



Neighbourhood policing: a police force typology

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In early 2017 we stand at the mid-point between two national visions for neighbourhood policing: those embodied by the Neighbourhood Policing Programme, which culminated in 2008, and the Policing Vision 2025, published last year. At present however, the picture regarding neighbourhood policing looks fragmented and opaque and is increasingly generating concern. In this paper we use the available secondary data to chart the divergent trajectories of neighbourhood policing in forces across England and Wales since 2008. We present a working 'typology' as a framework for understanding the range of strategies adopted in response to the changing resource, demand and political context during the period.

This paper is the first product from the Police Foundation's 2017 research project on *the future of neighbourhood policing*.

We would be very interested to hear from police officers (of whatever rank or role), PCSOs, police staff or others, who can provide force-level context and narrative to the trends described in this paper. Please share your views and insights with us by **completing a short, anonymous survey** on the Police Foundation website¹. Alternatively you can email us at **neighbourhood.policing@police-foundation.org.uk**.

A set of supplementary charts, illustrating force-level data, is available to accompany this paper².

The Police Foundation is very grateful to the Hadley Trust for funding *the future of neighbourhood policing* project.

¹ Please go to: <http://www.police-foundation.org.uk/what-s-been-happening-to-neighbourhood-policing-in-your-force>

² See: http://www.police-foundation.org.uk/uploads/holding/projects/np_typology_sup_slides.pdf

The past

Nine years ago the national Neighbourhood Policing Programme (NPP) was approaching completion.

This was the ambitious, centrally-funded and managed roll-out of a version of community policing that sought to improve public confidence and safety through three mechanisms:

- *Visibility*: provided by consistent, locally-dedicated neighbourhood police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).
- *Community engagement*: particularly in relation to setting local priorities.
- *Problem-solving*: to address local priorities, tackle antisocial behaviour and improve quality of life, through preventative activity by the police, partners and local residents.

Although the quality of implementation varied, by October 2008 HMIC reported that all forces had achieved acceptable delivery standards, amounting to a patchwork of around 3,600 neighbourhood policing teams across England and Wales³. These typically comprised a sergeant and several constables and PCSOs, tasked to engage with, reassure, and deal with the issues that mattered most to local people. Although the NPP did not achieve the evaluated successes of its smaller-scale predecessor⁴ the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP)⁵, its correlation with the first modest improvements in public confidence in twenty years was seen as an encouraging sign, and the programme was judged by HMIC to be a firm foundation for a long-term commitment to what was then a new approach to delivering locally-rooted policing by consent⁶.

The future

Looking eight years into the future, the *Policing Vision 2025*, agreed last year by all forces and their elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), is equally clear on the character of neighbourhood (referred to as 'local') policing that forces will strive to deliver, although

it does not deal with the structures and mechanisms through which they will do so⁷. The *Policing Vision 2025* sets out high-level commitments to focus on proactive prevention, identify and tackle recurrent issues and individuals, adapt to local evidence of impact, support efforts to build cohesive communities, share data, utilise academic knowledge and invest in analytics. In particular, it emphasises the need for far greater alignment and integration with other local public services, moving towards a 'whole-system' approach⁸.

While the emphasis has understandably shifted in the period since 2008 – visibility and local priority setting are recessive, if not absent, from the *Policing Vision 2025* – there is an enduring core that links the neighbourhood policing of the recent past to that envisaged for the future. This includes a tangible connection between the police and communities, a well-developed understanding of local needs, and proactive, preventative interventions to address these, all delivered by collaborating agencies and guided by strong analysis and evidence. This aspiration fits well with what we have previously termed *informed proactivity*⁹. It is an approach to local policing with a strong evidence-base¹⁰ and one we have argued is just as relevant to the new policing challenges of vulnerability, 'hidden' harm and online crime as it is to more traditional crime reduction priorities like burglary and public place violence. We have previously described how different approaches to neighbourhood policing can enable or inhibit its delivery¹¹.

Informed proactivity: An effective local policing function intervenes creatively, purposefully and proactively, with other agencies and the support of local people, based on an understanding of the conditions that make particular types of crime more likely (and jeopardise safety) in particular places.

The present

If *informed proactivity* is the common thread linking neighbourhood policing past and future, there is increasing evidence that it is becoming frayed at

³ HMIC (2008).

⁴ Quinton and Morris (2008), Mason (2009).

⁵ Tuffin, Morris and Poole (2006).

⁶ HMIC (2008) p.4.

⁷ APCC and NPCC (2016).

⁸ APCC and NPCC (2016) pp. 7-8.

⁹ Higgins and Hales (2016).

¹⁰ See Kam (2013), Weisburd and Eck (2004) and Lum et al. (2010).

¹¹ Higgins and Hales (2017).

present. HMIC has been raising questions about the health of neighbourhood policing – and thus the capacity of the police in some areas to prevent crime – since at least 2013¹², with the level of concern about its ‘erosion’ escalating during the last two *PEEL Effectiveness* inspection cycles¹³. In particular, HMIC has recently noted a number of contributing factors, including the diversification and generalisation of local policing models, the pull of resource towards managing vulnerability, extensive and sometimes poorly managed abstraction, and, in fewer cases, the impact of budgetary reductions¹⁴. Tellingly, they observe that:

‘Neighbourhood policing responsibilities are becoming wider and more varied... As a consequence, officers are not always available to undertake dedicated crime prevention work in their neighbourhoods, and the work of neighbourhood teams, across the service, is becoming more irregular, unstructured, and is supported ineffectively by other force resources’. (p.30)

If the Neighbourhood Policing Programme was a common departure point and the *Policing Vision 2025* is a shared destination, it is increasingly clear that forces are taking diverging routes between the two – and that some are veering dangerously off course. Indeed, it seems increasingly valid to question whether all, or indeed most, will arrive at the intended destination.

The journey so far

The diversification of neighbourhood policing since 2008 reflects a combination of drivers: the devolution of policy from Whitehall to force level, the on-going adjustment in focus from public-place crime and disorder to ‘hidden’ harm and vulnerability (including online vulnerability), and the pressing imperative for forces to reshape and remodel, in order to address these new demands with increasingly stretched budgets.

It is worth noting, however, that alongside these developments, the rhetorical commitment to neighbourhood policing as the ‘bedrock’ of the British policing model¹⁵ has endured and intensified at times, particularly when further cuts have been threatened¹⁶.

In a 2013 survey, the College of Policing¹⁷ identified a number of trends emerging from the shifting conditions outlined above. Some forces had brought in new command structures, some had combined neighbourhood functions with elements of response, investigation or both, some had scaled back the number of staff allocated to particular localities (for instance leaving a single dedicated officer or PCSO covering one or several areas, while other resources were deployed more flexibly), and some had substantially increased the responsibilities given to PCSOs.

Three years on, based on information provided by forces, HMIC identified four ‘types’ of approach being taken¹⁸:

- **Dedicated models:** in which ‘neighbourhood’ staff mainly spend their time on engagement, problem solving and prevention activity in a specified location (25 forces in 2016).
- **Fully integrated models:** in which neighbourhood and response functions are combined, sometimes with additional elements of investigation (three forces).
- **Partially integrated models:** in which neighbourhood and response staff had separate functions, but neighbourhood staff responded and investigated when demand was high (12 forces).
- **Prioritised models:** a version of the *fully integrated* model in which some specified localities also had dedicated staff performing neighbourhood functions (two forces)¹⁹.

These sources provide some clues to the ways neighbourhood policing has diversified in recent years. In the remainder of this paper we seek to build on this by exploring what police workforce data reveal about the different approaches taken to neighbourhood policing – and to local policing more broadly – across England and Wales.

¹² HMIC (2013).

¹³ HMIC (2016), HMIC (2017).

¹⁴ HMIC (2017) pp.28-31.

¹⁵ Stevens (2013), National Debate Advisory Group (2015).

¹⁶ See for instance BBC (2015), Davenport (2015), Dodd (2015).

¹⁷ College of Policing (2015).

¹⁸ HMIC (2017) p.29, one force did not respond.

¹⁹ HMIC identifies those forces with dedicated and ‘non-dedicated’ models (but does not breakdown the latter into its three component categories) (see HMIC (2017) p29). There is no obvious relationship apparent between this classification and the typology offered here.

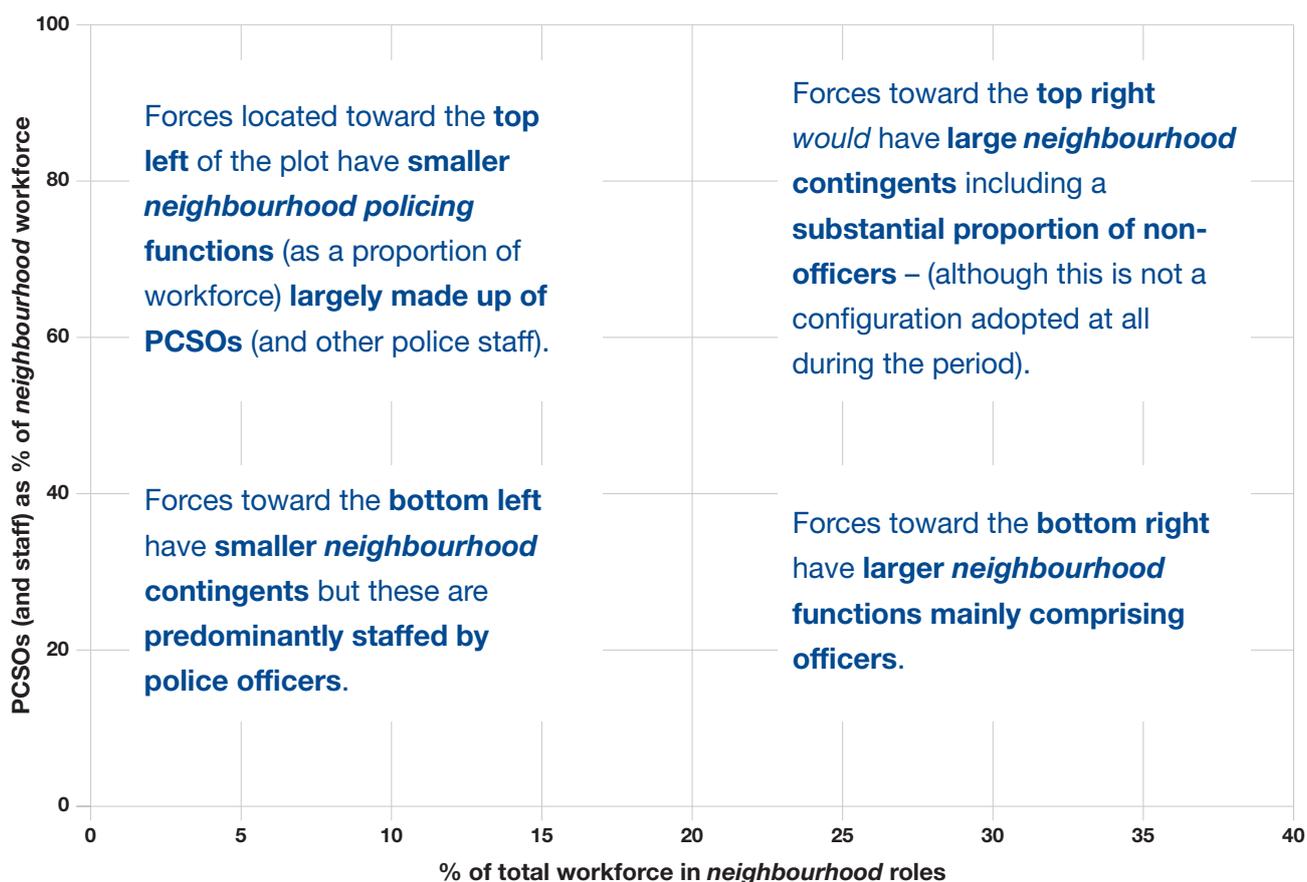
The neighbourhood policing workforce since 2008

Since 2012, official police workforce statistics, published by the Home Office, have included a functional breakdown detailing the number of police officers, PCSOs and other police staff principally assigned to specific areas of business within each police force²⁰. This includes 'full-time equivalent' (FTE) staffing numbers for *neighbourhood policing*²¹, and the broader category of *local policing* within which it sits (which also encompasses incident response staff and comparatively small numbers in local command and specialist community liaison roles). Although the published data series does not extend back beyond 2012, one additional snapshot of the neighbourhood workforce can be obtained from a set of HMIC inspections carried out in 2008²².

These data make it possible to visualise the 'size and shape' of the designated *neighbourhood policing* function in each force, on two dimensions, and to observe how this has changed over time. These dimensions are:

- **Size:** defined here as the proportion of each force's total workforce (officers, PCSOs and other staff combined) allocated to *neighbourhood* roles in each year (represented on the horizontal 'x' axis of the charts that follow).
- **Shape:** the balance between police officers and PCSOs²³ within the *neighbourhood policing* function in each force, in each year²⁴ (shown on the vertical 'y' axis).

Thus, in the charts that follow...



²⁰ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales>. Since 2012, the March edition for each year includes a breakdown of the numbers of officers, PCSOs and police staff in each force, into 10 functional categories (including *Local Policing*) and around 70 sub-categories (including *Neighbourhood Policing*); data formats differ, but for 2016 see tables F4, F5 and F6.

²¹ Where we have italicised *neighbourhood policing* we refer to the workforce contingent officially designated as such by forces in their Home Office data returns.

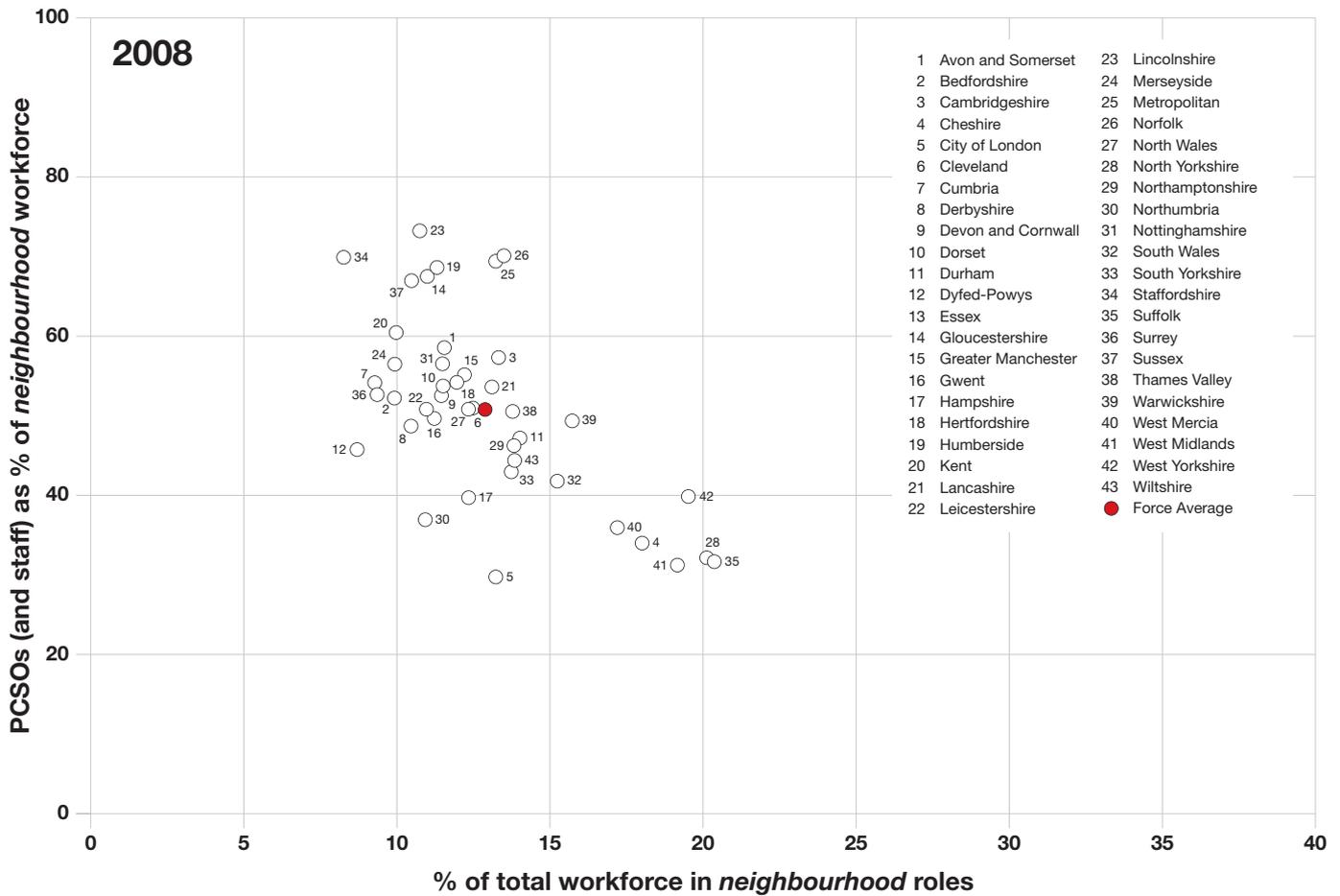
²² In 2008 HMIC inspected all forces on *neighbourhood policing and developing citizen focus policing*. Each report (with one exception, Essex) records the

number of officers and PCSOs delivering neighbourhood policing in the force at that time. Any other police staff working within neighbourhood policing are not recorded, however the effect of this on the comparability of the data with later years is likely to be negligible. There is no reason to suspect that the missing data for Essex is anything other than an oversight. These inspection reports are available on the HMIC website, see for example <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/media/avon-and-somerset-phase2-neighbourhood-policing-citizen-focus-20080830.pdf>

²³ And occasionally small numbers of other police staff.

²⁴ Expressed as the percentage of the *neighbourhood policing* workforce made up of PCSOs (and other staff).

Figure 1: The size and shape of ‘neighbourhood policing’ in police forces in England and Wales – 2008



2008

So, as we can see from Figure 1, at the end of the Neighbourhood Policing Programme in 2008, forces assigned an average of 13 per cent of their workforce to *neighbourhood policing*, and maintained close to a one-to-one balance between officers and PCSOs within these teams (the force average is shown by the red point).

There were some variations; *neighbourhood* functions ranged in size between eight per cent of the total workforce in Staffordshire and 20 per cent in Suffolk and North Yorkshire, while PCSOs made up as little as 30 per cent of the *neighbourhood* workforce in the West Midlands and Suffolk (along with City of London Police), and up to 70 per cent in Lincolnshire, Norfolk and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Generally however, reflecting the legacy of the national programme, the data suggest a relatively consistent approach being taken across the country.

2012

Four years on, the Policing Pledge²⁵ and the single public confidence target had come (in 2008/09^{26 27}) and gone (in 2010²⁸), the coalition government had come to office, public sector austerity was a reality, ring-fenced PCSO funding was coming to an end²⁹, PCC elections were held for the first time, and *threat, risk and harm* were increasingly part of the police vernacular while performance targets receded from view. In some forces *neighbourhood policing* looked rather different to four years earlier.

As Figure 2 shows, on average, force *neighbourhood* functions had grown as a proportion of workforce since 2008³⁰ and now contained slightly more

²⁵ The Labour government’s Policing Pledge included promises about the accessibility, responsiveness, staffing consistency and levels of abstraction of Neighbourhood Policing Teams. See HMIC (2009) pp7-8.

²⁶ Home Office (2008).

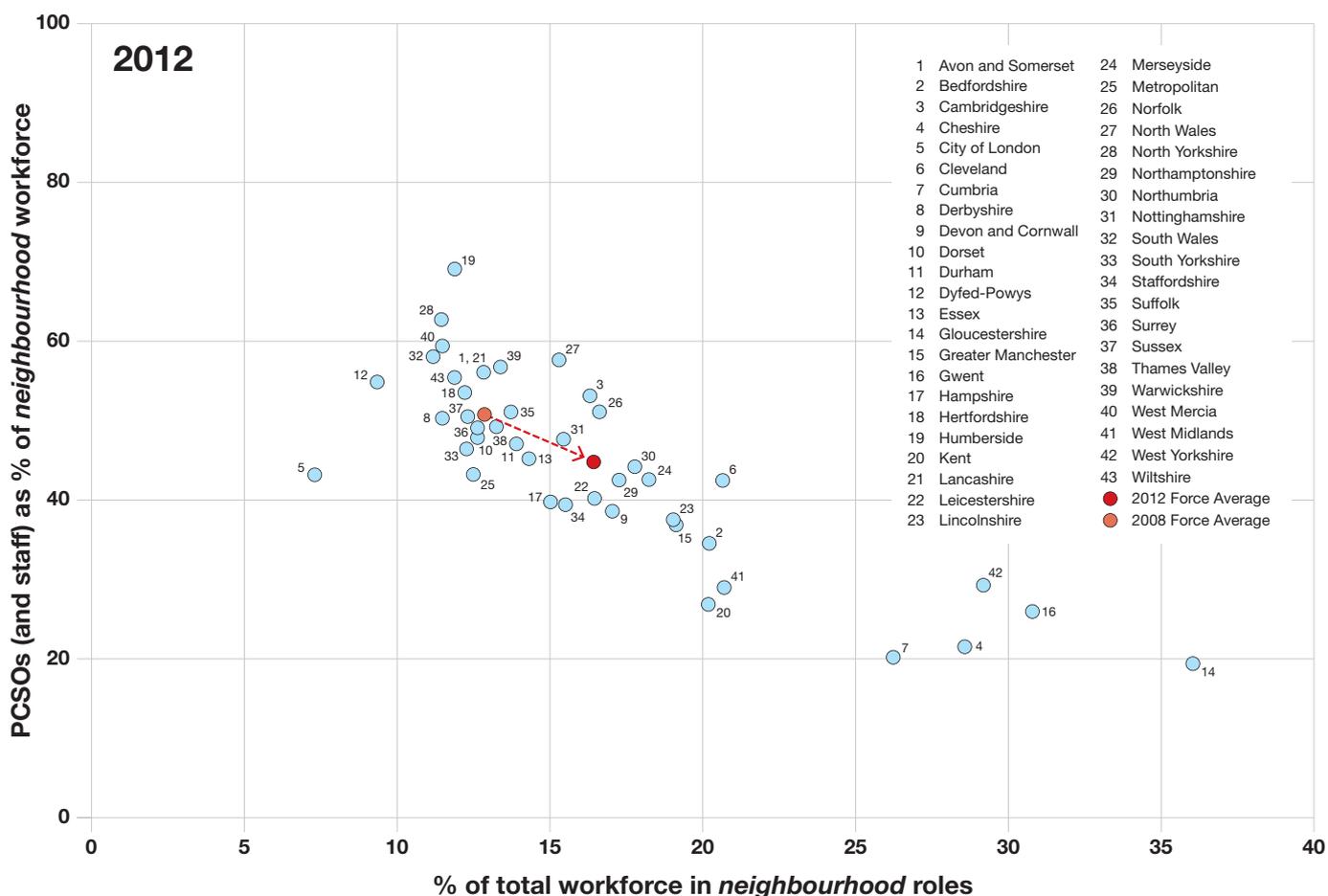
²⁷ BBC (2009).

²⁸ Travis (2010).

²⁹ Except in Wales where the Welsh government provided ongoing funding for additional PCSOs.

³⁰ Against an overall police workforce reduction of six per cent, 31 forces allocated a greater proportion of workforce to *neighbourhood* roles in 2012 than in 2008.

Figure 2: The size and shape of ‘neighbourhood policing’ in police forces in England and Wales – 2012



officers than PCSOs (ie the red average point has moved down and to the right). This is understandable; as forces began to reduce headcount to cut costs, attention turned first to ‘back office’ and police staff posts (including PCSOs), leaving ‘front-line’ *neighbourhood* teams, and especially the police officers within them, comparatively protected. However, as Figure 2 also shows, this general shift was accompanied by substantial workforce re-organisation in a number of forces (ie the shape of the scatter of points has changed).

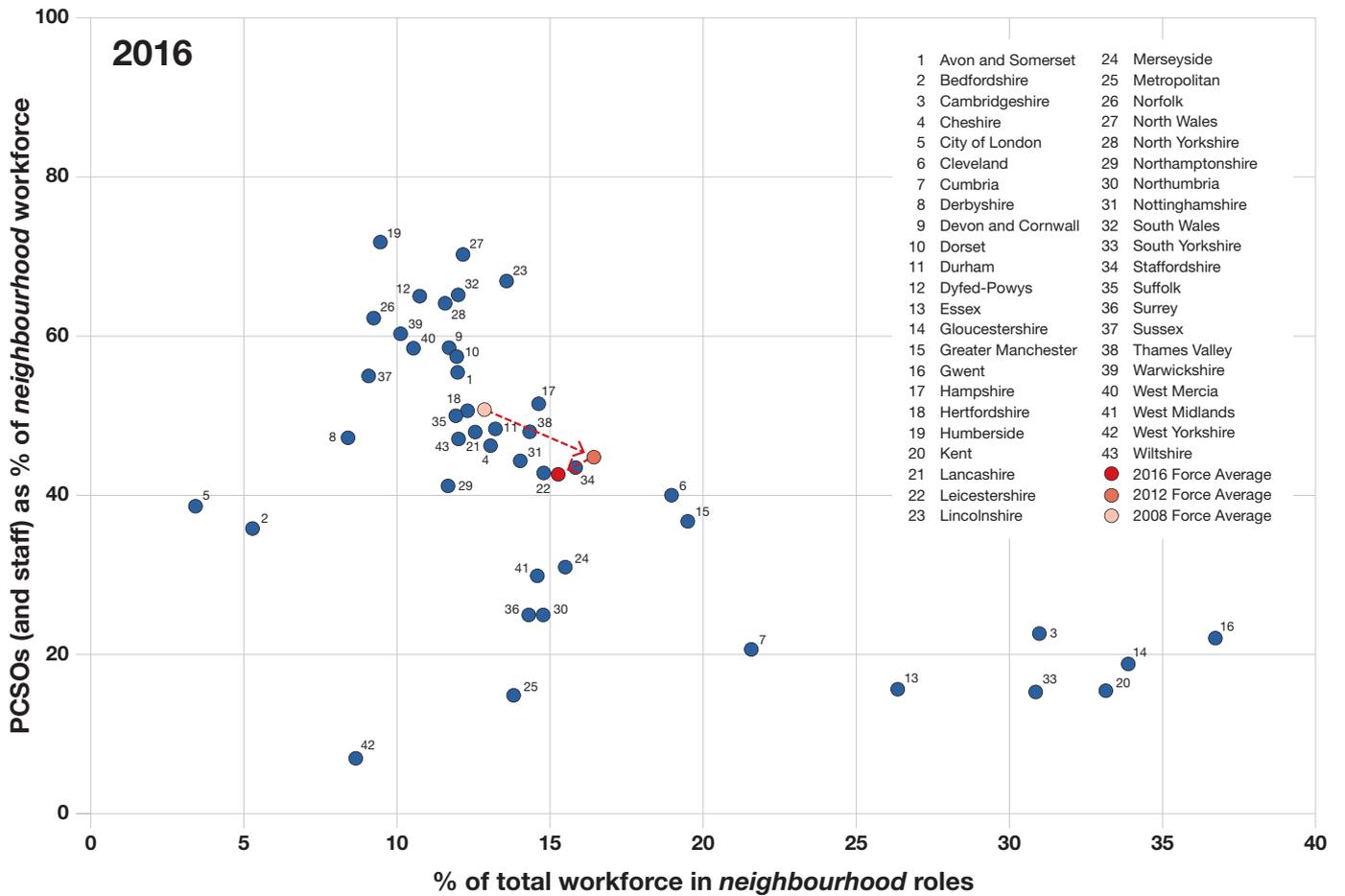
In particular, by 2012, five forces in the bottom right of Figure 2 – Gloucestershire, Gwent, West Yorkshire, Cheshire and Cumbria – were allocating more than 25 per cent (and as much as 36 per cent) of their entire workforce to *neighbourhood* roles. These expanded teams were predominantly made up of police officers, with only 20 to 30 per cent PCSOs or other police staff. Elsewhere, the number of forces that now had *neighbourhood* functions consisting of at least 60 per cent PCSOs reduced from eight to two.

2016

By 2016 the first cohort of PCCs had served (almost) a full term. The emphasis given to public protection, managing risk and the resourcing of ‘non-recent’ investigations had intensified – notably following revelations of extensive sexual abuse by Jimmy Savile (and others) and failings in the public service response to child sexual exploitation in Rotherham, Rochdale and elsewhere. In addition, terrorist attacks in Europe (most notably in Paris in November 2015) kept threat levels high and prompted a reassessment of armed policing provision, and the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review saw police budgets (at least nominally and temporarily) protected. Against this back-drop, forces’ local policing models, and the *neighbourhood policing* functions within them, continued to diversify³¹.

³¹ The diversification of *neighbourhood policing* models is evident in the way that Home Office workforce data began to be qualified with notes such as ‘Essex’s and Kent’s Policing Model of Local District Policing teams includes multi-skilled officers who deal with both response and neighbourhood policing’ (2015) and ‘Some forces are not able to make a clear distinction between certain functions and therefore record the majority of, or all, employees under one function. This is particularly apparent for the ‘Neighbourhood Policing’ (1a) and ‘Incident (Response) Management’ (1b) functions’ (2016).

Figure 3: The size and shape of ‘neighbourhood policing’ in police forces in England and Wales – 2016



Although the average force position had changed only slightly since 2012, a number of disparate trends are apparent within the workforce data (see Figure 3, above).

First, the group of forces (in the bottom right of the chart) that maintained large *neighbourhood* functions primarily staffed with officers, moved further to the right – that is, they *further* increased the proportion of workforce in *neighbourhood* roles. However, the composition of this group changed over the period with Kent, Essex and Cambridgeshire joining, while West Yorkshire, Cumbria and Cheshire reduced the proportions of staff in *neighbourhood* roles.

Second, while more than half of forces retained between 10 and 15 per cent of their workforce in *neighbourhood* functions, more achieved this using larger proportions of PCSOs (and other staff). In 2016 eight forces – including most Welsh forces³², Norfolk,

Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire – staffed their *neighbourhood* teams with at least 60 per cent non-officers, compared to just two forces in 2012.

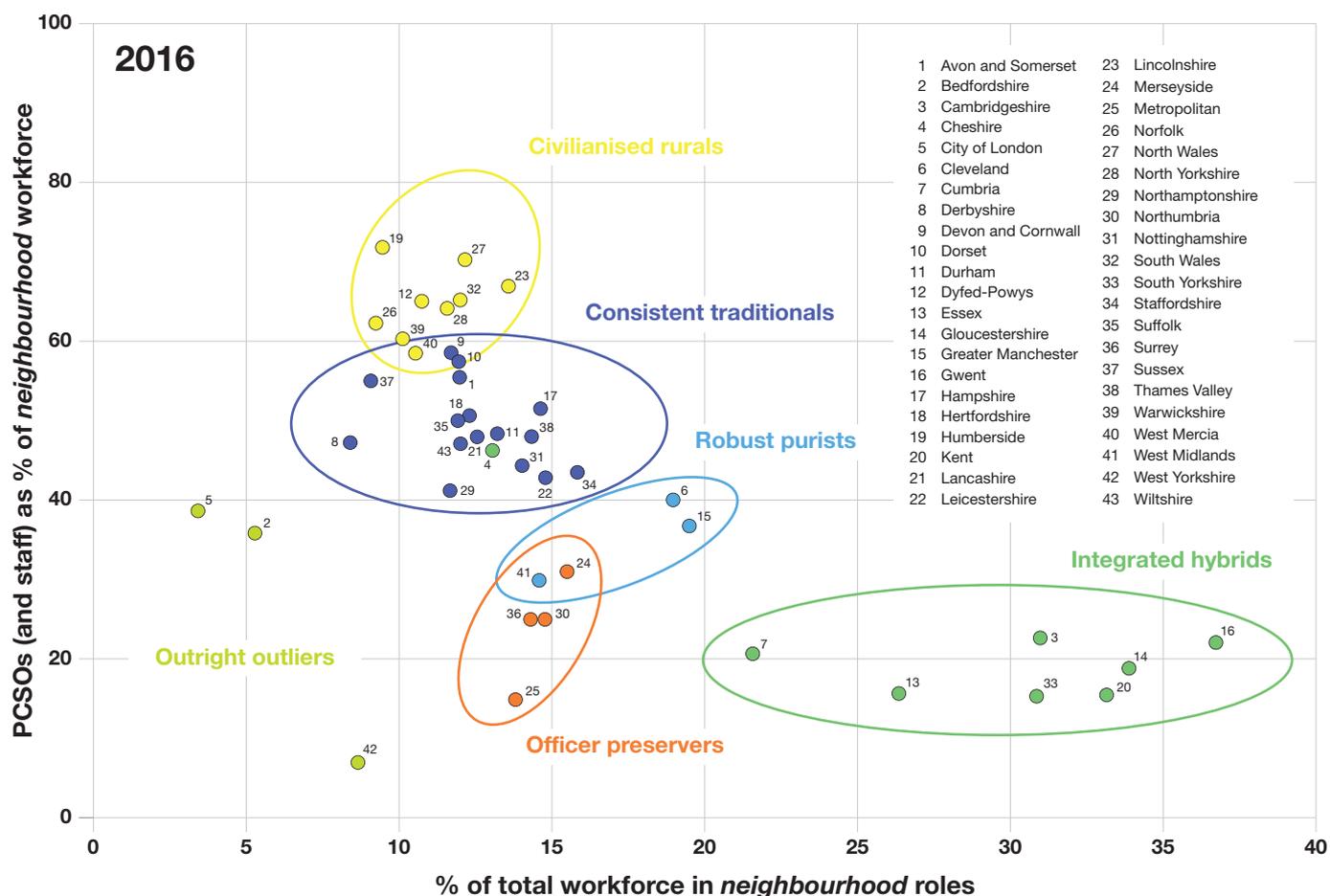
Finally, unlike in 2008 and 2012, by 2016 a number of forces reported smaller *neighbourhood* functions dominated by officers. Seven forces, including large forces like the MPS and West Midlands, had *neighbourhood* functions that were both less than 15 per cent of workforce and comprised less than 40 per cent non-officers. Within this group, Bedfordshire and West Yorkshire (along with City of London police) reported particularly atypical models.

A typology

By closely examining the trajectories taken by individual forces over this period (including during the years between 2012 and 2016 not covered by the charts above), it is possible to hypothesise a number of distinctive strategies taken in respect of local and neighbourhood policing, and to formulate a typology, which groups and distinguishes forces based on the

³² Following previous additional funding, in 2015 the Welsh Government committed £16.8m to continue to fund 500 PCSOs. See: <http://gov.wales/newsroom/people-and-communities/2015/150610-cso-awards/?lang=en>

Figure 4: A working ‘typology’ of ‘neighbourhood policing’ in England and Wales



approaches taken³³. Like any typology, some cases appear to be ‘classic’ examples of a type, while others are best seen as ‘border-line’ or ‘variant’ examples, while some appear to move from one grouping to another over time. Generally, the typology reflects the ‘zone’ of the chart in which the force had arrived by 2016 (see Figure 4, above); however, the movement (or stasis) of the force during preceding years also informs the classification.

It is acknowledged of course that workforce data, and the two variables examined here, give only a partial picture of the approaches taken to policing local neighbourhoods in each force area, and that they will be susceptible to any variation in the data recording and reporting practices of individual police forces. Without more contextual information – which we will seek to gather in the next phase of this project – only tentative assumptions can be made about the activities that those assigned to neighbourhood roles actually undertake in different forces, and the impact or effectiveness of these.

However, as a high-level framework for understanding recent trends and current circumstances, the typology appears to offer a useful foundation, which we will build on, including by digging deeper into what different neighbourhood officers actually do.

Figure 4 shows the 2016 picture (as in Figure 3) with five hypothesised ‘types’ of neighbourhood policing approach identified using colour-coding (in addition to three ‘outlier’ forces that fit into none of these). Each ‘type’ is described below.

Consistent traditionals

This group of forces is characterised by a 2016 neighbourhood workforce close to the 2008 average position in terms of size and composition (ie around 10 to 15 per cent of the total workforce, and comprising 40 to 60 per cent police officers). These forces are also notable for the stability of their neighbourhood provision over time³⁴.

³³ Charts for individual forces are contained within the slide pack that accompanies this paper – see: http://www.police-foundation.org.uk/uploads/holding/projects/np_typology_sup_slides.pdf.

³⁴ Despite a 2016 position close to the average, Cheshire has not demonstrated the same consistency over time and has therefore been assigned to a different grouping.

Figure 5: 'Size and shape' of 'neighbourhood policing' in Durham Constabulary (2008-2016)

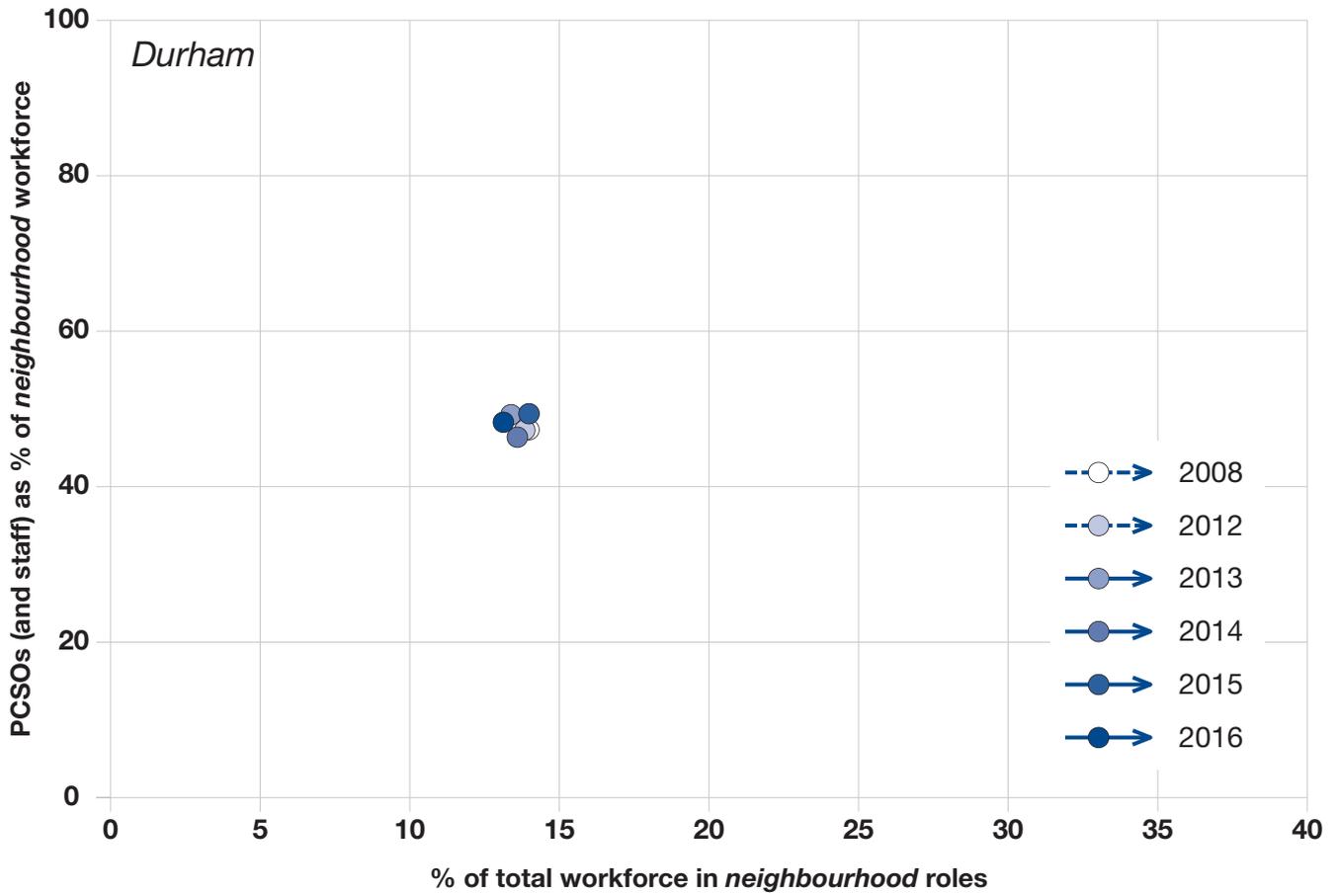


Figure 6: 'Size and shape' of 'neighbourhood policing' in Bedfordshire Police (2008-2016)

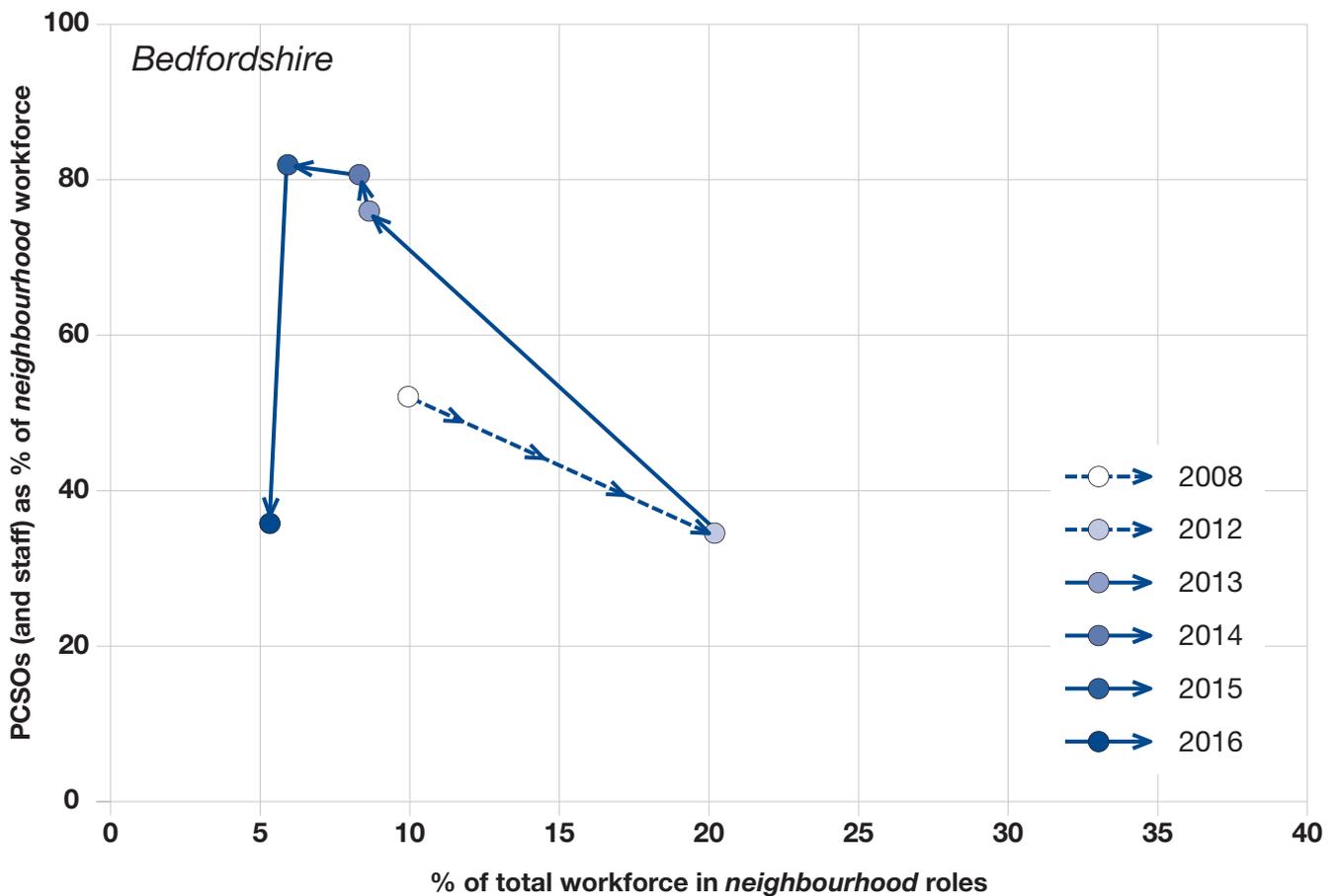
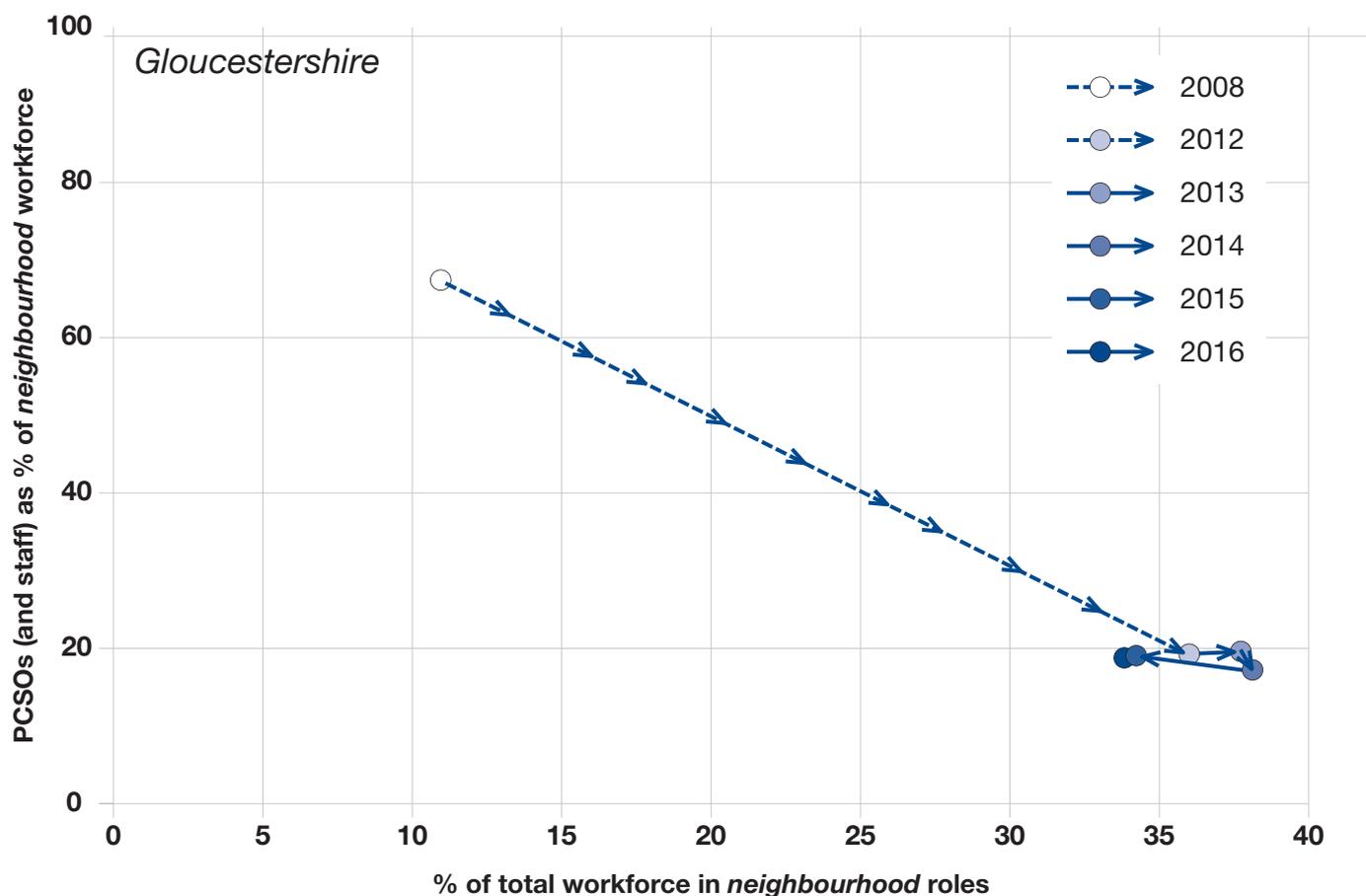


Figure 7: ‘Size and shape’ of ‘neighbourhood policing’ in Gloucestershire Constabulary (2008-2016)



Figures 5 and 6 contrast the consistency evident in Durham’s *neighbourhood* workforce (a classic example of this *consistent traditional* type) with the much more volatile situation in Bedfordshire (an outlier, but by no means the only force to have changed course on several occasions during the period). While we must be careful not to over-simplify, it is notable that Durham and Bedfordshire were the forces to receive *outstanding* and *inadequate* ratings (respectively) in HMIC’s recent 2016 Effectiveness inspections, and it is tempting to see multiple changes of direction over the period as indicative of strategic indecision, or at least of unsuccessful attempts to solve the problem of efficiently delivering effective policing services with finite and limited resources.

Other ‘classic’ examples of the *consistent traditional* type include Avon and Somerset, Dorset, Hertfordshire, Thames Valley and Wiltshire, while a number of other forces have varied a little more over the period but generally not strayed far from the ‘traditional’ (average 2008) position and are also included in this grouping³⁵.

³⁵ Devon and Cornwall, Derbyshire, Hampshire, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Sussex, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Suffolk and Staffordshire.

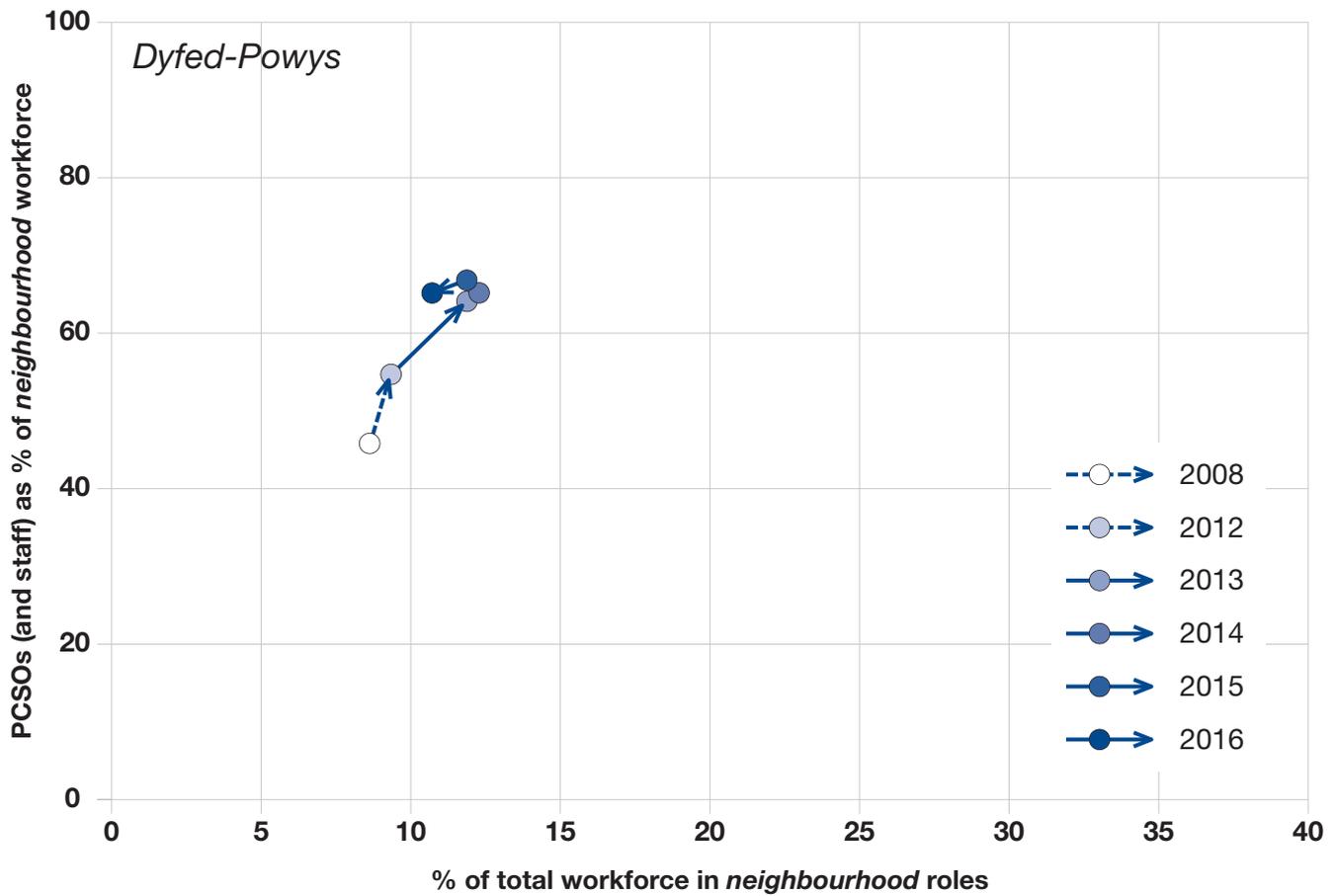
While we again acknowledge that there will have been changes ‘on the ground’ in these forces that are invisible to this analysis, the workforce data suggest an approach characterised by evolution (rather than revolution), stability and incremental adaptation.

Integrated hybrids

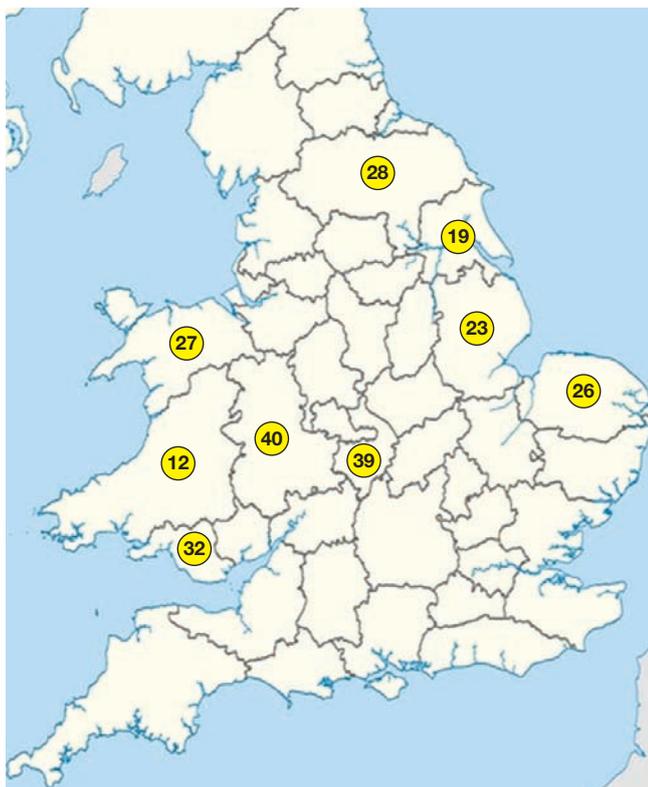
Between 2008 and 2012 a number of forces including Gloucestershire (illustrated, as an example, in Figure 7 above), Cheshire, Cumbria, Gwent and Kent substantially increased the number of police officers allocated to *neighbourhood* functions. Since 2012, Essex, Cambridgeshire and most recently South Yorkshire have followed suit. Cheshire subsequently appear to have reverted to a more typical configuration, as have Gwent before readopting the *integrated hybrid* approach (this is the group seen breaking off to the bottom right in Figures 2 and 3).

Forces employing this model are also distinctive in that they tend to have either no, or very few, resources allocated to separate response (or incident management) functions, strongly suggesting that the

Figure 8: ‘Size and shape’ of ‘neighbourhood policing’ in Dyfed-Powys Police (2008-2016)



Map of forces with ‘civilianised rural’ ‘neighbourhood policing’ functions



- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 12 Dyfed-Powys | 26 Norfolk | 32 South Wales |
| 19 Humberside | 27 North Wales | 39 Warwickshire |
| 23 Lincolnshire | 28 North Yorkshire | 40 West Mercia |

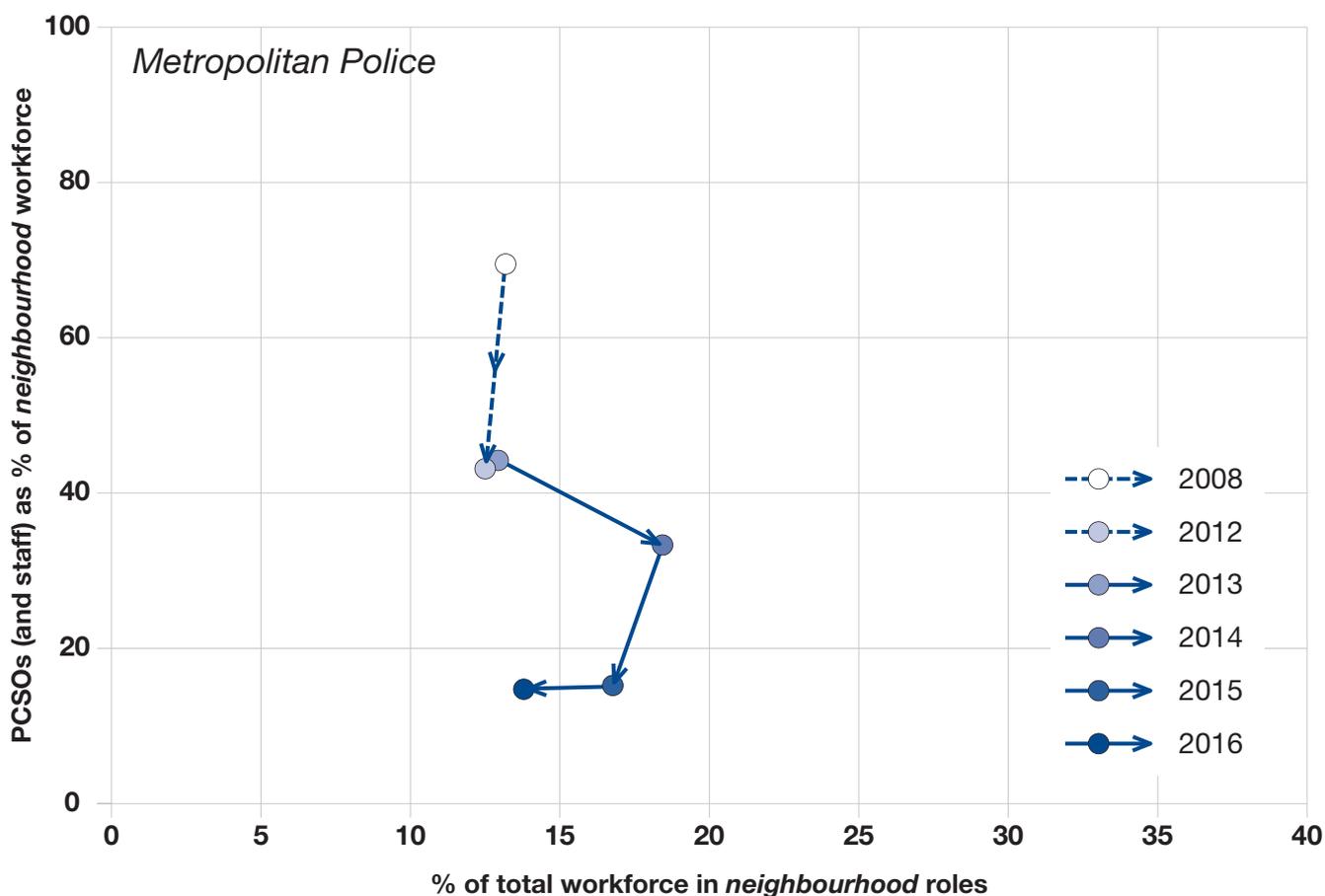
officers within this type of *neighbourhood* arrangement have a generalist or ‘hybrid’ local policing role that involves both a reactive response to calls for service (and possibly some elements of investigation) alongside more traditional ‘neighbourhood’ activities like community engagement, proactive problem solving and targeted patrolling.

It is worth mentioning two variant cases. Between 2012 and 2015 Cumbria appears to have adopted this ‘hybridised’ approach, but in 2016, while maintaining a relatively large and ‘officer heavy’ *neighbourhood* contingent, also deployed substantial numbers of response officers. This might suggest a move to a model approximating the *robust purist* approach outlined later. Cheshire appears – as mentioned above – to have undergone a significant transition in 2015/16, from a ‘hybrid’ approach to something closer to the ‘traditional’ *neighbourhood* workforce model.

Civilianised rurals

This group of forces is notable for having a comparatively large proportion of PCSOs (and/or

Figure 9: ‘Size and shape’ of ‘neighbourhood policing’ in the MPS (2008-2016)



other police staff) within their *neighbourhood* provision and also (generally) for having increased this proportion over time (ie for having migrated towards the top of the chart – see the example of Dyfed-Powys in Figure 8). These forces tend to dedicate less than the average proportion of their workforce to *neighbourhood* roles but also have comparatively large response functions. They are notable for their generally rural profile and tend to cluster geographically, covering most of Wales, bordering West Mercia and its collaborating neighbour Warwickshire, along with four contiguous forces on the east coast (see the map opposite).

Humberside is notable within the group for having maintained a consistently high proportion of non-officers in *neighbourhood* roles since 2008, (rather than having adopted this approach later).

It seems probable that this format is viewed as appropriate to more sparsely populated areas, where the geography necessitates a comparatively well-resourced and mobile response function, making use of PCSOs to provide local consistency and

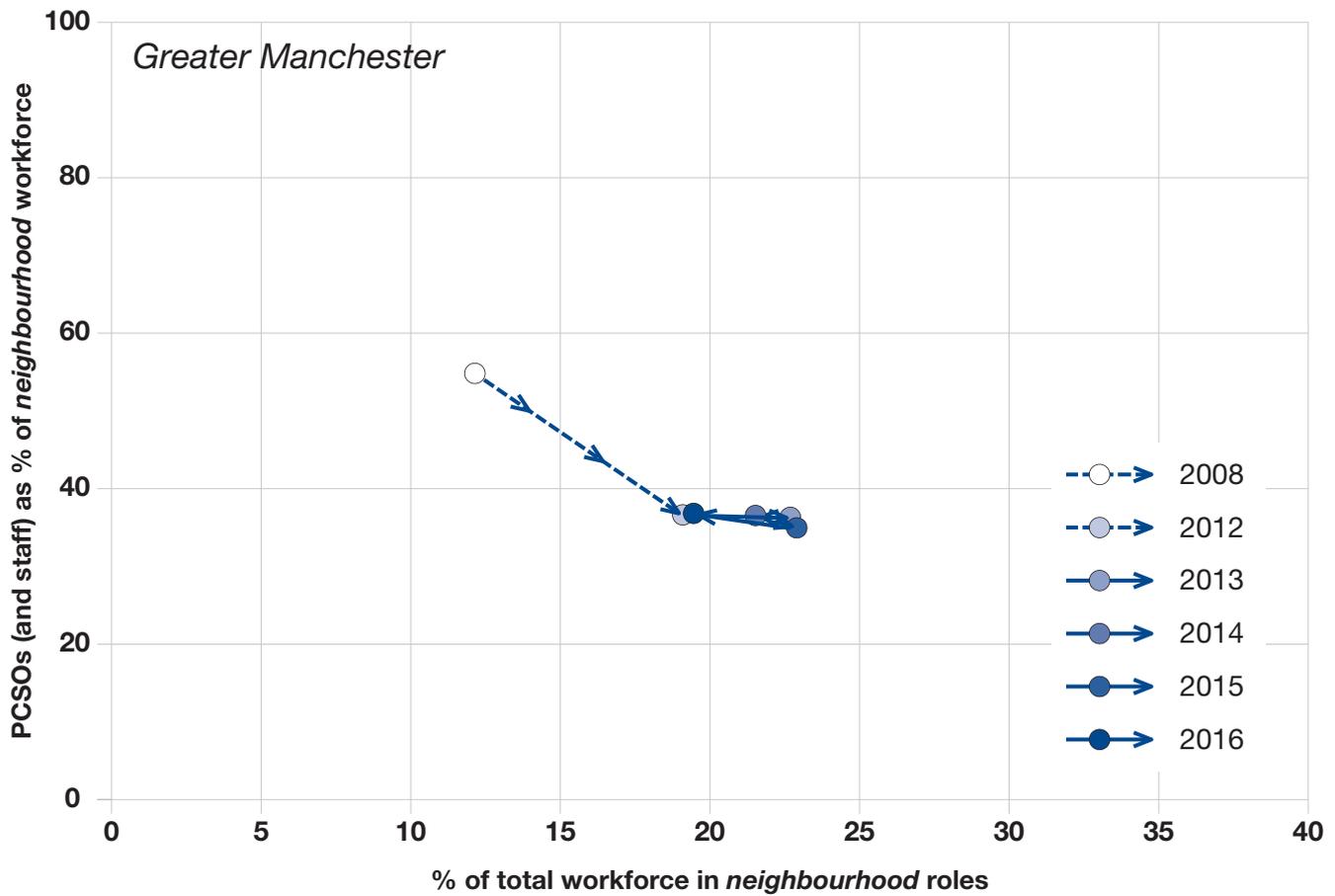
especially visibility. It is worth noting however, that other largely rural forces (such as Cumbria and Devon and Cornwall) have taken different approaches.

Officer preservers

Several forces appear to have taken the opposite approach to the *civilianised rurals* described above. These have maintained roughly average proportions of the workforce in *neighbourhood* roles (10 to 15 per cent) but have progressively *de-civilianised* their *neighbourhood* function, replacing PCSOs with warranted police officers. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is the most notable example of this approach (see Figure 9), having reduced the proportion of PCSOs (and other staff) in the *neighbourhood* workforce from 70 to 15 per cent over eight years. Merseyside, Surrey and Northumbria have followed broadly similar trajectories.

In the MPS, and possibly also elsewhere, the strategy is likely to relate to the well-publicised commitment to maintain the overall number of police officers within the

Figure 10: ‘Size and shape’ of ‘neighbourhood policing’ in Greater Manchester Police (2008-2016)



force³⁶, meaning that efficiencies have been sought elsewhere, including by reducing PCSO and other police-staff posts. The different employment rights of sworn officers and police staff are likely to be significant given that the former cannot be made redundant.

Robust purists

This category is the most tentative. It is characterised by a well-resourced *neighbourhood policing* function (generally around 20 per cent of workforce), and a relatively even balance within it between officers and non-officers (around 60 per cent officers to 40 per cent PCSOs and staff). With exceptions, forces in this group have been relatively consistent in the size and shape of the *neighbourhood* workforce and have also maintained a substantive response function, suggesting that (unlike the *integrated hybrids*) *neighbourhood* staff are functionally separated from a portion of the force’s reactive demand profile. It appears (from these data at least) to be a structure

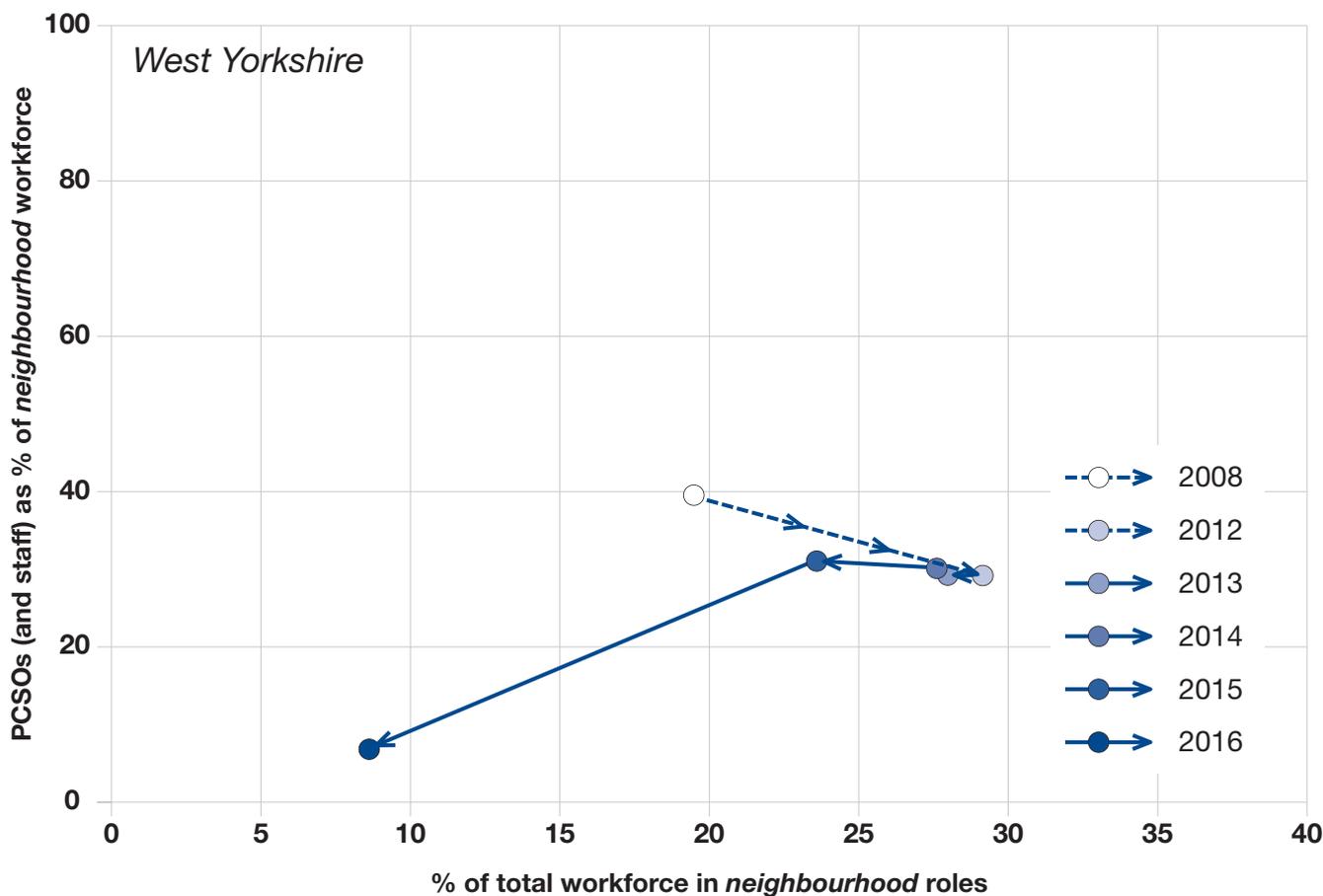
that could allow substantial scope for proactivity and a dedicated neighbourhood offering. Greater Manchester is the most notable example of this model (see Figure 10), with a similar profile apparent in the West Midlands prior to a reduction in the (relative) size of the *neighbourhood* function in 2014/15. The Cleveland workforce also fits this pattern and, although it has varied over time (and has been assigned to a different type), Cumbria’s data for 2016 are also suggestive of this type.

Outright outliers

Three forces, City of London, Bedfordshire and West Yorkshire exhibit notably atypical *neighbourhood* workforce profiles in 2016, which set them apart from those in the five other categories. In the case of the City, this is perhaps understandable given its unique remit and tiny residential population, however Bedfordshire (discussed above) and West Yorkshire (see Figure 11, opposite) have seen substantial reductions in their *neighbourhood* workforce, with West Yorkshire recently moving from an (apparently)

³⁶ See for example MOPAC (2016), p.22.

Figure 11: ‘Size and shape’ of ‘neighbourhood policing’ in West Yorkshire Police (2008-2016)



'hybrid' model prior to 2015/16 to a much reduced and almost entirely officer-based offering. As discussed later, it is clear that these radical departures are generating some concern.

Neighbourhood policing in 2016/17

The working typology presented here offers an aerial perspective on the development of local and neighbourhood policing during recent years. While expanding the focus to the national level means a certain loss of granularity, we nevertheless hope the analysis serves to chart the main contours of the changing landscape, including some features that might not previously have been widely recognised. As we develop our research on *The future of neighbourhood policing* part of our challenge will be to enrich this overview with local narrative and context (and we invite those who can provide this to share it with us³⁷). Based on the analysis presented here,

however, three observations can be made about the current situation.

First, HMIC's conclusion that neighbourhood policing is becoming 'wider and more varied'³⁸ is clearly borne out. Centralised national roll-outs like the Neighbourhood Policing Programme tend to attract criticism for ignoring the nuances of local variation and context, and it was perhaps inevitable that in the subsequent climate of localism, local and neighbourhood policing would diverge into varying forms. That said however, the strongest currents of change during recent years have impacted the police service as a whole (if not evenly): all forces have sought new ways to identify and respond to vulnerability, deal with online crime, respond to a changing partnership dynamics, carry out increasingly complex investigations and make budgetary savings. It might seem surprising therefore, that these common challenges have been met with such varied and sometimes opposite responses; steady consolidation versus radical

³⁷ See 'Research next steps' below.

³⁸ HMIC (2017), p.30.

redesign, civilianisation versus de-civilianisation, generalism versus functional specialism.

Questioning '*what works*' (best) from among this array of approaches to neighbourhood policing – and, by implication suggesting that an 'optimum' model should be more widely adopted – is undoubtedly too simplistic. However, a more nuanced enquiry into '*what works, for whom and in what circumstances and respects, and how?*'³⁹ with a view to enabling forces to take more informed strategic decisions about the format in which local policing is delivered, seems an important and legitimate endeavour, and one in which HMIC, along with the College of Policing, should arguably have a central role. One size may not fit all, but each will have its best fit, and it is right to question the design principles and quality of tailoring currently being demonstrated.

Second, the state of *informed proactivity* within forces – the 'active ingredient' in neighbourhood policing and the essence of police effectiveness⁴⁰ – remains tantalisingly just out of reach in these data. Each 'type' begs a different question;

- To what extent do officers in *integrated hybrid* models find time for community engagement and problem solving work within their generalist remit?
- Are neighbourhood staff within *consistent traditionalists* or *robust purists* sufficiently protected from abstraction to allow for meaningful proactive work to take place?
- Have *civilianised rurals* found it easier to separate their predominantly non-officer teams from reactive demand and, if so, is this resource mainly used to provide visibility, or does it also have a problem-solving focus?
- Does the different mix of skills and police powers within the neighbourhood functions of *officer preservers* lead to a different form of neighbourhood policing?
- Have the *outright outliers* found radical new ways of delivering *informed proactivity* outside of the neighbourhood framework?

A crude overlay of HMIC's latest ratings for crime prevention⁴¹ on to the typology, suggests the answer to the final question is, at least in HMIC's view, clearly 'no' (see Figure 12). Beyond this, however, there is some intriguing clustering of 'effectiveness' (and 'ineffectiveness') within the workforce typology; but there is also much unexplained variation – and hence more questions. In particular, given the similar size and shape of the *neighbourhood policing* workforce in Norfolk and Warwickshire, Kent and Gloucestershire, or Durham and Nottinghamshire (for example), what practices, systems, training, partnerships or leadership styles make the difference between good/outstanding practice, and that which requires improvement (or is inadequate)? There are clues in the inspection reports but more needs to be done to understand this.

Finally, this exercise highlights the increasing ambiguity of the language used to describe the forms in which territorial policing is organised and delivered, and the risk this poses to making systematic improvement in this area. In and around 2008 'neighbourhood policing' had a relatively fixed and consistent meaning, it could be delivered more or less well, but *what it was* (and *what it was not*) – and identifying the part of the workforce doing it – was uncontroversial.

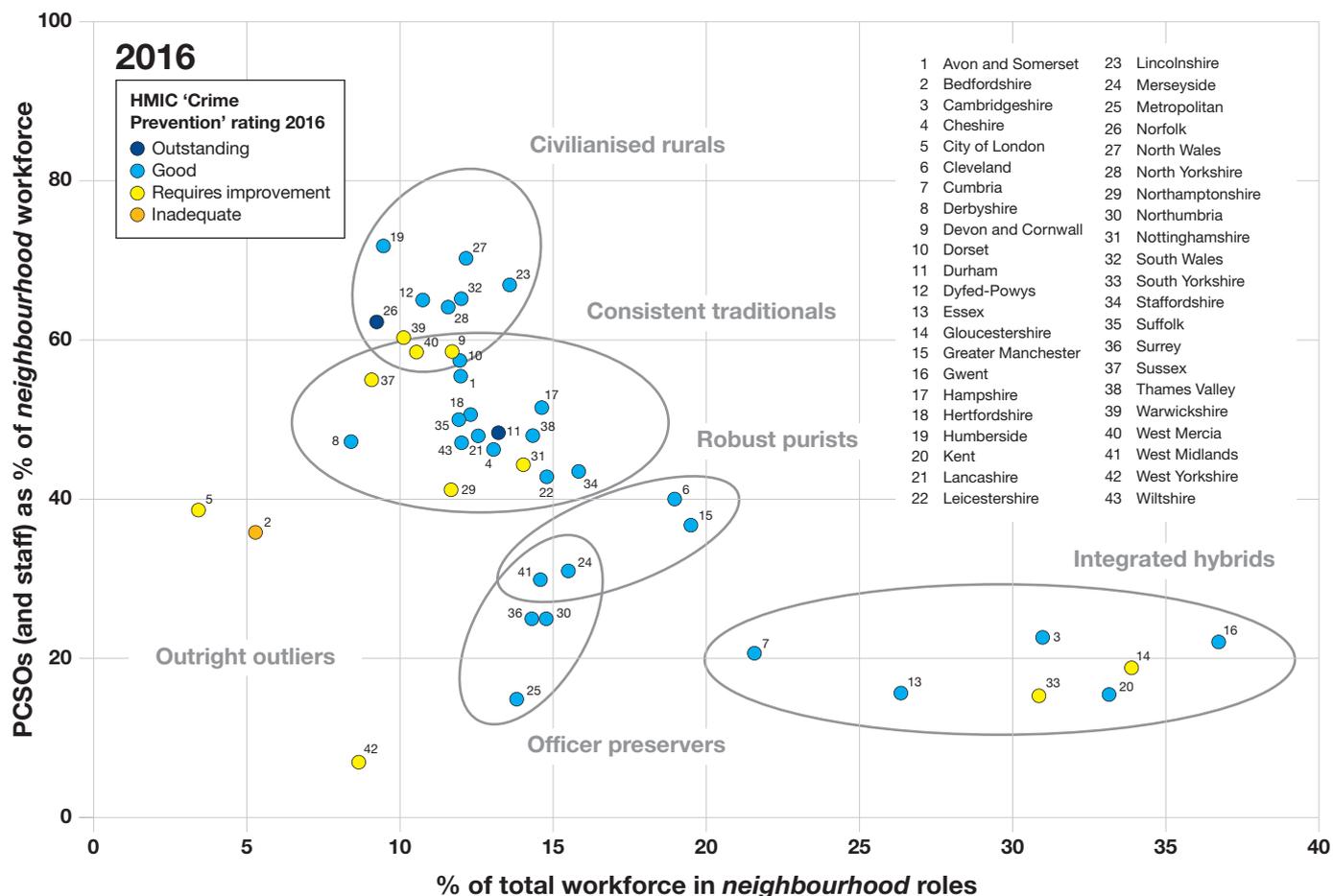
In 2017, that is no longer the case. The Neighbourhood Policing Programme trinity of visibility, engagement and problem-solving, delivered by ring-fenced, geographically dedicated personnel, seems increasingly unrealistic and ill-adapted to current challenges of hidden harm, online crime and constrained resources. Reflecting this, while the police officers, PCSOs and police staff assigned by forces to the *neighbourhood policing* category within their 2016 Home Office data returns might do some high-visibility patrolling, spend time engaging with the community and/or carrying out proactive, preventative problem-solving work, it seems more likely that they will also – either as part of their official job-descriptions or through frequent abstraction – respond to calls for service from the public, investigate crime, have a role in public-protection work and generally find

³⁹ Pawson and Tilley (2004), p.2.

⁴⁰ In our formulation of effectiveness (Higgins and Hales (2016)) and at least in the 'crime prevention' component of HMIC's.

⁴¹ Crime prevention is the element of the PEEL inspection regime that maps most closely to neighbourhood policing and *informed proactivity*.

Figure 12: ‘Neighbourhood policing’ typology and HMIC PEEL Effectiveness rating for Crime Prevention (2016)



themselves dealing with *'whatever is happening here right now'*. In addition, while these individuals might be assigned to a particular locality, anecdotal evidence suggests that the geographic blocks have become larger over time, and that staff will spend more time doing work outside of their boundaries.

In other words, to different degrees in different places, *neighbourhood policing* is becoming increasingly indistinct from *local policing*.

To add further complexity, these two terms are being used interchangeably to refer to (at least two) different things. On the one hand, it appears to be rhetorically and politically convenient for forces, PCCs and national politicians⁴² to refer to all (or much of) the policing done locally as 'neighbourhood policing' even if it is more generalised or 'hybridised' than it once was. On the other hand, perhaps to demonstrate modernisation or to shed (party) political connotations,

those describing the ongoing importance of local insight, partnership collaboration, and proactive problem-solving (for which 'neighbourhood policing' might once have stood as short-hand) have chosen to refer to this as 'local' policing^{43 44}.

Given that the title of our project puts it squarely in the path of this cloud of linguistic ambiguity, it seems appropriate to end by offering a more precise sub-title to better define its purpose and scope; in exploring *The future of neighbourhood policing* we will seek to address the question: *How can the police do informed proactivity better?*

Research next steps: adding depth and context

Alongside this paper, we are publishing detailed analysis of the trajectory of the *neighbourhood*

⁴² In November 2015, Prime Minister David Cameron was challenged over his claim in Parliament that neighbourhood policing in London had increased by 500 per cent. See Simons and Waugh (2015).

⁴³ APCC and NPCC (2016).

⁴⁴ It is also interesting to note that the NPCC's Local Policing committee includes portfolios on PCSOs, Troubled Families, Partnership Working and ASB (among other things) but does not cover incident response, public protection or investigation.

policing workforce in all 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales. Our next ambition is to obtain narrative accounts for each force, which succinctly explain what has changed (in particular, what activity currently sits under the broad '*neighbourhood policing*' title) and why. To do this we will be making a fact-finding approach to all forces, via their local policing assistant chief constables.

In addition, we would like to reach out more broadly to police officers (of whatever rank or role), PCSOs, police staff or any others who can provide force-level context and narrative to the trends described in this paper, to share their views and insights with us. You can do so via **a short, anonymous survey** on the Police Foundation website⁴⁵ or you can email us directly at **neighbourhood.policing@police-foundation.org.uk**. If you are able to help us assemble the national picture of neighbourhood policing – and to look to the future – we would be extremely grateful for your assistance.

Finally, later in the year we will be conducting a number of force visits – probably using the typology developed in this paper to identify an appropriate range of forces – to discuss their approaches to neighbourhood policing in more depth.

We intend to publish a final report in the autumn of 2017. For further information, please see **<http://www.police-foundation.org.uk/the-future-of-neighbourhood-policing>**.

The aims of the *future of neighbourhood policing* project are to:

- Chart how neighbourhood policing has changed in England and Wales since the end of the Neighbourhood Policing Programme in 2008 – and what it looks like in 2017.
- Identify what, if anything can be said about the impacts and consequences of the different approaches taken over the period.
- Understand how forces allocate resources to neighbourhood policing, and how these, in turn are allocate between neighbourhoods.
- Examine how neighbourhood resources are deployed to specific policing activities and how different approaches and policing styles are tailored to particular neighbourhoods.
- Examine how neighbourhood policing connects to, supports and is supported by other local services and other police functions – and how this might be improved.
- Explore how changes in crime, technology, society and the public's expectations have changed the policing needs of neighbourhoods, how neighbourhood policing has adapted so far, and how it might do so in the future.

About the Police Foundation

The Police Foundation is the only independent think tank focused entirely on developing knowledge and understanding of policing and crime reduction, while challenging the police service and the government to improve policing for the benefit of the public. The Police Foundation acts as a bridge between the public, the police and the government, while being owned by none of them.

⁴⁵ Please go to: <http://www.police-foundation.org.uk/what-s-been-happening-to-neighbourhood-policing-in-your-force>.

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Appendix: List of forces in each ‘type’

Consistent traditionals

Avon and Somerset
 Derbyshire
 Devon and Cornwall
 Dorset
 Durham
 Hampshire
 Hertfordshire
 Lancashire
 Leicestershire ⁴⁶
 Northamptonshire ⁴⁷
 Nottinghamshire
 Staffordshire
 Suffolk
 Sussex
 Thames Valley
 Wiltshire

Integrated hybrids

Cambridgeshire
 Cheshire ⁴⁸
 Cumbria ⁴⁹
 Essex
 Gloucestershire
 Gwent
 Kent
 South Yorkshire

Civilianised rurals

Dyfed-Powys
 Humberside ⁵⁰
 Lincolnshire
 Norfolk
 North Wales
 North Yorkshire
 South Wales
 Warwickshire
 West Mercia

Officer preservers

Merseyside
 Metropolitan Police
 Northumbria
 Surrey

Robust purists

Cleveland
 Greater Manchester
 West Midlands ⁵¹

Outright outliers

Bedfordshire
 City of London
 West Yorkshire ⁵²

⁴⁶ Leicestershire has shown a greater variation than most ‘consistent traditionals’.

⁴⁷ Northamptonshire has also shown a greater variation than most ‘consistent traditionals’.

⁴⁸ Cheshire adopted a more ‘traditional’ *neighbourhood* workforce position during 2015/16.

⁴⁹ Cumbria adopted a workforce position approximating the ‘robust purist’ type in 2015/16.

⁵⁰ Humberside has consistently adopted a highly civilianised model since 2008.

⁵¹ West Midlands displayed classic ‘robust purist’ characteristics prior to 2015 but has since reduced the proportion of workforce in *neighbourhood* functions.

⁵² West Yorkshire fitted the profile of an ‘integrated hybrid’ prior to 2016 but substantially reduced both the size of its *neighbourhood* workforce and the number of PCSOs.

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