

# An exploratory international comparison of professional confidence in volunteer policing

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## Abstract

Police volunteers are an important asset to communities and policing agencies but have been relatively understudied. Similar models of police volunteers have developed in the United States and the United Kingdom but these differ in the level of their preparedness and training. This current study utilises vignettes to examine the confidence of volunteer police officers from two agencies, one in the US and one in the UK. Results show that while both groups in the study are confident in their professional ability to handle issues at a policing scene, UK volunteer officers feel less confident about interviewing and administrative paperwork than their US counterparts.

## Keywords

Volunteer, police, training, confidence

## Introduction

Volunteer law enforcement officers are utilised in many countries throughout the world as a supplement to regular, paid, full-time police forces. They can be used to stretch tight budgets and can increase citizen access to resources. Volunteer police can be used for

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routine police services, including foot or vehicle patrol, or be trained to work in more specific police functions, such as marine patrols, emergency response teams or investigative units.

The operational use of volunteer police varies between countries and geographical jurisdiction: while some use volunteer police in the same way as full-time or regular police, others use volunteers to act only as eyes and ears for the police and to report problems in the community (Wolf *et al.*, 2015a). Volunteer police officers are often seen in current UK policing and in those countries where at some point in history there was a British influence, including Ireland, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Canada, the Bahamas, the Cayman Islands, the United States and New Zealand. However, they can also be found in other countries, including Hungary, Germany and the Netherlands.

The primary function of volunteer police officers (special constables) across England and Wales is to support, work alongside and supplement the duties of regular police officers. As an added benefit, these special constables are also more representative of the communities that are being policed than are regular officers (Bullock, 2014; Newburn, 2008; Stuart, 2008). Training for special constables is drawn from elements of the Policing National Curriculum, which is used to create a professional framework for policing. The Initial Learning for the Special Constabulary (often referred to as the IL4SC) is traditionally taught over weekends and evenings, equating to around 3 to 4 weeks of full-time training and taking new starters up to the level of accompanied patrol (College of Policing, 2015). In 2014, there were 72 of these special constables working within Cleveland Police.

Like special constables in the UK, reserve deputies in Orange County have the same police powers as their regular police colleagues, wear the same uniforms and carry the same gear. The Orange County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) in central Florida had 85 volunteer reserve deputies in 2014. An additional role of these volunteers, however, in contrast with their UK counterparts, is at times to run fully independent road patrols (Pepper and Wolf, 2015). The two categories of volunteer reserves with the OCSO in Florida are required to have a minimum of either 319 hours or 770 hours of training, respectively (Wolf, 2014).

While modernisation of the UK Special Constabulary has attempted to bring about standardisation of many aspects of volunteer policing, law enforcement agencies throughout the United States utilise reserve and auxiliary law enforcement officers differently, with distinct responsibilities. Recent volunteer policing events, including an accidental shooting of a suspect by a volunteer police officer in April 2015 and the death of a volunteer sheriff's deputy in a shooting in May 2015, have led to a push for standardisation in the US (Wolf *et al.*, 2015a) but little movement has occurred.

The aim of this current study is to compare and contrast the self-reported confidence that volunteer police have in approaching potential situations that they may face while in a policing function. This study looks at the volunteer police services from a northeast UK police force (Cleveland Police) and a US Central Florida sheriff's office (Orange County). Although these two geographical areas are some 4000 miles apart and different in size, they have many similarities, such as a mixture of urban and rural locations, areas of high population density and higher than national average crime rates. They have

similar numbers of full-time officers and part-time volunteer officers, along with a local university that has a good relationship with the police service.

Volunteer participants in both organisations completed a self-administered questionnaire that included demographic questions and questions related to their training. Finally, the participants were asked to respond to three short vignettes that asked them to assess their confidence in performing police functions in the listed scenarios. This research provides an interesting comparison between the volunteers in the US and the UK police agencies.

## Literature review

There is a renewed global interest in volunteers who are active in government (Cooper *et al.*, 2006), and volunteers are essential for many functions of governmental organisations to succeed (Musick and Wilson, 2008). In the United States, the rate of volunteerism among adults who actively or occasionally volunteer is about one in four, and averages about 32 hours per resident per year (Bryer, 2015; National Community Service, 2016). In England, research conducted for the Cabinet Office found that during 2013–2014, almost three-quarters of 5000+ respondents throughout England had volunteered either formally (such as unpaid in groups or clubs) or informally (providing unpaid help to others) in the month preceding the research, with little change in the rates of volunteering over the previous ten or so years (Cabinet Office, 2014). Local government may be extremely interested in utilising volunteers, as they support governmental functions and fill a void in service. Volunteers at the local level also can represent public service in a positive way to their friends, neighbours and families (Bryer, 2015). While volunteerism has been examined to a great extent, volunteerism specific to policing organisations has been largely lacking from the literature.

Citizen police were utilised long before the concept of modern policing in the mid-nineteenth century (Greenberg, 2015). The use of uncompensated community members for public safety purposes can be traced back to the dawn of civilisation. Tribal structures in early human history relied on a mutual responsibility to ensure that law was enforced (Seth, 2006). Later, in tenth century Britain, the local lord would appoint a ‘Constable of the Manor’ whose primary purpose was to maintain the ‘King’s peace’ and to raise the ‘hue and cry’ if necessary to summon aid (Greenberg, 2005; Wolf *et al.*, 2015a). With the implementation of Sir Robert Peel’s Metropolitan Police Act in 1829 there was already the ability for the government to summon additional police aid in the form of special constables. In 1831, provisions in law regarding special constables were adopted that clarified their nomination and duties (Seth, 2006). Many UK special constables died in the line of duty, particularly in World War II (Greenberg, 2015).

The American system of policing is largely based upon the model of Sir Robert Peel’s London-based Metropolitan Police, and this is true for volunteer policing as well (Dobrin, 2015). In the mid-seventeenth century, American sheriffs often called upon local posse volunteers to assist in order maintenance (Wolf *et al.*, 2015b). Volunteer policing units in the United States grew out of civil defence units during World War II, and throughout the late twentieth century were a response to government needs in a

variety of jurisdictions, resulting in auxiliary and reserve units throughout the country (Greenberg, 2005; Wolf *et al.*, 2015a).

Modern UK police agencies utilise volunteer special constables to serve as unarmed warranted police officers on a part-time basis and they serve in all police forces across England, Wales and Scotland. These so called 'specials' are vested with the same powers to uphold the law as their full-time counterparts, but have significantly less initial training. Specials are provided with the same equipment as full-time officers, including handcuffs, radios, a stab vest and an incapacitating spray. Often specials work in teams, with other specials or full-time officers, but they can also be authorised to patrol alone (Seth, 2006). Special constables are asked to provide several hours of service each week, primarily on evenings and weekends (Greenberg, 2015). There are more than 16,700 specials across England and Wales (College of Policing, 2016) and more than 5000 specials in the 32 boroughs that make up London alone (Bailey, 2015).

American reserve and auxiliary officers are disparate in function because of the local control inherent with the American structure of government and are dependent on the local agency policies and state standards (Greenberg, 1984). Some policing agencies in the United States utilise reserve volunteer officers in the same manner as regular police personnel and they receive similar training. Other jurisdictions utilise volunteer police as 'eyes and ears' and to back up regular police when trouble is encountered or suspected (Dobrin, 2015). Still others use a combination of these volunteers, dependent upon the amount of training they have received and local laws.

Immediately recognisable as a major difference between policing in the UK and the US is that in American policing all full-time police are armed with handguns. Arming of volunteer police varies across the United States, but in Florida volunteer police are armed and categorised by state statute into one of two categories: auxiliary police (who have less training and authority than full-time police) and part-time police (who have equal training and authority to full-time police but may be paid or volunteers). These classifications are discussed in additional detail below.

Another major difference in American policing from that in the UK is that US police forces are decentralised and every state and local jurisdiction follows different state laws, regulations, rules and policies as to how the police are able to perform their public service. This decentralisation reflects the contrast between federal, state and local government and the more than 17,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States, some with only a handful of officers and others with tens of thousands (Blair, 2010).

The police service across the United Kingdom is governed by national guidelines for much of its activity. Although there are differences in the ways chief constables interpret and enact national regulations, operational policing is reasonably consistent throughout. Although historically the British have kept politics distinctly separate from policing, Police and Crime Commissioners were elected for the first time in 2012 (APCC, 2016). They were introduced in an effort to connect the local populace with their policing bodies. Under this new system, the goal is to increase understanding of and participation in policing by way of the elected commissioner holding the police accountable for public priorities (Rogers and Gravelle, 2012).

## **Volunteer policing in the UK and the US**

### *Special constables in the United Kingdom*

Across England and Wales there is a standardised selection and recruitment process for regular police officers, with a similar, but shorter, process for special constables. This recruitment process includes initial application, assessment centre, vetting, and medical and fitness tests, along with a final interview. Once recruited, special constables are generally trained to the requirements of the standardised national programme, called 'Initial Learning for Special Constables' (IL4SC). The College of Policing (2015) provides guidance on a number of training programmes that police forces may opt to follow, including the IL4SC. This programme covers a range of mandatory units linked to the Policing National Curriculum, together with a number of optional units which individual police forces can add to the initial training. These mandatory units are usually taught over a mixture of weekend and evening classroom and practical sessions (although in some forces sessions are also taught in block weeks) covering aspects such as ethics and values of the service, personal safety, arrest and detention, first aid, stop and search, human rights and diversity, criminal law and road traffic offences, etc. Once their initial training is complete, special constables are attested (sworn in as a police officer) and then when on duty have the same powers as a regular police officer. At this stage of their training, special constables are equipped and expected to take part in mentored, accompanied patrol. During this phase, special constables commit as a volunteer to a minimum of 16 hours of unpaid duty a month, including a mixture of training and tutored operational patrol, and over a period of months they complete their 'Police Action Checklists' (PACs).

During this tutored phase, usually supported by a regular police tutor officer, special constables demonstrate and document in their PACs that they can implement their knowledge and complete tasks in practice. Once the PACs are complete, a special constable's status is confirmed as having the ability to perform safe and lawful accompanied patrol. This initial training is also supplemented in some forces with additional required local training; for example, the Metropolitan Police Service trains special constables to a level that enables them to deal with certain types of public disorder (Whittle, 2014).

Increasingly, forces are also encouraging or requiring special constables to move on with a tutor police officer to achieve independent patrol status. This is achieved over a year or so by the special constable's successful completion and assessment in practice of additional units from the Policing National Curriculum. Throughout their service, special constables work voluntarily under the control of the chief constable and are bound by the police conduct regulations (Special Constabulary Manager: Norfolk Constabulary, 2011).

### *Reserves and auxiliaries in the United States*

The training provided in US police academies for regular, full-time police officers averages about 19 weeks (or 761 hours), of which 60 hours are spent on firearms instruction and 44 hours on self-defence instruction (Bureau of Justice Statistics,

2009). After completion of police academy, regular police recruits complete field training, or on-the-job training, under the instruction of a training officer in the agency where they are employed. While there are many variations across the United States on how this field training is conducted, recruits spend an average of approximately eight weeks in this training (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2014).

There is no standard of training in the United States, however, for volunteer police officers. Training varies from absolutely no formal training to the same amount of training that is required of full-time personnel within the jurisdiction. In Florida, the state where this current study is focused, there are two categories of volunteer law enforcement officer, those who are categorised as 'auxiliary' officers under state law and those who are categorised as 'part-time' officers under state law. Auxiliary officers have completed basic academy courses in firearms, defensive tactics, patrol techniques, criminal investigations, first aid and emergency vehicle operations (319 hours). Part-time officers have completed the same training as full-time officers within the state of Florida (770 hours).

In Florida, part-time officers must complete the same state qualifying exam as their full-time counterparts to receive a law enforcement officer certification. They can begin to volunteer and receive agency training while they await the results of that exam, which may take several months. Agency training consists of coursework and simulations training, followed by on-the-job training called 'field training' with a Field Training Officer (very similar to the mentored accompanied patrol of UK special constables). In the Orange County Sheriff's Office, utilised in this current study, these reserves must complete 4 weeks of classroom training (20 eight-hour days of classroom, simulations and knowledge testing) followed by 16 weeks (56 twelve-hour days) of field training. Auxiliary certified volunteers must undergo the same field training but are not required to complete the state officer certification exam. Both auxiliary and part-time certified reserves in the OCSO must complete the mandatory field training programme within two years (Wolf and Beary, 2010).

There is a difference in authority for each of these classifications. Auxiliary officers in the state of Florida must be under the span of control of a regularly certified law enforcement officer (which includes part-time or regular officers) to have police powers. Part-time officers do not have the same restrictions on their authority, and have the same responsibilities and authority as their regular, full-time police counterparts. The Orange County Sheriff's Office uses a combination of auxiliary and fully certified volunteer officers. Reserves who have attended the shortened academy have limitations in their work, in that they are not authorised to work alone as they must be in the presence of a fully certified reserve or full-time deputy to have law enforcement powers (Wolf, 2014). The Orange County Sheriff's Office combines both auxiliary certified and part-time certified volunteer officers into one unit, the OCSO Reserve Unit; all members of this unit are classified as reserve deputy sheriffs with the agency and commit to volunteer a minimum of 16 hours of duty each month, 12 of which must be in a patrol capacity (Wolf and Beary, 2010).

A national survey of police volunteers who work for sheriffs' agencies in the United States found that the average these volunteers spend in their policing duties is about 9 hours a week. The survey also found that most agencies issue all duty gear and uniforms to their policing volunteers, but this varies between jurisdictions. While most agencies do not provide any wage or salary for their service, some agencies do provide

a small stipend to compensate for any expenses borne by the volunteer (Wolf et al., 2015b). The OCSO reserve unit averages approximately 270 hours each year per volunteer, and reserves are not provided any salary or stipend for their service.

## Research question

Because US and UK police organisations utilise volunteer police to perform general policing functions, and because these two different agencies have distinctly different training programmes, the researchers for this current study developed the following research question:

Do Orange County reserve deputies or Cleveland special constables have more confidence when responding to calls for service with regard to:

1. providing initial support to victims
2. providing initial first aid to victims
3. managing potential conflict
4. using appropriate police powers
5. detaining or arresting individuals
6. searching individuals and vehicles
7. interviewing victims and suspects
8. completing the required administration/paperwork after handling the incident?

## Methodology

This current exploratory study was designed in order to contrast the levels of confidence of volunteer police officers within Cleveland Police (UK) and volunteer deputies within Orange County Sheriff's Office (Florida). The survey collected demographic information along with the volunteers self-reporting their confidence when responding to specifically described patrol-related incidents.

The research utilised vignettes (see Appendix 1 for complete vignettes) that described in a short paragraph three realistic uniformed patrol-related events. Vignette methodology was chosen to 'present participants with carefully constructed and realistic scenarios' (Aguinis and Bradley, 2014: 352) in order to enhance both internal and external reliability. By using this methodology for the current study, the researchers were able to control the perceived circumstances to collect respondent confidence levels. The situations presented in the vignettes are readily recognisable to all police officers, whether volunteer or not, and therefore increase generalisability to the greater population. The scenarios presented for this study revolved around:

1. an urban foot patrol during an evening with a reported theft from a vulnerable, elderly witness by an angry young male;
2. an urban night time disturbance, with an injured, apparently drunk female who has been assaulted by a group of males;
3. an urban afternoon verbal taunting of a distressed individual with aggressive verbal and physical posturing towards the police volunteer.

The participants were then asked to respond with their confidence to deal with such scenarios. Their confidence was self-reported on a five-point Likert scale linked to selected and adapted aspects of the UK National Occupational Standards (NOS), which are expected as functions of regular UK police officers utilising the Policing Professional Framework (Skills for Justice, 2010).

The respondents were asked to report their confidence in their personal abilities (based on their training and experience) in categories on a five-point scale (see Appendix 2). Approval was sought and granted from the Universities' Institutional Review Board (USA) and Ethics Committee (UK), along with the appropriate authority at each of the police agencies. Participants were then selected using convenience sampling during previously scheduled evening meetings for the whole volunteer force, which participants had opted to attend. It is acknowledged that it takes time to build trust working with policing and criminal justice partners, and as such the use of convenience sampling enabled engagement with these subjects. The surveys were explained and then self-administered to both teams of police volunteers. Voluntary involvement and informed consent was obtained from each of the respondents. All respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the data collected and that any reported findings would have no identifying information. Of the 47 OCSO reserve deputies in attendance, from the 83 who could have attended, 41 completed the survey (total response rate of 49%). Thirty-one of the 32 attending Cleveland Police participants responded, out of a possible maximum of 72 who could have attended (total response rate of 43%).

Data were collected from both groups of volunteers using the same research instrument at set points during mid-2014. The survey instrument utilised vignettes to collect the perceptions of a respondent's confidence of how they would deal with an event. The results must be tempered with the realisation that how an individual perceives they would respond may not be matched in reality. Recognising the convenience sampling bias and self-selection bias of the respondents who attended the meetings in which the survey was distributed, and also the self-selection bias of those who filled out the survey, the researchers acknowledge that various probability sampling techniques would have enhanced the overall reliability of the data. The external validity, or the ability for the current research findings to be generalised across a much wider population of police volunteers, is therefore limited.

## **Results**

The analyses presented are all two-tailed tests, as available research makes no predictions as to which direction any difference between agencies might occur in. Respondents were asked two initial questions about training. The first (see Table 1) asked if the respondent felt that their initial training prepared them adequately for policing. Respondents were to choose one item from the list of five options that reflected their feelings of preparedness. The differences between the OCSO and Cleveland responses were significant (Pearson Chi-Square test  $p = .007$ ). Respondents from both agencies were about equal in saying they received most of the training required (about 32% for both), but there was a large difference between those saying they received all the



**Table 1.** Do you feel that your initial training prepared you for operational policing?

	OCSO	Cleveland
Yes, all the training I required	37.5%	3.2%
Yes, most of the training I required	32.5%	32.3%
Yes, the minimum training I required	17.5%	38.7%
No, not quite enough training	7.5%	19.4%
No, not nearly enough training	5.0%	6.5%

Pearson Chi-Square p. = .007.

**Table 2.** Have you attended any formal professional development or advanced training classes since completing your initial training?

	Orange County SO	Cleveland UK PD
No	4.9%	19.4%
Yes	95.1%	80.6%

Pearson Chi-Square p. = .05.

training required (37.5% of OCSO respondents did as compared to 3.2% of Cleveland respondents). Additionally, almost twice the percentage of Cleveland respondents (25.9% compared to 12.5% of OCSO respondents) reported that they felt that they did not receive enough training.

In addition to large differences in perceptions of initial training, there were significant differences (Pearson Chi-Square test p. = .05) between the two groups of volunteers of their perceptions after the initial training (see Table 2). Over 95% of OCSO respondents said they had attended formal professional development or advanced training classes since completing their initial training, as compared to 80% of Cleveland respondents.

The next analyses examine the three vignette scenarios, with the same ten Likert scale items for each, with five possible answers. Table 3 shows the results of summing all of the items within each of the three vignettes, and the comparison of them between the two agencies (with independent samples t-tests). The differences in responses in all three scenarios are significant, showing that the OCSO respondents report being more confident in their training than the Cleveland respondents in each scenario. The levels of confidence are stable between the three scenarios for each agency.

Table 4, however, examines each of the ten items summed across the three scenarios. The results of the independent samples t-tests illustrate that the differences between the two agencies might not be as widespread as first appears, and are impacted by a small subset of training areas. There are only three events in which the Cleveland respondents report feeling significantly less comfortable with their training than the OCSO respondents: interviewing the victim, interviewing the suspect and completing required paperwork (at a much lower level of significance, but, as noted earlier, still within the accepted parameters of significance for two-tailed tests).

**Table 3.** Summary of three scenarios compared.

	OCSO Mean (Std. Dev.)	Cleveland Mean (Std. Dev.)
Scenario 1*	14.2 (7.2)	9.6 (5.3)
Scenario 2**	14.3 (7.3)	9.0 (5.7)
Scenario 3***	14.7 (7.7)	9.6 (6.3)

\*T-test  $p = .003$ .

\*\*T-test  $p = .001$ .

\*\*\*T-test  $p = .004$ .

Note: Items in each scenario were scored as 2, 1, 0, -1, -2. With 10 items per scenario, the range of the sum of all items in the scenario could be from -20 to 20. The means that the higher the score, the more confident the respondent is in their training.

**Table 4.** Comparisons across individual items summed in all three scenarios.

Sum of item across three scenarios	Agency	Mean (Std. Dev)	p-values
Providing initial support to the victim	OCSO	4.58 (2.34)	.700
	Cleveland	4.76 (1.43)	
If required, providing initial first aid to the victim	OCSO	4.34 (2.41)	.814
	Cleveland	4.21 (1.99)	
Managing the potential conflict	OCSO	4.63 (2.34)	.615
	Cleveland	4.38 (1.74)	
Using the most appropriate police powers	OCSO	4.58 (2.29)	.258
	Cleveland	3.97 (2.10)	
Detaining or arresting individuals	OCSO	4.32 (2.44)	.690
	Cleveland	4.11 (1.79)	
Searching individuals	OCSO	4.55 (2.39)	.909
	Cleveland	4.61 (1.47)	
Searching the vehicle	OCSO	4.39 (2.55)	.394
	Cleveland	3.93 (1.86)	
Interviewing the victim	OCSO	4.55 (2.25)	.000*
	Cleveland	-0.82 (3.89)	
Interviewing the suspect	OCSO	4.21 (2.60)	.000*
	Cleveland	-2.00 (3.75)	
Completing the required administration/paperwork	OCSO	3.26 (3.40)	.069*
	Cleveland	1.71 (3.32)	

Note: Items in each scenario were scored as 2, 1, 0, -1, -2. With 3 scenarios combined, the range of the sum of all items in the scenario could be from -6 to 6. The means that the higher the score, the more confident the respondent is in their training.

## Discussion

When asked if the training received as a volunteer prepared the respondents for operational policing, only a small number of respondents from Cleveland Police agreed that this was the case as opposed to a high proportion of OSCO volunteers. Although OSCO respondents went on to suggest that there wasn't quite enough initial training, respondents from Cleveland Police only agreed in part, and in fact a large proportion suggested that the initial training was the minimum they required.

This difference could be due to the limited time spent on initial training as a special constable in England and Wales, with the equivalent of around 3 to 4 weeks of full-time training over evenings and weekends, which equates to approximately 160 hours and which includes a number of assessments. This takes new volunteer officers to the level of accompanied patrol (College of Policing, 2015), which is then followed by up to 12 months' tutoring within the workplace where practical expertise in dealing with incidents is demonstrated. This is compared to part-time officers within the state of Florida, who complete the same training as full-time officers of at least 770 hours, take a State of Florida examination and then are tutored within the workplace, although the duration of this tutoring differs between law enforcement agencies. Auxiliary officers receive the same tutoring, although a shorter academy training of 319 hours.

The research reveals that in both the US and UK sample groups involvement in professional development is high, with over 95% of OCSO police volunteers and over 80% of Cleveland Police special constables reporting that they had attended training and development sessions since completing their initial training. Previous research has shown that volunteer police officers regularly donate in the region of 25 to 30 hours a month to their part-time voluntary roles (Pepper and Wolf, 2015; Whittle, 2014). However, what isn't clear is the division between hours that are donated for operational frontline services as a policing resource as opposed to involvement in professional development.

The research shows that confidence in dealing with all three of the scenarios was generally high amongst respondents from both volunteer agencies. This is seen across the majority of the selected aspects of the NOS in relation to the functions expected of a regular police officer in the UK. However, there were several areas for concern in relation to volunteer officer confidence. These relate primarily to the volunteer special constables responding from Cleveland Police who reported low confidence in both the completion of the required administration/paperwork and with regard to interviewing victims, along with very low confidence in interviewing suspects. This is as opposed to their OCSO counterparts, where self-reported confidence only fell significantly in relation to the completion of the required administration/paperwork, but even then not as much as respondents from Cleveland Police.

This lack of confidence could be due to the training requirements for UK special constables at the time of the survey. Mandatory units studied as part of the initial training to become a special constable in England and Wales only include the interviewing of witnesses, with optional taught units on interviewing suspects. Each police force decides which optional units should be included in the initial training programme. Billet (2002) describes how in order to ensure shared vocational competency with co-workers,

learning within the workplace relies on an individual's ability to access support and guidance, build on existing knowledge and, over time, be exposed to new scenarios. This is further supported by Smets and Pauwels (2010), who identified that in order to ensure the effectiveness of training as an interviewer, it is essential that the interviewing skills are put in to practice and supported by workplace coaching. This being the case, if suspect and witness interviewing are a core function of a police officer, then those special constables who are not enabled, due to their initial and developmental training, along with the appropriate allocated time and guidance, to develop such knowledge and skills within the workplace will be at a disadvantage and lack confidence in performing such tasks. It is also not clear from the research how forces select which aspects of the IL4SC training to deliver and whether there are expectations that special constables within Cleveland Police, although having the same powers as regular officers, will be expected to interview suspects.

In Florida, both auxiliary certified and part-time certified volunteer officers have blocks of instruction in their initial training programme (the police academy) on investigations, which includes interviewing witnesses and suspects. Central to these instructional blocks are specific sections on US mandates related to constitutional law regarding interviewing, detaining and seizing suspects. US academy training on interviews is also interwoven with other blocks of instruction, including civil liability, constitutional law and criminal investigations (Marion, 1998). Specialised classes beyond basic academy training are also available for police officers in 'interviews and interrogations' (Inbau *et al.*, 2015) and reserve and auxiliary deputies with OCSO are encouraged to take specialised training in this and other content areas. One major difference between US and UK volunteer police has also been reported that may add to the significant differences found in the current study. It is commonplace in the United States for retiring full-time law enforcement officers to seek volunteer policing positions, but this is rare in the United Kingdom. 25% of the OCSO reserve unit reported having prior experience as a full-time or regular officer and this experience may lend itself to greater confidence in interviews and interrogations. None of the Cleveland Police volunteers reported the same experience (Pepper and Wolf, 2015).

The fact that volunteer police do not spend as much time as their regular counterparts in the field may be a critical factor in why both US and UK volunteer police feel less confident in the administrative aspects of policing. Policing agencies are constantly upgrading and renewing forms, computer software, processes and routing of paperwork such that it can be extremely difficult even for a regular officer to keep up. While a regular police officer may make an assault arrest once a month, for example, it may be six months to a year (or longer) between assault arrests for a volunteer police officer. If processes for paperwork change in that time period, it may make the volunteer officer less confident in completing the necessary affidavits, forms, statements and charging paperwork.

## **Study limitations**

The primary limitations to this study result from the selection of the agencies and the sampled respondents. The two agencies were selected based on geographical

convenience and existing professional relationships. As this is an exploratory study, and is not attempting to be a representative sample of police agencies within the US and UK, this limitation is not critical. The response rate may also be considered a limitation for this study. However, this is only an issue if the respondents who did not take the survey are different from the ones who did in terms of key measured variables. Without measuring these key variables from the non-respondents, any selection bias is impossible to measure, but is likely to be limited, as the respondents and non-respondents come from a very similar pool (volunteer officers within the same agency). As the survey was distributed at a monthly meeting, common mundane reasons for missing the meeting are the most likely reason for not completing the survey.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

Generally, confidence in dealing with all three of the urban policing-related scenarios was high amongst respondents across both volunteer agencies. However, the results demonstrate areas for concern in relation to volunteer officer training and confidence to perform certain functions of their policing roles. These relate primarily to the volunteer special constables responding from Cleveland Police who, as opposed to their volunteer colleagues in OCSO, reported low confidence in the interviewing of victims and very low confidence in interviewing suspects, while both OSCO and Cleveland Police volunteers reported significantly lower confidence levels in the completion of the required administration/paperwork.

While this study attempts to identify similarities and differences in training and confidence of volunteer police in two different countries, there is a dearth of research on this very important aspect of policing. Further research should be conducted in relation to the duration and content of initial and developmental training, along with the deployment of police reserves, in order to meet and ensure a consistent approach for the operational workplace.

Additional comparative research should be conducted which expands on the small number of agencies of this current study. Research should be expanded to identify if trends are replicated in other agencies. Finally, the results of this research should be utilised to create training updates for volunteer police, which may be different from those received by their full-time, regular counterparts.

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## Appendix I

### Scenario I

You are on patrol in an urban area during the early evening and are stopped in the street by an upset elderly male who seems confused and unsteady on his feet, who tells you that 'the young man over there has just taken my money.' You approach the young man and ask him if you can speak to him, which he angrily rejects as he moves off towards a nearby car.

**Scenario 2**

You are on patrol in an urban area just after midnight and several large crowds are gathering outside of the local bars/pubs. You hear a commotion and find a young woman on the ground bleeding profusely from a cut on her arm. She is drunk and she tells you that she is not sure how it happened, but that she thinks one of the three men standing near you may have argued with her over buying a drink and as a result she has been cut.

**Scenario 3**

You are on patrol in the middle of an afternoon along a city street when you see a two young men sitting in a vehicle taunting an adolescent girl. The girl is walking away, but is crying. You tell the men to move along, but one of them gets out of the car, walks over to you and, posturing aggressively, asks you to 'make' him move.

**Appendix 2**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Providing initial support to the victim	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If required, providing initial first aid to the victim	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing the potential conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the most appropriate police powers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Detaining or arresting individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Searching individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Searching the vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interviewing the victim	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interviewing the suspect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completing the required administration/ paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>