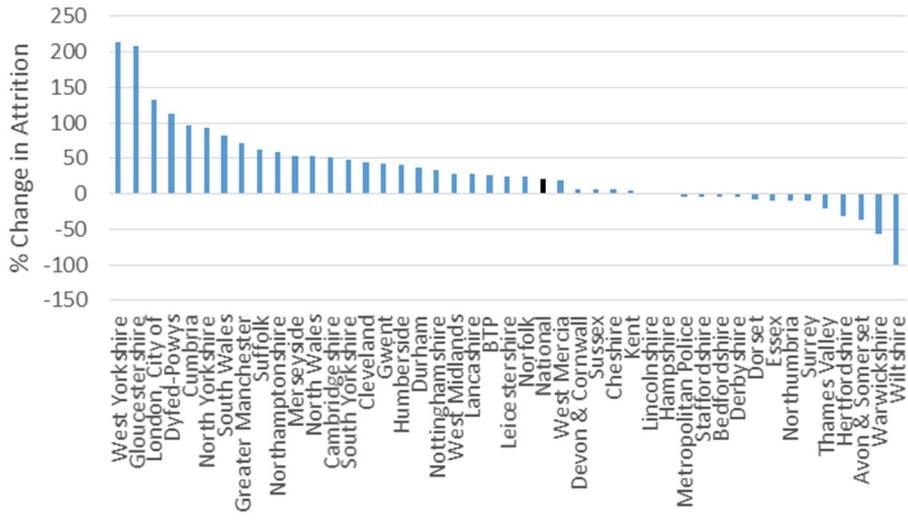


Once again, there is a wide spread of attrition 'rates' at force level for the 12 month period April 2016-March 2017.



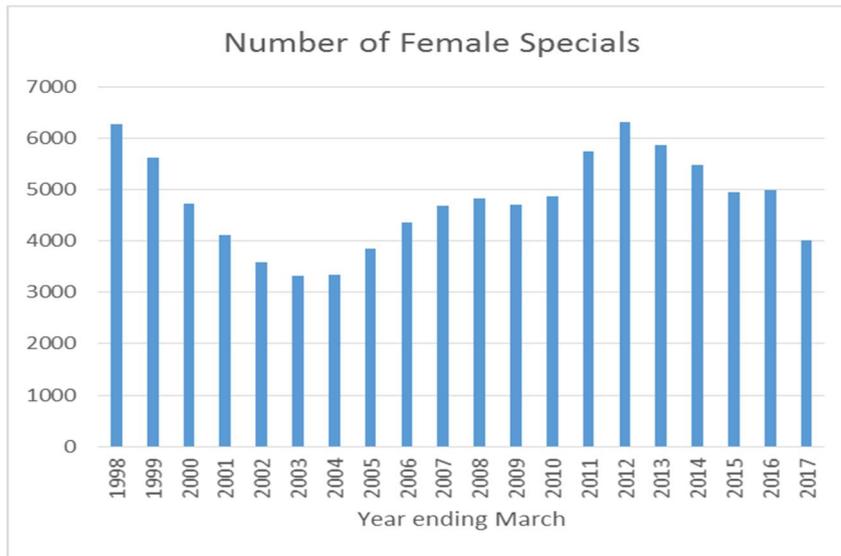
Roughly two thirds of forces have seen an increase in numbers leaving in April 2016-March 2017, compared to the preceding 12 month period. In a number of cases, the increase in numbers has been substantial.

Percentage change in Attrition (2015-16 and 2016-17)

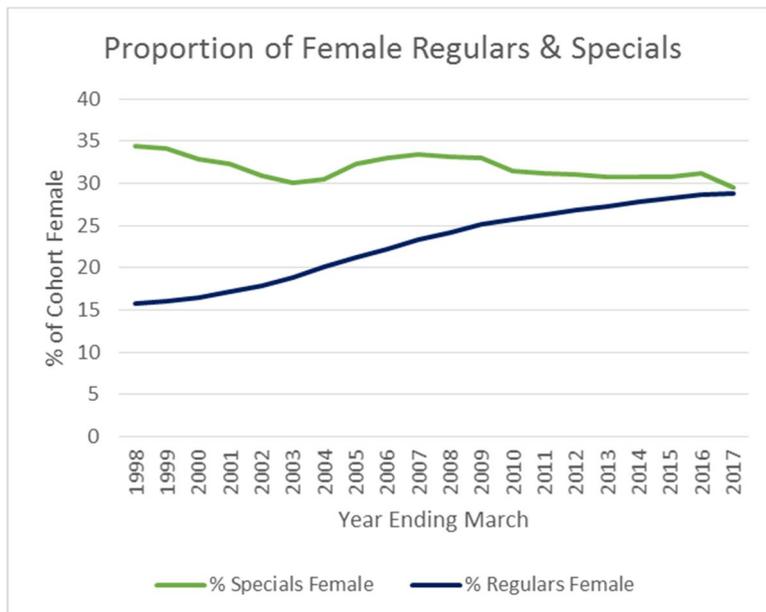


## Gender of Specials

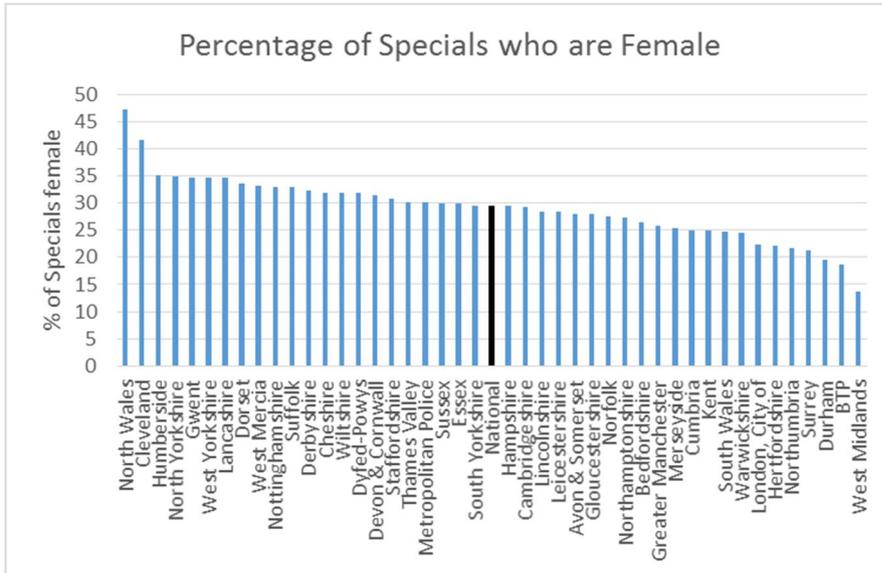
The number of female Specials is at its lowest level for a decade.



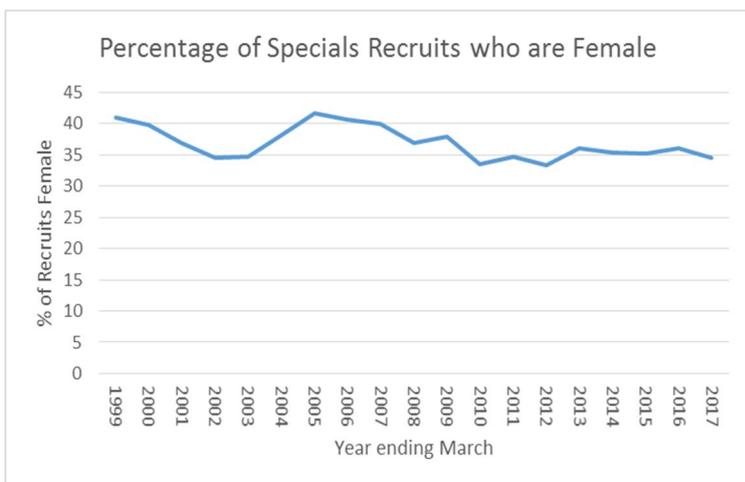
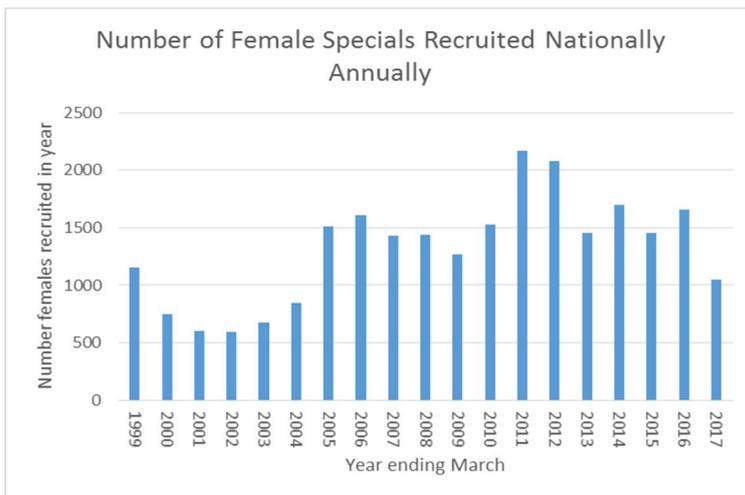
However, this raw number simply reflects the wider reductions in number overall; the proportion of Specials who are female has remained broadly the same over the most recent 12 month data period, experiencing only a small fall. Nevertheless, that small fall and a continuing small increase in Regular female representation means that Specials and Regulars have now almost converged in terms of female representation, as shown in the graph below.



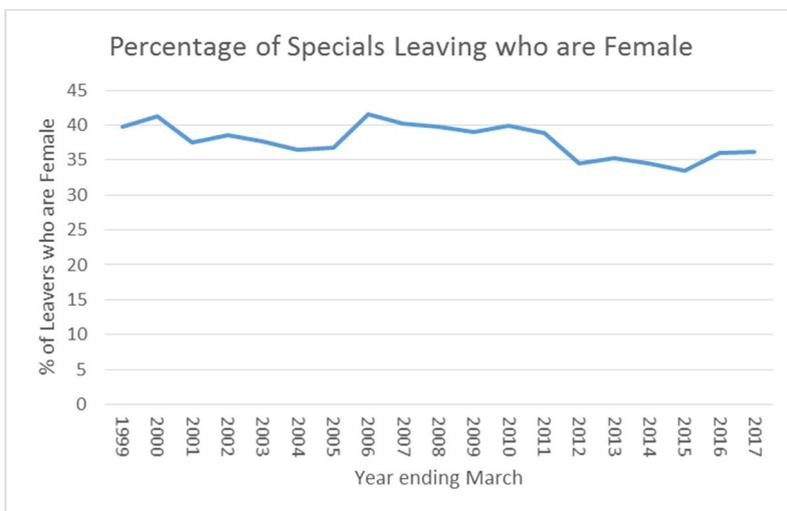
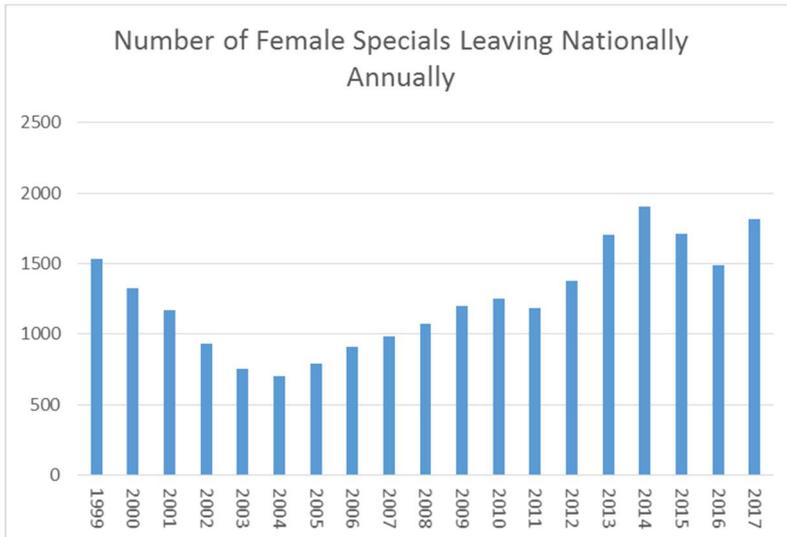
There remains in the March 2017 data a quite wide range across forces in the proportion of female Specials.



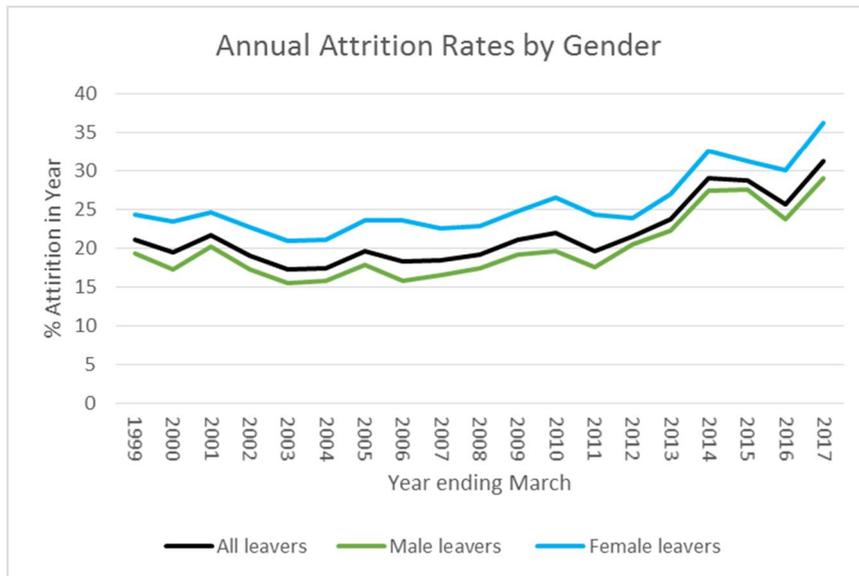
The number of female Specials recruited 2016-7 was the lowest level for 13 years, albeit this effectively reflects the drop in numbers more broadly and the proportions of recruitment by gender (shown in the second graph) has not shifted.



There is a similar pattern for female Specials leaving, with a higher than typical raw number leaving (shown in the first graph) but a consistency of gender proportions for those leaving (shown in the second graph below).

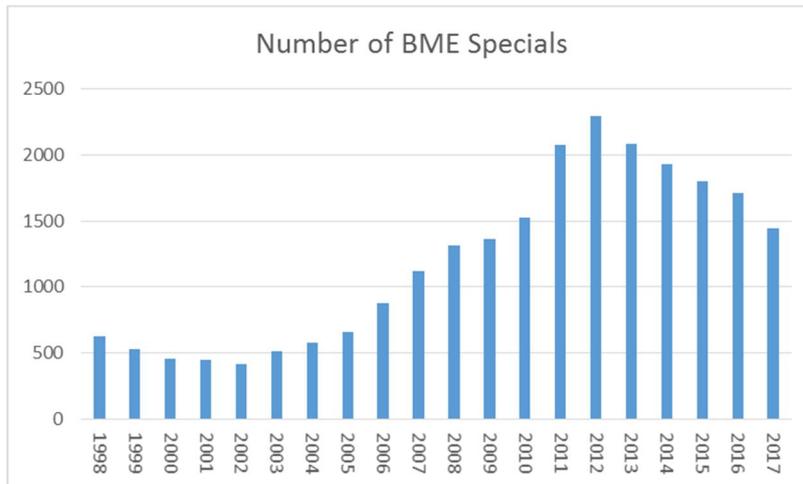


Consistent with the past 20 years, the proportion of female Specials leaving is once again higher than for male Specials.

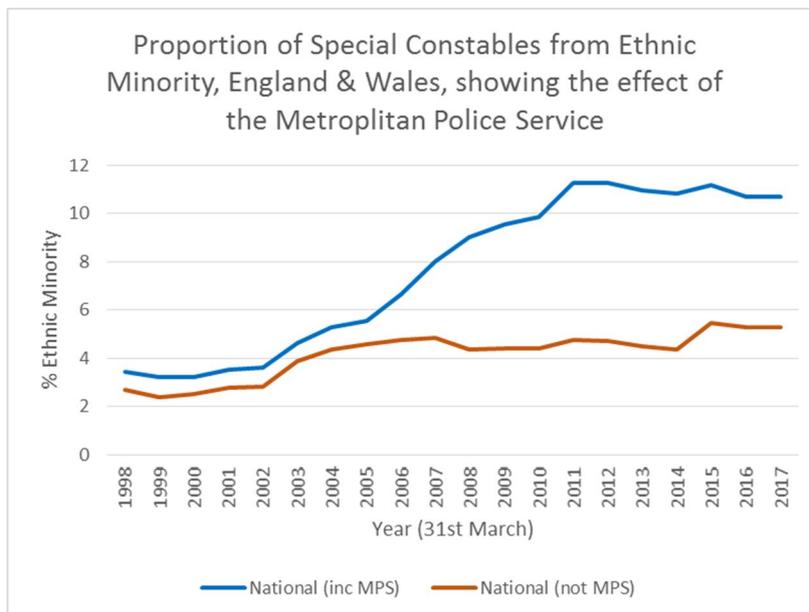


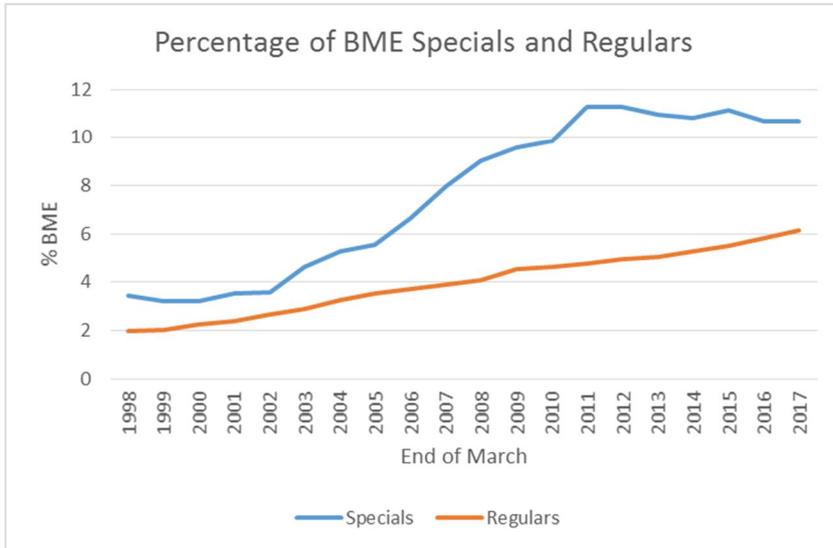
## Ethnicity of Specials

The raw number of BME Specials has continued the downward trend of the past five years.



The proportion of Specials who are BME has remained broadly static in the most recent 12 month data period. The proportion of Regulars who are BME continues to slowly increase, but the gap between Regulars and Specials remains a sizeable one, albeit accounted for by the sizeable numbers and high-rate of BME of Met Specials.





The spread of BME Specials representation in March 2017 is very similar to that in March 2016, with broadly a quarter of forces accounting for most BME Specials, and a quarter of forces having very low numbers (or in some cases zero) BME Specials.

