



Home Office

Police workforce, England and Wales, as at 30 September 2020

Introduction

This release is a mid-year update of the [Police workforce, England and Wales](#) publication series, containing information on police workers (covering both officers and staff) in post on 30 September 2020.

A second statistical bulletin on '[Police officer uplift](#)' has also been published on the same day. That release provides provisional information on progress with the recruitment of an additional 20,000 police officers in England and Wales as at December 2020.

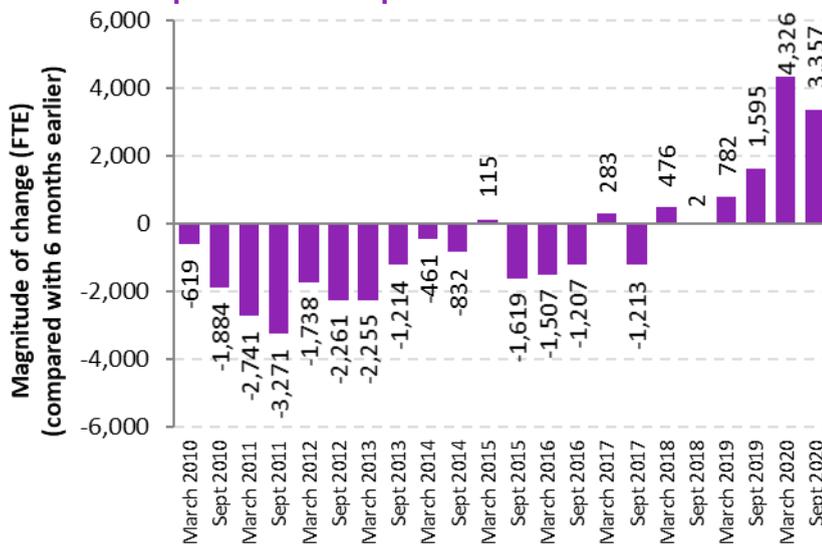
Police workforce as at 30 September 2020

As at 30 September 2020, the total police workforce size was **216,155 FTE** (an increase of **5.5%** on the previous year).

This includes:

- **132,467** police officers
- **74,572** police staff and designated officers
- **9,115** PCSOs

Change in the number of full time equivalent (FTE) police officers compared with the previous 6 months



Misconduct and criminal investigations (Experimental statistics)

- This release also contains experimental statistics on police misconduct and criminal investigations in 2019/20.
- In the year ending March 2020, there were **2,242** cases assessed as misconduct or gross misconduct.

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Police workforce, as at 30 September 2020.....	3
3	Experimental statistics on Misconduct and criminal investigations	7

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1 Introduction

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 and designated officers¹, police community support officers (PCSOs), special constables and police support volunteers (PSVs) in post on 30 September 2020. The statistics cover all the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales. Though data for the British Transport Police and the National Crime Agency (NCA) are largely excluded from analysis within this report, their data can be found in the accompanying [data tables](#). This release also contains experimental statistics on misconduct and criminal investigations for the year ending 31 March 2020.

Unless otherwise stated, total workforce figures quoted in the bulletin include those on career breaks or other forms of long term absence, as well as those seconded in to police forces from other forces or central services (e.g. the Home Office, the National Crime Agency). It excludes those seconded out from forces to central services. The headline workforce figures in this release are all presented on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis unless indicated otherwise. The accompanying [data tables](#) provide the same information on a headcount basis.

The [User Guide to Police Workforce Statistics](#) contains further information, including a glossary, conventions used, and other background information. 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.

1.2 National Statistics Status

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 2020. These data in this section of the release have been designated as **Experimental Statistics**, to acknowledge that further development is currently taking place, and more detailed statistics will be published in future years.

¹ Designated officers are police staff (who are not police officers) employed to exercise specific powers that would otherwise only be available to police officers

2 Police workforce, as at 30 September 2020

This release is a mid-year update of the [Police workforce, England and Wales](#) publication series, containing information on police workers (officers and staff) in post on 30 September 2020 in England and Wales. While this bulletin contains information on all workers as at 30 September 2020, a second statistical bulletin on '[Police officer uplift](#)' has also been published on the same day. That release provides provisional information on progress (as at end December 2020) with the recruitment of an additional 20,000 police officers in England and Wales by the end of March 2023.

There were 216,155 workers (FTE) employed by the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales on 30 September 2020, an increase of 11,341 (or 5.5%) compared with a year earlier, and of 5,402 (2.6%) since March 2020. The size of the workforce has been increasing, from 204,814 as at 30 September 2019, to 210,753 as at 31 March 2020, to 216,155 in the latest figures. There were increases in both the number of FTE police officers (up 6.2% since 30 September 2019), police staff and designated officers (up 5.4% over same the period), but reductions in Police and Community Support Officers (down 1.9%) and in special constables (down 9.1% on a headcount basis). There was a small rise (of 2.0% on a headcount basis) of the number of 7,891 police support volunteers (PSVs)² (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Police workforce as at 30 September 2019, 31 March 2020, and 30 September 2020, England and Wales

	30-Sep-19	31-Mar-20	30-Sep-20	Change in 12 months 30 Sep-19 to 30 Sep-20	
				Number	Percentage
Police officers	124,784	129,110	132,467	7,683	6.2%
Police staff and designated officers¹	70,737	72,395	74,572	3,835	5.4%
PCSOs	9,292	9,248	9,115	-177	-1.9%
Total workforce	204,814	210,753	216,155	11,341	5.5%
Special constables (headcount)²	10,039	9,588	9,126	-913	-9.1%
PSVs (headcount)²	7,740	8,339	7,891	151	2.0%

Source: [Workforce data tables](#)

Notes:

1. Designated officers and police staff have been combined as some forces are unable to provide data on designated officers separately.
2. Special constables and PSVs do not have contracted working hours so their numbers are provided on a headcount basis rather than FTE.

² Individuals who by choice put their time, experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of the force without expectation of compensation or financial rewards, except for the payment of pre-determined out of pocket expenses.

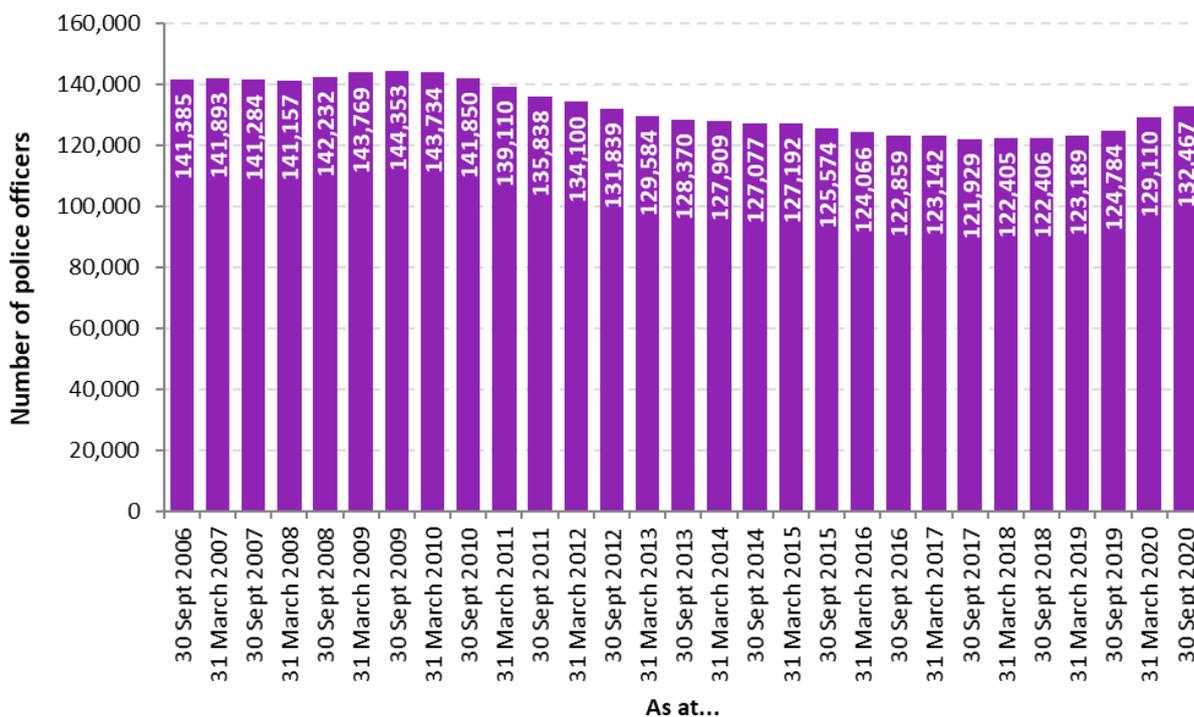
Police officers

As at 30 September 2020, there were 132,467 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales. This was an increase of 2.6% (3,357 officers) since March 2020 (when there were 129,110 officers) and 6.2% from the 124,784 police officers as at 30 September 2019. This is the largest September to September increase since comparable records began in 2003, and reflects the ongoing recruitment campaign to recruit an additional 20,000 officers by March 2023. Further details on this recruitment drive are available in the [‘Police officer uplift’](#) statistical series.

In addition to officers working in the 43 territorial police forces, the British Transport Police employed 2,984 police officers, and the National Crime Agency (NCA) employed 4,990 FTE officers in England and Wales. It should be noted that NCA officers are defined on a different basis than the territorial forces and the BTP, since they include both those warranted with the powers of a police constable or other powers, as well as non-warranted officers (civilians involved in the investigation of serious and organised crime). There were also a further 332 police officers seconded out to central services³ as at 30 September 2020.

Figure 2.1 shows the long-term trend in police officer numbers in the territorial police forces.

Figure 2.1: Number of police officers¹ as at 30 September 2006 to 2020, England and Wales



Source: [Workforce Table 4](#)

Notes:

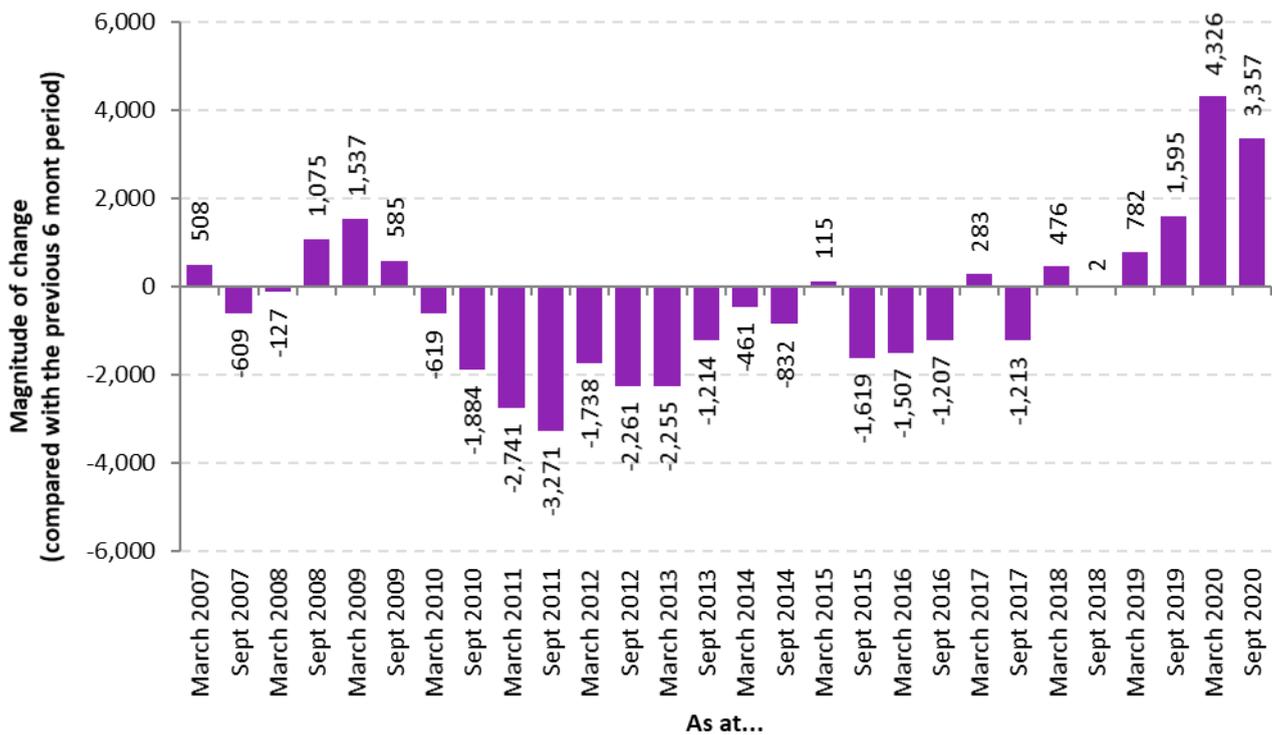
³ Secondments to central services are secondments to central government, e.g. the Home Office, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), or the National Crime Agency (NCA).

1. Excludes BTP and secondments to central services.

Police officer numbers peaked in September 2009, at 144,353 FTE officers. Between 2009 and 2017 there was a general downward trend, and officer numbers reached a low-point in September 2017. In the last three years the previous downward trend has reversed, and there are now 10,538 (8.6%) more officers than 3 years ago. However, the number of officers as at 30 September 2020 remains 11,886 (8.2%) below the peak of 144,353 officers in 2009.

On 5 September 2019 the Prime Minister [announced](#) the Government commitment to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers in England and Wales by 31 March 2023. In the year following this announcement (between 30 September 2019 and 30 September 2020), the number of full-time equivalent police officers across the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales rose by 7,683 (or 6.2%), the largest year-on-year increase since comparable records began in 2003. The increase in the last year accounts for almost three-quarters (73%) of the total increase since the low-point in 2017.

Figure 2.2: Change in the number of police officers¹ as at 30 March 2007 to 30 September 2020, compared with the previous 6 months, England and Wales



Source: [Workforce Table 4](#)

Notes:

1. Excludes BTP and secondments to central services.

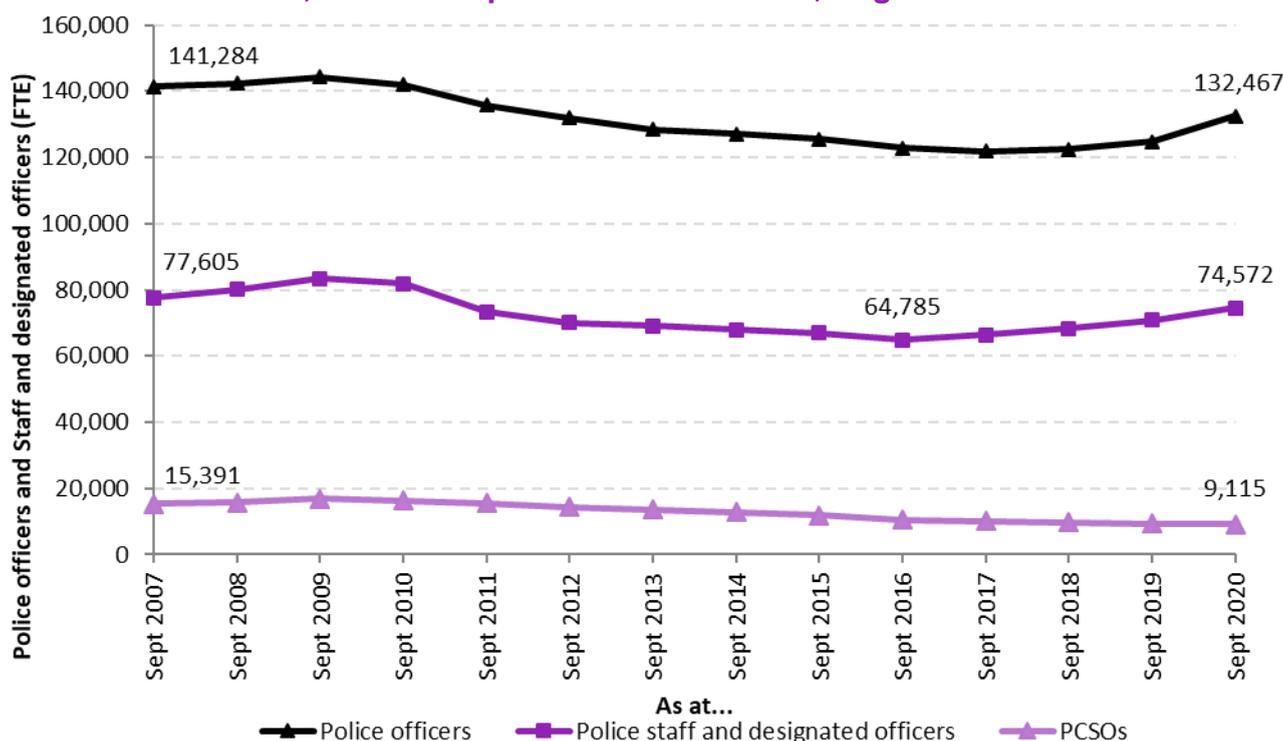
The statistics in this release show long term trends and comparisons with previous years. It should be noted that percentage changes in the number of police officers cited in this bulletin may differ from those in the companion '[Police officer uplift](#)' release. This is

because, firstly, the headline measures in this bulletin are based on FTE rather than headcount. Secondly, it is because percentage changes cited in this bulletin are based on all officers employed by forces at a given point in time (e.g. as at 30 September 2020 compared with as at 30 September 2019) whereas those in the ‘[Police officer uplift](#)’ series uses an adjusted baseline. Further details on uplift recruitment are available in the ‘[Police officer uplift](#)’ bulletin.

Other worker types

Between September 2019 and September 2020 the number of police staff and designated officers increased by 3,835 (5.4%) from 70,737 FTE to 74,572 FTE. In general, staff and designated officer numbers have followed a similar trend to police officer numbers over the past decade, with falls between 2009 and the low-point in 2016 (64,785 staff), before increasing in each year since. In the latest year, PCSOs numbers fell by 177 (1.9%) to 9,115 PCSOs, continuing the downward trend seen since 2009. PCSO numbers have not increased in the most recent years as staff and officer numbers have (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Number of police officers, police staff and designated officers¹, and PCSOs, as at 30 September 2006 to 2020, England and Wales



Source: [Workforce Table 4](#)

Notes:

1. Designated officers and police staff are combined as some forces are unable to provide data on designated officers separately.

3 Experimental statistics: Misconduct and criminal investigations

3.1 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 2020. 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, accelerated 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 2020](#) 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.

New legislation was introduced in February 2020 to overhaul the police discipline system, including changes to the threshold for misconduct and outcomes at disciplinary proceedings for cases where complaints were made, or conduct matters came to the force's attention, after 1st February 2020. A number of the cases included in these statistics will have commenced prior to this date and will therefore fall under the previous system.

The police officer discipline system is designed to deal with circumstances where it is alleged the standards of professional behaviour have been breached – with the threshold having increased in February 2020, meaning only serious breaches now constitute misconduct. 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 (DSI) 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 conduct matter comes to its attention, it must assess whether or not the matter needs to be investigated. Complaints must be investigated where there is an indication that the behaviour would justify disciplinary proceedings or that a criminal offence has been committed.

Conduct matters must be investigated where the conduct, if proved, would amount to at least misconduct - defined previously as ‘*a breach of the standards of professional behaviour*’ and since February 2020 as a breach *so serious as to justify disciplinary action*’. Under the previous system, the force would then need to go on to determine whether it was necessary to investigate. In these situations, it is the responsibility of the police force to conduct a formal investigation or refer the matter to the [Independent Office for Police Conduct \(IOPC\)](#), depending on the nature of the case.

At the end of the investigation, a senior manager (known as the “Appropriate Authority”) 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 whether to bring disciplinary proceedings and, if so, what form the disciplinary proceedings will take – with the presumption under the new system that those with a case to answer will be referred to disciplinary proceedings.

Where disciplinary proceedings are brought, this will either be a referral to a misconduct meeting (in the case of misconduct) or, in the most serious cases, a misconduct hearing (in the case of gross misconduct or where the officer already has a final written warning in place). An officer found to have committed gross misconduct at a misconduct hearing may be dismissed, reduced in rank or issued a final written warning. Some cases are referred to an accelerated hearing (previously known as a ‘special case hearing’), which is a fast-tracked process when there is sufficient evidence that the conduct of the officer constitutes gross misconduct and it is in the public interest for the officer to cease to be a member of a police force without delay.

In the vast majority of cases, hearings arranged under the [Police \(Conduct\) Regulations 2012](#) or [Police \(Conduct\) Regulations 2020](#) 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 (LQC) 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. Details of the hearing may be published on the force’s website.

A decision is made at the end of the proceedings as to whether the individual has been found to have committed misconduct or gross misconduct, and, if so, the appropriate sanction is given. This decision is now made by a three-person panel, chaired by an independent LQC.

Many complaints made against the police do need to be formally investigated. For example, complaints about a low-level service delivery matter or complaints where the alleged conduct of an officer, even if proven, would not justify bringing criminal or disciplinary proceedings. Therefore, these statistics only contain data for complaint cases that were subject to a formal investigation and, following investigation, were assessed as misconduct or gross misconduct.

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.

3.2 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 and internal misconduct allegations.

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, special constables and police staff are all subject to the [Police \(Complaints and Misconduct\) Regulations 2020](#) which govern the handling of complaints, recordable conduct matters and DSI matters. Police officers and special constables are also subject to the [Police \(Conduct\) Regulations 2020](#), which govern the handling of internal misconduct allegations and disciplinary proceedings, whereas these matters for police staff are covered by local policies within police forces.

Therefore, while misconduct and gross misconduct cases against police officers and special constables there are 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.

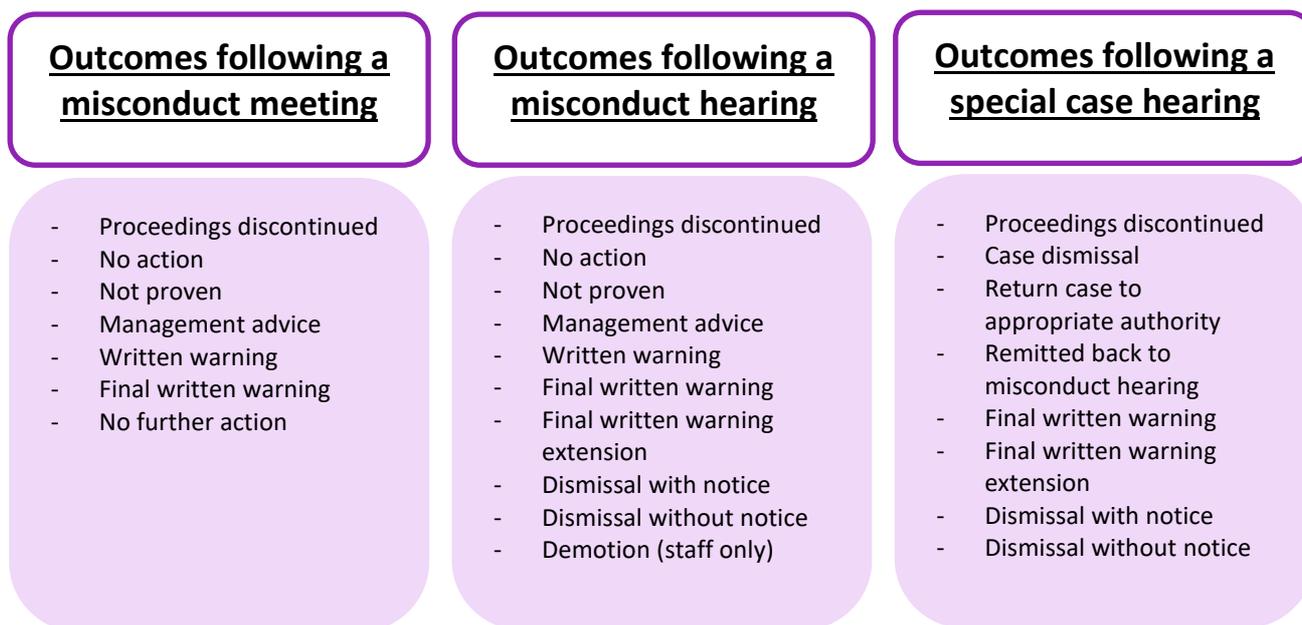
Experimental Statistics status

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, were amended in February 2020 as part of wider police integrity reforms. These amendments include changes to sanctions and outcomes which will be reflected in changes to this dataset in the next release of data under provisions established by 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 or specified law enforcement bodies.

Figure 3.1 show the possible outcomes, covered in these statistics, following misconduct proceedings finalised prior to the legislative reforms to the discipline system in February 2020. While the vast majority of proceedings covered in these statistics will have commenced prior to the legislative reforms to the discipline system, comparisons to previous years have not been made to acknowledge that 2019/20 data may include some cases under the new system.

Data for previous years can be found in the relevant accompanying [open data table](#).

Figure 3.1: Possible outcomes following misconduct proceedings
(Cases commenced before 1st February 2020)



3.3 CASES RECEIVED AND FINALLY ASSESSED AS MISCONDUCT OR GROSS MISCONDUCT

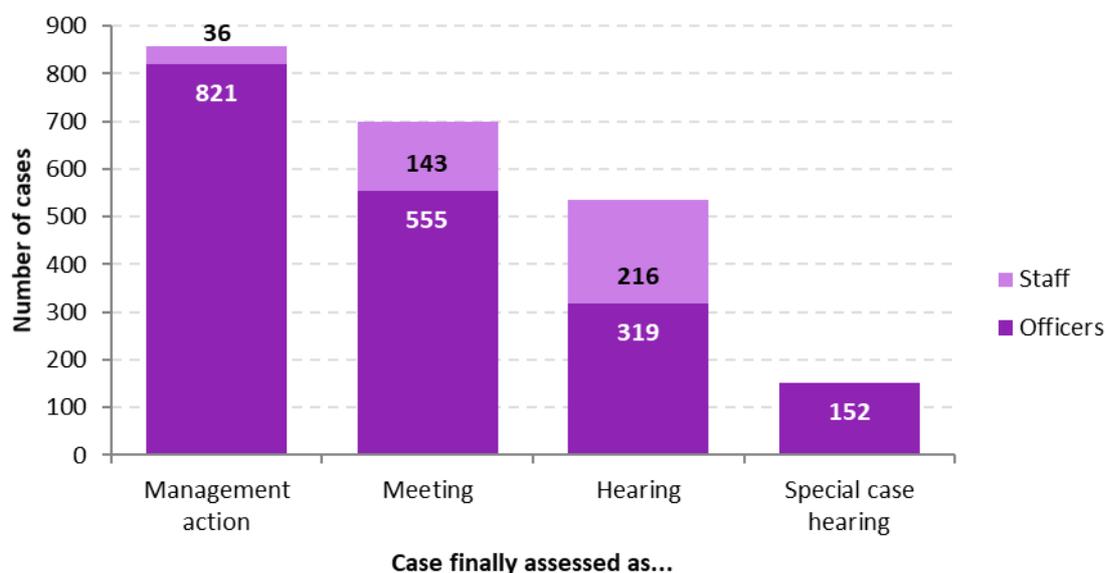
Of the complaint and conduct matter cases finalised by the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2020, 2,242 were considered to be matters involving misconduct or gross misconduct.

Of these 2,242 cases:

- Misconduct proceedings were brought in 1,385 cases (62%), of which:
 - 698 (31% of all misconduct proceedings) were assessed as misconduct and referred to a misconduct meeting.
 - 687 (31% of all misconduct proceedings) 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 857 (38% of all cases) 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 3.2 shows the number of cases that resulted in management action, meetings or hearings (including special case hearings), for both officers and staff.

Figure 3.2: Number of cases received and finally assessed as relating to misconduct or gross misconduct, year ending 31 March 2020¹



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.

3.4 OUTCOMES OF MISCONDUCT MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

Data on outcomes relate to cases that were finalised in the 2019/20 financial year. For this reason, totals here will not match the numbers in section 3.3, as some cases that were assessed in 2019/20 could still be ongoing. Likewise, cases finalised in 2019/20 may have commenced in a previous financial year, and would therefore not show in the totals above.

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 2020, 671 officers and staff attended a misconduct meeting.

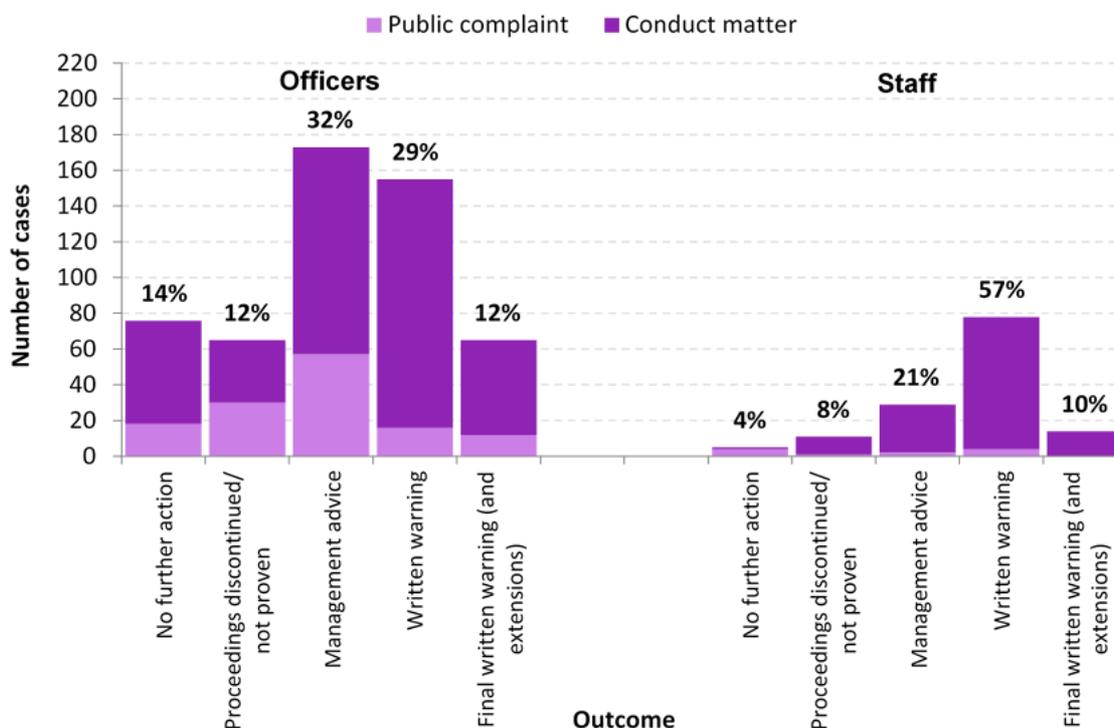
The most common outcome at a misconduct meeting for officers was management advice, with 32% of meetings involving officers resulting in this outcome, closely followed by an outcome of a written warning (29% of meetings). For staff, the most common outcome following a misconduct meeting was a written warning (57%), followed by management advice (21%). The most serious outcome at a misconduct meeting is a final written warning (or final written warning extension). In the year ending 31 March 2020, 12% of officer cases and 10% 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 those 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 26% of all cases involving officers, the outcome was either no action, the accusations were not proven, or the proceedings were discontinued (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3: Outcomes of misconduct meetings, year ending 31 March 2020¹



Source: [Misconduct Table 4](#)

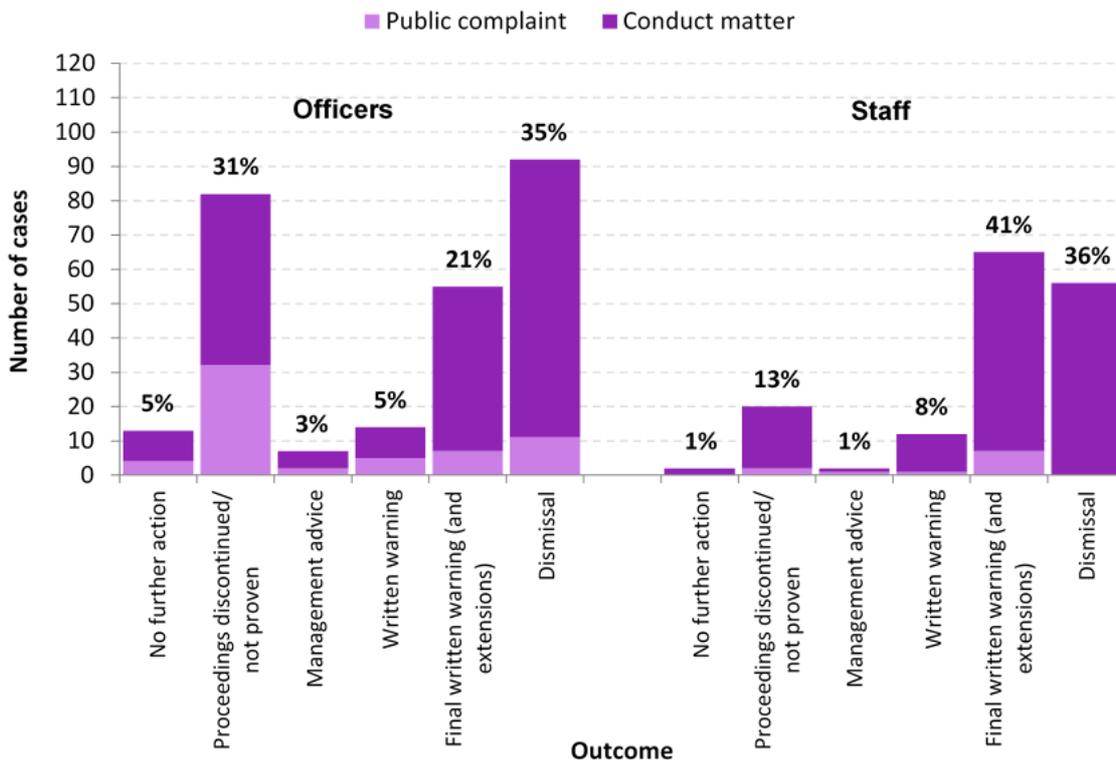
Notes:

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 263 such hearings involving officers and 157 hearings involving staff in the year ending 31 March 2020.

For officers, 35% of misconduct hearings resulted in dismissal, and a further 20% resulted in a final written warning. For staff, 36% of hearings resulted in dismissal and 41% in a final written warning.

Figure 3.4: Outcomes of misconduct hearings, year ending 31 March 2020¹

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 2020, 86 officers faced a special case hearing, with 69 (80%) leading to dismissal. One case was discontinued, and the remaining 16 cases resulted in a final written warning.

In total, in the year ending 31 March 2020, 161 officers and 56 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 2020, 34 misconduct hearings were held in private and 29 special case hearings were held in private.

3.5 CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Home Office also collects data on the number of criminal investigations involving officers and staff. In the year ending 31 March 2020 there were 152 criminal investigations, 115 of which related to police officers and 37 to police staff. The majority (90%) 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, 28% resulted in a not guilty verdict, 1% in the officer receiving a caution, and in the remaining 12% of cases, proceedings were discontinued, or no evidence was offered. For staff, 70% of cases resulted in the individual being found (or pleading) guilty and 14% resulted in a not guilty verdict. One case (3%) resulted in a caution, and the remaining 14% of cases, proceedings were discontinued, or no evidence was offered.

3.6 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>

Statistical Bulletins are prepared by staff in Home Office Statistics under the National Statistics Code of Practice and can be downloaded from GOV.UK:

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

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