



Home Office



# Police Workforce, England and Wales, 30 September 2018

Statistical Bulletin 02/19

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## Further information

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The biannual *Police Workforce, England and Wales* publication and other Home Office statistical releases are available from the [Statistics at Home Office](#) pages on the GOV.UK website.

The dates of forthcoming publications are pre-announced and can be found via the [GOV.UK publication hub](#).

For further information about the statistics in this publication, please contact [crimeandpolicestats@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:crimeandpolicestats@homeoffice.gov.uk) or write to:

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This statistical bulletin is produced to the highest professional standards and is free from political interference. It has been produced by statisticians working in the Crime and Policing Analysis Unit in accordance with the Home Office's [Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#), which covers Home Office policy on revisions and other matters. The Chief Statistician, as Head of Profession, reports to the National Statistician with respect to all professional statistical matters and oversees all Home Office National Statistics products with respect to the Code, being responsible for their timing, content and methodology.

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# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 General introduction

This release is a mid-year update of the [Police workforce, England and Wales](#) publication series. It contains statistics on the numbers of police officers, police staff, police community support officers (PCSOs), designated officers, traffic wardens, special constables and police support volunteers (PSVs) in post on 30 September 2018 in the 43 police forces of England and Wales and the British Transport Police (BTP)<sup>1</sup>. This release also contains experimental statistics on misconduct and criminal investigations for the year ending 31 March 2018.

Unless otherwise stated, total workforce figures quoted in the bulletin include those on career breaks or other forms of long-term absence, and include those seconded in to police forces from other forces or central services (e.g. the Home Office, the National Crime Agency). The workforce figures in this release are all presented on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis unless indicated otherwise.

We are currently reviewing our crime and policing statistics outputs to check there is a continuing user need for the range and frequency of our published outputs. We would welcome feedback on the usefulness of this mid-year update.

Please send any comments to [crimeandpolicestats@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:crimeandpolicestats@homeoffice.gov.uk).

The [User Guide to Police Workforce Statistics](#) contains further information including a glossary, conventions used, and other background information. The data in this release can be found in the [Police workforce, England and Wales, 30 September 2018: data tables](#).

## 1.2 National Statistics status

These statistics have been assessed by the UK Statistics Authority to ensure that they continue to meet the standards required to be designated as National Statistics. The Home Office has worked closely with the UK Statistics Authority during this process, and as a result has made several changes to the ['User guide to Police Workforce statistics'](#), which is published alongside this release. It contains further information on the quality and limitations of the various datasets, and the ways in which the Home Office engages with users of the statistics.

The Office for Statistics Regulation (the regulatory arm of the UK Statistics Authority) has confirmed the continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics. This means that these statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, impartiality, quality and public value, and are fully compliant with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

This release also contains data on misconduct and criminal investigations for the year ending 31 March 2018. These data in this section of the release have been designated as **Experimental Statistics**, to acknowledge that further development will take place in the coming years.

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<sup>1</sup> Data for the British Transport Police are largely excluded from analysis in this report, their data can be found in the accompanying [data tables](#).

## 2 Key findings

### 2.1 Police workforce

As at 30 September 2018 there were 122,395 police officers in the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales, a similar figure to March 2018 (122,404 officers), and a small increase of 0.4% (466 officers) on September 2017.

**Table 2.1: Police workforce, as at 30 September, England and Wales<sup>1</sup>**

Worker type	30 Sept 2017	30 Sept 2018	Percentage change (%)
Police officers	121,929	122,395	0.4
Police staff and designated officers <sup>2</sup>	66,393	68,256	2.8
Police community support officers	10,056	9,791	-2.6
Special constables <sup>3</sup>	12,601	11,029	-12.5
Police support volunteers <sup>3,4</sup>	6,909	8,131	..

**Source:** Home Office, [Workforce Table 7](#)

**Notes:**

'..' Denotes data not available

1. Excludes BTP and secondments to central services.
2. Designated officers and police staff have been combined as some forces are unable to provide data on designated officers separately. However, where available, a breakdown of these figures can be found in the data tables.
3. Special constables and police support volunteers do not have contracted working hours, so their numbers are provided on a headcount rather than a FTE basis.
4. Not all forces were able to provide data on police support volunteers for all time periods. Therefore, a year on year change has not been calculated.

### 2.2 Misconduct and criminal investigations

In the year ending 31 March 2018, Professional Standards Departments in the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales concluded there were 2,809 cases considered worthy of investigation as misconduct or gross misconduct following either a public complaint or a misconduct allegation<sup>2</sup>.

Proceedings were brought in 1,520 of these cases, of which:

- 820 were referred to a misconduct meeting (cases relating to misconduct where the most serious outcome is a final written warning).
- 700 required a misconduct hearing or special case hearing (cases relating to gross misconduct [or repeated misconduct] where the most serious outcome is dismissal).

Following a hearing or special case hearing, there were a total of 315 dismissals in the year ending 31 March 2018, 245 relating to officers and 70 to staff.

Data were also collected on the number of cases held in private. In the year ending March 2018, 67 hearings and 37 special case hearings were held in private.

In the year ending 31 March 2018, 81 (59%) officers and 23 (62%) staff members were found guilty after a criminal investigation.

<sup>2</sup> Data are not collected from forces on the total number of complaints made about police officers or police staff.

### 3 Police workforce, as at 30 September 2018

There were 200,448 workers (FTE) employed by the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales on 30 September 2018, an increase of 2,060 (or 1%) compared with a year earlier. The size of the workforce (officers, staff, designated officers, community support officers, and a small number of traffic wardens) has been increasing, from 198,388 as at 30 September 2017, to 199,752 as at 31 March 2018, to 200,448 in the latest figures.

In addition, as at 30 September 2018 there were 11,029 special constables (headcount) and 8,131 police support volunteers (PSVs)<sup>3</sup> (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1: Police workforce<sup>1,2</sup> as at 30 September 2017, 31 March 2018, and 30 September 2018, England and Wales**

	30-Sep-17	31-Mar-18	30-Sep-18	Change in 12 months 30 Sep-17 to 30 Sep-18	
				Number	Percentage
<b>Police officers</b>	121,929	122,404	122,395	466	0.4%
<b>Police staff and designated officers<sup>3</sup></b>	66,393	67,200	68,256	1,863	2.8%
<b>PCSOs</b>	10,056	10,139	9,791	-265	-2.6%
<b>Total workforce<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>198,388</b>	<b>199,752</b>	<b>200,448</b>	<b>2,060</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>Special constables (headcount)<sup>4</sup></b>	12,601	11,690	11,029	-1,572	-12.5%
<b>PSVs (headcount)<sup>4,5</sup></b>	6,909	7,856	8,131	..	..

Source: [Workforce Table 7](#)

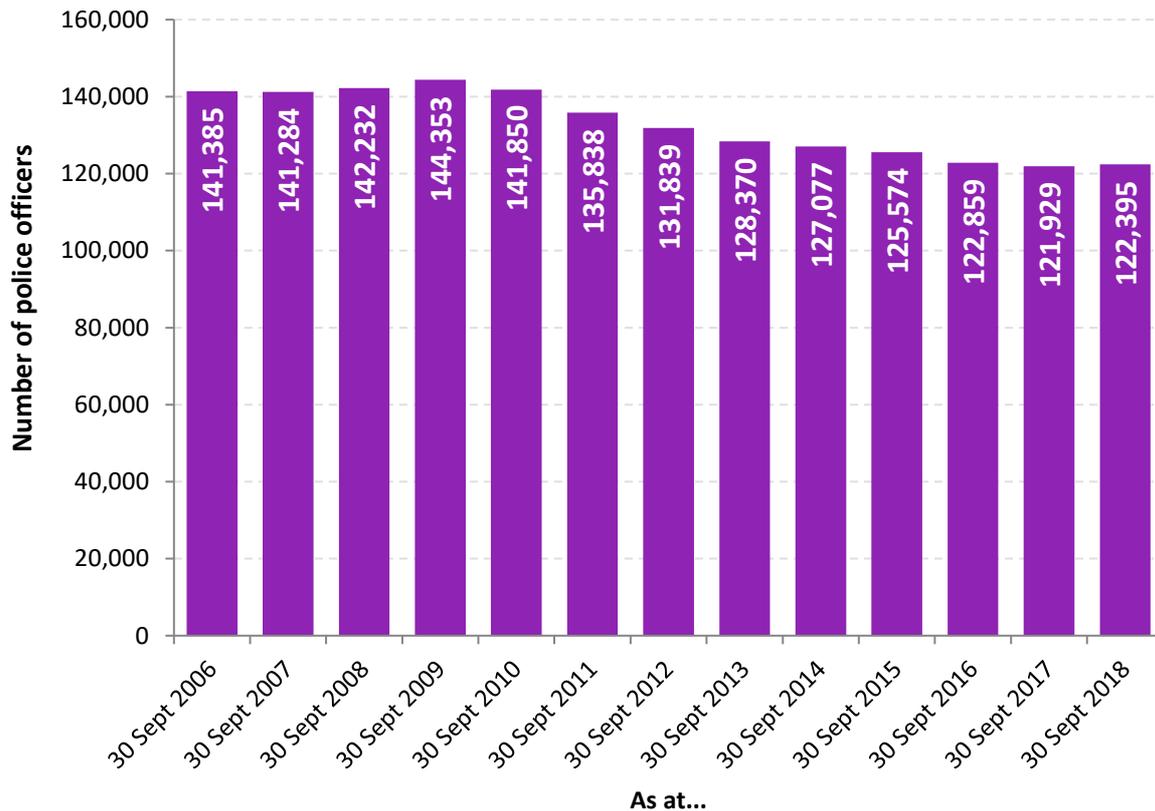
**Notes:**

1. Excludes British Transport Police and secondments to central services.
2. Total workforce includes a small number of traffic wardens. Figures on the number of traffic wardens quoted in this release are very small as police forces have mostly transferred these duties to local authorities. Special constables, as volunteers, have been excluded from this count.
3. Designated officers and police staff have been combined as some forces are unable to provide data on designated officers separately. However, where available, a breakdown of these figures can be found in the data tables.
4. Special constables and PSVs do not have contracted working hours so their numbers are provided on a headcount basis rather than FTE.
5. Not all forces were able to provide data on police support volunteers for all time periods. Therefore, a year on year change has not been calculated.

<sup>3</sup> Individuals who by choice put their time, experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of the force without expectation of compensation or financial rewards, expect for the payment of pre-determined out of pocket expenses.

As at 30 September 2018, there were 122,395 police officers in the 43 police forces in England and Wales, a 0.4% increase from 121,929 police officers as at 30 September 2017. Figure 3.1 shows the long-term trend in police officers numbers. Police officer numbers have fallen by 21,958 (15%) since the peak in 2009, when there were 144,353 officers, and the increase between September 2017 and September 2018 was the first year on year increase since 2009, showing that the previous downward trend in officer numbers has ceased. In addition, the British Transport Police employed 3,074 police officers, whilst a further 391 police officers were seconded out to central services<sup>4</sup>.

**Figure 3.1: Number of police officers<sup>1</sup> as at 30 September 2006 to 2018, England and Wales**



Source: [Workforce Table 7](#)

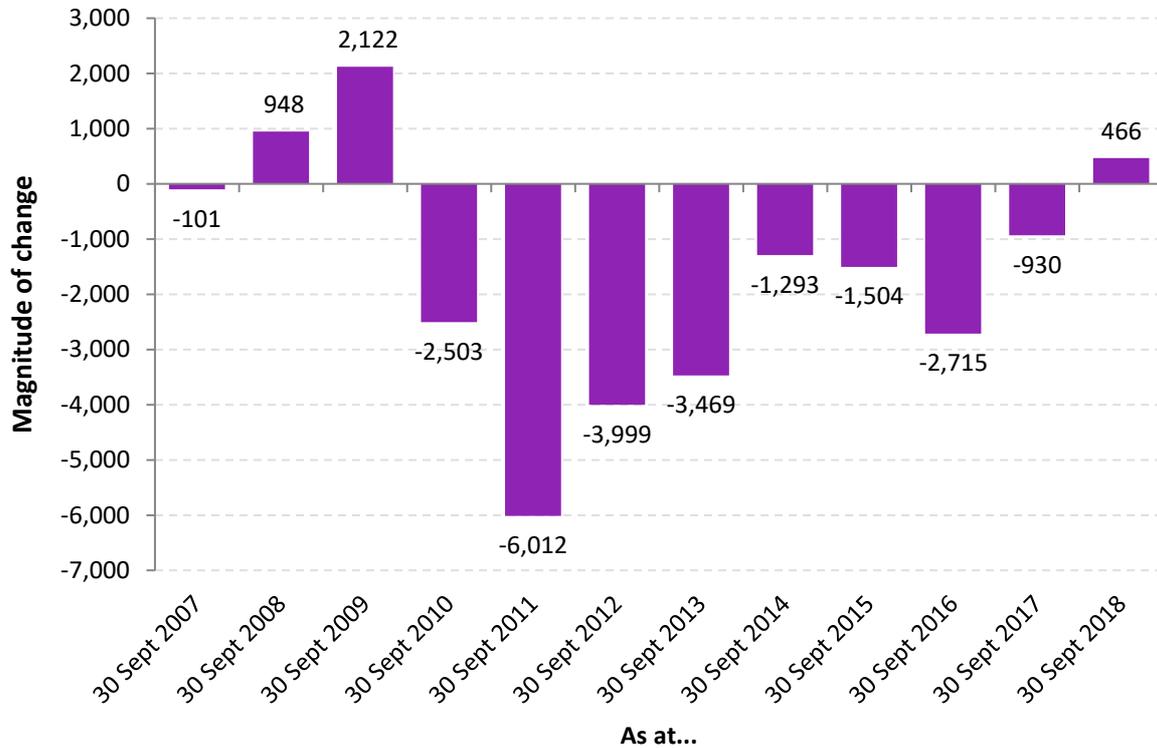
**Notes:**

1. Excludes BTP and secondments to central services.

<sup>4</sup> Secondments to central services are secondments to central government, e.g. the Home Office, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), or the National Crime Agency (NCA).

Across the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales, police officer numbers rose by 466 between 30 September 2017 and 30 September 2018 (Figure 3.2). PCSO numbers fell by 265 over the same period to 9,791 PCSOs, continuing the recent downward trend. This is now the lowest level since 30 September 2006. Numbers of police staff and designated officers increased between 30 September 2017 and 30 September 2018, by 1,863 (or 2.8%).

**Figure 3.2: Change in the number of police officers<sup>1</sup> as at 30 September 2007 to 2018, compared with the previous year, England and Wales**



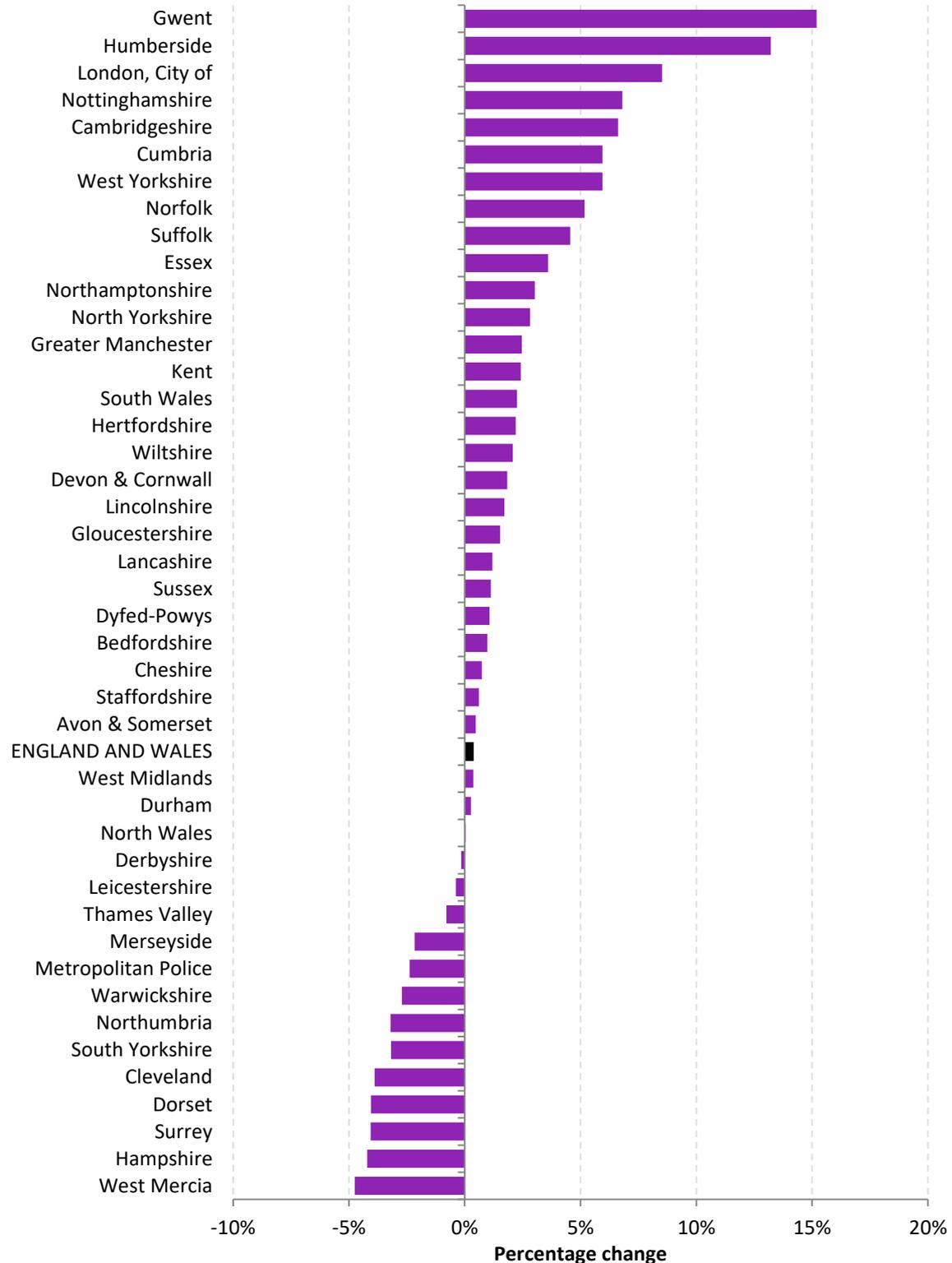
Source: [Workforce Table 7](#)

**Notes:**

1. Excludes BTP and secondments to central services.

Of the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales, 13 recorded reductions in police officer numbers in the year ending 30 September 2018 compared with 12 months earlier (Figure 3.3).

**Figure 3.3: Change in the number of police officers as at 30 September 2018, compared with 30 September 2017, by police force area**



Source: [Workforce Table 1](#)

## 4 Experimental statistics: Misconduct and criminal investigations

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### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers data from the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales on the number of cases of police misconduct and criminal investigations involving officers and staff, in the year ending 31 March 2018. It covers the number of cases received and assessed by forces as misconduct or gross misconduct, as well as the outcomes at misconduct meetings, hearings, special case hearings and criminal investigations.

In carrying out their duties, police officers and police staff are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional behaviour. These standards are set out in the [Police \(Conduct\) Regulations 2012](#) and apply to all police officers and special constables, with equivalents in local policy for police staff. The College of Policing's [Code of Ethics](#) sets out the principles, values and behaviour expected of everyone who works in policing.

The police discipline system is designed to deal with circumstances where it is alleged the standards of professional behaviour have been breached. This could come via a complaint from a member of the public (referred to here as a "public complaint") or from an internal misconduct allegation (referred to as a "conduct matter"). In addition, a case could arise from an incident such as a death or serious injury following contact with the police (e.g. following a police pursuit or a death in custody).

When a force receives a public complaint, or a misconduct matter comes to their attention, they decide as to whether the alleged misconduct could be a breach of the standards of professional behaviour set out in the regulations. Where behaviour is suspected of falling short of these standards, it is the responsibility of the police force to conduct a formal investigation or refer the matter to the [Independent Office for Police Conduct \(IOPC\)](#), formerly the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), depending on the nature of the case.

At the end of the investigation, the investigator will decide whether the individual has a case to answer for misconduct or gross misconduct. If there is a case to answer a decision will then be made about what form of disciplinary proceedings will take. This might, in serious cases, involve a formal disciplinary hearing at which the person may be dismissed, receive a final written warning, or a formal reprimand ("management advice").

Where misconduct proceedings are brought, this will either be a referral to a misconduct meeting (in the case of misconduct) or a misconduct hearing (in the case of gross misconduct or where the officer already has received a final written warning for misconduct). Some cases are referred to special case hearings, which is a fast-tracked process when evidence appears compelling and it is in the public interest for the matter to be resolved without delay.

In the vast majority of cases, hearings arranged under the [Police \(Conduct\) Regulations 2012](#) are now held in public. This reform was introduced in May 2015 to increase the transparency of the police discipline system. Hearings may be held in private when necessary; for example, where there are sensitive national security matters to be discussed or the involvement of vulnerable individuals. An independent legally-qualified chair makes the decision whether or not to hold all or part of the hearing in private based on specific criteria set out in the [Regulations](#). The proceedings and details of the hearing are published on the force's website.

A decision is made at the end of the process as to whether the individual has been found to have committed misconduct or gross misconduct, and, if so, the appropriate sanction.

A simplified flow chart of the misconduct process can be found on page 12 (Figure 4.1).

Further information about complaints and the discipline system can be found in statutory guidance issued by the [Home Office](#) and the [IOPC](#). The [User Guide to Police Workforce Statistics](#) also contains further information on the misconduct process.

## 4.2 How to use these data

Data are collected by the Home Office from each of the Professional Standards Departments (PSDs) in the 43 police forces in England and Wales. The PSDs are responsible for upholding and improving professional standards in the force, and for investigating complaints about police officers and staff.

### Officer and staff data

Different discipline systems exist for police officers and police staff (which includes civilian staff, PCSOs, designated officers and traffic wardens). Police officers and special constables are subject to the regulations as set out in the [Police \(Conduct\) Regulations 2012](#) whereas that involving staff is covered by local policies within police forces.

Therefore, while misconduct and gross misconduct cases against police officers and special constables tend to be dealt with and recorded in a similar way by most forces (with some exceptions), there are often different processes and recording practices for staff cases of misconduct and gross misconduct. Data relating to staff cases in this chapter should therefore be used with caution; they may be incomplete and not directly comparable across forces.

### Local resolutions

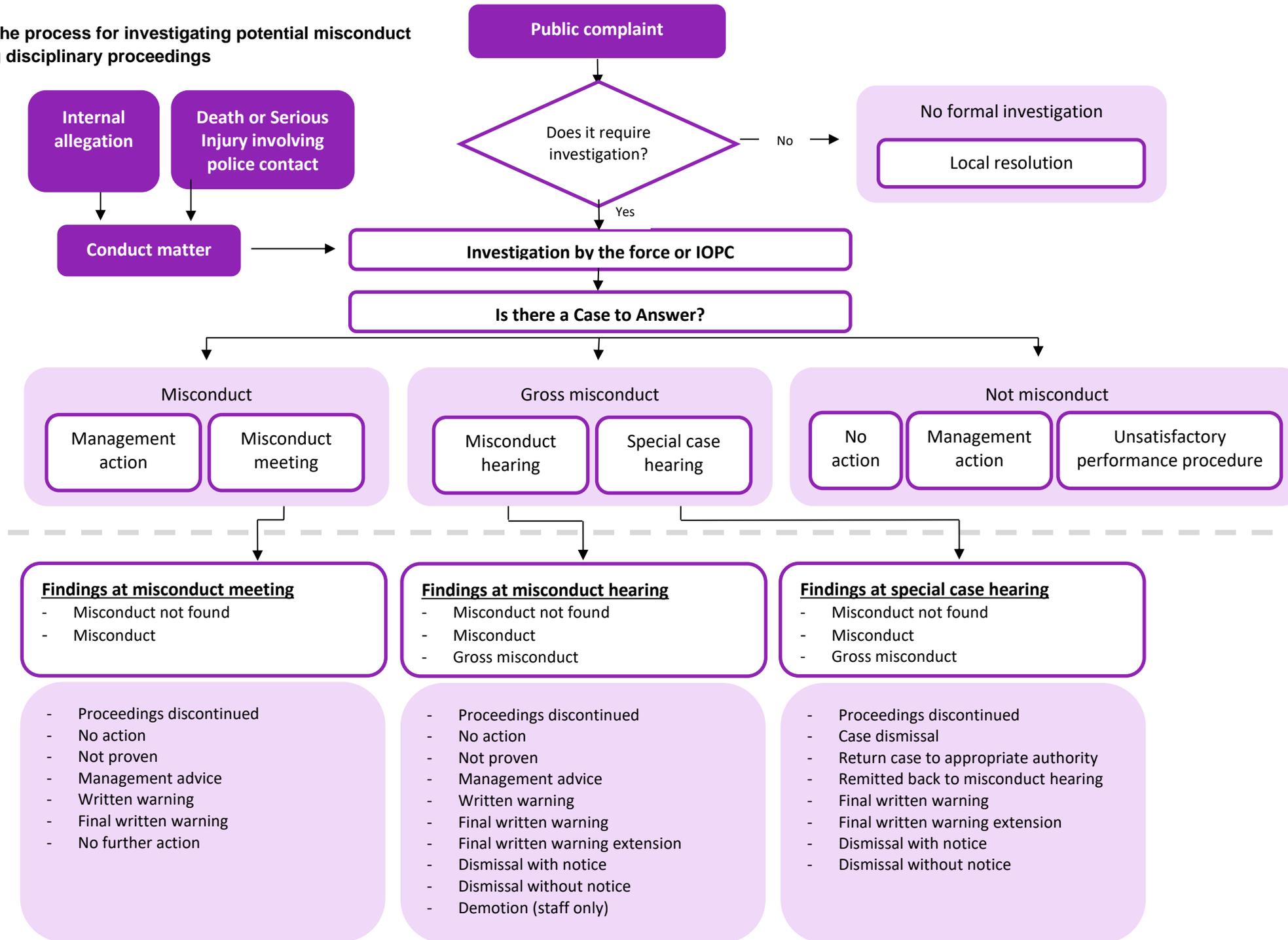
When a force receives a public complaint, or when an internal conduct matter arises, they decide as to whether the conduct meets the requirements for a formal investigation. In the case of public complaints, some do not meet the criteria for an investigation and are resolved locally without referral to disciplinary proceedings.

Some forces do not record a final assessment for cases that are resolved via a local resolution. Therefore, these statistics now only contain data for cases that were finally assessed as misconduct or gross misconduct to ensure consistency across forces.

### Experimental Statistics status

Due to the provisional and evolving nature of this dataset, these statistics have been designated as **Experimental Statistics**. The Police (Conduct) Regulations, which deal with the police discipline system, will be amended as part of wider police integrity reforms and are expected to come into force in 2019. These amendments include changes to sanctions and outcomes which will be reflected in changes to this dataset. Some changes to the police discipline system have already been made, including the introduction of the [Police \(Conduct, Complaints and Misconduct and Appeal Tribunal\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2017](#) and [Police Barred List and Police Advisory List Regulations 2017](#), which took effect on 15 December 2017. These extend the disciplinary provisions to former officers and introduce a barred list which prevents those who have been dismissed taking up other roles within policing.

**Figure 4.1: The process for investigating potential misconduct and bringing disciplinary proceedings**



### 4.3 Cases received and finally assessed as misconduct or gross misconduct

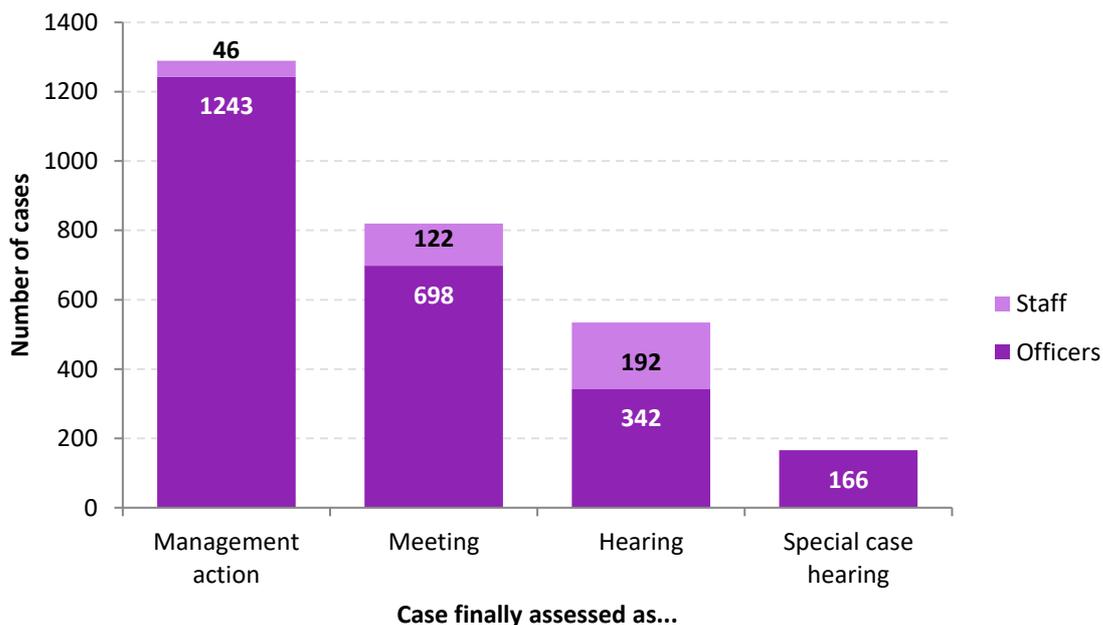
Of the complaint and conduct matter cases finalised by the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2018, 2,809 were considered to be matters involving misconduct or gross misconduct.

Of these 2,809 cases:

- Misconduct proceedings were brought in 1,520 cases, of which:
  - 820 were assessed as misconduct and referred to a misconduct meeting.
  - 700 required the bringing of a misconduct hearing or special case hearing (where the force considered there was sufficient evidence and public interest grounds for the case to proceed without delay) as they related to matters that could lead to the dismissal of the individual.
- The remaining 1,289 did not require the bringing of misconduct proceedings but resulted in 'management action' which is 'action or advice intended to improve the conduct of the officer concerned'.

Figure 4.2 shows the number of cases that resulted in management action, meetings or hearings (including special case hearings), for both officers and staff.

**Figure 4.2: Number of cases received and finally assessed as relating to misconduct or gross misconduct, year ending 31 March 2018<sup>1</sup>**



Source: [Misconduct Table 1](#)

**Notes:**

1. Members of police staff are not subject to the same regulations as officers. Staff data should be used with caution, as they may be incomplete and not directly comparable across forces.

## 4.4 Outcomes of misconduct meetings and hearings

### Misconduct meetings

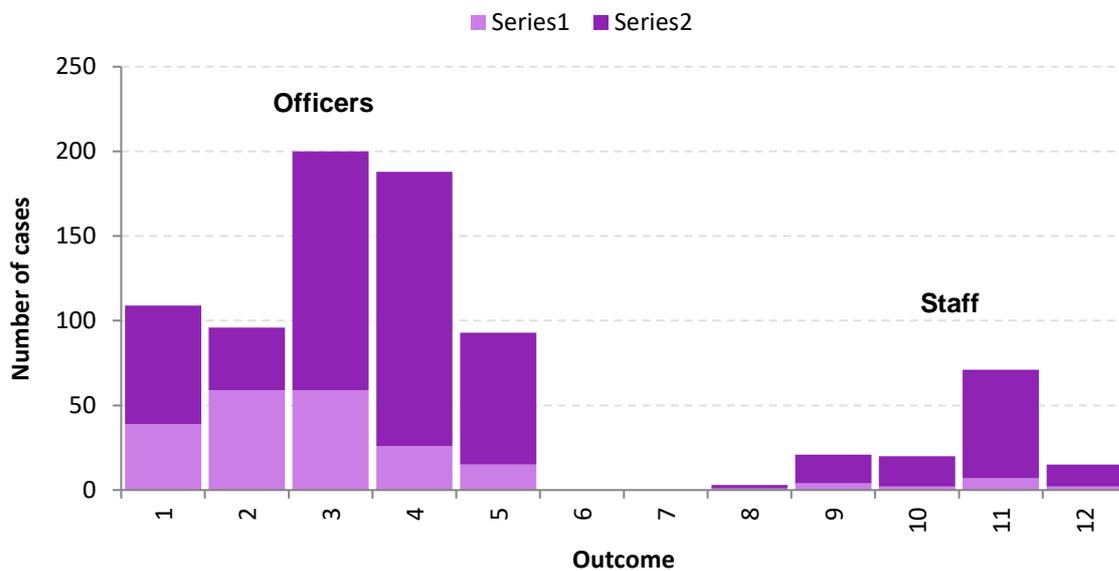
A misconduct meeting is held where there is a case to answer in respect of misconduct, and where the most serious outcome would be a final written warning. In the year ending 31 March 2018, 816 officers and staff attended a misconduct meeting.

The most common outcome at a misconduct meeting for officers was management advice, with 29% of meetings involving officers resulting in this outcome. The next most common outcome was a written warning (27% of meetings). For staff, the most common outcome following a misconduct meeting was a written warning, with 55% of meetings resulting in this outcome, followed by management advice (15%). The most serious outcome at a misconduct meeting is a final written warning (or final written warning extension). In the year ending 31 March 2018, 14% of officer cases and 12% of staff cases resulted in this outcome.

For officers, there was also a noticeable difference between the outcomes of cases following a public complaint and cases following an internal conduct matter. Conduct matters were more likely to result in more serious action, such as written warnings and final written warnings, whereas public complaints most frequently resulted in management advice, or the case was not proven.

In 28% of all cases, the outcome was either no action, the accusations were not proven, or the proceedings were discontinued (Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.3: Outcomes of misconduct meetings, year ending 31 March 2018<sup>1</sup>**



Source: [Misconduct Table 4](#)

**Notes:**

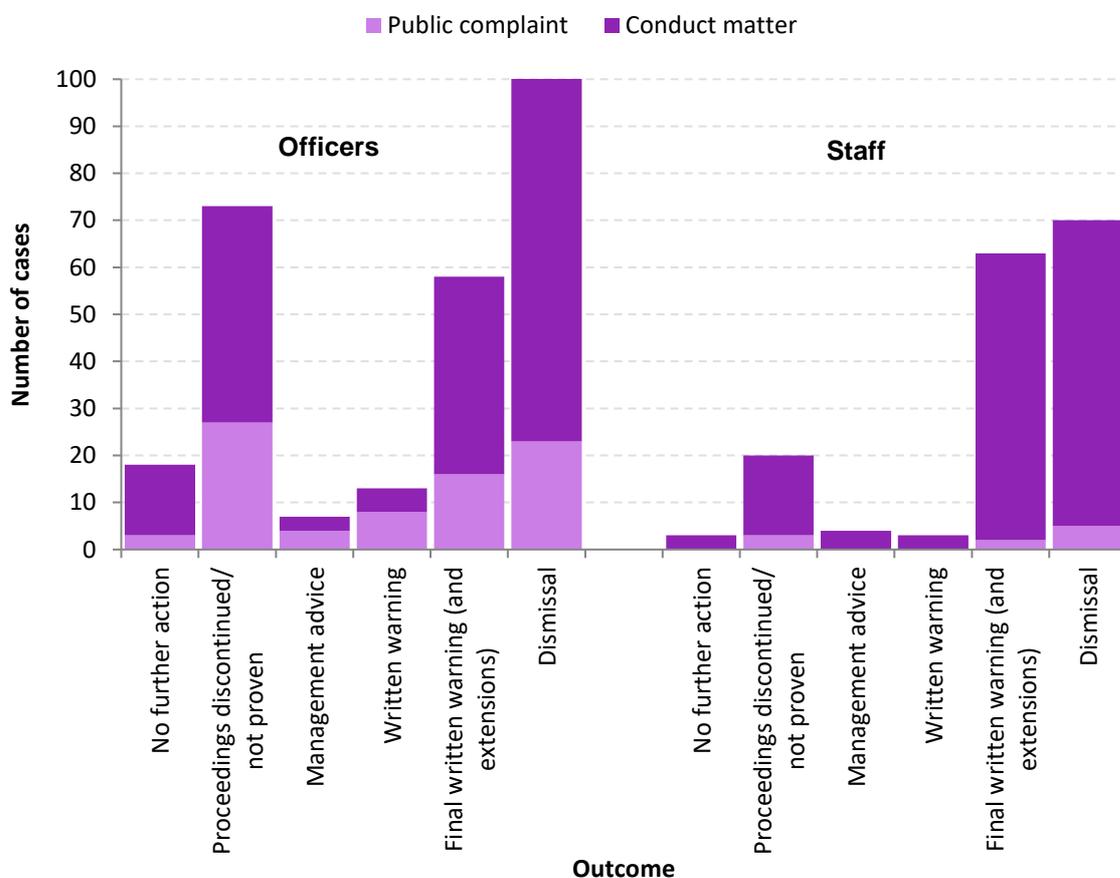
1. The total number of outcomes may not always exactly match the total number of cases assessed. This can be for a range of reasons, including where the officer or staff member resigns ahead of the meeting.

Misconduct hearings

A misconduct hearing is held when there is a case to answer in respect of gross misconduct, or where the police officer has a live final written warning and there is a case to answer in respect of a further act of misconduct. There were 274 such hearings involving officers and 163 hearings involving staff in the year ending 31 March 2018.

As might be expected, for both officers and staff, conduct matters led to misconduct hearings more frequently than public complaints. For officers, 38% of misconduct hearings resulted in dismissal, and a further 21% resulted in a final written warning (or final written warning extension). For staff, 43% of hearings resulted in dismissal and 39% in a final written warning (or final written warning extension).

**Figure 4.4: Outcomes of misconduct hearings, year ending 31 March 2018<sup>1</sup>**



Source: [Misconduct Table 5](#)

**Notes:**

1. The total number of outcomes may not always exactly match the total number of cases assessed. This can be for a range of reasons, including where the officer or staff member resigns ahead of the hearing.

Special case hearings

A special case hearing is a fast-tracked misconduct hearing where the force considers there is already sufficient evidence and public interest grounds for the officer to be dismissed without delay. In the year ending 31 March 2018, 156 officers faced a special case hearing, with 140 (90%) leading to dismissal. Three cases were discontinued, and the remaining 13 cases resulted in a final written warning.

In total, in the year ending 31 March 2018, 245 officers and 70 staff members were dismissed following a hearing or special case hearing.

### Private hearings and special case hearings

Hearings convened under the [Police \(Conduct\) Regulations 2012](#) are now held in public in the majority of cases. Hearing's may be held in private if it is more appropriate, for example where there are sensitive national security matters to be discussed at the hearing or where there is the involvement of vulnerable individuals. In the year ending 31 March 2018, 67 misconduct hearings were held in private and 37 special case hearings were held in private.

## 4.5 Criminal investigations

The Home Office also collects data on the number of criminal investigations involving officers and staff. In the year ending 31 March 2018 there were 174 criminal investigations, 137 of which related to police officers and 37 to police staff. The majority (91%) of these followed an internal conduct allegation.

Criminal investigations and proceedings are distinct from misconduct proceedings, as there are different tests and thresholds applied. For example, while a criminal prosecution relies on a burden of proof *beyond all reasonable doubt*, misconduct proceedings are in line with civil proceedings and rely on *the balance of probabilities*. This means that for criminal cases which do not result in conviction or are unsuitable for criminal prosecution, the individual can still be subject to misconduct proceedings and potentially be dismissed. In addition, where cases do result in criminal conviction, the individual can also be subject to misconduct proceedings. However, these are often paused while criminal proceedings are ongoing to avoid any potential prejudice to the proceedings.

Of the criminal investigations involving officers, 59% resulted in the officer being found (or pleading) guilty, 34% resulted in a not guilty verdict, and in the remaining 7% of cases proceedings were discounted or no evidence was offered. For staff, 62% of cases resulted in the individual being found (or pleading) guilty and 16% resulted in a not guilty verdict.

## 4.6 Additional data

For the reasons mentioned above, data on cases relating to public complaints in this chapter should not be used to measure the total volume of complaints received by the police in England and Wales. A more reliable data source for the total volume of complaints is published by the [IOPC](#).

The IOPC collects and publishes data on complaints against the police in England and Wales but is collected on a different basis to the data covered in this chapter. The IOPC data cover the number of complaints, whereas data in this chapter relate to number of workers. For example, in the event of one complaint being made against three officers, the IOPC would count one complaint, whereas three cases would be counted in the Home Office data. The opposite is also true, if four complaints were made about the same incident involving one officer, four complaints would be counted by the IOPC but just one case recorded in the Home Office statistics.

The latest IOPC publication can be found here: <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/research-and-learning/statistics/complaints-statistics>



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<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office/about/statistics>

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