Volunteer Police Cadet leaders across England and Wales: exploring their motivations

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Abstract

Volunteering within policing across England and Wales has a long history. Previous research on police volunteering has predominantly been focused upon volunteer special constables, however, volunteers occupy numerous and varied roles across the police service. Indeed, it appears that there will be a concerted effort to recruit more volunteers to support policing. If such growth is to be effectively planned and managed, understanding the characteristics of volunteers and their motivational factors for volunteering is critical.

This research considers the characteristics and motivations of Volunteer Police Cadet (VPC) Leaders who donate hours in schemes across England and Wales. The research concludes that respondent VPC leaders were mainly white British, well-educated individuals who tend to be motivated by feelings of community spirt and the opportunity for self-development. Whilst these are important for understanding how to attract volunteers, the lack of diversity amongst these individuals is a matter for concern.

Keywords

Volunteer, Police, Cadet Leader, Characteristics, Motivations

Introduction.

The recent report into the future operating environment of policing in England and Wales considers the way in which policing may be delivered by the year 2040 (College of Policing, 2020 (a)). Whilst technology will obviously have a significant impact upon the organisation, this brings many challenges, including the shape and structure of the future police workforce. The report stresses that in a broad sense, the police will need to find new ways of connecting future skills, expertise and resources. This new way, the report continues, needs to involve the greater use of volunteers, as well as enhanced partnership arrangements with other agencies.

Given that volunteers are perceived to be a major component of future police work, it is prescient to understand not just the roles they undertake, but their motives for volunteering. In a competitive sector with multiple voluntary opportunities, organisations who rely on volunteers need to understand and enrich the volunteer experiences in order to secure the organisations future (Morgan, 2013). By understanding such aspect, police agencies in England and Wales may better attract and retain those individuals who play their part in the future of policing. Currently, there appears to be a general stability in the numbers of those volunteering across society (Lindsey *et al.,* 2019), with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2020) reporting over 19 million people formally volunteering in the UK during 2018/2019. However, only 17% of volunteers donated hours within the public sector (McGarvey *et al.,* 2019).

This research therefore considers the motivations of Volunteer Police Cadet (VPC) Leaders, who operate within a scheme aligned to the police service across England and Wales. VPC Leaders donate their time to support significant numbers of uniformed young people aged between 13 and 18, helping develop them as good citizens whilst making a difference within their local communities. The findings of this study will also have resonance for other forms of police volunteering both nationally and internationally.

Volunteering: An International Context for Policing

Volunteering is increasingly important within contemporary society with millions of hours donated every year. In the UK volunteers are a key feature of life, with 40% of adults volunteering in some capacity (McGarvey *et al.,* 2019). Such volunteering ranges from

running libraries (Casselden *et al.,* 2015) and the local provision of services such as sport (Morgan, 2013), to a range of roles across policing (Cheah *et al.,* 2021). The most common reasons for volunteering are to either help others or improve things (McGarvey *et al.,* 2019).

In Armenia, which has a high level of volunteering predominantly in administrative tasks, the most frequently reported motivations for volunteering among young people is to acquire new knowledge and skills for employment (Gevorgyan and Galstyan, 2016). Across Canada, just over 40% of the population aged over 15 volunteer, with the most popular activities to be involved with being the organisation of events and fundraising (Volunteer Canada, 2013). Whilst in Australia, over 36% of adults formally volunteer (Volunteering Australia, 2015), with over 50% of volunteers donating their time because they want to help others and the community (ibid.).

From the policing perspective, supporting such voluntary interactions encourages the evolution of social capital (Putnam, 2000), with community cohesion leading to increased feelings of safety and less crime (Wedlock, 2006; Rochester *et al.,* 2016). The development of social capital involves the creation of networks, norms and social contacts that provides benefits for communities. Through the encouragement of social trust and cohesion, communities find life easier (Putnam, 1995).

Cherney and Chui (2010) point out that at the international level there has been an increasing diversification of policing roles and functions within and external to public police agencies, sometimes referred to as plural policing or 'auxiliarisation', examples of which are widely discussed (Jones and Newburn, 2006; Jones *et al.,* 2009; Rogers, 2016; Dobrin and Wolf, 2016). The use of volunteers in certain roles appears to have been historically common and growing in popularity (Bullock, 2018), volunteering within policing has received limited attention, especially in terms of research (Pepper and Wolf, 2015; Cheah, *et al.,* 2021).

Dobrin (2017) states that both the police organisation and communities benefit from police volunteerism because people in free societies are best governed when members of the community take active participation in the oversight of the community. Volunteering has therefore been viewed as a potential mechanism for promoting the legitimacy of the police within communities. The notion of legitimacy has been a strong theme for quite some time when discussing why individuals participate in volunteering (Bullock, 2014). Legitimacy is

the recognition that those who are not in a position of power grant to those who are in power the right to hold and exercise such power (Coicaud, 2013). One of the reasons why the police obtain legitimacy from citizens is through the concept of procedural justice (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). Procedural justice requires the police to treat people according to the rules, with dignity and respect, listen to what they have to say and explain the reasons for their decisions. Tyler (2004) suggests that there are several areas which influence a communities perception of procedural justice and one of the strongest of these is citizen participation, as it allows individuals to potentially influence official decision making. Volunteering therefore is a key element in supporting the idea of police legitimacy.

Consequently, volunteers are seen as bridge or conduit between both parties, i.e. the police and the community it serves. Uhnoo and Lőfstrand (2018) highlight how volunteers within policing in Sweden have continued to gain legitimacy with both the police and the public. Supporting the importance of volunteers building community relationships, Miranda-Díaz *et al.,* (2020), reports in their US study of motivations for volunteers mentoring young people, the existence of significant links between a volunteers empathy towards those from different ethnic backgrounds and altruistic reasons for volunteering in order to enhance both a young person's quality of life and their local communities.

Van Steden and Mehlbaum (2019), in their study in the Netherlands, conclude that volunteers are indeed a useful bridge or contact between the community and police but also point to the fact that volunteers are in a paradoxical position. The need for volunteers must be seen in the wider socio-political context of 'responsibilising' citizens, whilst struggling with opposition from unions that see them as threatening jobs. On the level of individual volunteers, they found that most choose to undertake voluntary work because they not only wanted to do something worthwhile for the community, but also felt that they improved their personal skills and created a pleasant connection with their regular colleagues (ibid.).

In Sweden volunteering has been depicted as a resource and a benefit for both the public and the police (Uhnoo and Lőfstrand 2018). This has been the case particularly so since the Swedish police reforms of 2015-2017, when they were given a clear political direction to get closer to the citizens and deal with local problems as defined by communities themselves (Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, 2016). Voluntary policing initiatives here have gained support in the eyes of the police and the public and are presented in such a light

by the media, and the transfer of responsibility from state to citizens allows for citizen participation and allows for more flexible ways for citizens to influence police operations and aids accountability (Van Steden *et al.,* 2011).

Most studies of police volunteers in the USA tend to concentrate upon the sworn volunteer, known sometimes as the police reserve, police auxiliary, or similar. The fact that there are so many police agencies in the USA (18,000 according to the FBI (2014)) makes it difficult to establish just how many volunteers there are actually assisting the police in their duties. Although, Dobrin and Wolf (2016) suggest that in the region of 30-35% of all public safety agencies utilise sworn volunteers in varying capacities.

Police Volunteers across England and Wales.

Volunteering in policing across England and Wales has a long and varied history. Radzinowicz (1968) and Palmer (1990), for example, remind us of the roles of volunteers and special constables in policing the country prior to and after the Metropolitan Police Act 1829. A national 'Citizens in Policing' strategy aims to provide additional capability for policing with over 500,000 volunteers donating many hours and providing links to local communities (College of Policing, 2020 (b)). This engagement is achieved through the use of volunteer police officers (special constables) who have the same powers as a regular police officer when on duty, in 2020, across England and Wales, there were slightly over 9,500 special constables (SC) (Kirk-Wade *et al.,* 2020). Police support volunteers (PSV) offer non-frontline support to policing numbering over 8000 (Callender *et al.,* 2018), whilst Neighbourhood Watch and the Volunteer Police Cadet (VPC) schemes are amongst other groups of volunteers engaged within policing. Exploring the development of positive links between community policing and their relationships with youth, Deuchar *et al.,* (2018) discusses the important part played by social capital and trust, whilst also reflecting on building links with organisations in authority, such as the police.

Volunteers for policing are attracted to roles through numerous means including word of mouth, community events, leaflets, local media, social media platforms and the police services own websites (Leahy *et al.,* 2020). Bullock and Millie (2018) suggest that the recruitment of volunteer SC's through both local and national campaigns continues to be challenging, in the main this is because the numbers of applicants increase during a

campaign, however the police infrastructure and resources required to process applications does not significantly increase, resulting in significant time lags in the processing of applications and potential applicants losing interest. This could perhaps also be transposed to the recruitment of volunteer police cadet leaders.

In their national survey, McGarvey *et al.,* (2019), identify how the will to improve things and help others are the most common motivations for volunteering. Whilst Nichols *et al.,* (2019) discuss how Sport England have moved to promoting the benefits to the potential volunteer, rather than the benefits to others in an altruistic fashion. Bullock and Millie (2018) found that many young volunteer SC's join during their academic studies in order to gain practical experience of policing and enhance their CV's for future recruitment as a regular police constable. McGarvey *et al.,* (2019) suggest the importance of raising awareness of volunteering opportunities, linking such opportunities to an individual's life and their aspirations, resulting in a greater likelihood of individuals becoming involved. Millie (2019) reports, as an example, how one PSV in their 60's, was encouraged by a police Inspector to assist volunteer police cadets with sport, the PSV went on to described how they enjoyed seeing positive change amongst the cadets.

Supporting Andreoni and Vesterlund (2001), Dawson *et al.,* (2019) found that females and those holding a university degree are more likely to donate time to volunteering, with increases in age positively affecting involvement in volunteering. Previous experiences of volunteering, whether earlier or later in life, can be linked to future and enduring volunteering by individuals (Dawson *et al.,* 2019). Volunteering can be viewed as a means for developing social networks and the associated social wellbeing (Dawson *et al.,* 2019). McGarvey *et al.,* (2019), identifies that one of the main barriers to volunteering for the first time is that it has just never been considered. Whilst Leahy *et al.,* (2020) found that a large factor affecting those considering volunteering within policing is the perception by potential applicants that they do not have the time available to volunteer.

Volunteer Police Cadet Leaders.

The concept of police cadets supporting mainstream policing either in back office functions or accompanying patrol officers as a route of entry to the regular police service, dates back to before WW2 (Commentary, 1966). However the Volunteer Police Cadet (VPC) scheme in

21st Century England and Wales is very different. The VPC scheme is a national uniformed youth organisation with over 18,000 cadets (VPC, n.d.) ranging in age from 13 to 18 with a linked mini-police/junior cadet scheme for children under the age of 13. The aim of the scheme is to develop cadets understanding of and trust in policing, embrace the spirit of adventure and develop as good citizens. As Myhill and Quinton (2011) describe, police legitimacy can be increased by encouraging people through volunteering to both assist the police and become socially responsible, which leads to them cooperating more with the police and less likely to commit offences.

The VPC scheme provides the opportunity for young people to develop regardless of their background whilst making a positive difference within their communities. It is worthy of note that the VPC scheme is not a recruiting agency for the police service (VPC, n.d). In contrast, research by See *et al.,* (2017) reports a positive effect on the career aspirations of members of uniformed youth groups, with Denselow and Noble (2018) reporting how despite not being a high priority for the Sea Cadets, significant numbers aspired to join the Royal Navy. Both See *et al.,* (2017) and Denselow and Noble (2018) describe a number of associated benefits to being a member of the uniformed cadet forces including increases in confidence, team work and the life skills.

At the centre of enabling the achievements of the VPC scheme are the volunteer leaders, who need to be attracted, retained and trained (VPC, n.d.). See *et al.,* (2017) identifies the need for strong leadership to ensure success in establishing such uniformed youth groups. Callender *et al.,* (2019) estimates there are somewhere between 2,300 and 2,500 people supporting the delivery of the VPC scheme in a range of employed and volunteer capacities, however the actual number of volunteer leaders across England and Wales is far more difficult to pinpoint. VPC leaders are responsible for the practical delivery of the police cadet scheme within local units, some of which are directly affiliated to a local police force or alternatively a charity aligned to the structure of a police force. Although there are no formal qualifications to join as a VPC leader, all leaders must be over 18 years of age, vetted and able to demonstrate they can lead, organise, inspire and communicate with young adults. There are no formal requirements for the donation of hours volunteering as a leader with the VPC scheme (VPC, 2021), but leaders are likely to become involved in the supervision of cadets, delivery of structured learning programmes, administration relating to parade evenings or site visits, use their existing specialist skills such as in the Duke of Edinburgh's

award scheme, or assist with cadets health, safety and welfare etc. The VPC (2021) suggest that most volunteer leaders come from the existing policing family.

Perhaps the largest single constraint on the future growth of the VPC scheme is the ability to attract, develop, support and retain leaders (VPC, n.d.). Nichols *et al.,* (2019) reiterates how, even though sports clubs are one of the most popular areas to volunteer across the UK, it is still difficult to recruit volunteers. Callender *et al.,* (2019) identify how some areas find it difficult to recruit cadet leaders, with DeMarco and Bifulco (2020) echoing how the VPC schemes are constantly struggling to find human resources, an issue identified across uniformed youth groups (See *et al.,* 2017). Following a survey of the VPC scheme in London, Pepper and Silvestri (2017), report how over half of the police cadets first heard about the cadet scheme through family, friends or someone who was a cadet. Are these social networks the main means of attracting volunteer leaders?

Methodology

The aims of this research were to explore the characteristics, initial attractions and motivations of individuals who engage in the voluntary role as Police Cadet Leaders.

A pilot of the questionnaire was completed in the late summer of 2020 leading to minor amendments. Then during early autumn of 2020, as volunteer police cadet units were preparing to return to face to face parades following the initial Covid-19 lockdowns, VPC leaders across six police force cadet schemes (three in England and three in Wales) were surveyed with an ethically approved research instrument, a self-completion questionnaire. The questionnaire was accompanied by an invitation to each VPC leader to participate in the research along with a consent form, all to be returned directly to the researchers. The research was supported by the National VPC Hub, who hope to further build their evidence base and inform practice.

The questionnaire used predominantly closed questions and Likert scales, with a limited number of free text open questions. With questions also being embedded to test responses for validity. Initial questions gathered background demographic information from the VPC leaders. This was followed with questions broken in to themes including exploring respondent's perceptions of how they first learned of volunteering opportunities with the

VPC schemes and their motivations for volunteering. Referring to the Inventory for Volunteers' Motivation (IVM) described as a functional approach to volunteering (Clary *et al.,* 1998), these questions were structured around exploring the motivational needs of supporting personal values, career enhancement, social reasons, developing further understanding, personal enhancement and psychological protection.

The questionnaire was administered electronically to geographically spread participants as a means of reaching out safely without face to face contact. Following the initial distribution, and in order to enhance response rates, a follow up email was also sent with the questionnaire and accompanying information attached. Once responses from the questionnaire were received, they were coded, anonymised and amalgamated with other participant's responses in order to be utilised for statistical purposes. In this way no one individual could be identified. Throughout, ethical principles for good research were adhered too, with the data being interpreted using appropriate methods and the findings protected against researcher bias, although, the potential impact of non-response bias must be acknowledged.

Of the 43 Home Office police forces across England and Wales, the majority of which either deliver or are directly associated with a VPC scheme, in consultation with the National VPC hub, six police force areas were selected for the research. The cadet schemes were chosen due to their geographical spread across England and Wales, along with their VPC scheme similarities. These similarities were considered in terms of the host forces physical geography, population, social constructs, crime statistics, police force numbers, cadet unit numbers and group sizes across England, with a similar selection across Wales, the initial intentions included being to also compare and contrast findings across the two nations. Acknowledging the larger cadet numbers in the Metropolitan Police area, it is also important to note that in all of the police cadet units selected, their membership was below the average across England and Wales of 21 cadets per 1,000 of the population (Callender *et al.,* 2019).

Of the six police force areas approached, four completely engaged in the research. The first cadet scheme engaging is run by a police force in Wales which covers over 4,200 square miles including coastline and predominantly rural areas with a number of well-defined urban areas. There are some affluent areas but also areas of high poverty across a population of slightly over 0.5 million (HMICFRS, 2021). The police force consists of almost 1,200 officers and slightly over 650 police staff (National Statistics, 2020), with volunteer police

cadet units totalling 84 cadets, equal to 16 per 1,000 of the population (Callender *et al.,* 2019) with a reported 9 volunteer cadet leaders. The second cadet scheme is part of the extended police family of a Welsh force which polices over 2,375 square miles including coastline and predominantly rural areas with a number of well-defined urban areas across a population of slightly over 0.7 million (HMICFRS, 2021). The force consists of just over 1,500 officers and almost 1,000 police staff (National Statistics. 2020), with volunteer police cadet units totalling 118 cadets, equal to 17 per 1,000 of the population (Callender *et al.,* 2019), with a reported 19 volunteer cadet leaders.

Two police cadet schemes in England engaged with the research. The first cadet scheme is part of the extended police family of an English force which polices over 2,000 square miles including coastline and predominantly rural areas with a number of well-defined urban areas across a population of just under 1 million (HMICFRS, 2021). The force consists of slightly over 1,650 officers and over 1,100 police staff (National Statistics. 2020), with volunteer police cadet units totalling 106 cadets, equal to 12 per 1,000 of the population (Callender *et al.,* 2019) with a reported 61 volunteer leaders. The second is a charity aligned to a force in England which polices almost 1,000 square miles including coastline and predominantly rural areas with a number of well-defined urban areas. There are some affluent areas but also high levels of poverty and a population of slightly over 0.6 million (HMICFRS, 2021). The force consists of over 1,100 officers and slightly over 900 police staff (National Statistics. 2020), with volunteer police cadet units totalling 120 cadets, equal to 19 per 1,000 of the population (Callender *et al.,* 2019), with a reported 14 volunteer cadet leaders.

The findings from the research are only generalisable to the sample population, however should be viewed wider as an evidence based insight which could have impact within the wider national context.

Findings and discussion

Of the volunteer police cadet schemes surveyed force-wide, 14 responses were received from a possible sample group of 103 volunteer leaders across four of the six police force schemes originally approached. No responses were received from cadet schemes in two police force areas (one from England and one in Wales). The employed force co-ordinators reporting in one case that the volunteer police cadet leaders, who donated their time across a largely urban

area within England with a seaport and high levels of social deprivation, were not currently being used and would not be for the foreseeable future. In the second force was in Wales where no responses were received, again predominantly an urban area with a seaport and areas of high poverty, the employed coordinator reported that the cadets only had one volunteer leader.

The overall response rates were low, at 13.6%, this could be due to a number of reasons, but this also removed the ability to compare and contrast across the two nations of England and Wales, instead the researchers moving to aggregate the findings. The limited response rate could be due to the data collection method, although this was most practicable at the time, (Payne and Payne, 2004) discuss how using electronically administered questionnaires can be problematic, with Callender et al, (2018) identifying a number of similar issues with similar data collection when conducting research with PSV's. The limited number of responses by the VPC leaders could also be due to the volunteer's re-engagement (or otherwise) following a period of far less activity, it could be their lack of available time or focus on their return to face-to-face activities, or even the volunteers focus on the local scene rather than the national picture. Whichever the reason, probably a mixture of all, McGarvey *et al.,* (2019) makes it clear that an individual's involvement in volunteering changes over time as their life commitments change.

As a result of the limited response rates, it would be difficult to generalise the findings of this research beyond the sample group, however, it is still worthy of reporting as a guide to those developing future policy, practice and research.

Identifying Characteristics of the Volunteers.

It was important to examine the characteristics of VPC leaders and thereof establish if there was any pattern or type of individuals that would volunteering for this role would appeal too. Although it is worthy to note that respondent A in the questionnaire free text commented *"I'd say a large part of my force don't even realise that the [volunteer police] cadets exist, let alone know that they need support leader wise".*

The data concerning these characteristics or background demographic information, can be seen in Table 1.

Insert table 1 here: Background demographic information

Over half of respondents were male (57%) and under half female (43%), with very limited diversity reported amongst volunteer leaders, almost all respondents reporting their ethnicity as white British (93%). These findings align with a national study conducted by Callender *et al.,* (2018) in to another voluntary role within policing, that of the PSV, and are similar to the findings of Moon *et al.,* (2010) researching volunteer leaders with the uniformed cadet forces. This supports the call by McGarvey *et al.,* (2019) of a need to reach out to more diverse communities to engage them more in volunteering.

However, unlike the findings of Callender *et al.,* (2018) of almost half of PSVs being aged between 60 and 74, and McGarvey *et al.,* (2019) who suggests that generally volunteering is more frequent in those over 65 (although acknowledging that those under 55 are more likely to volunteer in the public sector), over half of the VPC leaders respondents where in the age range of 35 to 54 (58%). This is similar to the almost 50% of respondents reported by Moon *et al.,* (2010) being in the age range of 30 to 49. Well over three quarters (79%) of VPC leader respondents had two years or less voluntary service with the scheme, as opposed to just over a third of PSVs Callender *et al.,* (2018) had less than two years voluntary service. Both the lower age group and length of voluntary service than PSV's, could be due to the relatively new and recent growth in the VPC scheme units across England and Wales, attracting leaders from existing police employees, who are likely to be in the lower age groups.

Over half of respondents (54%) held either undergraduate or postgraduate awards. These findings go some way to reinforce the findings ten years ago by Stott (2011) and Smith (2011), who found that volunteers are typically degree educated and the findings of Miranda-Díaz *et al.,* (2020) that over 70% of volunteer mentors for youth were educated to degree level or above. It also supports the findings of both McGarvey *et al.,* (2019) and Dawson *et al.,* (2019) that those educated to degree level or above tend to volunteer more.

Unlike the national findings of McGarvey *et al.,* (2019) of full-time workers being less likely to volunteer than part-time workers, the majority of VPC Leader respondents (65%) stated they were in full-time employment. Only 1 person stated they were retired, the remaining

respondents being either part-time employed or in full-time education. This could be due to the limited awareness of the role and requirements for VPC leaders beyond the cadet scheme and police service.

Motivations for becoming a VPC leader

There are a number of reasons why volunteers donate their time and energies. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2020) identify the importance of altruistic reasons for volunteering, whilst Bussell and Forbes (2003) also add that many people volunteer to increase their human capital or learn new skills for their future careers. Pepper (2014) adds that volunteer special constable in England and Wales were motivated by a desire to see what policing was really like before applying for a full time career in the police. Van Steden and Mehlbaum (2019) found that in the Netherlands police volunteers are motivated to donate their time to assist others, support local communities, do something for the community and for their own personal development. Continuing to describe how following a royal proclamation, it was suggested that Dutch society should adopt an ethos of volunteering for the 'common good', however, despite a number of recruitment campaigns the national targets for the recruitment of police volunteers have yet to be met (ibid.).

Broadly speaking, there were two main themes which emerged when researching the motivational aspects of why VPC leaders donated their time, which the researchers have labelled Community Spirit and Self Development. Community spirit accords with the sense of altruism that many other commentators have mentioned in similar research, whilst Self Development has been identified in various forms as a separate yet important aspect of motivation for volunteering. Table 2 considers the area of Community Spirit as being a motivator for volunteering.

Insert Table 2 here: Community spirit

As can be seen from the results in Table 2, 100% of respondents agreed with the statements concerning helping or supporting people, having an interest in local policing and using their knowledge, experience and abilities to good use. In the questionnaire free text, respondent B commented *"I recognised that this would give me an opportunity to interact with young people from the community in a positive and fun setting".* This supports the evolution of the

policing family to establish the VPC scheme, with the legitimacy of policing being in part about sharing a common purpose and set of values (Myhill and Quinton, 2011), whilst developing the social capital of all those involved.

The only statement in this area that did not draw a 100% response was concerning giving something back because they were a former cadet. Under a third (30%) of respondents signalled they had been former cadets. Whereas, Denselow and Noble (2018) report how 50% of Sea Cadet leaders were former cadets and Moon *et al.,* (2010) also found a significant number of cadet forces leaders volunteered as they used to be cadets. In the VPC research, respondent C commented in the free text how they had been *"a former Air Cadet (cadet and adult staff)".* This could be viewed as an opportunity to target a recruiting strategy at existing (or former cadets) to become future volunteer leaders.

Overwhelmingly what appears to be the position is that those who volunteer for the role of VPC leaders display a strong shared sense of community spirit and of wanting to help young people. Both Millie (2019) and Westall (2020) highlight a theme of altruistic values for volunteering across policing and criminal justice, with Morgan (2013) suggesting that the adoption of such altruistic reasons for volunteering allow the acquisition of social capital, with an ongoing need to reinvest to remain current.

Personal development reasons for volunteering are also identified as important by numerous studies (Bussell and Forbes, 2003; Moon *et al.,* 2010: Millie, 2019; Van Steden and Mehlbaum, 2019). A separate aspect of the research examined the idea of motivation for volunteering to become a VPC leader rests in such a self-development approach. This also accords with the work of Carpenters and Myers (2007) who identified that individuals who volunteer do so for many reasons, including both personal and career development. Volunteers are also motivated to do so by personal contacts who are existing volunteers, as Bullock and Millie (2018) suggest is the case for special constables in England and Wales.

Insert Table 3 here: Self-development

The area of personal self-development produced a range of varied outcomes. There was some divergence in response regarding aspects of career enhancement and self-development. The

majority of respondents (75%) reported not being motivated by wanting to join the police, this may be due to a significant number (71%) of respondents reported being employed in a number of roles across the police service. However half of respondents (50%) also stated their voluntary role would help them explore policing career options. This could be accounted for by slightly over a fifth (21%) of respondents also reporting volunteering as either SC's or PSV's and of those in paid policing employment, just over a quarter (29%) were serving in either police staff or police community support officer roles. This also supports the idea that as the volunteer role (in this case that of a VPC leader) becomes more integrated within policing, their legitimacy as a policing resource increases (Uhnoo and Lőfstrand, 2018). With slightly over a quarter (28%) of respondents being under 34 and over half under 44 (57%), and the associated desire for half of respondents to explore careers within policing, respondent D commented in the questionnaire how *"Being a young leader …. I think it can help provide young people with a role model to look up to and gain knowledge of how to join the police as I have recently been through the process".* Further research should explore the likelihood of ongoing volunteering by VPC leaders versus being transient as a means to find out more about policing prior to applying to join the police service.

Personal recommendations through contacts are important motivators for volunteering (Bussell and Forbes, 2003), be it a relation or other person. When presented with statements concerning this aspect of their attraction to the volunteer role and their motivations to donate their time, slightly over a quarter (27%) of VPC leaders agreed that they volunteered because their son or daughter was a VPC, whilst this reduced (18%) when the criteria of friend or other relative was introduced. Respondent A commented in the free text that whilst at a charity event *"I happened to mention my scouting experience to someone I hadn't realised was involved in the [volunteer police] cadets and then I was asked to help out*". Pepper and Silvestri (2017) found that in London, over 50% of police cadets, rather than their leaders, heard of the scheme through family, friends or other cadets. Whereas, Denselow and Noble (2018) report that slightly over 75% of volunteer Sea Cadet leaders would recommend the organisation to a friend or young person, however, there is no indication that they did. As a result, it may be that 'word of mouth' is an important way of attracting leaders but cannot necessarily be relied upon as a recruiting mechanism.

Moon *et al.,* (2010) found that almost 7% of respondents in their research were attracted to volunteer with the military cadet forces due to an advertisement, acknowledging the limited

response rate in the VPC research, such an initial attraction to volunteer through advertisements was not revealed.

Respondents were reflective concerning their own abilities, with well over half (64%) stating they wanted to develop confidence and experience of supervising young people, this is supported by a free text comment by respondent D, who stated how *"being a VPC leader can help gain more confidence".* Whilst over three quarters (79%) wished to explore their own strengths and areas for development.

On a personal and social aspects as reasons for volunteering there was divergence in views. However, over half of respondents (54%) disagreed that their motivations for volunteering lay in wanting to make new friends and social contact, whilst approaching three quarters of respondents (69%) agreed that one aspect of motivation lay in the fact that volunteering would increase their own self–esteem.

Findings from this research show the desire to assist young people and put something back into the community (Community Spirit) is extremely strong with those volunteering as cadet leaders'. This strong sense of giving back to society by those volunteering in a policing context was also found by Callender *et al.,* (2019) and Van Steden and Mehlbaum (2019), and is perhaps a theme to be explored when attracting new volunteer leaders. There are also other aspects that influence their decision making to volunteer, for example, knowing someone already involved in the scheme, an opportunity to reflect and test their own abilities and skills, as well as, for some, an opportunity to increase social activity and self-esteem are also seen as important.

Conclusion

As Clary et al (1998) points out, advertisements and appeals to attract volunteers are most effective when they are matched with personal motivations to volunteer. By doing so, linking increased awareness and promotion of volunteering opportunities to the potential societal and individual benefits, should result in a greater likelihood of recruitment. This could be further enhanced by targeted recruitment towards certain groups such as existing police cadets, previous cadets, ex-police officers and staff, all of who are well invested within policing, along with those studying within universities who may aspire to work within policing or

criminal justice. This may also be a way of increasing the diversity of VPC leaders. As can be seen in the results of this research, the ethnicity reported by VPC leader's responses appears to be the province of White British individuals. This should not come as a surprise as there appears to be limited diversity throughout the police service in England and Wales. As of March 2020, for example, 93% of police officers were classed as White British, whilst the general population contained 87% those who identified in the same category (Home Office, 2020). Therefore, one major benefit for the police service of promoting volunteering across differing areas and communities is an opportunity to diversify the volunteering pool beyond its heavy reliance on existing White British police employees and volunteers.

The two overwhelming areas of motivations for VPC leaders to volunteer appears in this research to revolve around the theme of community spirit and an opportunity for self-development. This research has tended to confirm the findings from other research projects on volunteering that suggests the idea of 'giving something back to community', helping others and general community spirit, are strong motivators for volunteering in a role involving leading young people. In terms of self-development, this idea does not appear to be driven by a purely selfish motivation in this research into VPC leaders, individuals were keen to point to such concepts as 'self-challenging' and reflecting upon their skills and abilities rather than on personal advancement ideas.

As with most research, it also raises further questions. For example, further research should be conducted into the likelihood of volunteer leaders continuing to donate hours to the police cadet scheme over significant periods of time, as well as to why under-represented groups have limited presence in the role of VPC leader.

If the police service across England and Wales truly wishes to ensure that by 2040 their workforce consists of the required skilled resources, then there needs to be a concerted effort to understand, not just motivations for people to volunteer within the service, but also to understand the reason why other sections of the community do not feel inclined to volunteer. Once this has been achieved and addressed, then volunteers in Policing in England and Wales, may be truly representative of the community they serve.

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The Author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest