



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

# Briefing paper on data relating to gender and the Special Constabulary

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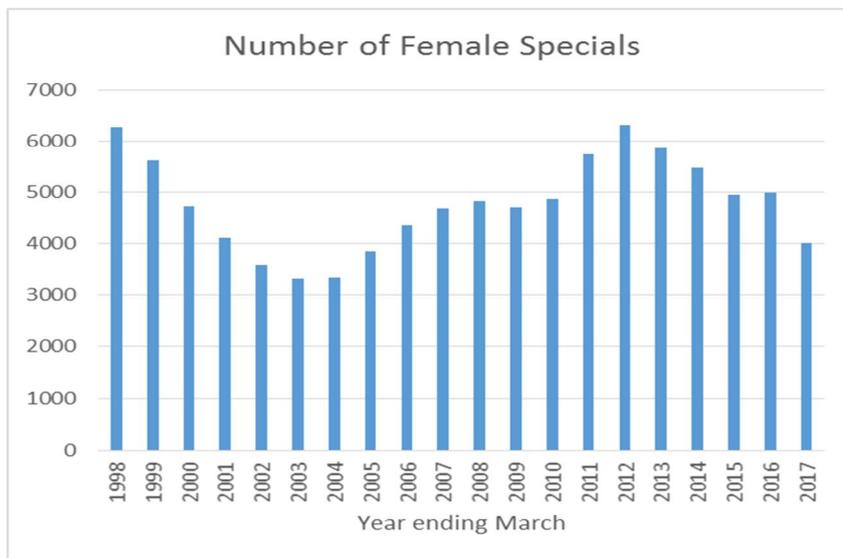
# Data on gender of Special Constables

## National police workforce statistics

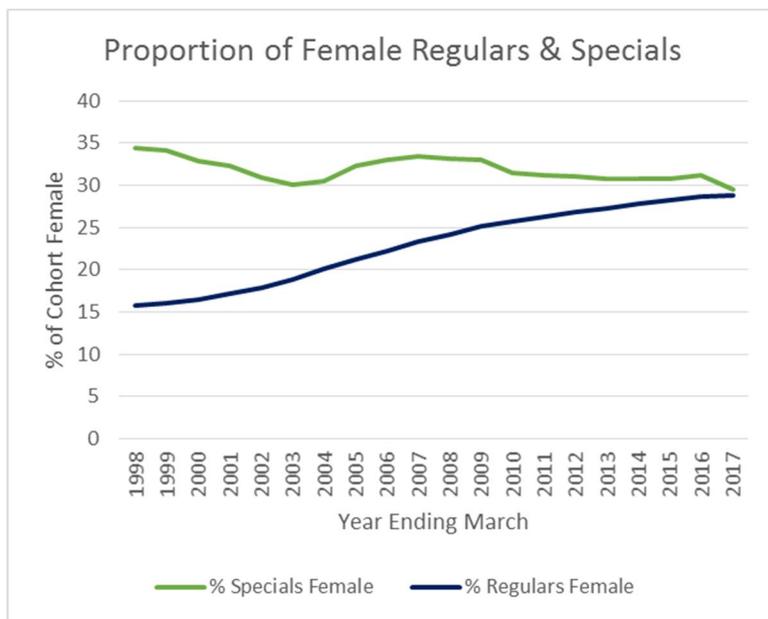
*The latest statistics available are for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, published July 2017.*

The graph below shows the 'official' national statistics for the number of female Special Constables in England and Wales since 1998 (the year when the current police workforce statistics were first published). The decrease in raw numbers of female Specials over recent years largely 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.

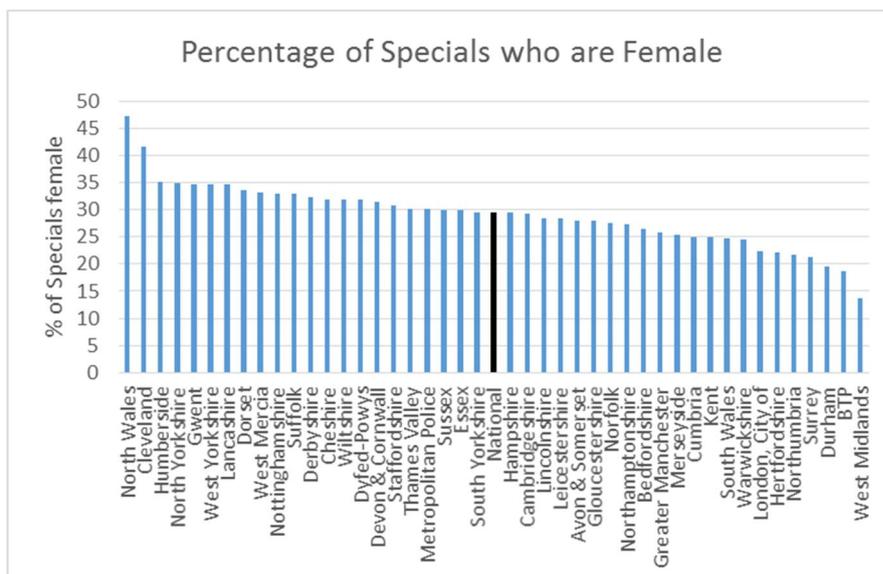
Nevertheless, the number of female Specials is at its lowest level for a decade. On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 the national statistics show there to be **4,015 female Special Constables** serving in the police forces of England and Wales (not including BTP, with BTP added the figure was 4,074). This is the lowest figure since March 2005 (3,844) and is down 36% from a peak number of female Specials of 6,305 in March 2012.



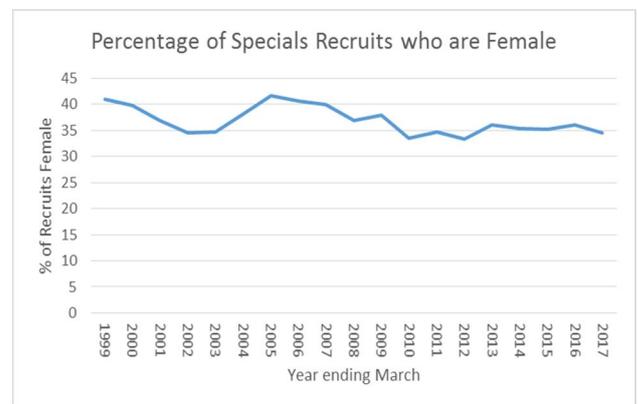
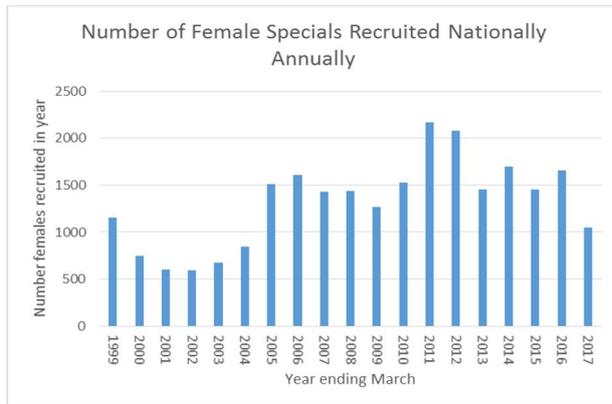
In March 2017 **29.5% of Specials** were female. This figure is the lowest during the time period since 1998, is the only time the figure has been under 30% since 1998, and is lower than it was back in 1998 (34.4%). Having said that, the primary trend over the past twenty years in the data is effectively one of little change (the figures have remained stable between 30-35%). This is in marked contrast to the female proportion of Regular police officers, which has risen consistently during the time period, from a low in 1998 of 15.7% to 28.9% in March 2017. This means, as shown in the graph below, in 1998 the proportion of female Specials was hugely higher than for Regular officers, whilst in the most recent data in 2017 it is virtually the same.



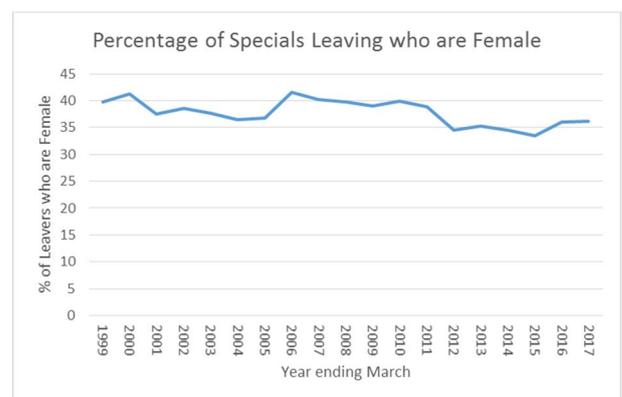
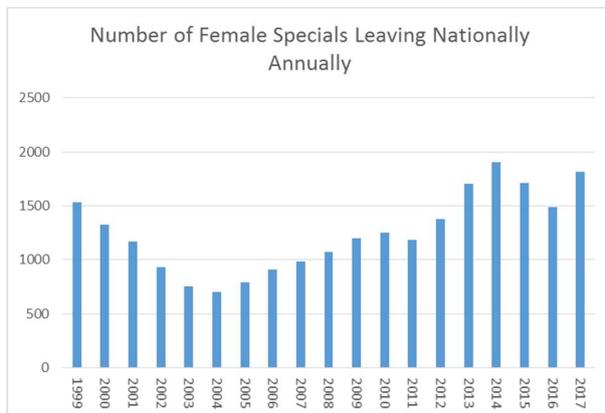
There remains in the March 2017 data a quite wide range across forces in the proportion of female Specials. We know next to nothing about the factors behind this variation. This includes a number of forces (those on the right-hand side of the below graph) where the proportion of female Specials is notably lower than the national average, at 1 in 4 or 1 in 5; but also some forces to the left hand side of the graph which have proportions which are significantly higher, in the case of North Wales not far short of 1:1.



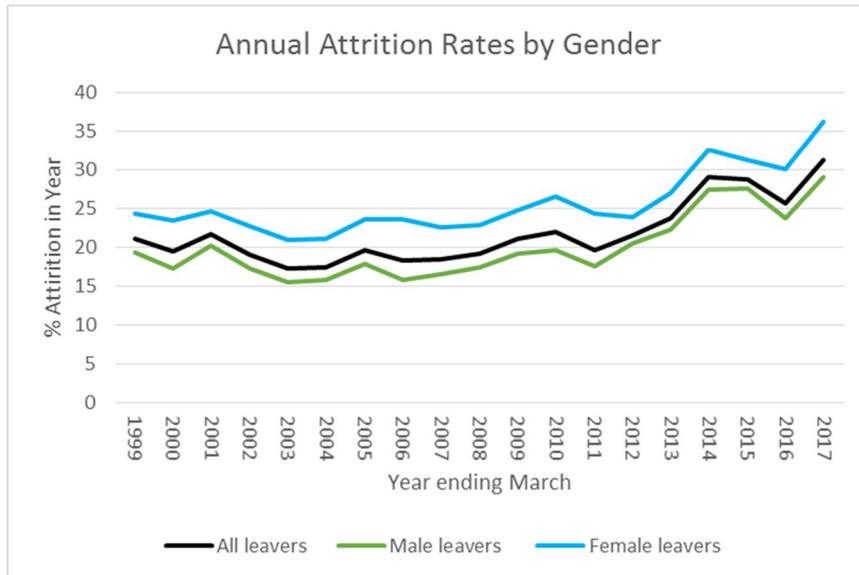
The number of female Specials recruited 2016-7 was the lowest level for 13 years, albeit this effectively reflects the drop in numbers joining the Specials more broadly, with the proportions of recruitment by gender (shown in the second graph) not shifting significantly.



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 in the 2017 data is higher than for male Specials. In every year of the past twenty, a higher proportion of the female Specials cohort has left during the year than for the male Specials cohort. Whilst technically the national statistics do not tell us this, the data suggests that female Specials careers are on average shorter, that in effect the ‘churn’ effect is greater – so for female Specials there is a greater proportion of joiners and leavers, and shorter careers, than for male Specials.

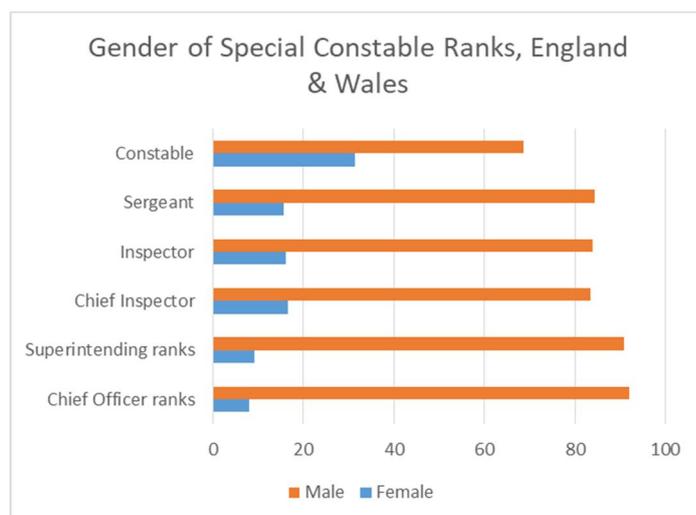


## National CiP Benchmarking Survey 2016

*The benchmarking exercise surveyed all forces for data around Citizens in Policing in summer 2016.*

In terms of adding to the data on gender and Specials, the main aspect the 2016 benchmarking survey added to is providing us with what is currently the only systematically collected data on gender and ranks in the Special Constabulary. The returns were slightly incomplete nationally (7 forces missing from this data) and there are some questions over detail of data quality in some force returns, but it still provides the best snapshot we currently have of gender and rank. The graph shows that whilst the male: female ratio is particularly acutely skewed towards males at the most senior ranks (Superintendent ranks, and Chief Officer ranks), the proportion of males at all promoted ranks including at Special Sergeant and Special Inspector is notably higher than for the cohort of Special Constables as a whole.

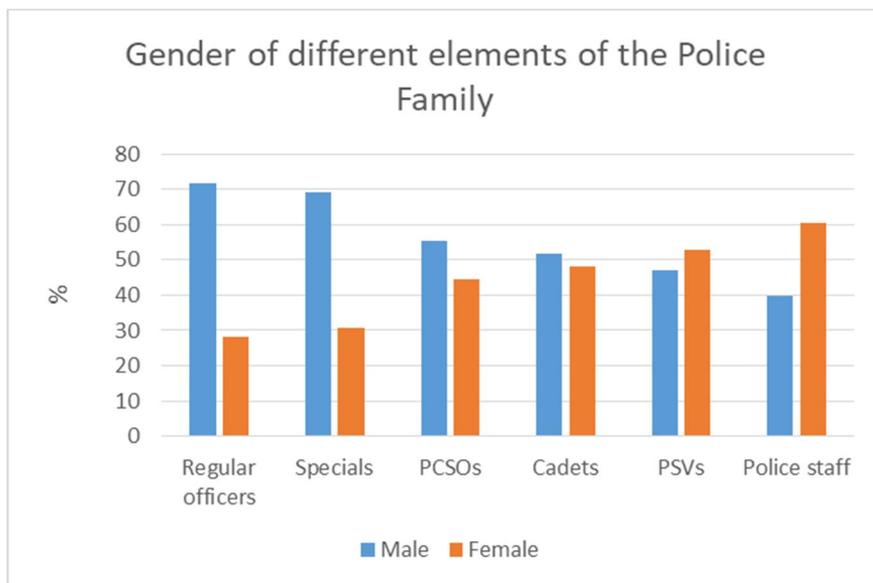
Whilst raw figures will underestimate the totals (due to missing data, meaning not all Specials of rank nationally will be counted in these figures), in the benchmarking survey data there were 160 female Special Sergeants or equivalent (and 790 male), 59 female Special Inspectors (and 283 male), 15 female Special Chief Inspectors (and 55 male), 3 females at Superintendent ranks (2 Superintendents in Devon & Cornwall, and one Superintendent in Merseyside, and 30 males), 2 female assistance chief officers (Derbyshire and Warwickshire, and 17 males), and 2 chief officers (Dorset and North Yorkshire, and 28 males).



Comparing with regular ranks, 15.5% of Special Sergeants were female, compared to 22.3% of Regular Sergeants, and 16.1% of Special Inspectors were female, compared to 21.7% of Regular Inspectors. In terms of ranks of Superintendent and above, 8.5% of such senior Specials ranks were female, comparatively particularly low given the 23.7% of Regular senior officers at those ranks who are female.

## Gender comparisons across police family

*Piecing together a number of data sources... (National workforce stats for Regulars, Specials, PCSOs and police staff; CiP benchmarking survey for PSVs; annual Volunteer Police Cadet audit for Cadets).*



Not shown in the graph, but back in the late 1990s, Specials were one of the highest representations of females across policing. Both policy and academic work at that time talked of the Specials as being a route into improving both BME and gender representation. That position has shifted over the past two decades. If current trends continue, it seems likely the proportion of females in the Regulars will overtake that in the Specials, and the Specials will then be the element of the police family with lowest representation of females. In effect, there have been significant shifts in roles across policing, and many more females in policing across those roles, during the past two decades, and during that period the Specials have 'stood still'.

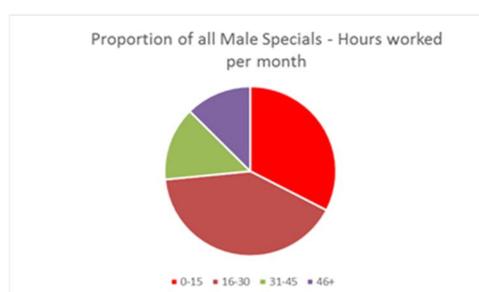
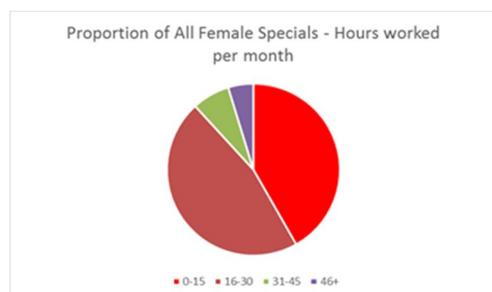
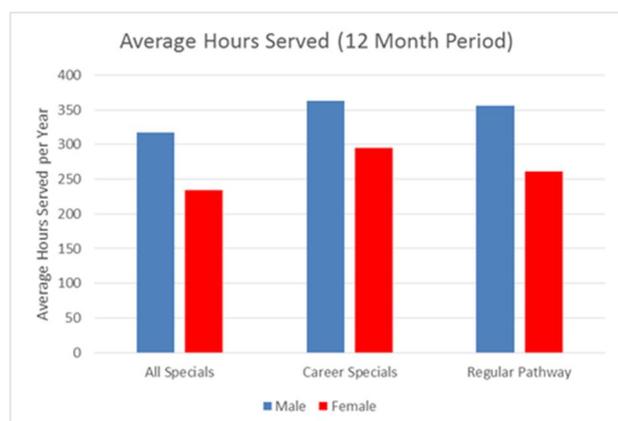
## Force-level research data

*Some graphs drawn from IPSCJ research in specific forces...*

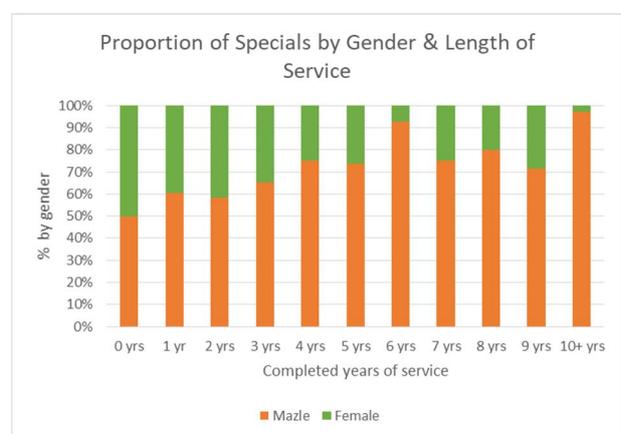
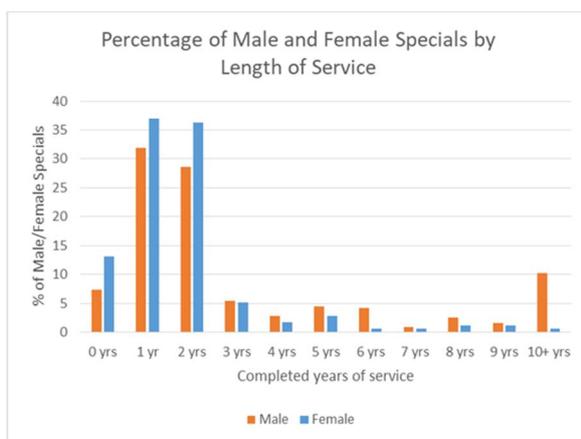
The following graphs are only taken from one force's Specials cohort, so are not necessarily representative of a wider national picture. However, they do reflect similar differences in activity levels for male and female Specials seen elsewhere in our research of forces.

In effect, this data doesn't tell us anything about why this pattern on hours served is there, nor what implications it may have.

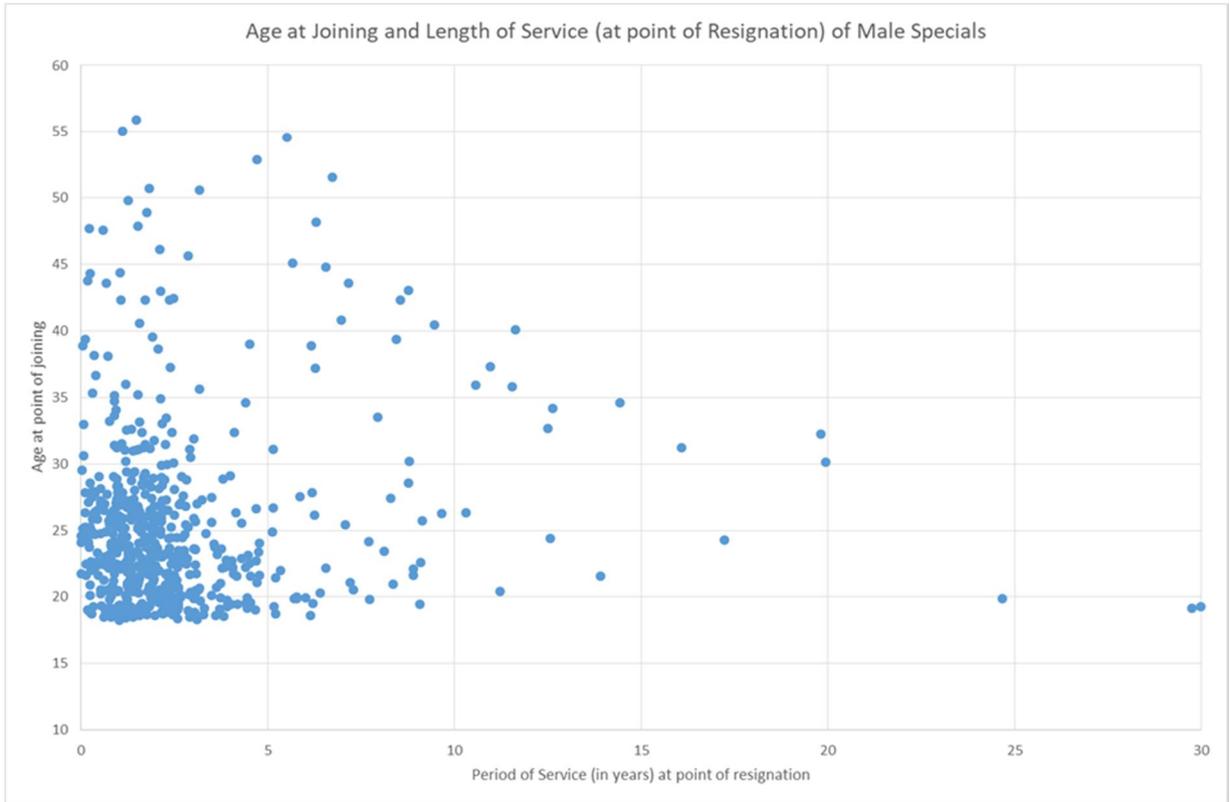
What does seem to be replicated in other force data we have researched, is that the small 'highly-active' section of a Special Constabulary cohort – which will see some Specials doing 100+ hours a month, and is typically predominantly made up of Regular-pathway, relatively young-in-service and relatively young in age, Specials, tends to be predominantly male. Likewise, the sub-set of 'highly-active', longer-in-service, typically in promoted roles 'career' Specials is similarly predominantly male. So, in effect, not only is there a higher proportion of males in Special Constabularies cohorts, but there is also a higher proportion of male Specials amongst the most active Specials, and a higher proportion of female Specials amongst the less active Specials. Again, research to date hasn't really dug into why this is the case, nor what the implications might be.



Similarly, the two graphs below only relates to one force’s data. The data touches on the question raised within the national workforce statistics in respect of career lengths for Special Constables and whether female Specials have shorter career lengths. The graphs show that for this particular force’s current cohort of Specials, a higher proportion of females are younger in service, and that there are markedly fewer longer (10 years plus) Specials in this force’s cohort who are female than who are male. Again, the data doesn’t really help us in understanding why, nor in respect of implications. Albeit regarding implications, given that promoted Specials, and in particular those at more senior ranks, will predominantly be longer-in-service, it seems reasonable to hypothesise that data which shows fewer female Specials have longer careers in the Specials may well be a factor connected to the promotion statistics (potentially that connection may work both ways; it may be that lack of promotion ambition or opportunities is a factor in earlier female departure, as well as the more obvious connection that there being fewer longer-serving females makes the pool of females available for promoted roles smaller).



Looking at the graphs on the next page, another way of looking at length of service of Specials is to analyse resignations data. Once again, the below data only relates to a single force, so its generalisability to national picture is limited. The scatter-graphs show each resignation from the particular Special Constabulary by the age of joining and length of service of the Specials concerned. As would be expected, the bulk of Specials form into the cluster of data in the lower left of the graphs, which reflects joining in their twenties and serving 0-3 years. Broadly, the spread of the data again shows the predominance of longer serving male compared to female Specials. Once again, this length of service data is potentially interesting in respect of promotion patterns; the bulk of promoted Specials, and particularly those in more senior ranks, will be those individuals more towards the right hand side of the graph, with service of 5 years and more. As will be seen, the reality is that there are, at least in this force’s data, not many of those individuals who are female, and certainly far fewer than are male.



In terms of reasons for resignation, the research to date is limited in truly understanding and digging into this aspect, something we are aiming to address around some of the current piloting work. Again, the data below relates only to one force, but is similar to data IPSCJ has for other forces. In effect, data such as this collected by forces does not really reflect much of interest in terms of differing motivations for resignation between male and female Specials. However, that may well be mainly a product of the relatively limited way in which such data is typically gathered in forces presently.

