MPA

Metropolitan Police Authority

Reflecting London

Diversity of Police Community Support Officer recruits compared to Police Officer recruits in the Metropolitan Police Service
(Full report)

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Acknowledgements

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Abstract

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were introduced to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to provide a highly visible policing presence on the streets of London. The introduction of PCSOs brought an additional benefit of increasing the diversity of the MPS workforce. Previous PCSO research focused on motivations for applying for the role, recruitment and training, and the effectiveness of the role, with few studies focusing on the diversity of PCSOs. The current study was commissioned by the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) to investigate why there is more diversity amongst PCSO than police officer recruits[1].

A multi-method approach to the research was adopted, including analysis of human resource (HR) data on PCSOs and police officers, interviews with PCSOs and a survey of the MPA's Safer London Panel. Analysis of HR data identified more diversity amongst PCSO than police officer recruits in terms of age and ethnicity. There were proportionately more PCSO than police officer recruits in the younger and older age groups and from some Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

Interviews with PCSOs suggested a number of reasons why there is more diversity amongst PCSO than police officer recruits, including the community focused nature of the role attracting people from diverse communities, the use of the role as a 'stepping stone' to becoming a police officer and the alternative option the PCSO role provides for unsuccessful police officer applicants. In addition the visible diversity of the PCSO workforce serves to attract more people from diverse communities.

Across all PCSOs who left the role, the most common reason for doing so was to become a police officer. Analysis by overall ethnicity revealed a higher proportion of BME PCSOs who left for this reason than the proportion of BME police officers recruited from the outset. However, when broken down by individual ethnicity, for Black African, Black British, Black Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani PCSOs who left the role, the most common reason for doing so was voluntary resignation. One of the most common reasons why PCSOs left to become police officers was because they were seeking promotion. In order to increase the likelihood of retaining PCSOs, the MPA/MPS may wish to consider providing opportunities to specialise or be promoted within the role.

Efforts to dispel beliefs that a high level of education is required to become a police officer and that the MPS does not accommodate certain religious and cultural practices may result in attracting more people from diverse communities. In addition, consideration of alternative police officer training methods and processes to further support PCSOs who want to become police officers may contribute to further diversifying the police officer workforce.

This report identifies reasons for why the PCSO role may have been more successful than the police officer role in recruiting a more diverse workforce, however it also highlights the need to embed diversity beyond recruitment practices.

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[1] A summary version of this report is available at www.mpa.gov.uk

Introduction

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) were first introduced in England and Wales under the Police Reform Act (2002) to carry out a high visibility, patrolling role to provide further policing reassurance to the public[2]. A Chief Officer of a force has been able to designate those PCSOs in his or her force with a range of powers since December 2002. Powers can be applied to a number of offences and the designation of these powers varies across forces. However, typically PCSOs are employed to work alongside police officers as part of neighbourhood policing teams to provide a visible presence and engage with communities, obtain community intelligence and deal with antisocial behaviour and low-level crime[3].

Findings from early research into PCSO career motivation in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) suggest that the main reasons people choose to become a PCSO rather than a police officer are that they see it as a gateway to a police career – particularly the police officer role, a chance to work with the community and an opportunity to make a difference (Smith, 2003).

The Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) recognised a difference between the diversity of MPS PCSO and police officer recruits, particularly in relation to age and ethnicity[4]. They also highlighted a lack of research into reasons underlying the differences in diversity and commissioned a project to investigate this further.

Overall, this research sought to understand why there was a difference between the proportion of PCSO and police officer recruits who were women, from Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) communities and a wider range of ages[5]. Further questions were also addressed to support this:

- ❑ is there a difference in the diversity of those who apply to become PCSOs and those who are successful? If so, is there a similar pattern for successful police officer recruits?
- ❑ what are the key reasons why people want to become a PCSO? Are there differences in these reasons by gender, age or ethnicity?

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[2] A copy of the Police Reform Act 2002 is available at www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/20020030.htm. PCSO powers are detailed in Schedule 4, Part 1 of the Act.

[3] There are four types of MPS PCSOs: community, transport, security and parks. Roles, responsibilities and some powers may differ between each type.

[4] The MPA defines diversity as 'the difference in values, attitudes, cultural perspective, beliefs, ethnic background, sexual orientation, skills, knowledge and life experiences of each individual in any group of people. Diversity in the workplace is an understanding that there are differences among employees, acceptance of these differences among employees, acceptance of these differences so that each person is treated and valued as a unique individual and recognising that these differences can be an asset to work being done more efficiently and effectively' (MPA, 2005). Restrictions on resources and data available meant that it was only possible to consider three strands of diversity (age, race and gender) in this report.

[5] Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) is a term used to describe communities and individuals who belong to an ethnic group that is smaller in number than the UK's predominant White group. 'Black' is an inclusive term that refers to all ethnic groups who experience discrimination because of the colour of their skin (MPA, 2005). Other organisations may adopt different terms such as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME).

- why do so many PCSOs go on to become police officers rather than applying from the outset?

The research was carried out for the MPA to address the questions they raised and contribute to the developing body of research into the diversity of PCSOs. The research adopted a multi-method approach to address these questions including a review of key literature, interviews with stakeholders, analysis of MPS Human Resources (HR) data of those who apply, are recruited and leave both the PCSO and police officer role, semi-structured interviews with 45 serving MPS PCSOs and a postal survey of the MPA Safer London Panel (SLP)[6].

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter one contextualises the study with a review of key literature in the field and findings from semi-structured discussions with a number of MPS, MPA and Home Office stakeholders;
- Chapter two provides details of the methodological approach adopted by the study and acknowledges some limitations to the methods used;
- Chapter three sets out results from analysis of MPS HR data of those who applied and were recruited to the PCSO and police officer roles, and those PCSOs who left the role, the findings from semi-structured interviews with 45 MPS PCSOs and a postal survey of the MPA SLP; and
- Chapter four attempts to draw together the various strands of analysis used to address the questions above and the overall research question of why there is a difference in the diversity of PCSO compared to police officer recruits in the MPS.

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[6] See Chapter two for more details of the Safer London Panel.

Chapter one: Background Information

This section provides some background and context to the current study. It includes a discussion of key points from a review of previous research into the PCSO initiative and related fields and summarises discussions with a number of MPS, MPA and Home Office stakeholders.

Literature Review

Background to the PCSO initiative

Public demands for the police to provide a highly visible presence have been increasing for many years – especially since terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in September 2001. Many local authorities have embarked on 'buying in' private patrols, sparking debate around the ability of more affluent boroughs to protect themselves, leaving poorer areas vulnerable. In his previous post as Chief Constable of Surrey Police, the current MPS Commissioner, Sir Ian Blair, first expressed concern around this growing trend of private security. Upon transferring to the MPS he proposed that these demands should be embraced by patrols offering boroughs a service with 'Met-backing, Met-intelligence, Met-standards and Met-powers'.

This service would be visible on the streets at all times – not removed to give evidence in court, provide security at football matches or be tied to the police station with large quantities of paperwork following an arrest. The staff, he stated, would require less training, less equipment and would become normalised as part of the everyday environment and the MPS (Blair, 2002).

Role of PCSOs

Introduced as part of the Police Reform Act 2002, the Association of Chief Police Officers (2005) recognised the fundamental role of the PCSO as:

> '…to contribute to the policing of neighbourhoods, primarily through high visibility patrol with the purpose of reassuring the public, increasing orderliness in public places and being accessible to communities and partner agencies working at local level'.

Crawford and Lister (2004) found that the response to public demands for a visible patrolling presence was one of the greatest challenges facing modern policing. Indeed, the majority (85%) of forces surveyed in the Home Office national evaluation stated that visibility was the number one priority for PCSOs, with interacting with the public and dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB) and low-level crime considered to be the next most important functions (Cooper et al, 2006).

PCSOs were also envisioned to be instrumental in gathering local intelligence through regular contact with the community and local service providers. Traditionally, the civilian police staff role had been confined to largely non-operational duties. However the introduction of the PCSO role meant that staff were taking responsibility for increasingly operational roles (Loveday, 2005).

Despite this seemingly clear vision, Johnston et al (2004) stated that the PCSO role lacked clarity from the outset, compounded by poor communication regarding the role and expectations. This was evident from findings of Wynnick and Calcott's (2006) focus groups with PCSOs who felt that their role was misunderstood by both police officer colleagues and line managers alike.

The PCSO role was found to be most successful when it was clearly defined and publicised, afforded adequate training and powers and deployed only to incidents that were appropriate to these, integrated as part of a team in a fixed local area to allow staff to build profile and trust with the local community and when PCSOs often patrolled on foot and had regular contact with their supervisor (Cooper et al, 2006).

Recruitment and training of PCSOs

A number of studies (Bellos, 2003; Johnston et al, 2004; Wynnick and Calcott, 2006) have referred to the 'rapid implementation' of PCSOs – possibly at the expense of adequate selection and training systems being put in place from the outset[7]. A further study by Johnston (forthcoming) proposed that this led to a small number of applicants recruited who were clearly unsuited to the role.

Limited time to produce a tailored recruitment programme led to the early MPS PCSO application form being taken from a standard civilian recruitment pack – even though the role was more closely related to that of a police officer. This resulted in some confusion around the nature of the role and expectations of applicants and, as mentioned above, recruitment of some unsuitable candidates – both of which may have been avoided if a robust, well researched application and recruitment process had been in place (Bellos, 2003).

Similar to the application form, Johnston et al (2004) felt that more time should have been afforded to identify the training needs of new PCSOs and tailor the course appropriately. A number of studies (Wynnick & Calcott, 2006; Bellos, 2003; Johnston et al, 2004) have commented on the length of the PCSO training course (originally three weeks), which was felt to be too short to cater for the development needs of the PCSO or the performance requirements of the borough to which they would eventually be deployed. Only 38% of PCSOs interviewed as part of Wynnick and Calcott's (2006) study felt their training was adequate for their role with over half (59%) stating they had encountered situations for which they felt they had insufficient training. Bellos (2003) felt the original training course included too much material for its length, leaving little time for practical training such as using the radio. Although some boroughs were able to offer further local training for PCSOs, others were often ill equipped to provide this.

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[7] This may have been due to the urgent need to introduce security PCSOs to provide a resilient response to major incidents and security alerts (MPA, 7 March 2002).

According to Johnston et al (2004), the PCSO training regime seemed to lack the disciplined structure of the police officer course, leaving PCSOs ill-prepared for the disciplined environment on borough. Wynnick and Calcott (2006) also found that, although information on professional standards was included in the course, no formal training was offered to PCSOs. This may have contributed to a number of PCSOs who had disciplinary action taken against them (Johnston et al, 2004). In a later study (2005) Johnston referred to the high proportion of BME PCSOs on disciplinary charges (at one time a third of all BME PCSOs in one MPS police station) which the Metropolitan Black Police Association claimed may be due to the MPS appointing candidates ill suited to the role and then failing to provide adequate training and support.

Johnston (2005) claimed that the organisational problems in relation to the recruitment and training of PCSOs discussed above impacted greatest on those from BME groups, possibly due to their greater need for institutional support – perhaps in relation to language and communication – not being provided for. In addition, Johnston (2005) referred to the greater visibility of BME PCSOs, which may make them easier to isolate as 'problems'. This may be further compounded by findings from an earlier study by Johnston et al (2004) that identified little practical equality and diversity training for PCSOs and some evidence of inappropriate language and actions.

A final point on recruitment is around the practice of recruiting PCSOs from probationers who failed to meet the required standard for the police officer role. Johnston et al (2004) felt this served to undermine the PCSO role, suggesting that someone deemed unable to undertake the role of police officer is capable of being a PCSO – implying a 'badge of failure' rather than a professional role which requires a high standard of skills.

Motivation for becoming a PCSO

Cooper et al (2006) found that overall, PCSOs were attracted to the role because it was varied and allowed close working with the local community. In addition, many saw the role as a 'stepping stone' to becoming a regular police officer – with younger males more likely to cite this. Similar proportions of PCSOs from White and BME groups stated that they planned to become regular police officers – perhaps indicating that the role may attract certain underrepresented groups to become police officers. Older and female applicants were more likely to be attracted to the PCSO, rather than police officer, role as they saw the working culture as more appealing.

Johnston (2006) found that many PCSOs viewed the role as an opportunity to 'test the water' before applying to become a regular officer. This was as true for White PCSOs as it was for BME PCSOs however for the latter groups 'testing the water' was not just about checking the job over but also exploring for levels of racism and discrimination. Johnston et al (2004) cited the most common concern amongst PCSOs at the time of joining as reactions from police and civilian colleagues and personal safety.

Cooper et al (2006) found that over two-thirds (68%) of PCSOs were satisfied with their work, with females and older people most satisfied and most likely to

state that they intended to remain in the post. PCSOs under the age of 35 were less satisfied than those in older age groups and BME PCSOs were less satisfied than their White colleagues. The authors claim this may be explained by the younger age profile of BME PCSOs.

Career progression

Various studies (Cooper et al, 2006; Johnston et al, 2004; Wynnick and Calcott, 2006; Bellos, 2003) have commented that the PCSO role offers very little in terms of career progression with the only possibility of promotion to become a regular officer or take a different police staff position – either way, to stop being a PCSO. Bellos (2003) argues that this means that specific knowledge and expertise of PCSOs can never be acknowledged. A similar flat career structure was in place when traffic wardens were first introduced in 1960 however it was quickly recognised that an internal rank structure would be most effective – a model that Bellos recommends may be worth revisiting in relation to the PCSO role. Loveday (2005) also urged the need to develop the career structure of police staff (including PCSOs) to offer the same development opportunities available to regular police officers.

As previously discussed, many PCSOs viewed the role as a 'stepping stone' to becoming a regular police officer (Cooper et al, 2006). However, Johnston et al (2004) suggested that BME PCSOs were doing less well in the 'fast track' process for those who aspire to be regular police officers, than their White counterparts. The authors expressed a concern that a two-tier form of policing may emerge with a largely White, male, regular police force, supported by a predominantly female and BME PCSO workforce. The Metropolitan Black Police Association also highlighted this within a report by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) (2005) suggesting that this may portray a message to the community of a lower status, 'Black tier' of policing.

A report by the HMIC (2003) stated that the effort the police service invests in recruiting members of diverse, under-represented groups is often not matched by effective retention and career progression for these individuals. Studies into career progression of regular police officers (e.g. Bland et al, 1999; Stone & Tuffin, 2000) refer to perceived barriers to promotion held by some BME officers – compounded by the lack of senior ranking BME officers and their over-representation at constable level.

An opportunity to increase diversity across the service?

The Home Office (2003) clearly stated their desire for a police service to be truly representative of the communities it serves. HMIC (2003) also highlighted the 'recognisable contribution' a representative police service makes in achieving policing by consent. It has also been suggested that applications for MPS posts should only be considered if the applicant has lived in London for a set period of time. Arguably, this would make the pool of potential applicants more representative of the community they are employed to serve, and knowledge of the area would also be of benefit to the applicant and the service (Commission for Racial Equality, 2005; Bellos, 2003)

Various studies by Johnston et al (2004; 2005; 2006 & forthcoming) have highlighted how the PCSO initiative was seen as an opportunity to diversify the recruitment profile of the MPS as a whole. The Home Office's 2006 national evaluation of PCSOs found that the role had been successful in doing this, attracting people from a range of backgrounds including older, ethnically diverse individuals with wider ranging work experience.

Johnston (2006) proposed that the role has attracted BME groups who previously would not have considered a career in the MPS – possibly because, as a PCSO Programme Manager suggested, some BME PCSOs felt that the 'cultural barriers to becoming a police officer did not apply to becoming a PCSO'. The role has also attracted a more even spread of applicants in terms of age with larger proportions in the youngest (under 25 years) and oldest (over 55 years) age categories when compared to the police officer role (Cooper et al, 2006). Johnston et al (2004) also found that more individuals applied to become PCSOs later in their working life compared to police officers.

Flexibility of the PCSO role is often perceived as a reason for the role attracting more females (who often, but not exclusively, take on more domestic and caring tasks), however Johnston et al (2004) found little difference between the stated work preferences of either male or female PCSOs[8]. Indeed, requests for flexible working arrangements were just as likely to come from males as females. Cooper et al (2006) found that very few (2%) of PCSOs in their study worked part time but the vast majority (83%) were female.

It has been proposed that PCSOs have been able to overcome barriers and engage with community groups 'in a way that police officers have found difficult' (HMIC, 2004 in Loveday, 2005). However, Wynnick and Calcott (2006) identified a source of possible language and community skills amongst PCSOs currently not being exploited. They recommend further analysis of applicants' personal data to match skills and requirements of the local area. Johnston et al (2004) also suggested that mechanisms are introduced to identify and tap into the skills of diverse PCSO recruits.

Despite benefits to both communities and the police service, of employing a diverse workforce, Johnston et al (2004) found that many police officers view it in terms of the practical difficulties it may present. The CRE (2005) has referred to a 'tilt point' (estimated to be between 15% and 30%) at which BME officers are numerous enough to have an impact on the police service's culture. The 'trickle' of BME police officer recruits to date may have led to their being 'submerged into the majority culture', however the success of larger scale recruitment of PCSOs from a range of backgrounds may have the potential to make a more notable impact on the services' culture.

Various studies (Johnston, 2006 & forthcoming); Bellos, 2004) have highlighted how the creation of a diverse police workforce is not simply about

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[8] From the outset PCSO applications were welcomed from those who required flexible working arrangements (MPA, 7 March 2002; MPA, 21 May 2002).

'headcounts' and numerical targets, but also the ability of an organisation to 'change with the times' (Bellos, 2004). Recruiting a diverse police workforce will not automatically result in better policing of diverse communities (Johnston, 2006 & forthcoming). As Bellos (2004) argued, the real benefits that diversity brings to policing will only be realised when the workforce understand and are part of the communities they serve – a key component of the PCSO role[9]. However, Cathcart (2004) argued that the police service was unrepresentative not only via limited demographics of the workforce but also the distinct culture which sets it apart from society and makes it appear inaccessible to the public. It is envisioned that the community focused nature of the PCSO role will assist in overcoming this further perceived barrier to achieving a police service that is fully representative of the community it serves.

Stakeholder interviews

This section summarises findings from semi-structured discussions with 16 key stakeholders from the MPA, MPS and Home Office. Interviewees were from a number of business areas including the MPA Race and Diversity Unit, MPS Recruitment, Advertising and Marketing teams, Public and Commercial Services (PCS) Union representatives, and operational police officers involved in the PCSO and Safer Neighbourhoods initiative. Stakeholders were asked their opinions of what factors they thought attracted people to apply for the PCSO role, any perceived barriers to applying for the role, and some tailored questions depending on their specialist area of work (e.g. marketing or recruitment).

Advertising

Bold, simple campaigns were utilised to advertise the PCSO role. The first tranche introduced the role as 'something new is coming to London' followed by the 'make a visible difference' campaign. At the time of writing, it was planned to follow this campaign with advertisements showing how PCSOs are making a difference to communities. A number of focus groups were conducted to inform the advertising campaigns, together with the results of other pieces of research into effective PCSO recruitment advertising.

MPS advertising and marketing colleagues reported that campaigns targeted at particular groups were not necessary to achieve a representative PCSO applicant pool – also the case for Special Constables. They also mentioned that efforts to target advertising towards the ethnic media were often unsuccessful as members of BME communities rarely look to these types of publications for vacancies, preferring to access mainstream press such as the Evening Standard.

Instead, campaigns targeted at particular ethnic groups are often used to inform friends and family of potential applicants, encouraging them to support

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[9] Unlike police officers (who are employed across the Metropolitan Police District as a whole) PCSOs are attached to local borough commands, which may lead to greater understanding of the community they serve (MPA, 7 March 2002).
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their decision to join the service – a factor that often influences an individual's decision to apply, particularly those from BME communities. Stone and Tuffin (2000) highlighted the importance of making recruitment information available in a variety of languages to obtain support of the older generations who may be influential in a younger family members' decision to join the police service.

Recruitment advertisements for the PCSO role have also proved useful in informing the general public about the role and this was often used to shape their ideas of how the role can help them and their community. One colleague mentioned an incident where a shopkeeper introduced himself to a new PCSO in his area and described what he envisioned his role to be and how he could help his business.

Recruitment process

HR personnel provided details of the change in the PCSO selection and recruitment process since the introduction of the role. The selection process has developed from a basic interview to a 'job relevant and reliable' process testing for a number of competencies including resilience, teamwork, effective communication and respect for diversity – more in line with the police officer selection process[10]. The introduction of a national model for PCSO recruitment may further change this. A few stakeholder interviewees mentioned that applicants who are 'borderline' unsuccessful at police officer recruitment, or successful police officer applicants who faced a lengthy wait for a training place at Hendon, were sometimes invited to become PCSOs.

Attractions to the role

Stakeholders interviewed commented that the PCSO role was often perceived as less confrontational and that potential applicants and their family/friends were less likely to have previously come into conflict with PCSOs than police officers. Stakeholders often mentioned the stigma and history that was perceived to surround the police officer role but not the 'new' community focused PCSO role. A colleague mentioned how it was often the role of police officer – not the MPS as a whole – that carried with it negative perceptions. Therefore the PCSO role was perhaps less likely to be considered in negative terms for some underrepresented groups. In some communities a career in the police service is not afforded high status, which may be why certain groups are underrepresented, however this does not explain why the role of PCSO may be seen as a more appealing career option. Some previous marketing strategies have referred to the macho 'rough and tumble' side of the police officer role, whereas the PCSO role has always been 'sold' as approachable, visible and community based – which again may be more attractive to certain groups.

Flexibility was a key point mentioned by many stakeholders. The more flexible nature of the PCSO role was seen as a reason why more people with care and domestic responsibilities were attracted to the role with its opportunities for term and part time working and a more sociable shift pattern. There was

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[10] Further information on the PCSO application and selection process can be found at www.metpolicecareers.co.uk/default.asp?action=article&ID=41.

also a perception that the police officer role is viewed as more dangerous than the PCSO role, resulting in some groups being more likely to be attracted to the latter.

MPS recruitment colleagues reported how some older PCSOs joined the service after a 'midlife career crisis' where they were either made redundant or wanted to try a different role after being office based for many years. The heavily competency based police officer application form may be challenging for younger applicants, with limited life and work experience, to complete. Although the PCSO application is still competency based, it may be more accessible for younger applicants – who, in some areas, are being encouraged to join as a PCSO to build experience and skills before applying to be a police officer. Accelerated time from expression of interest to start date for PCSOs, which is often considerably faster than for the police officer role, was also recognised by stakeholders as a possible attraction to the role.

The PCSO training programme was also cited as a possible reason for more diversity amongst PCSO recruits. One stakeholder commented on the full time, 18-week, residential police officer training course possibly being less accessible for some groups compared to the 5-week, non-residential PCSO course. In addition, becoming a police officer was often viewed as a lifelong career move and applicants who do not intend to remain in the police service for a long period of time may be more attracted to the PCSO role.

Previous research (e.g. Home Office, 2005; Office of the Deputy Prime Minster, 2005) suggests that BME groups are more likely to live in deprived areas and experience poor education outcomes. One interviewee mentioned how this may impact upon chances of success at police officer recruitment, which is slightly more challenging than PCSO recruitment and more linked with educational attainment. In addition, these factors are often related to earning a low salary, hence the reasonable salary attached to the PCSO role may be a main attraction for some groups. While English as an additional language was recognised as a barrier to success for both police officer and PCSO recruitment, stakeholders felt that this was less notable for the latter.

Similar to findings of previous research (e.g. Cooper et al, 2006; Johnston, 2005), a common view of stakeholders was that some PCSOs viewed the role as a 'stepping stone' to becoming a regular police officer, enabling an individual to 'test out' the MPS before deciding whether they would like to become a police officer. However, one interviewee felt that many PCSOs go on to become police officers due to the limited career structure within the PCSO role. It was proposed that this should be addressed, rather than simply encouraging successful PCSOs to consider applying to become a police officer to obtain job satisfaction.

A final issue that arose in stakeholder interviews was around successes of the role and how the introduction of PCSOs has improved the service that the MPS provides to London's communities. Stakeholders highlighted how communication between officers and members of the public from the same demographic group was often better than dialogue between those with little in common. The success of the PCSO role in recruiting a more diverse workforce has the potential to notably improve police-public relations with

underrepresented groups the police may have failed to reach. Another interviewee stated that employing a diverse workforce 'simply makes good business sense', improving trust and relationships between the community and police and benefiting both. He felt that communities that trusted the police were more likely to give information that could be used as intelligence, assist in improving performance and further improve trust. It was felt that officers who understood the communities they policed were most likely to increase this level of trust.

Summary

This section has presented a selection of key findings from studies to date on the PCSO initiative and discussions with key stakeholders in the field. As outlined above, many previous studies have focused on the logistics of recruiting and training PCSOs, together with details of their motivation for applying for the role and opportunities for career progression. A number of studies (e.g. Johnston et al, 2004; Johnston, 2005, 2006 & forthcoming; Cooper et al, 2006) have highlighted the dual function of the PCSO role in both improving public reassurance and 'diversifying' the police service, making it more representative of the communities it serves (Johnston, forthcoming).

However, few studies have fully considered reasons why the PCSO role has been more successful in recruiting underrepresented groups than the police officer role. The current study will investigate this issue further, and contribute to understanding the diversity of PCSOs, and the impact of this on the police service as a whole.

Chapter two: Methodology

A multi-method approach was used to address the research questions, including analysis of quantitative data, semi-structured interviews with PCSOs and a postal survey of the MPA SLP[11]. This section will discuss each of these methods in more detail and highlight some of the limitations they presented.

Quantitative data

To investigate differences in the gender, ethnicity, age, disability, faith and sexual orientation of PCSO and police officer applicants, recruits and PCSO leavers, data was requested for the two most recent financial years (April 2004 to March 2006). Unfortunately, data regarding sexual orientation of employees is not recorded on the MPS HR system and although some disability data is recorded it is considered to be very unreliable. Furthermore, much of the faith data for PCSO and police officer recruits was incomplete, perhaps because completion of this field is voluntary. As such, the focus of the quantitative data analysis was on the ethnicity, age and gender of PCSO and police officer applicants and recruits, and those PCSOs who left the role (often referred to as 'wastage'). Data was imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis of the demographic profile of those who applied and were recruited as PCSOs and police officers, the attrition between these two stages, and those PCSOs who left and their reasons for doing so.

To identify in detail the particular groups that were more represented amongst PCSO than police officer recruits, cross tabulations of age, ethnicity and gender of both sets of recruit data were analysed. This analysis also formed the basis of interview sample specifications. Recruit, rather than total strength (all current employees) data, for the previous two financial years was analysed to identify more recent trends and take account of changes in the PCSO application and selection process (since April 2004 there have been fewer changes to this process). Analysis of PCSO and police officer recruit data rather than total strength data also provides a fairer comparison as police officers have been in existence much longer than PCSOs.

Interviews with PCSOs

To obtain 'first-hand' opinions to inform the research, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 45 serving MPS PCSOs.

Sample selection

As the research focused on why there was more diversity amongst PCSO than police officer recruits, demographic groups for which there were more (proportionately and in number) PCSOs than police officers were identified to form the basis of the interview sample. In relation to ethnicity, the greatest difference was noted for Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black African and Black British groups. Analysis of the age data indicated there were higher proportions of PCSO recruits than police officer recruits in the slightly younger

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[11] Further details of the Safer London Panel are included later in the chapter.

and older age groups (approximately 25 years and under and 36 years and over).

The proportions of PCSO and police officer recruits in each age group for each of the selected ethnic groups were compared to determine where there were differences (and consequently which groups of PCSOs to interview). It was found that there were proportionately more Bangladeshi and Pakistani PCSO recruits in the younger (18-20 and 21-25) age groups than there were Bangladeshi and Pakistani police officer recruits in these age groups. Therefore the interview sample included Bangladeshi and Pakistani PCSOs between the ages of 18 and 25 years. For Black African and Black British PCSO and police officer recruits however, there was minimal difference in the age breakdowns, therefore a sample of Black African and Black British PCSOs across all age groups was selected for interview. As the data also revealed a higher proportion of PCSO recruits in the older age groups, and more White British PCSO recruits aged 18 to 20 and 46 years and older than White British police officer recruits, a small sample of White British PCSOs in these age groups were also selected for interview.

Although there was not a particularly notable difference in the gender breakdowns of PCSO and police officer recruits, analysis of age by gender revealed higher numbers of female PCSO recruits aged between 18 and 20 years and 41 years and older. Similarly, there were also higher numbers of male PCSOs in the age groups 18 to 20 and 46 years and older. An even split of both male and female interviewees was sought.

Contacting PCSOs for interview

To maintain confidentiality of the recruit data and ensure voluntary participation, a colleague in the Met HR team emailed a letter (see Appendix 1), inviting PCSOs to take part in an interview, to a selection of those who met the demographic requirements of the sample. PCSOs who were interested in taking part in the research contacted the researchers directly and arrangements were made for the interview to take part at a time and location convenient to the interviewee – usually the police station or Safer Neighbourhoods Team office[12]. The required number of interviewees had not been reached after initial interest in participating diminished, therefore the Met HR team emailed a further selection of PCSOs who met the demographic requirements. In addition, some senior police officers were asked for their assistance in advertising this study to Pakistani and Bangladeshi PCSOs, for which interviewee numbers were low.

A total of 13 Black African (various ages), 11 Black British (various ages), seven Pakistani (aged 18-25 years), five Bangladeshi (aged 18-25 years), two Bangladeshi (aged 26-40 years), one White British (aged 18-20 years) and six White British (aged 46 years and older) PCSOs were interviewed. Of all PCSOs interviewed, 13 were female. See Appendix 2 for a more detailed breakdown of the demographic profiles of each group.

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[12] A health and safety schedule was drawn up to inform the fieldwork, which included guidance around safe interviewing practices.

Interview questions

Based on discussions with MPA, MPS and Home Office colleagues and piloting a draft questionnaire, open-ended interview questions for PCSOs were structured around the following:

- ❑ reasons for applying for the role;
- ❑ views on the police officer role;
- ❑ reasons why particular diverse groups may not apply for the role of PCSO and police officer;
- ❑ intentions of becoming a police officer; and
- ❑ reasons why there is more diversity amongst PCSOs than police officers.

The interview schedule used for interviewing PCSOs is attached at Appendix 3.

Analysis of PCSO interview data

Interviewee responses to each question were entered into Microsoft Excel. The researchers agreed a list of categories (coding schedule) and interviewee responses to each question were coded to these categories accordingly. Common responses were initially identified by producing summary tables of the data, then by verifying themes against individual responses where necessary. Individuals' quotes that supported key themes across respondents were paraphrased in the report to further illustrate findings.

Responses were analysed by ethnic group (Bangladeshi, Black African, Black British, Pakistani and White British), gender and age group (18-25, 26-40 and 41 years and older). As there were proportionately more PCSO than police officer recruits who were younger and slightly older, it was felt that it would be useful to look at any differences in interviewee responses by age group. As the quantitative data indicated there were more PCSO recruits aged 18 to 25 years than police officer recruits, this age bracket constituted the younger age group. It was less clear which age groups should be chosen to allocate the remaining respondents to: there were proportionately more PCSO than police officer recruits aged 36 years and older, a higher number of females were older than 41 years of age, and a higher number of males were older than 46 years of age. However, in considering the spread of the data, defining the older age group as 41 years and older (and therefore the remaining age group as 26-40 years) provided a reasonably even frequency of respondents in each age group. Therefore the age groups chosen to analyse interview responses by were 18 to 25, 26 to 40 and 41 years and older. Responses were also analysed by gender. However, as there were almost twice as many male than female interviewees, any findings attributed to gender should be considered with caution.

Analysis of interviewee responses was presented by theme: reasons for applying for the PCSO role and views of the role; reasons why PCSOs are interested in the police officer role after being a PCSO, rather than applying from the outset; reasons why people from particular groups may not apply for

the PCSO and police officer role; and why there is more diversity amongst PCSO than police officer recruits.

Survey of Safer London Panel (SLP)

It was felt that a survey of public perceptions around attractions to becoming a PCSO or police officer and any perceived reasons preventing someone from an underrepresented group applying would add a further dimension to the research. Resource constraints on the project meant that a large-scale public perception survey was unfeasible however there was an opportunity to obtain the views of the public through existing MPA resources such as the SLP.

The SLP was established by the MPA in June 2004 to further support the Authority's strategic responsibility to consult with Londoners on policing issues. The Panel is made up of almost 3,000 people, is representative of the capital in terms of ethnicity, age, gender and disability (according to the Census 2001), and is managed for the Authority by the Office for Public management (OPM). The Panel is involved in a number of consultation and engagement activities around areas such as annual policing priorities and the effectiveness of community-police engagement.

A brief overview of the research and a survey consisting of four questions was included in the July 2006 newsletter circulated to 2,877 members of the SLP. A copy of the survey is attached at Appendix 4. The questions were structured around similar themes to those in the PCSO interview schedule and covered: attractions to the PCSO role; reasons that may prevent someone from applying to be a PCSO or police officer; and suggested reasons why there is more diversity amongst PCSO recruits than police officer recruits. Respondents were also asked to specify their demographic details[13].

Of the 2,877 surveys sent out, 189 (6.5%) were returned to OPM who entered the raw data into Microsoft Excel and forwarded it to the researchers for analysis[14]. A list of categories to code responses by (coding schedule) was agreed and responses were coded accordingly. Summary tables identified common responses across respondents however due to the very low response rate the data was analysed by question, as one whole group – rather than analysing for differences between demographics of respondents.

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[13] Alternative response methods were available for those unable to respond via written postal survey.
[14] See Appendix 5 for a demographic breakdown of respondents.

Methodological limitations

As outlined above, the study drew upon a number of information sources to address the research questions. This allowed for triangulation of data to enhance the robustness and reliability of findings. However, the methods used did pose some limitations and the findings should be contextualised by considering the following:

- quantitative data: the MPS collects and uses ethnicity data as classified by the individual, some of which may not be mutually exclusive (e.g. Black African and Black British). In addition, incomplete fields also appeared in the data, particularly in relation to faith;

- demographic data: for the purposes of this study, PCSO and police officer applicants and recruits defined as coming from a BME community included those from all ethnic groups except White British. Comparability of findings in this study with other research will depend on the definition of BME in other studies;

- scope of interviews: limited resources meant that only 45 interviews with PCSOs were conducted. As such, responses are not likely to be representative of all PCSOs and reliable quantitative analysis of results was not possible. Key themes were identified and quotes have been paraphrased to illustrate these where appropriate. It was also not possible to interview other members of the extended police family (e.g. police officers, police cadets, traffic wardens or special constables);

- self-selected interview sample: participation in the interviews was entirely voluntary. As such, PCSOs interviewed were not randomly selected which also limits the extent to which results can be generalised;

- control group: the interview sample did not include a control group of police officers from diverse groups or other PCSOs as it was considered a better use of resources to interview a larger sample of PCSOs;

- selection and recruitment process: the PCSO selection and recruitment process has changed considerably since the PCSO role was first introduced and, although efforts to minimise the effects of the data have been taken, this will have an impact on the recruit and interview data;

- use of recruit vs. strength data: as previously mentioned, the quantitative data analysis and specifications for the interview sample were based on recruit data for the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2006. However, the interview invitation was sent to all those PCSOs who met the demographic specifications so the two data sets are not directly comparable (i.e. PCSOs who were recruited more than two years ago were included as interviewees); and

❑ low response rate from the SLP: Postal surveys typically achieve a lower response rate than telephone or personal interviews (De Vaus, 2002) and a very low response rate was achieved from the survey (6.5%). As such these results are not generalisable and should only be considered, where relevant, in support of findings from the other aspects of the research.

In light of the limitations of the methodology, conclusions made from the results of the data analysis are, where possible, based on findings from more than one source.

Chapter three: Results

Quantitative data analysis

PCSO and police officer applicant and recruit data and PCSO leaver (wastage) data for the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2006 were analysed for differences in ethnicity, age and gender both within and between the PCSO and police officer roles. The following section presents the findings of this analysis, firstly comparing any differences between applicants and recruits for both roles, and then presenting analysis in relation to those PCSOs who left the role.

Analysis of PCSO and police officer applicant and recruit data

A total of 7,324 and 4,472 people applied to be PCSOs and police officers respectively, and 1,538 and 2,879 people were recruited respectively during the period. Analysis of this data by demographics identified some differences due to age, ethnicity and gender and the findings are presented below.

Gender
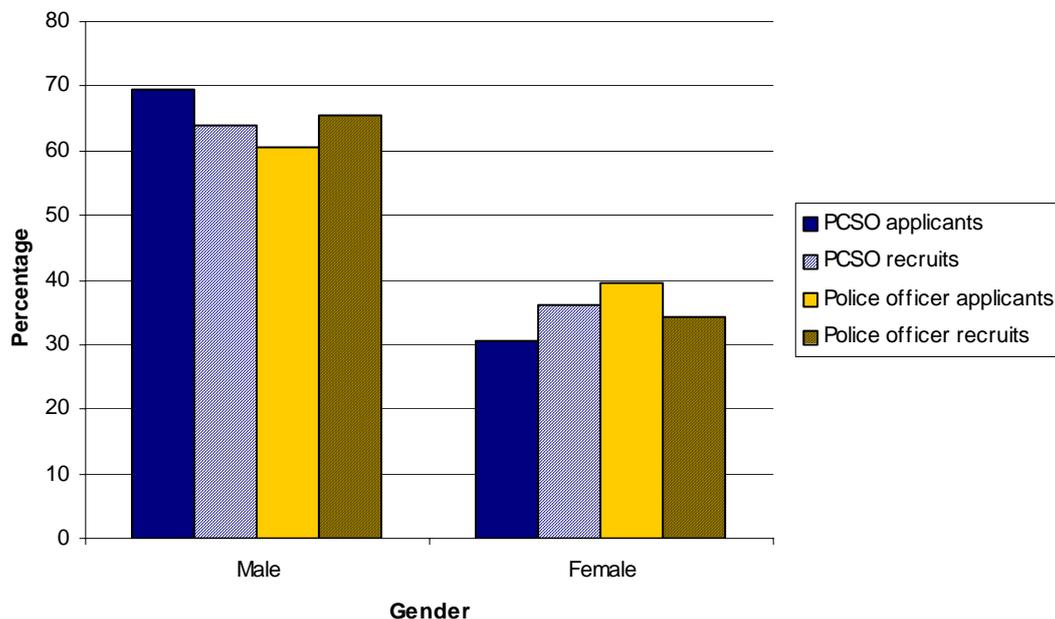
Figure 1: PCSO and police officer applicants and recruits by gender (1 April 2004 – 31 March 2006)

The proportion of female PCSOs recruited during the period did not differ greatly to police officers (36% vs. 34% respectively).

However, there was a higher proportion of female PCSO recruits than applicants, perhaps suggesting that more female applicants are successful

than their male counterparts[15]. However the reverse of this trend is true for police officer applicants and recruits: a higher proportion of police officer applicants than recruits are female.

Age
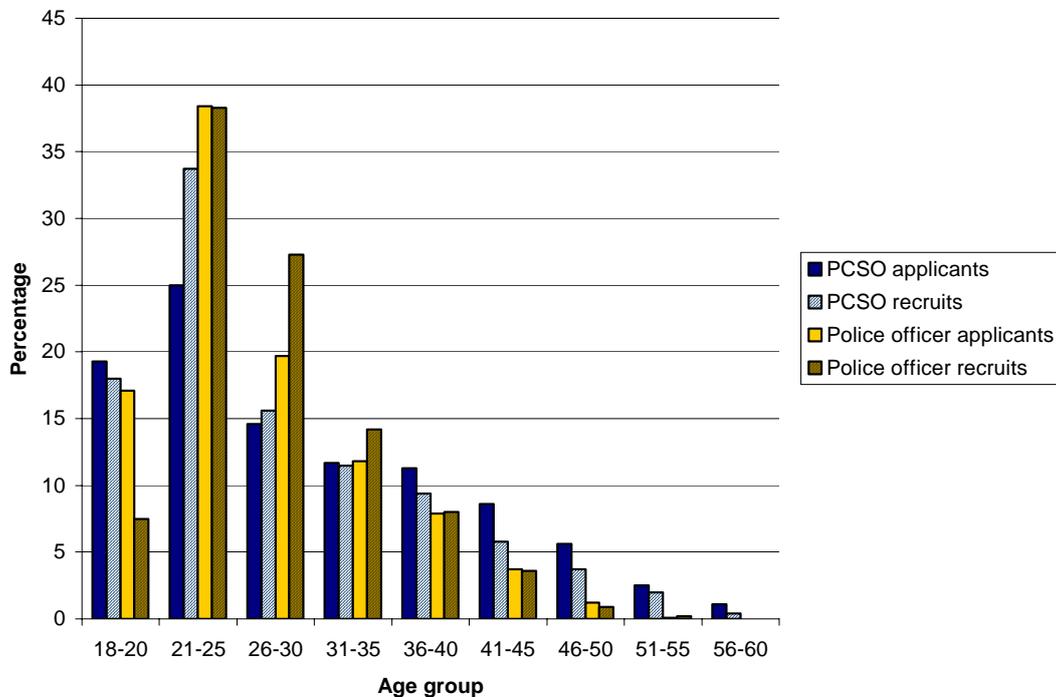
Figure 2: PCSO and police officer applicants and recruits by age group (1 April 2004 – 31 March 2006)

During the period there was greater diversity in the ages of PCSO and police officer applicants than recruits.

There were proportionately more applicants than recruits in the 18 to 20 year age group for both the PCSO and police officer roles. It appeared that for the police officer role there were proportionately more recruits aged between 26 to 30 years and 31 to 35 years than applicants in these age groups, suggesting there were proportionately more applicants across the other age groups than recruits. For the PCSO role there was a similar trend to that for the police officer role, of proportionately more recruits than applicants, but for the slightly younger age groups (21-25 and 26-30 years). Analysis of the recruit data alone suggested there were proportionately more PCSO than police officer recruits aged between 18 to 20 years and 36 years and older.

Analysis of PCSO and police officer recruit data by age and gender was also carried out. The results of this analysis identified more female PCSO recruits in the age groups 18 to 20 years and 41 years and older than female police officer recruits in these age groups. There were also more male PCSO

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[15] This interpretation should be treated with caution as although the recruit and applicant data are taken from the same time period, it does not necessarily follow that the same individuals fall in to both groups.

recruits in the age groups 18 to 20 years and older than 46 years of age than male police officer recruits in these age groups.

Ethnicity
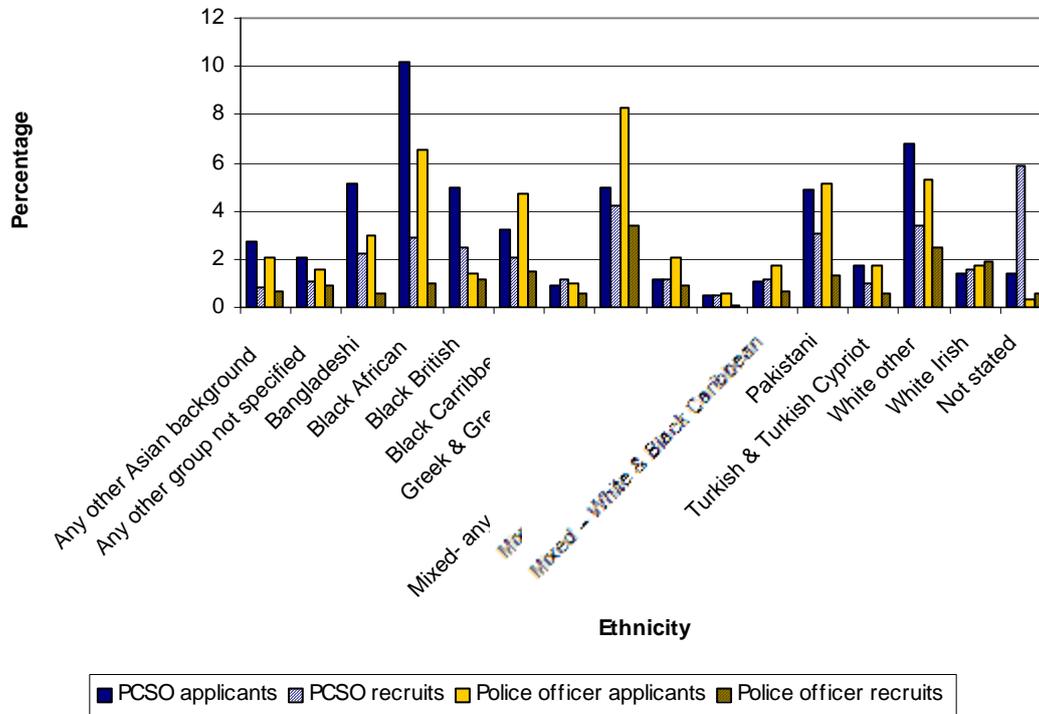
Figure 3: Most commonly identified ethnicities of PCSO and police officer applicants and recruits, excluding White British (1 April 2004 – 31 March 2006)

Although not presented in figure 3, for both PCSO and police officer applicants and recruits during the period, the most common ethnic group identified was White British: 44.9% and 49.8% (applicants) respectively, and 63.5% and 79.7% (recruits) respectively.

There was a higher proportion of PCSO applicants (55.1%) than police officer applicants (50.2%) from BME communities[16]. Figure 3 illustrates that, with the exception of certain ethnic groups[17], there was a higher proportion of BME applicants than recruits for both the PCSO and police officer role. There was a particularly marked difference between the proportions of Black African applicants and recruits in both the PCSO and police officer data. More specifically, 10.2% of PCSO applicants were Black African compared to only 2.9% of recruits. Similarly, 6.5% of police officer applicants were Black African and only 1.0% of recruits.

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[16] For the purposes of this study, all non-White British PCSOs and police officers were considered to come from a BME community.
[17] White Irish, Greek & Greek Cypriot, Mixed – White and Black African, Mixed - White and Black Caribbean and applicants and recruits from any other background.

Overall, with the exception of White Irish, there was a higher proportion of PCSO recruits from BME communities than police officer recruits. Even more interesting is that during the period there were numerically more Pakistani, Black British, Black African, Bangladeshi, Greek/Greek Cypriot and Mixed (White/Black African) PCSOs recruited than police officer recruits. When considering the notably higher number of police officers than PCSOs recruited during this period (2,879 police officers vs. 1,538 PCSOs), this finding becomes even more prominent.

Data were analysed by ethnicity and age group, which revealed proportionately more Bangladeshi and Pakistani PCSO recruits than police officer recruits in the younger (18-20 and 21-25) age groups. In addition, there were proportionately more White British PCSOs aged 18 to 20 and 46 years and older, than there were police officers.

Analysis of reasons given by PCSOs who leave the role

A total of 592 PCSOs left the role during the period. This data was analysed by gender, age, ethnicity and leaving reason. Comparisons were also made between the demographic profiles of those who left the role with those recruited, and those who left the role to become a police officer and police officer recruits. Findings are presented by analysis in relation to gender, age and ethnicity.

<u>*Gender*</u>
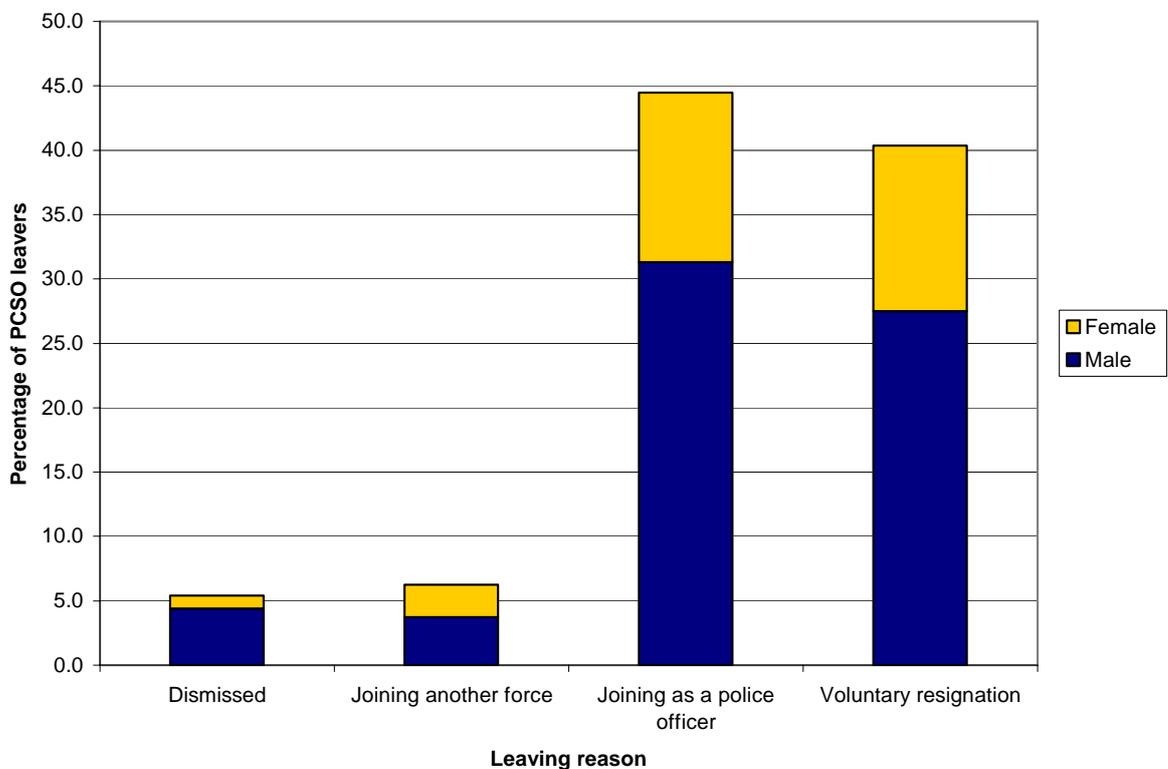
Figure 4: Proportions of male and female PCSOs who left the role, by most common reason for leaving (1 April 2004 – 31 March 2006)

The most common reason that both male and female PCSOs gave for leaving the role was to join as a police officer (44.7% and 44.1% respectively), followed by voluntary resignation (39.4% and 42.9% respectively).

Compared with the proportion of all PCSO recruits who were female (36%), a lower proportion of all PCSOs who left the role to become police officers were female (29.7%). This was also lower than the proportion of police officer recruits who were female (34.4%).

Age

Two types of analysis were used to identify differences in leaving reasons of PCSOs due to age: reason for leaving by age group and the age distribution by reason for leaving.
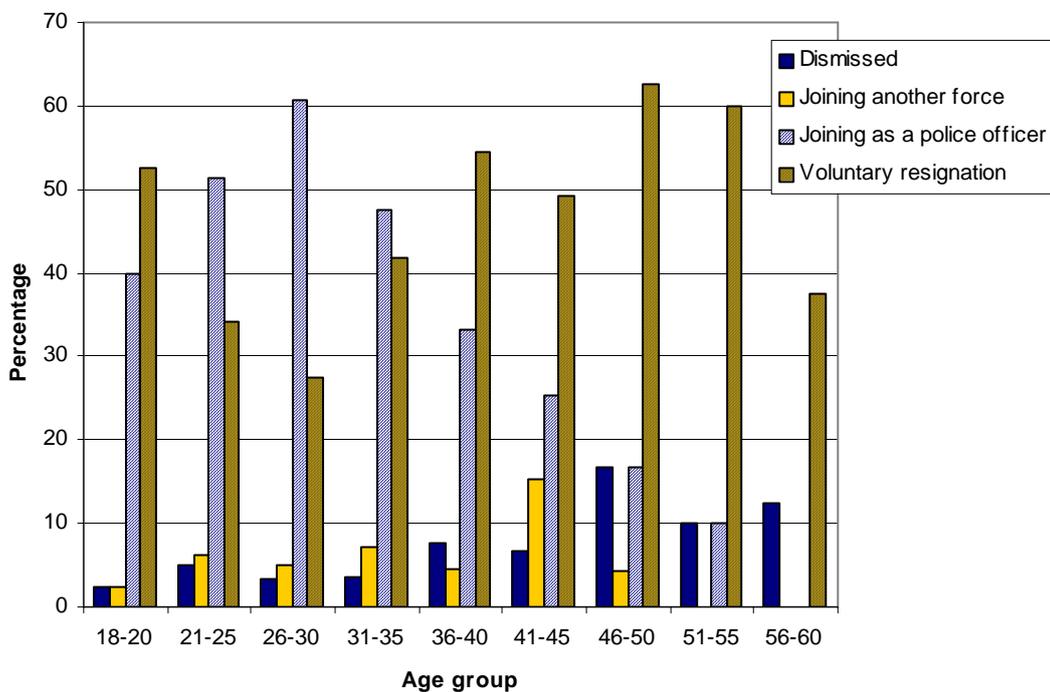
Figure 5: Most common reason PCSOs left the role by age group (1 April 2004 – 31 March 2006)

The most common reason given by PCSOs aged between 21 and 35 years who left the role was to join as a police officer. For PCSOs aged between 18 to 20 years and 36 to 55 years who left the role, the most common reason was voluntary resignation. The most common reason that PCSOs aged 56 to 60 years left the role was due to ordinary retirement.
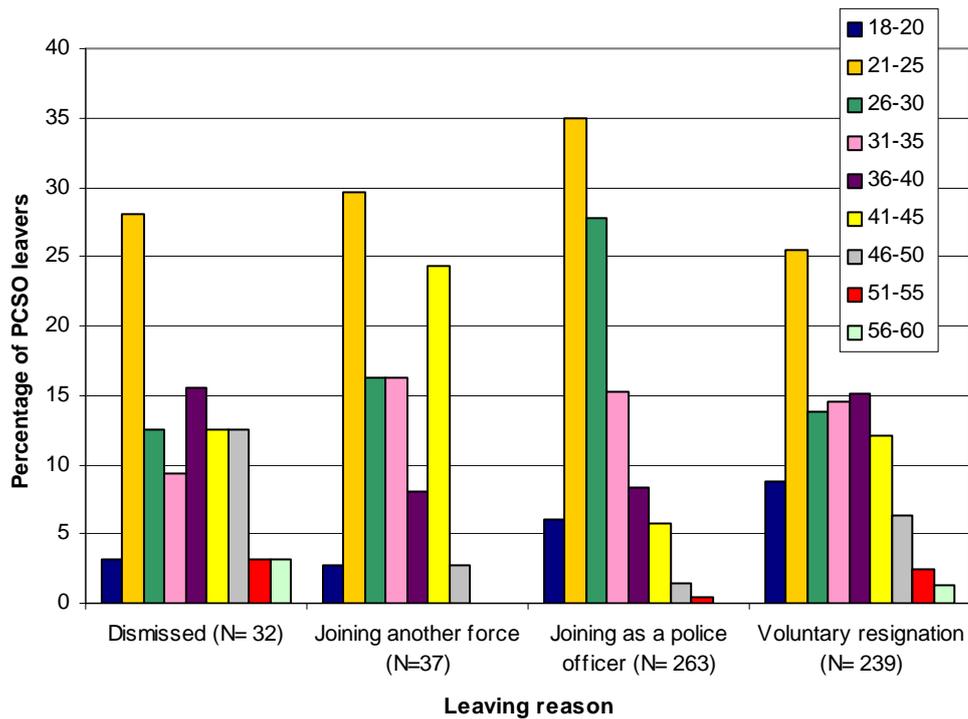
Figure 6: Age group breakdowns for PCSOs who left the role, by most common reason for leaving (1 April 2004 – 31 March 2006)

Across the four most common types of leaving reason, the largest proportion of PCSOs who left the role was between the ages of 21 and 25 years.

The age group breakdown of those PCSOs who left the role to join as a police officer was roughly the same as the age group breakdown for PCSO recruits, with the exception being fewer PCSOs aged between 18 and 20 years and more aged between 26 and 30 years who left the role to become a police officer. Almost two-thirds (62.8%) of PCSOs who left the role to join as a police officer were aged between 21 and 30 years, similar to the age breakdown of police officer recruits generally (65.6% of police recruits).
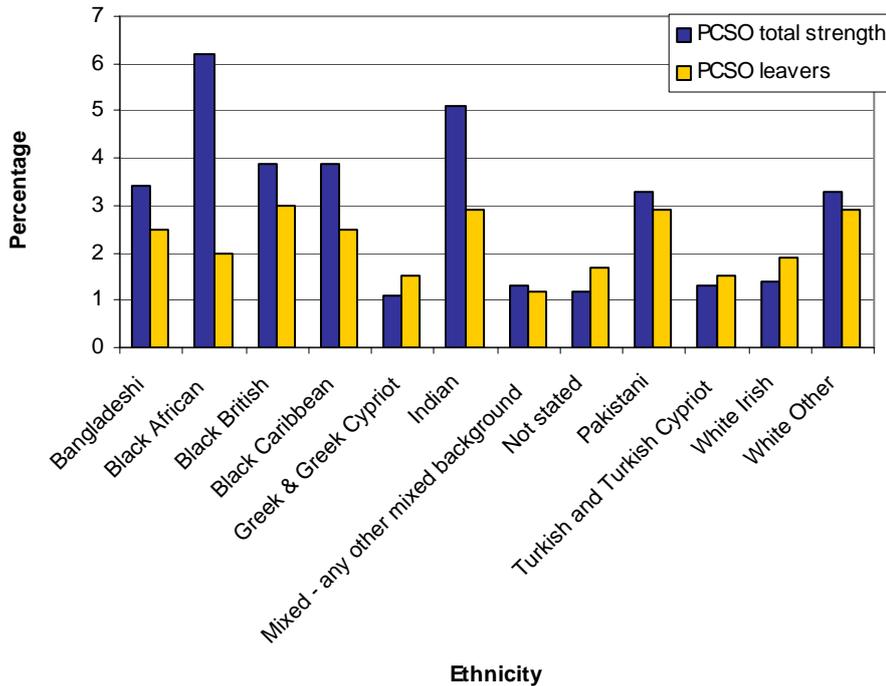
Figure 7: Proportions of BME PCSOs across the total PCSO population (as at 31 March 2006) compared with proportions of BME PCSOs who left the role (1 April 2004 – 31 March 2006)

Although not presented in figure 7 above, 63.3% of PCSOs who left the role during the period were White British, higher than the proportion of White British PCSOs (57.8%) in the total PCSO population. With the exception of Greek & Greek Cypriot, Turkish & Turkish Cypriot and White Irish PCSOs (and those who did not state their ethnicity), there was a lower proportion of BME PCSOs who left the role than there were in the total PCSO population.
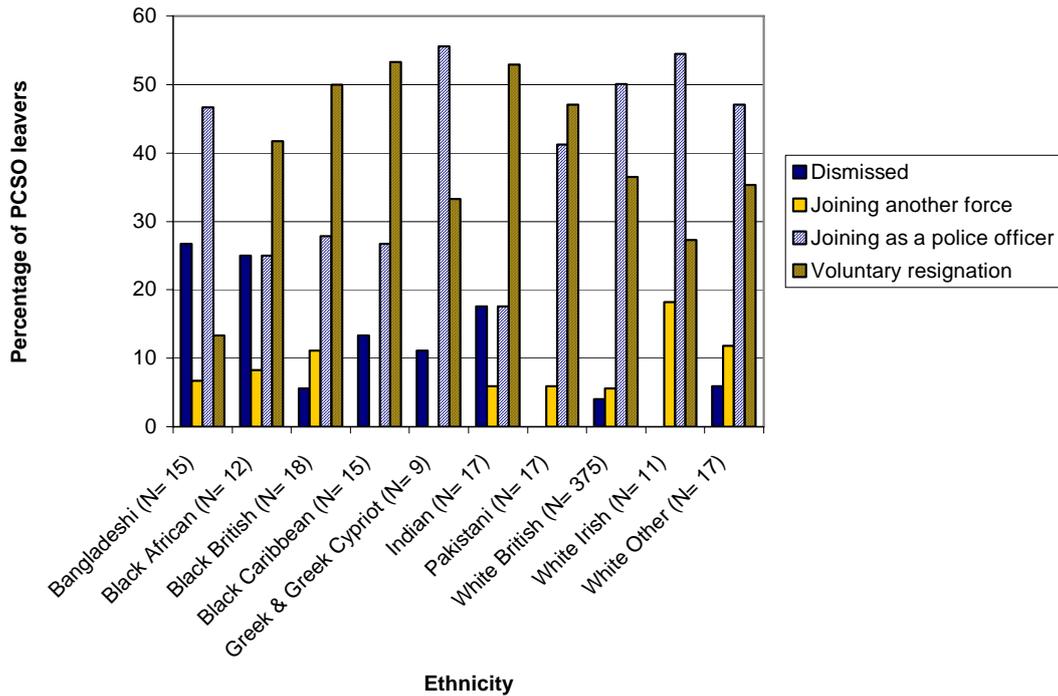
Figure 8: Reasons for PCSOs leaving the role for each ethnic group (1 April 2004 – 31 March 2006)

For Bangladeshi, Greek/Greek Cypriot, White British, White Irish and White Other PCSOs who left the role during the period April 2004 to March 2006, the most common reason for doing so was to join as a police officer. However, for Black African, Black British, Black Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani PCSOs who left the role, the most common reason for doing so was voluntary resignation.
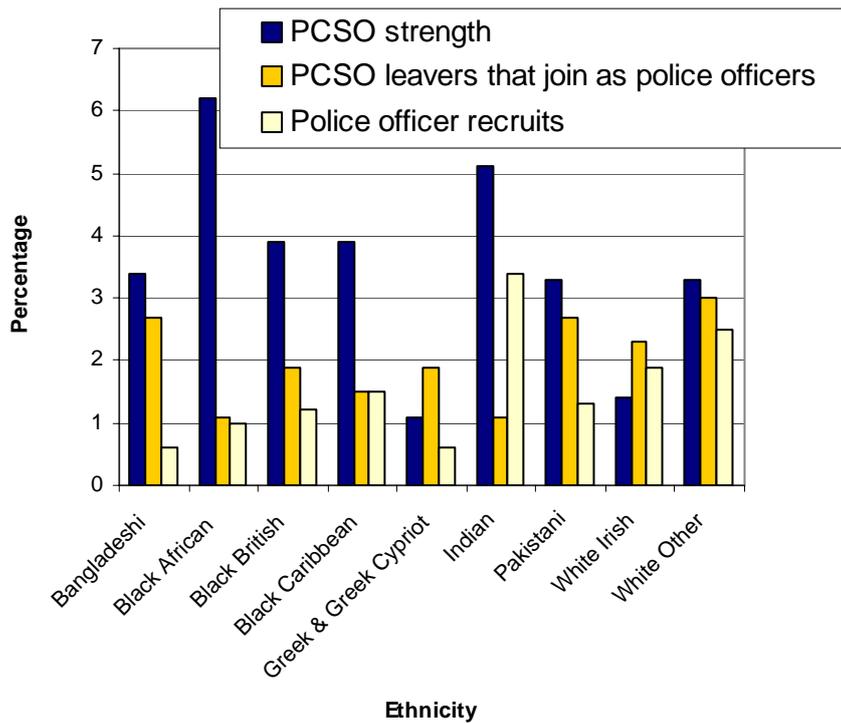
Figure 9: Comparisons of percentages of PCSOs (at 31 March 2006) who left the role to join as a police officer and police officers recruited (1 April 2004 - 31 March 2006) who were from BME groups

Although not shown in figure 9, the proportion of PCSO leavers who joined as a police officer that were White British (71.5%) was closer to the proportion of police officer recruits that were White British (79.7%) than the proportion of PCSO recruits from this ethnic group (57.8%). With the exception of Indian PCSOs who left the role to join as a police officer, there was a higher proportion of PCSOs leaving the role to join as a police officer from BME communities than there were BME police officer recruits.

This difference was particularly marked for those who defined their ethnicity as Bangladeshi: 2.6% left the role to become a police officer compared to 0.6% of police officer recruits from this ethnic group.

Analysis of PCSO interviews

In total 45 semi-structured interviews were conducted with serving MPS PCSOs across a range of boroughs. As discussed in the methodology section, responses were analysed by gender, age and ethnicity. A brief description of the profile of these groups is presented below and in further detail at Appendix 2. The reader is advised to bear these profiles in mind when considering the results presented in this section.

Gender

The majority (32) of the PCSOs interviewed were male, of who over a third (13) were aged 18 to 25 years. A further nine were aged 26 to 40 years, with the remainder aged 41 years and older. Over a quarter (9) of male interviewees were Black African, with a further seven Bangladeshi, six Black British, six Pakistani and four White British. Thirteen interviewees were female, of who over half (7) were aged 41 years and older. Four female interviewees were aged 26 to 40 years, with the remaining two aged 18 to 25 years.

Age

There were 15 PCSOs interviewed in the youngest age group (18-25 years). Of these, the majority were male (13) and either Pakistani or Bangladeshi (12). A further 13 interviewees were aged between 26 to 40 years. Again the majority (9) were male and their most common ethnicity was Black African (8). Interviews were carried out with 17 PCSOs aged 41 years and older, of who over half (10) were male. The ethnic profile of this age group was divided between White British (6), Black British (6) and Black African (5).

Ethnicity

Over a quarter (13) of PCSOs interviewed defined themselves as Black African. Of these, the majority (9) were male and all were aged 26 years and older. Eleven PCSOs interviewed were Black British, around half (6) of who were male. In addition, six Black British interviewees were aged 41 years and over. Seven White British PCSOs were interviewed, of who the majority (6) were aged 41 years or older with a relatively even gender split (4 males). Pakistani (7) and Bangladeshi (7) interviewees made up the rest of the sample. The interviewees in these ethnic groups were almost exclusively male (with the exception of one Pakistani female) and between the ages of 18 to 25 years (with the exception of two Bangladeshi PCSOs aged 26 years).

Reasons for applying to be a PCSO

Analysis of all responses given by PCSOs interviewed showed that almost half (19) applied for the role as they were interested in becoming a police officer and wanted to use the role as a 'stepping stone' or to gain experience. Over a quarter (13) were interested in policing related work and a similar number (11) saw the role as an opportunity to work with the community. Nine

respondents had previous experience either working for the police or in a security related environment. The MPS had advised eight respondents to become a PCSO before applying to be a police officer.

At the time of applying, over half of respondents (27) thought that the role would involve liaising with the community and being the link between them and the police. Fourteen respondents thought the role would involve patrolling and eleven envisioned the role to involve reassuring the public and being a visible presence. Just under a quarter (9) of respondents saw the role as working alongside and supporting police officers. The majority (27) of respondents stated that their view of the role differed now with a further seventeen stating it had not. The most common reason offered for why their view of the role differed was that they had not expected to be carrying out a specialist role (e.g. transport or security), that there were fewer or more restricted powers and that the role was more proactive than expected (6 each).

Gender

For female respondents, the most cited reasons for applying were similar to those revealed in the overall analysis: they saw it as an opportunity to work with the community and were interested in policing related work. Male interviewees also offered these reasons but were most likely to report they were interested in becoming a police officer and wanted to use the role as a 'stepping-stone' and/or to gain experience in policing related work (17 out of 32). A much smaller proportion (2 out of 13) of female respondents cited this as their reason for applying. One female respondent stated that she had originally wanted to be a police officer however childcare responsibilities prevented her attending the 18 week residential training course – a reason, she cited, that prevented a number of female recruits on her PCSO training course applying for the police officer role.

At the time of applying for the PCSO role, both male and female respondents most commonly thought that the role would involve liaising with the community and being the link between them and the police and patrolling – again similar to overall findings. A third (10 of 32) of male respondents thought the role would involve reassuring the public and being a visible presence – however only one female respondent had this perception of the role. Respondents' reasons for why the role differed to what they had expected varied by gender. Males felt they had fewer or more restricted powers (6) and received less training (4) than expected, and the role was more proactive than they thought it would be (5). With the exception of one female who agreed with the latter statement, no female respondents cited these reasons for why their view of the role differed from what they thought it would be like. Common reasons offered by this group were that there was more patrolling than expected (3) or that they weren't expecting to be in a specialist (e.g. traffic or security) role (3). A female traffic PCSO felt like a 'glorified traffic warden' and a security PCSO stated that the role of Safer Neighbourhood PCSO appealed to her but she couldn't afford to lose the shift allowance payment that she received in the security role. There was a sense

of higher levels of satisfaction amongst both male and female Safer Neighbourhood PCSOs than those in specialist roles. One female respondent stated that when she took part in Safer Neighbourhoods training it "all fell into place…community working, bringing stakeholders together". Male respondents in specialist roles indicated that their cultural understanding and skills were not being fully utilised and were more suited to a role within the Safer Neighbourhoods setting.

Age

The majority (11 out of 15) of younger (aged 18-25 years) PCSOs interviewed had applied for the role because they were interested in becoming a police officer and wanted to use the role as a stepping-stone and/or to gain experience. Of all age groups analysed, younger PCSOs were most likely to cite this as a reason for applying to be a PCSO. They were also most likely to have been advised by the MPS to become a PCSO before applying to be a police officer. Older PCSOs (41 years and over) were more likely to state that they applied for the role because they were interested in policing related work and saw the role as an opportunity to work with the community. This group was the least likely to be using the role as a stepping-stone to being a police officer. The older age group was most likely to state that they applied for the role because they wanted to make a positive difference within the MPS and/or wanted to make the MPS more approachable to BME communities (this may be a reflection of the ethnic profile of this age group). One older female Black British respondent had previously worked in a police staff role for twenty years and felt that the police weren't always fair to Black people, so she became a PCSO to 'build bridges' between the police and the Black community. Another older female Black African respondent thought that by becoming a PCSO she would make the police more approachable for people from her ethnic group.

When asked what they thought the role would be like when they applied, the most common reason given by all age groups was that it would involve liaising with, and being the link between, the police and community. This was most prominent for the older (41 years and over) age group (12). Respondents aged 18 to 40 years also thought that the role would involve reassuring the public and providing a visible presence (11). However, no older (41 years and over) respondents cited this. The majority of respondents in all age categories stated that their views of the job differed now they had been a PCSO for a while. This was most marked for the younger (18-25 years) age group and least for the older (41 years and over) age group. Reasons given were generally consistent with overall findings with no particular distinction between age groups. One respondent, in the 26 to 40 age group, felt that the lack of respect from the public for the PCSO role was a consequence of their limited powers and another respondent in the older age group (41 years and over) stated that the role was static and that PCSOs were capable of much more than just being a 'visible presence'. Younger (18-25 years) and older (41 years and over) respondents (2 each) felt they received less training than expected. One younger respondent felt that the training should include details of how to interact with police officers and that police officers should be taught more about PCSOs and their powers.

Similar to overall findings, the most common reason given by Bangladeshi (5) and Pakistani (6) respondents for applying to become a PCSO was that they were interested in becoming a police officer and wanted to use the role as a stepping-stone and/or to gain experience. This was largely a reflection of the demographic profile of this group – young and almost exclusively male. Black British (4) and Black African (4) respondents also gave this as a reason, although it was not the most common. However, no White British respondents claimed they had applied for this reason, again largely a reflection of the older age profile of this group. One young (18-25 years) Black British respondent stated that joining the MPS as a police officer was a 'big deal' within his community. Black African and Black British interviewees sometimes felt that although they wanted to 'make a difference' they were concerned about how their ethnicity would affect their reception by fellow officers and their own communities. However, joining as a PCSO was viewed as an opportunity to 'test the water'.

The most common reason for applying cited by both Black African (5 out of 13) and White British (3 out of 7) respondents was that the role offered an opportunity to work with the community. Previous analysis showed that this was a common reason amongst older groups in general, from which the Black African and White British sample largely derived. Black African respondents (4) also stated that they applied as the role was specifically targeted towards BME groups (this had directly encouraged one Black African female to apply) and because they wanted to make a positive difference within the MPS and make the police more approachable to BME communities (4). One male Black African respondent felt that his role in Safer Neighbourhoods allowed him to 'tap into' the Black community although he thought this would be made easier if he could work in plain-clothes, removing the stigma of the uniform.

With the exception of Bangladeshi respondents, the most common perception held by all ethnic groups regarding what the PCSO role would be like when they applied was similar to the overall analysis: liaising with the community and being the link between the community and the police. One Black African respondent thought the role would involve liaising to avoid a 'combat zone' in the community and resolving issues by communicating. Bangladeshi (4) and Pakistani (4) respondents largely thought the role would involve reassuring the public and providing a visible presence. Of all ethnic groups interviewed, Black African respondents (5) were most likely to think that the role would involve working alongside and supporting police officers.

When asked whether their view of the role differed now they had been a PCSO for a while, responses were fairly split between 'yes' and 'no' from Bangladeshi, Black and White British respondents. However, Pakistani (5) and Black African (10) respondents seemed more likely to state that the role did differ from what they thought it would be like when they applied. Reasons for this were not distinct. The most common reason offered by Black British (3) and Black African (3) respondents were that they did not expect to be in a

specialist role (this reason was only cited by these ethnic groups). One Black African Transport PCSO interviewed questioned what part of the 'community' he was actually 'supporting'. He saw his role as simply issuing tickets with little prospect of gaining any intelligence from the community. Black African respondents also stated that the role offered less respect from the public than expected (3). Bangladeshi, Black British and African respondents (2 each) felt that there were fewer or more restricted powers than expected. One male Black African respondent felt that he could diffuse certain situations in the Black community that an officer from another ethnic group may inflame if he had more powers to do so.

Intentions of becoming a police officer

At the time of applying to be a PCSO, the majority (33) of interviewees intended to become a police officer after being in the role for a while, or were considering it. Of these, ten respondents stated that they saw the PCSO role as an opportunity to 'test the water' in relation to working for the MPS and/or as a stepping-stone to becoming a police officer. Nine interviewees had originally applied to be a police officer.

When asked if they still intended to apply to become a police officer, fewer (21) interviewees now stated they did, with a further five considering it. Of these, five had already applied but failed, and eight were in the process of applying. Lack of respect for the PCSO role and limited options for promotion were common reasons mentioned by respondents who wanted to apply to be a police officer after having been in the PCSO role for a while (4 each).

The most commonly cited reason overall for not wanting to apply to be a police officer (either at PCSO recruitment stage or after) was that respondents (all 41 years and older) thought they were too old for the role (5 and 6 responses respectively).

In addition, although a common reason cited for applying for the PCSO role, some respondents indicated that using the role as a stepping stone/to test the water might instead deter people from applying to be a police officer. One interviewee mentioned that being a PCSO provided the opportunity to see what police officers "are really like" and also how much paperwork is involved. Another mentioned that, despite always wanting to be a police officer, he now felt that the extra few thousand pounds in salary is insufficient compensation for the amount of paperwork and unsociable hours associated with the police officer role. Another felt that some PCSOs may have originally wanted to become a police officer but changed their mind after seeing the way their colleagues and the public perceive them.

A higher proportion of male (25 out of 32) than female (8 out of 13) interviewees stated that at the time they applied to be a PCSO they either planned, or were considering applying, to become a police officer in due course. Similarly, a higher proportion of male (18 out of 32) than female (3 out of 13) respondents wanted to become a police officer having been in the PCSO role for a while.

Reasons given for wanting to become a police officer after being in the PCSO role for a while varied by gender. All interviewees who stated that they wanted more options for promotion were male (4). One interviewee commented that he would have remained in the PCSO role if there was a rank structure and an opportunity to specialise in particular areas, as was the case for the police officer role.

Of those respondents who did not want to apply to be a police officer having been a PCSO, males were more likely than females to state this was because they enjoyed being a PCSO (3), they wanted to remain in a community focused role (2), the police officer role involved too much extra work and responsibility for little extra money (2), the two-year probation period was off-putting (2) and the application process was daunting (2).

Female interviewees were more likely to mention work-life balance and previous negative experiences working within the MPS as reasons for not wanting to apply to be a police officer after being in the PCSO role for a while (2 each). One interviewee felt that she did not completely 'belong' and would be concerned that her colleagues would not assist her if she had to deal with serious incidents as a police officer.

Age

At the time of applying, all (15) younger (18 to 25 years) respondents wanted to become a police officer after being in the PCSO role for a while, or were at least considering it. A lower proportion of PCSOs in the 26 to 40 years age groups (10 out of 13) and even fewer in the 41 years and older age group (8 out of 17) had similar intentions. The majority (8) of those who had originally applied to be a police officer were between 18 and 40 years.

Only five of the ten 26 to 40 year old respondents who stated that they wanted to become a police officer at the time of applying to be a PCSO still planned to do so having been in the role for a while. There was little change in the numbers within other age groups. After being a PCSO for a while two respondents in the older (41 years and over) age group, who originally had no intention of becoming a police officer, were now considering applying.

Three young (18 to 25 years) respondents felt that the only way to be promoted was to become a police officer. One stated that he had joined as a PCSO at the age of 18 and "wasn't going to serve 30 years as a PCSO!" A couple of young respondents also expressed interest in MPS roles other than

becoming a police officer (e.g. human resources and recruitment). It is possible that these comments may be associated with the ethnicity (exclusively Pakistani or Bangladeshi) of respondents rather than their age. Older respondents (41 years and over) were the only group to state that they were deterred from applying to be a police officer as they felt it required too much commitment with less work/life balance than the PCSO role, but despite this two were in the process of applying.

Ethnicity

All Pakistani and Bangladeshi interviewees stated that at the time they applied to be a PCSO they either intended to become a police officer after they had been a PCSO for a while or were considering it. This may be a reflection of the young age profile of these ethnic groups. Most, but not all, Black African and Black British PCSO interviewees (9 out of 13 and 8 out of 11 respectively) had similar plans to become a police officer at the time of applying for the PCSO role. Only one of the seven White British interviewees stated this but, with the exception of this PCSO, the remainder of interviewees in this group were older than 41 years of age. With the exception of White British, there were slightly fewer respondents in each ethnic group who stated that they wanted to become a police officer now they had been in the PCSO role for a while. There were no apparent differences between the ethnicities of those who had previously applied to be a police officer but were unsuccessful, were advised by the MPS to be a PCSO before applying to be a police officer, or were in the process of applying. Similarly, there were no discernable patterns by ethnic group regarding reasons for or against becoming a police officer.

Reasons for not applying to be a police officer at the time of applying to be a PCSO

Respondents who indicated that they intended to become a police officer were asked why they did not apply for the role from the outset. The most common response given was that they actually had but were either unsuccessful or did not proceed with the application (16 interviewees)[18]. Of these the majority were male (12) and under 40 years of age (13). Ten interviewees wanted to use the PCSO role to gain more experience in a policing role, enabling them to make a more informed decision as to whether or not to apply for the police officer role. Six interviewees mentioned that the long wait for a police officer training place at Hendon had deterred them from applying.

Analysis of reasons for not applying for the police officer role from the outset revealed minimal differences between gender, age or ethnic categories, indicating that, for this sample, particular demographics had little influence.

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[18] Reasons for not proceeding with an application were both personal (feeling too young to commit to a career as a police officer) and administrative (MPS mislaying application form).

Reasons stopping people from diverse communities applying for the PCSO or police officer roles

When asked whether they thought there were any reasons why people from diverse communities may not apply for the PCSO role, 32 of the 45 respondents indicated there were. Considerably more (41) respondents felt there were reasons when asked the same question in relation to the police officer role.

For both the PCSO and police officer roles, a common reason offered was a perception that the MPS was racist or a "White man's organisation" (10 and 9 respondents respectively). Another reason cited was that the applicant, or someone they know, may have had previous negative experiences with the police (7 and 10 respondents respectively). Perceptions of "moving away from the community" or "selling out" were identified as reasons stopping people from diverse communities applying for either role (9 and 5 respondents respectively). Another commonly perceived barrier to applying for either role was the level of fitness required (5 each).

Other reasons given differed by role. A lack of confidence to pass the academic side of the assessment (7) and lack of respect for the role (5) were cited as reasons that may stop members of diverse communities applying to be a PCSO. As for the police officer role, reasons offered included family/childcare commitments (6), the perceived level of education required for the role (6) and challenging recruitment and selection processes (5).

Five interviewees noted that seeing underrepresented groups in the PCSO role encouraged people from diverse communities to apply. There was no similar statement made in relation to the police officer role.

Gender

Analysis of reasons given that may stop members of diverse communities applying to be a PCSO or police officer showed minimal difference by gender of respondent. However, there were some additional reasons cited by male – but not female - interviewees as to why people from diverse groups may not apply to be a police officer. The educational standard and communication skills required for the role were perceived to be high (6 and 4 respectively). One respondent felt that extra support should be offered to some groups to build their confidence and help them to be successful in the selection process. In addition, limited promotion of the role for older people (4), extra levels of responsibility (3) and less visible diversity among the police officer workforce (3) were also highlighted. All five interviewees who felt that the visible diversity of the PCSO workforce encouraged members of diverse communities to apply were male.

Age

Suggested reasons that may stop people from diverse communities applying to be a PCSO or a police officer were analysed by age of respondent and showed no apparent differences with the exception of those reasons noted by interviewees aged 41 years and older. Levels of fitness required and limited promotion of the role as an option for older people were the most commonly identified reasons stopping their peers applying for either role (cited by 5 and 3 respondents respectively in relation to both roles). One respondent felt that the lack of a rank structure for PCSOs may mean that older PCSOs would be concerned about being supervised by younger police officers. In addition, the 2-year probation period attached to the police officer role may be restricting for older people nearing retirement age. An older female interviewee felt that her peer group may be deterred from applying to the police service in general due to their memories of television programmes such as 'The Sweeney' which portrayed a largely male dominated, sexist work force.

One respondent suggested that although many members of the Black community feel unfairly targeted by the MPS, those who are older might feel more confident to be able to make a difference by joining the organisation. However, younger members of the Black community may feel too angry to consider this option.

Specifically, in relation to reasons that may prevent members of diverse communities applying for the police officer role, four interviewees aged 26 to 40 noted family pressures in various guises. One respondent mentioned that some potential applicants might have family pressure to pursue a career deemed to be more professional such as a lawyer. Other pressures may be in relation to childcare – the police officer role is not seen as being as flexible as the PCSO role. One Black African female respondent felt that some husbands wouldn't allow their wives to work for the male dominated police service.

Ethnicity

Reasons why people from diverse communities may not apply for the PCSO and police officer role showed variation by ethnicity of respondents. Table 1 below summarises the most common responses.

Table 1: Most common reasons cited stopping members of diverse groups applying for the roles of PCSO and police officer, by ethnicity of respondent

Reason cited	Bangladeshi		Black African		Black British		Pakistani		White British	
	PCSO	*Police officer*	*PCSO*	*Police officer*	*PCSO*	*Police officer*	*PCSO*	*Police officer*	*PCSO*	*Police officer*
Lack of confidence to meet educational requirements	2	3	4	2						
Perceptions of racism in the MPS	2		4	3	2	4				
Previous negative experiences or perceptions of the MPS		2	3	2		3	3	3		
Poor English/communication skills		2		2						
Perception that applicant is 'moving away' from their community/'selling out'			5	2	4	2				
Family commitments or pressures				2			2	2		
Lack of respect for the role			3							
Immigration status limitations			2	3						
Levels of fitness required									4	5
Not promoted as an option for older people									2	2
Perception that recruitment process is more difficult				2				3		

Both Bangladeshi and Black African respondents felt that a lack of confidence to meet academic requirements of both the PCSO and police officer role may stop their peers applying for either role.

Perceptions of racism in the MPS were identified by Black British and Black African respondents as possible reasons stopping people from these ethnic groups applying for either role. Some reported experiences of negative comments from members of the Black community such as being asked why they were wearing uniform and working for a "White man's organisation". One Black African PCSO mentioned that on the outside the MPS is being politically correct and implementing diversity policies and training, but racist behaviour still exists internally and should be addressed. In addition, a Black African interviewee also felt that Black officers may feel inferior when dealing with White members of the public who challenge their authority. Conversely, a Black British PCSO interviewed specifically stated that she had not had any experience herself or seen any discrimination in the MPS. Bangladeshi respondents also cited perceptions of racism in the MPS as a deterrent specifically in relation to the PCSO role.

With the exception of White British respondents, interviewees in all ethnic groups felt that their own negative experiences with the police or those of friends/family may stop people from diverse groups applying to be a police officer. However, only Pakistani and Black African respondents noted this as a deterrent specifically in relation to the PCSO role. Pakistani respondents also felt this may be exacerbated by recent counter terrorist activity. Furthermore, Black British and Black African respondents felt that applying for either role may be perceived as moving away from their communities. One Black British PCSO had heard that Black police officers have to "come down very hard" on their own community thus losing the trust and respect of family and friends who feel even angrier about being "hassled by their own people".

Pakistani respondents more commonly cited family pressures as a reason that may prevent their peers applying for either role. Pakistani interviewees noted the importance of spending time with family and how the 18 week residential training course and shift pattern associated with the police officer role may disrupt this. Another interviewee stated that some communities are concerned that particular parts of their culture may not be accommodated by the organisation, and mentioned that he is often asked whether there are facilities to pray, whether the organisation accommodates his needs during Ramadan and so on. Black African interviewees also made reference to family pressures, but only as a deterrent to applying for the police officer role. Black African respondents also mentioned immigration status as a reason possibly stopping their peers applying for either role.

Reasons given by White British respondents as to why people from diverse groups may not apply to be a PCSO or police officer were common to both roles - levels of fitness required and that the roles were not promoted for older people, reflecting the older age profile of respondents in this group. Bangladeshi and Pakistani interviewees (2 each) felt that seeing

underrepresented groups in the PCSO role would encourage others to apply. Bangladeshi respondents (2) also felt that it was easier to successfully apply for the PCSO role.

Diversity amongst PCSO recruits

With the exception of three interviewees, all felt that there was more diversity amongst PCSO recruits than police officer recruits. When asked why they thought this was, the most commonly mentioned reasons were that the role:

- ❑ provides an attractive salary and job security (12);
- ❑ offers an opportunity for BME groups to 'test out' the organisation or use the role as a 'stepping stone' before applying to become a police officer (12);
- ❑ is easier to successfully apply for than the police officer role (11);
- ❑ offers a more relaxed, less pressured work ethos that may be more suited to some communities (8);
- ❑ requires a shorter period of non-residential training than the police officer role (7);
- ❑ is perceived to be less confrontational and less dangerous (6);
- ❑ offers more flexible working arrangements than the police officer role (6);
- ❑ does not require formal educational qualifications (6)[19];
- ❑ has no negative history attached to it (5); and
- ❑ is more community focused than the police officer role (5)

Gender

There were no particular differences between comments made by males and females regarding reasons for more diversity amongst PCSO compared to police officer recruits. Perceptions that the PCSO role was safer and involved more work with the community were cited by male respondents only. However, this may be a reflection of the larger number of males in the sample.

Age

Similar to one of the overall findings, equal numbers (4) of respondents in each age group felt that a reason for more diversity amongst PCSO recruits was that it was an opportunity for people from BME communities to 'test out' the organisation or use the role as a 'stepping stone' before committing to a police officer career. In addition, four interviewees in the younger age group and three in the older age group also felt the role offered a chance for younger applicants to 'trial' a career in the police service.

Younger (18-25 year old) respondents were most likely to cite perceptions that the application and selection process for the PCSO role was easier than that for the police officer role (7) as a reason for there being more diversity

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[19] There are no formal educational requirements to become either a PCSO or police officer. However, there was a perception amongst PCSOs interviewed that the police officer role required a higher level of education than the PCSO role.

amongst PCSO recruits. In addition, this group cited attractive salary and job security (5), also the most common reason give by older (41 years and over) respondents (5). One interviewee stated that a number of older people, particularly those from BME communities, often missed out on formal education hence view the PCSO role, which they perceive as affording more value to life experience, as an attractive and more viable option.

Some (3) older interviewees noted that as the PCSO role was new it had no negative history unlike the police officer role, and this may make it more attractive to members of diverse communities. The opportunity to "make a difference" and improve relations between the community and the MPS was also mentioned by this age group (3). These comments may be attributable to the ethnic profile of this group, as well as age.

Ethnicity

Consistent with overall findings, the opportunity to use the PCSO role to 'test the water' of what it is like to work for the MPS or to use it as a 'stepping stone' to becoming a police officer was mentioned by all ethnic groups as a possible reason for more diversity amongst PCSO recruits than police officer recruits. This was mentioned with particular reference to BME communities, but Black British (3) and White British (2) interviewees also cited this reason specifically in relation to young people. With the exception of White British, respondents from all ethnic groups also felt that the attractive salary and job security attached to the PCSO role may be a reason for more diversity amongst recruits.

Black British (3), Black African (3) and Pakistani (2) interviewees cited the work ethos of the PCSO role which they perceived to be more relaxed and, therefore, more attractive to some communities than the structured and high pressured role of a police officer. Black African interviewees (4) most commonly cited the community aspect of the PCSO role as a reason for attracting more diverse recruits. In a similar vein, Black British respondents (3) felt that the opportunity to work with one's own community may be an attraction to the role. The lack of negative history associated with the PCSO role, largely due to its recent implementation, was also mentioned by Black British interviewees (3). One stated that while the Black community may feel that Black police officers had "sold out" they were more sympathetic towards those who wanted to become a PCSO. Although not commonly mentioned, it was interesting to note that only Black interviewees (two African and one British) cited that seeing other underrepresented groups in the PCSO role was a possible reason for attracting more diverse recruits.

Bangladeshi (5) and Pakistani (3) interviewees commonly highlighted the perception that the PCSO application and selection process and the role itself was easier than the police officer role which may attract more diversity amongst PCSO recruits. White British respondents also cited this perception (2). In addition, Bangladeshi interviewees mentioned the shorter PCSO training course (3) and perception of fewer educational requirements (3) as attractors to the role.

One interviewee felt that the more representative profile of the PCSO workforce was helping to "break down the barriers" between the MPS and particular communities. However, two others felt concerned that the MPS may end up with a diverse PCSO workforce but a continued non-diverse police officer workforce.

Analysis of SLP survey responses

This survey was sent to 2,877 SLP members. In total, 189 were received giving a response rate of 6.5%. This is a significantly low response rate; especially considering the SLP consists of volunteers recruited to participate in consultation and engagement activities to inform policing in London.

Due to the very low response rate it was decided that the responses would be analysed as one group rather than analysing any differences between demographic groups. Findings should be interpreted with caution and only considered alongside those from other parts of the research.

The majority of members of the SLP who returned their questionnaire were female (54%), White British (62%), aged 41 years and older (72%), heterosexual (87%) and of Christian belief (62%). A table of further breakdown of the demographics is included at Appendix 5.

Attractions to the PCSO role

When respondents were asked what they thought attracted people to the PCSO role, the most common responses were that it provided an opportunity to liaise/build relationships with communities (32%) and that it was a community focused role as opposed to the more confrontational role of a police officer (10%). There was also a perception that it was easier to become a PCSO than a police officer (32%) and that there was less paper work and responsibility attached to the PCSO role (23%).

Similar to views of stakeholders and PCSOs interviewed, the opportunity to 'test the water' or use the role as a 'stepping-stone' to becoming a police officer was mentioned as an attractor to the PCSO role (9%) and that the public have a more positive perception of PCSOs than police officers (8%). Furthermore, the decent salary and job security that comes with the PCSO role (6%), coupled with it being less dangerous (7%) and having a less demanding shift pattern (7%) than the police officer role, was seen to add to the appeal of the role.

However, it should be noted that 7% of respondents indicated they did not have an answer to the question or did not know the difference between PCSOs and police officers.

SLP survey respondents gave a range of reasons why they thought there was more diversity amongst PCSOs than police officers. The most common reason was that respondents thought it was easier to become a PCSO than a police officer (25%). Other reasons were that the public had a more positive perception of PCSOs than police officers (15%), perhaps because the role was new and not tarnished with the same history as the police officer role, and that the community liaison and relationship building aspect of the role may attract people from more diverse groups (14%). They also felt that the PCSO role had less responsibility and a more relaxed structure than the police officer role (12%).

Furthermore, 9% of respondents noted that the PCSO role is seen as more of an option for older people than the police officer role. However, 13% did not answer the question or indicated they did not know.

Reasons stopping people from diverse communities applying for the role of a police officer

Fewer SLP members responded to the question of why people from diverse communities may not apply for the role of a police officer. The most common reason offered by Panel members as to why people from diverse communities may not apply were perceptions of discrimination, including racism, sexism, homophobia and not accommodating cultural/religious practices, within the MPS (28%). In addition, a few respondents expressed views that the MPS is perceived to be a White dominated organisation (3%) and there may be fears that a BME officer may not be promoted over a White colleague (2%). It was also mentioned that concerns about racism from the community might deter people from applying to be a police officer (3%).

Seventeen per cent of SLP members mentioned that in certain communities the applicant's own community, family or peers may not approve of them applying to become a police officer. Lack of trust in the police and previous negative experiences with the police were also noted as reasons that may put potential police officer applicants off applying (9%). Ten per cent of respondents did not think there were any reasons, and 9% mentioned that they did not know what, if any, reasons might stop people from diverse communities applying for the role of a police officer.

Reasons stopping people from diverse communities applying for the role of a PCSO

Almost a fifth (18%) of respondents to the survey indicated they did not think there were any reasons that would stop people from diverse communities applying to become a PCSO. However, 17% of respondents chose not to answer this question and 15% were not sure enough to comment. Where respondents did comment, similar views were expressed to those given for the police officer role: 10% mentioned that there may be pressure from communities, family or peers not to join the MPS or concerns that they may be ostracised by their communities, perhaps due to a negative relationship between particular communities and the MPS in the past; and 7% mentioned perceptions of discrimination existing in the MPS.

Chapter four: Discussion

In response to increasing public demand for a highly visible police presence, PCSOs were introduced as part of the Police Reform Act 2002. The core purpose of their role was to reassure the public through visible patrolling, dealing with low-level crime and building relationships with the community, without being abstracted to other duties. The initiative was also an opportunity to increase the diversity of the MPS workforce as a whole. The benefits of employing a workforce that represents the community it serves have long been recognised. Previous research (e.g. Home Office, 2003; Commission for Racial Equality, 2005) and the current study have identified the important contribution that a representative police workforce can make in delivering an improved service. Stakeholders interviewed as part of this study highlighted how dialogue between officers and members of the public from the same demographic groups is often better and has the potential to improve police relations with groups that the MPS has failed to reach. It was felt that the recruitment of a representative workforce simply made "good business sense", improving communication and trust with London's communities.

Findings from the Home Office's (2006) national evaluation of PCSOs suggested that the role had been successful in diversifying the recruitment profile of the police service. Data analysis in the current study supported this in relation to age and ethnicity. Specifically, there were proportionately more PCSO than police officer recruits in the younger and slightly older age categories and proportionately more who were from BME communities. However, there was little difference in the overall gender breakdown of PCSO and police officer recruits.

This study was commissioned to investigate the reasons *why* there are differences in the diversity of PCSO and police officer recruits. The research considers whether there is a difference in the diversity of PCSO and police officer applicants and recruits, the key reasons for wanting to become a PCSO, any differences by age, gender or ethnicity and why many PCSOs go on to become police officers rather than applying from the outset. This section discusses findings in relation to each of these questions and considers how they can be used to inform efforts to increase the diversity of the service as a whole by both retaining current PCSOs and further increasing the diversity of the police officer workforce.

Diversity of PCSO and police officer applicants and recruits

The study compared the demographic profiles of those who applied and those who were successfully recruited to the PCSO and police officer roles for the period April 2004 to March 2006. Analysis was carried out at both stages of this process, both within and between roles.

Generally, the age and ethnicity of applicants showed greater variation than the age and ethnicity of recruits for both the PCSO and police officer role. This was particularly marked for Black African applicants and recruits to both roles. Some Black African PCSOs interviewed as part of this study highlighted

perceived educational requirements as a barrier to applying to be a PCSO and were also the only ethnic group to mention immigration restrictions as a reason that may prevent successful recruitment to either role.

The difference between the proportion of BME applicants to the PCSO and police officer role was minimal. However, the difference between the proportion of successful BME recruits to the PCSO and police officer role was more notable, with proportionately fewer in the latter. In particular there were numerically more Pakistani, Black British, Black African, Bangladeshi, Greek/Greek Cypriot and Mixed White and Black African PCSOs recruited than police officers, the former four of which formed the majority of the interview sample.

Motivations for becoming a PCSO

Attractions to the PCSO role seemed to fall within three themes: the nature of the role itself; future opportunities the role may present; and terms and conditions of the role. Cooper et al (2006) found that the variety of the role and the opportunity to work closely with the community were key attractors. Stakeholders interviewed confirmed this, highlighting how the community aspect of the role was 'sold' to potential applicants. They stated that the role was often perceived to be less confrontational and one that family and friends of applicants are less likely to have conflicted with or associate with negative history. When PCSOs themselves were asked about attractions to the role, females more commonly stated that they were interested in the community aspect. Older respondents and those of Black African origin were also likely to cite this reason. Black British respondents particularly noted the opportunity that the role offered to work with their own community. Some Black African respondents stated that they had applied because, unlike other jobs, they felt the PCSO role would particularly welcome applications from BME communities.

Previous research (e.g. Johnston, 2005; Cooper et al, 2006) suggests that many PCSOs view the role as a 'stepping stone' to becoming a police officer. This was also mentioned by a number of stakeholders interviewed in this study. Furthermore, half of all the PCSOs interviewed applied for the role for this reason, particularly males and those in the younger (18-25 years) age group. In addition, some interviewees saw the role as an opportunity to 'test the water' and find out what working for the MPS would be like, enabling them to make a more informed choice about committing to a career as a police officer. Interviews with Black (British and African) PCSOs suggested that joining the MPS as a police officer was a 'big deal' in their community and that their peers would be more sympathetic to those who wanted to be a PCSO. Johnston (forthcoming) stated that 'testing the water' was as true for White as it was for BME communities, but that the latter group may be 'testing' for different reasons such as levels of perceived discrimination.

Both the stakeholders and PCSOs interviewed referred to the salary attached to the PCSO role as an obvious attractor to applying. Some felt this might be particularly attractive to potential applicants with a lower level of education.

Both stakeholders and PCSO interviewees also mentioned flexibility of the PCSO role as an attractor. However previous literature (Johnston et al, 2004; Cooper et al, 2006) suggests that opportunities for flexible working hours are not taken up as often as perhaps would be expected.

Analysis of responses from the survey of SLP members indicated largely similar views on the attractions to the PCSO role to those offered by previous literature, stakeholders and PCSOs themselves.

Reasons why PCSOs go on to become police officers rather than applying from the outset

Analysis of Human Resources (HR) data regarding those who left the PCSO role indicated that the most common reason for doing so was to become a police officer, with those aged 21 to 30 years most likely to cite this. For Bangladeshi, Greek/Greek Cypriot, White British/Irish/Other PCSOs who left the role, this was the most common reason for doing so. However, the most common leaving reason for Black African/British/Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani was voluntary resignation. Johnston et al (2004) suggested that some BME communities are less successful at using the PCSO role as a 'stepping stone' to becoming a police officer.

Despite this, the data used in this study indicated that overall there was a higher proportion of BME PCSOs who left to become police officers when compared to the proportion of BME individuals recruited as police officers from the outset. Possible reasons for this may be that BME communities are more likely to use the PCSO role to 'test the water' before deciding to apply to be a police officer, that, contrary to Johnston et al's (2004) claim above, BME communities are more likely to be successful in the police officer recruitment process after being a PCSO for a while, or that their experiences as a PCSO have led them to consider a career as a police officer, an option which they may previously have previously dismissed. Indeed, Johnston et al (2004) stated that the PCSO role attracted some groups who previously would not have considered a career in the MPS.

At the time of applying, over half of PCSOs interviewed as part of this study intended to eventually leave the role to become a police officer. When asked why they didn't apply from the outset, the most common response was that they did apply but were unsuccessful or decided not to pursue their application. Others stated that they wanted to gain more experience or that the lengthy wait for a police officer training place deterred them. Some interviewees who had originally applied for the police officer role but were unsuccessful stated that they were advised by the MPS to become a PCSO. Stakeholders interviewed also reported that 'borderline' unsuccessful police officer applicants were sometimes invited to consider applying for the PCSO role. Johnston et al (2004) felt that this approach often undermined the PCSO role, perhaps attaching to it a 'badge of failure'. However, it could also be viewed as an opportunity to retain enthusiastic applicants and the skills they have to offer within a policing role in the MPS.

When asked if they still wanted to be a police officer after being in the PCSO role for a while, fewer respondents said they did. A reason offered for this was that being a PCSO provided the opportunity to work alongside police officers and gain a better understanding of what the role involves, which may deter them from applying. Some felt that the considerable extra work taken on by their police officer colleagues was not matched sufficiently by the increase in salary.

Those who still wanted to go on to become a police officer often cited limited options for promotion and lack of respect for the PCSO role, in addition to their original desire to be a police officer. Bellos (2003) highlighted that the only promotion route for PCSOs was to leave the role. Stakeholders interviewed also acknowledged this and the need to address it, rather than encouraging PCSOs seeking their next step on the career ladder to consider becoming a police officer.

Reasons for more diversity amongst PCSO compared to police officer recruits

Findings from the variety of methods used in this study have illustrated a number of reasons why there is more diversity amongst PCSO compared to police officer recruits. These fell within three categories: the community focused nature of the role; the opportunity the role offers to increase understanding of working for the MPS; and the alternative option that the role provides for unsuccessful police officer applicants.

Stakeholders interviewed highlighted how the community aspect of the role was heavily marketed in recruitment campaigns. Indeed, PCSOs interviewed as part of this study often stated that they were attracted to the opportunity to work with the community without the more confrontational and dangerous parts of policing. Throughout interviews with Black and older PCSOs there was more commentary in relation to the community aspect of the role, particularly the chance it offered to work with their own community. The greater diversity amongst PCSO compared to police officer recruits may be, in part, due to the role attracting people who would not have otherwise applied to be a police officer. It may be that the profile of those attracted to a more community focused role is different and more diverse, than the profile of those attracted to the more enforcement oriented police officer role.

It is commonly recognised by the public and the policing community that many people want to become a PCSO to 'test the water' of what it is like to work for the MPS. These PCSOs seem to be genuinely interested in the police officer role but a number of reasons may have deterred them from applying from the outset. PCSOs and stakeholders interviewed highlighted perceptions that the application and recruitment process for the police officer role is more challenging, particularly for younger applicants with less experience to evidence the competencies required. Negative perceptions of the MPS and pressure from family or friends not to become a police officer, perhaps due to previous experiences or the stigma attached to the role, may also lead to

some individuals preferring to gain more experience as a PCSO before deciding to commit to a career as a police officer.

Various sources have indicated that unsuccessful police officer applicants are sometimes invited to apply for the PCSO role. Indeed, a large number of PCSOs interviewed had applied to be a police officer first but were unsuccessful or did not proceed with their application. This could suggest that a number of serving PCSOs took up the role as an alternative to their first choice, which was to be a police officer. This offers potential benefits for both the organisation and the individual: the MPS retains people that have expressed an interest in policing (who, prior to the introduction of the PCSO role would have been lost); and the individual gains further experience to assist them in any future police officer application. Although there is little difference between the diversity of PCSO and police officer applicants, recruit data suggests greater diversity amongst PCSO than police officer recruits. Therefore, PCSO recruits may be more diverse because they consist of successful PCSO applicants and some unsuccessful police officer applicants, capturing some of the diversity of both applicant pools.

Moving forward - increasing diversity in the MPS

At the time of writing, the PCSO role is further developing in a variety of ways including recruitment, training and the deployment of powers[20]. The changing environment offers a number of opportunities to ensure that the right people are recruited and, equally as important, developed and retained in the PCSO role. The development of the PCSO role and processes surrounding it may also highlight opportunities to further diversify the profile of police officer recruits.

Retaining current PCSOs

HMIC (2003) stated that efforts to recruit a diverse workforce were often not matched by those to retain them. A greater understanding of why PCSOs leave may assist the service in developing the role to retain them. The current study indicated that some PCSOs leave the role in search of opportunities for promotion, to specialise in certain areas, and to gain more powers and respect, which they perceive the police officer role offers. Rather than advising PCSOs seeking new challenges to consider applying to be a police officer, stakeholders felt more could be done to address career structure within the PCSO role. Indeed, some PCSOs interviewed who were intending to apply to be a police officer stated that they would remain in the PCSO role if it offered a more defined career structure. The introduction of a rank structure is just one of many possible developments that could make the role more satisfying[21].

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[20] For further information on the extension of PCSO powers see Schedule 9 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 at www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/50015-ad.htm#sch9 and Part 1, Section 7, 8 and 9 and Schedule 5 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 at www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/20060048.htm.
[21] Members of the MPA HR Committee discussed the merits of introducing ranks for PCSOs but did not favour such a development.

The PCSOs interviewed as part of this study possessed a range of skills, including in-depth understanding of certain communities or cultures, the ability to speak a number of languages, academic and practical qualifications and a variety of work and voluntary experience. Although some PCSOs gave examples of how they had used their experience and knowledge at work, in general, it appeared that their skills could be better utilised. In a discussion paper of career pathways for PCSOs, Sweeney (2006) suggested that opportunities to move into different areas (possibly making better use of skills) and for more experienced PCSOs to coach, mentor or train new recruits, could offer new challenges and make the role more fulfilling. Identifying skills, promoting opportunities for their use, and giving experienced PCSOs the chance to share their knowledge have the potential to offer both individual and organisational benefits and thereby increase job satisfaction, improve the accessibility and service offered by the MPS, and help retain motivated, enthusiastic PCSOs in the role for longer[22].

Diversifying police officer recruits

Analysis of Met HR data indicated more ethnic diversity amongst PCSOs who leave the role to become police officers than exists for police officer recruits. This highlights how the PCSO role is helping to diversify the profile of police officer recruits. Although beneficial to the service as a whole, this approach should not replace ongoing efforts to increase diversity of police officer recruits from the outset. PCSOs interviewed as part of this study mentioned a number of barriers – not necessarily accurate – that they thought may prevent a person from their community applying to be a police officer. These included perceptions that the police officer role required a high standard of education, formal qualifications and/or fitness, that the residential nature of the police officer training course and training methods (largely situated in a classroom and based on a western approach to education) may be inaccessible for certain people, concerns that the MPS would not accommodate cultural practices such as prayer or fasting, and that the role was not considered to be a respected profession[23]. It may be useful to further communicate and clarify MPA/MPS policies around these issues together with some positive messages around the police officer role, as it was often the role itself that was considered in negative terms, rather than the MPS as a whole.

In addition to efforts to increase diversity of police officer recruits from the outset, consideration could be given to providing more assistance to those PCSOs who want to go on to become police officers. Some interviewees felt they would benefit from extra support to build upon their existing skills and develop those required for a transition to the police officer role. For example, a structured development programme consisting of shadowing or mentoring opportunities with a police officer colleague could improve chances of success

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[22] See Sweeney (2006) for a more detailed discussion of possible career pathways for PCSOs.
[23] Respondents to Stone and Tuffin's (2000) study into attitudes of BME groups to a career in the police service felt that a lack of visible diversity amongst senior officers sent a message that these groups were less likely to be promoted.

and possibly lead towards a more condensed application and training process.

Reflecting London

The introduction of PCSOs represented one of the most significant changes in policing in recent years. The role provides reassurance to the public through high visibility patrols and tackling low level crime and has diversified the profile of the MPS, making it more representative of the communities it serves. This study has identified three overarching reasons for why the PCSO role has been more successful than the police officer role in recruiting a more representative workforce: the community focused nature of the role; the opportunity to use the role to increase understanding of working for the MPS; and the alternative option the role provides for unsuccessful police officer applicants. In addition, the PCSO and police officer roles are clearly different and will therefore attract different types of people for different reasons. Furthermore, visible diversity amongst PCSO recruits is in itself an additional attractor to potential applicants from minority communities.

However, as Bellos (2004) stated, effective policing of diverse communities is not just about employing a diverse workforce but also embedding diversity at the core of the organisation's practice and culture. Improving opportunities to retain PCSOs and further diversifying the profile of police officer recruits, together with ensuring that diversity is embedded beyond recruitment, will continue to develop a police service that truly reflects London.

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Further information on PCSOs

www.police.homeoffice.gov.uk/community-policing/community-support-officers/community-cso-faq/ (General information & FAQs about PCSOs)

www.metpolicecareers.co.uk/default.asp?action=article&ID=41 (Details of the PCSO application and selection process)

www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/20020030.htm (Original PCSO powers as set out in the Police Reform Act 2002, Schedule 4, Part 1)

www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/50015-ad.htm#sch9 (Extension of PCSO powers as set out in Serious Organised Crime and Police Reform Act 2005, Schedule 9)

www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/20060048.htm (Additional PCSO powers as set out in the Police and Justice Act 2006, Part 1, Section 7, 8 and 9 and Schedule 5)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Invitation to PCSOs to interview

MPA
Metropolitan Police Authority

10 Dean Farrar Street
LONDON SW1H 0NY

Telephone: **020 7202 0213**
Fax: **020 7202 0200**
Web: **www.mpa.gov.uk**

Dear colleague

Two of my research staff, Melissa Wagstaff and Sonia Cunningham, are undertaking a project investigating why there is more diversity amongst PCSO recruits than police officer recruits. Analysis of PCSO and police officer recruit data suggests that there are proportionately more older, younger and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) PCSOs than police officers and we would like to find out any reasons behind this.

We would be very grateful if you could spare 30-45 minutes of your time to take part in an interview. We would be asking your views on the PCSO role, why you applied to be a PCSO as opposed to a police officer and any barriers you perceive there to be around the two roles. Your responses will be confidential - only key themes across interviews will be reported. If we would like to quote you, we will seek your permission first and will not state your name. Participation in an interview is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part.

We are planning to carry out interviews during the period 19 June to 21 July 2006. If you do wish to participate, we would be very grateful if you would phone Melissa Wagstaff on 020 7202 0213 or email her at melissa.wagstaff@mpa.gov.uk to set up an interview at a time and place that is convenient for you. Melissa would also be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Yours faithfully,

Jane Owen
Head of Planning & Performance
Metropolitan Police Authority

Appendix 2: Demographic profile of PCSOs interviewed

18 to 25 year old PCSOs

Total number in group	15	
Gender	Male	13
	Female	2
Ethnicity	White British	1
	Black British	2
	Black African	0
	Pakistani	7
	Bangladeshi	5
Length of time a PCSO	< 1year	5
	1-3 years	8
	3+ years	2
Languages spoken – if mentioned		Urdu Punjabi Bengali Hindi Arabic Kashmiri
Religion – if mentioned		Muslim

26 to 40 year old PCSOs

Total number in group	13	
Gender	Male	9
	Female	4
Ethnicity	White British	0
	Black British	3
	Black African	8
	Pakistani	0
	Bangladeshi	2
Length of time a PCSO	< 1year	0
	1-3 years	6
	3+ years	7
Languages spoken – if mentioned		Yoruba Twi Urdu Bengali Hindi
Religion – if mentioned		Muslim

41+ year old PCSOs

Total number in group	17	
Gender	Male	10
	Female	7
Ethnicity	White British	6
	Black British	6
	Black African	5
	Pakistani	0
	Bangladeshi	0
Length of time a PCSO	< 1year	5
	1-3 years	5
	3+ years	7
Languages spoken – if mentioned		Creole Somalian Arabic Yoruba Nigerian
Religion – if mentioned		Muslim

Male PCSOs

Total number in group	32	
Age	18-25	13
	26-40	9
	41+	10
Ethnicity	White British	4
	Black British	6
	Black African	9
	Pakistani	6
	Bangladeshi	7
Length of time a PCSO	< 1year	6
	1-3 years	14
	3+ years	12
Languages spoken – if mentioned		Urdu Punjabi Bengali Creole Hindi Arabic Somalian Yoruba Kashmiri
Religion – if mentioned		Muslim

Female PCSOs

Total number in group	13	
Age	18-25	2
	26-40	4
	41+	7
Ethnicity	White British	3
	Black British	5
	Black African	4
	Pakistani	0
	Bangladeshi	1
Length of time a PCSO	< 1year	4
	1-3 years	5
	3+ years	4
Languages spoken – if mentioned		Yoruba Urdu Punjabi Twi
Religion – if mentioned		Muslim

Bangladeshi PCSOs

Total number in group	7	
Age	18-25	5
	26-40	2
	41+	
Gender	Male	7
	Female	
Length of time a PCSO	< 1year	2
	1-3 years	4
	3+ years	1
Languages spoken – if mentioned		Bengali, Hindi, Arabic, Urdu
Religion – if mentioned		Muslim

Pakistani PCSOs

Total number in group	7	
Age	18-25	7
	26-40	
	41+	
Gender	Male	6
	Female	1
Length of time a PCSO	< 1year	
	1-3 years	5
	3+ years	2
Languages spoken – if mentioned		Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Kashmiri
Religion – if mentioned		Muslim

Black British PCSOs

Total number in group	11	
Age	18-25	2
	26-40	3
	41+	6
Gender	Male	6
	Female	5
Length of time a PCSO	< 1year	4
	1-3 years	3
	3+ years	4
Languages spoken – if mentioned		
Religion – if mentioned		

Black African PCSOs

Total number in group	13	
Age	18-25	0
	26-40	8
	41+	5
Gender	Male	9
	Female	4
Length of time a PCSO	< 1year	1
	1-3 years	8
	3+ years	4
Languages spoken – if mentioned		
Religion – if mentioned		

White British PCSOs

Total number in group	7	
Age	18-25	1
	26-40	
	41+	6
Gender	Male	4
	Female	3
Length of time a PCSO	< 1year	3
	1-3 years	4
	3+ years	
Languages spoken – if mentioned		
Religion – if mentioned		

Appendix 3: PCSO interview schedule

Notes to interviewer:

Before starting the interview, inform the interviewee of the following:

1.   Background of researchers:
   - 2 researchers from the Metropolitan Police Authority working part-time on the project
   - MPA is the body that scrutinises and supports the Met Police on behalf of London's communities

2.   Background to the research:
   - Main research question - why there is more diversity amongst PCSO recruits than police officer recruits
   - data analysis suggests that there are proportionately more PCSO recruits in the younger age groups and in the older age groups than police officers, and that there are more older female PCSO recruits than police officer recruits.
   - proportionately more PCSO recruits who are Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black British and Black African
   - Method – final report will summarise findings from analysis of applicant and recruit data, interviews with key stakeholders, interviews with PCSOs and a survey of public perception

3.   Final report:
   - Completed by November
   - Published on the MPA website
   - findings from the research will be useful for informing recruitment strategies of PCSOs and police officers

4.   Rights of interviewee:
   - Confidentiality
   - key themes across PCSO interviews will be reported
   - seek permission for use of any quotes
   - it is intended that the data is only used for this research project but if it would be useful for future research we may share it along as the work is being carried out by the MPA or the MPS
   - free to choose not to answer any particular questions or end the interview at any stage

5.   Demographics:
   - As mentioned previously, analysis of recruit data suggests that there are more PCSO recruits from particular diverse groups than police officer recruits from these groups
   - Request: age, ethnicity, gender and length of service as a PCSO
   - Particularly interested in your responses to the interview as a [race/gender/age] and so if you could consider your answers to the questions in relation to your experience as a {race/gender/age]

6. Format of interview:
   - 12 main interview questions
   - we are taking a semi-structured approach to the interview so some questions may seem quite similar to others and you may end up answering some questions within previous responses so we can refer back to these

Interview questions:

1. Why did you apply for the role of a PCSO?
   - What attracted you to the role?
   - Was there anything about the role that was particularly attractive for you as a [tailor to interviewee - race/gender/age]?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What did you think the job of PCSO would be like when you applied?
   - What did you consider were the key components of the role?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Does your view of the job differ now that you have been a PCSO while? If so, how?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Do you think that [tailor to interviewee - ethnicity/age/gender] have specific reasons stopping them from applying to become a PCSO? If so, what are these?
    - at the application stage?
    - Actually doing the job?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

5. When you applied to be a PCSO, what were you views about police officers and their job?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
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6. Are your views different now? If so, how?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

7.   At the time you applied, did you have any intention of going on to apply for the role of a police officer once you had been in the role of a PCSO for a while?
  • Did you view the PCSO role as a stepping-stone to becoming a police officer?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8.   Do you have any intention of becoming a police officer now that you are a PCSO? Why?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9.   If yes to 7 or 8, why didn't you apply for the role of a police officer at the time?
  • What stopped you from applying for the role of a police officer?
  • Was there anything in particular for you as a [tailor to interviewee - race/gender/age] that stopped you from applying for the role of a police officer?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

10.   Do you think that [tailor to interviewee - age/race/gender] have specific reasons stopping them from applying to become a police officer? If so, what are these?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

11. Research suggests that the PCSO role attracts people from more diverse backgrounds than the police officer role. Have you noticed this?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

12. If so, why do you think this is?
- In particular why do you think this is the case for [tailor to interviewee - race/gender/age]?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Demographic details:

Please specify the following:

Age:

Ethnicity:

Gender:

Length of service as a PCSO:

Date of interview:

Name of interviewer:

Appendix 4: Safer London Panel survey

Mini-survey on Police Community Support Officers

Since the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) first introduced Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), there has been more diversity among PCSOs than among police officers. In particular, over the past two years higher proportions of PCSO recruits came from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and across a greater age range than police officer recruits. The MPA recently commissioned a research project to find out the reasons for this greater diversity. We hope that this research will be useful for informing recruitment strategies for the MPS. A report of the research findings will be produced in November and will be published on the MPA website. As part of this research we would be very grateful if you could spare a few minutes of your time to respond to the questions below. Your responses will be confidential; the report will combine all the responses in a way that does not identify you as an individual.

Please return your completed survey to us in the freepost envelope provided by 7 August 2006. If you have difficulties accessing the survey in written format please contact Melissa Wagstaff on 0207 202 0213.

1. What do you think attracts people to apply for the role of PCSO rather than the role of police officer?
....
....
....
....

2. Why do you think there is more diversity (particularly in relation to age and ethnicity) amongst PCSO recruits than police officer recruits?
....
....
....
....

3. Do you think that people from particular diverse groups have specific reasons stopping them from applying to become police officers? If so, what are these reasons and which particular groups do they affect?
....
....
....
....

4. Do you think that people from diverse groups have specific reasons stopping them from applying to become PCSOs? If so, what are these and which particular groups do they affect?
....
....
....

Please could you also let us have some information about you?[24] The MPA will only use your answers to these questions to analyse the responses of different groups. The data will not be shared with any other organisation.

Which of the following best describes
your faith?
Christian
Buddhist
Hindu
Jewish
Muslim
Sikh
Any other religion
(please write in)
....
No religion
Prefer not to say

Which of the following best describes your
sexual orientation?
Heterosexual
Gay
Lesbian
Bi-sexual
Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to be a Disabled
person? Yes   no
Do you meet the DDA definition of a Disabled
person? Yes   no

*(The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)
defines a Disabled person as someone who
has a physical or mental impairment that has
a substantial and long-term adverse effect on
his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day
activities. See www.direct.gov.uk)*

What is the nature of your disability?
....
Prefer not to say
How old are you? .... years

---

[24] Information on gender, ethnicity and age of all SLP Panel members was already held by the Office for Public Management.

Appendix 5: Demographics of Safer London Panel respondents

Demographic	Group	Number	Percentage of sample[25]
Total number of surveys sent		2,877	
Total number of respondents		189	100%
Age	18-25	9	5%
	26-40	35	19%
	41- 55	58	31%
	56-70	49	26%
	71+	28	15%
	Not specified	10	5%
Gender	Male	81	43%
	Female	103	54%
	Not specified	5	3%
Ethnicity	Asian Other	4	2%
	Bangladeshi	3	2%
	Black African	8	4%
	Black Caribbean	8	4%
	Black Other	2	1%
	Blank/not specified	5	3%
	Chinese	3	2%
	Indian	6	3%
	Irish	7	4%
	Mixed other	10	5%
	Pakistani	3	2%
	White British	117	62%
	White Other	13	7%
Religion	Christian	117	62%
	Buddhist	2	1%
	Hindu	6	3%
	Sikh	2	1%
	Muslim	14	7%
	Jew	6	3%
	Other	1	0.5%
	None	38	20%
	Prefer not to say	3	2%
Disability	Yes	17	9%
	No	172	91%
Sexuality	Heterosexual	164	87%
	Bisexual	3	2%
	Gay	1	0.5%
	Lesbian	3	2%
	Prefer not to say	11	6%
	Blank	7	4%

---

[25] Percentages do not always total to 100 due to rounding.