

N8 Policing Research Partnership

Purpose, Rationale & Principles

Purpose

1. The purpose of the N8 Policing Research Partnership is to enable and foster high quality, independent research and to facilitate research-based contributions to public debate, policing policy, governance and practice.

Rationale

2. Ongoing changes to the landscape and governance of policing, community safety, crime prevention and victim services provide an ideal opportunity for research collaboration, knowledge exchange and dialogue between the research, policy and practitioner communities, led and facilitated by the N8 universities.
3. N8 constitutes a valuable platform from which to engage Government, PCCs, Chief Constables, police forces, other organisations and communities in a strategic collaboration to provide a range of opportunities for conducting relevant, high quality research that helps address the problems of policing in the 21st century and for achieving international excellence in policing research and impact.
4. N8 affords significant scope, scale and multi-disciplinary reach with regard to the breadth of world-leading research expertise in the partner institutions which can be brought to bear to address issues locally, nationally and internationally.
5. N8 provides a suitable scale at which to conduct and organise policing research and engage in regional, national (and international) policy debates by collaborating with the police forces in the North of England.
6. By working collectively, the N8 universities can foster and deliver outcomes that have collective benefits for communities across police force areas, given their common needs, and that combine the expertise that is significantly greater than that of a single institution.

Principles

7. The N8 Policing Research Partnership will incorporate a range of empirical and theoretical approaches and embed a principle of non-exclusivity such that it is open to the involvement of diverse perspectives and other academic and non-academic partners (within and beyond the north) where they provide appropriate contributions, notably where these are not available from within the N8 universities.

8. The N8 Policing Research Partnership seeks to promote democratic practices, protect human rights, civil liberties and the broader well being of the communities and organisations we research. We aim to respect the dignity and diversity of the lay and professional communities with which we work and uphold the values of inclusiveness, integrity and professionalism.
9. N8 activities should complement, rather than detract from or hinder, any bilateral relations between partner institutions and their local PCC, Chief Constable, police force, other partner organisations or communities.
10. There is no requirement for all 8 partners to be involved in specific activities, projects or events if any either prefer not to be involved or do not have the appropriate expertise fit. Usually a minimum of 3 partner institutions will be involved in all significant N8 activities.
11. All participating N8 institutions should nominate at least one senior member of research staff to act as link coordinator(s) to and stakeholders in the Policing Research Partnership and keep up-to-date a register of policing research expertise in relation to the institution that they represent.

N8 Research Partnership

Principles

1. The role of the N8 is to create collaborative research partnerships that will deliver an outcome above that of a single institutional effort.
2. We are not a lobbying or mission group.
3. The eight universities are the core members of the partnership.
4. The N8 collaborates with other institutions through research projects where partners have world class capability to contribute.
5. All 8 universities should consent to a project being branded as an N8 project, but not all 8 need participate. (Usually we would think of a minimum threshold of 3.)
6. The lead University for each research programme is determined on a project by project basis, according to the specific requirements of the project or funding call.
7. The N8 seeks to maintain a balance over time of lead universities across the project portfolio.
8. The N8 secretariat are responsible and accountable for catalysing and developing projects. The lead University is responsible and accountable for the delivery and allocation of resources to a project.

N8 Policing Research Partnership

The N8 Policing Research Partnership seeks to enable and foster high quality, independent research and to facilitate research-based contributions to public debate, policing policy, governance and practice. It aims:

- to promote collaboration between universities and policing research users;
- to produce research that is empirically informed, conceptually rich and policy relevant;
- to deliver cross-disciplinary research excellence through all our activities;
- to maximise the impact of our research on society, through engagement with external (non-academic) partners.

In pursuing and achieving these aims, the N8 Policing Research Partnership (N8 PRP) is committed to the following values and approaches to the work in which it engages.

1. Research Capacity and Scope

The N8 PRP combines the research capacity of the eight leading research-intensive universities in the North of England.¹ Collectively, the N8 RPP draws together leading-edge expertise across the full range of social sciences with a large number of established world-class research groupings with significant track records in policing research. It affords opportunities to lever critical mass across the N8 universities, within and beyond the social sciences, to address the needs of contemporary policing research. The level of collaboration we can achieve is distinctive to N8 and is not matched by any other existing policing research consortia. This collaboration extends inwards (among the 8 institutions) and outwards (to our external academic networks and non-academic partners) to develop research intensive partnerships. The research programme will be underpinned by the extensive body of expertise and technical assets held by research groups and centres and individual experts within the N8 Universities.

2. Regional Hub, National Impact and Global Significance

Located in the Northwest, Yorkshire and Northeast regions of England, the N8 PRP is uniquely placed to build critical mass and research capacity in the north of England. It builds upon the existing successful and durable N8 partnership between the participating institutions. Shared regional geography provides an asset which enables the N8 PRP to draw upon relationships, expertise and institutions that exist within the partnership. This regional constituency and coverage allows the N8 PRP to address issues that cut across and transcend individual areas or localities and enables us to engage with national and international debates. The research generated will not be restricted to the regional or local focus but use this geographic foundation as a platform to produce insights which have conceptual and practical implications of international significance.

3. Scale

The N8 PRP offers opportunities for research at different scales including a focus on local, regional, national and international issues. It enables a depth of understanding through rich local studies and a breadth of relevance and coverage through large scale, comparative programmes, its global networks and the international standing and reach of the research it produces.

¹ N8 is a partnership incorporating the universities of Durham, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and York.

4. Policing Focus

The focus of the N8 PRP is not restricted to the study of the police organisation but proceeds from the premise that ‘policing’ – broadly conceived – is the outcome of a constellation of actors, agencies and processes both within and beyond the police. This includes the study and understanding of the contribution, role and impact of commercial, public, municipal, hybrid and citizen-based policing endeavours.

5. Inter-disciplinarity

The N8 PRP is committed to addressing research agendas and problems by drawing insights from different intellectual disciplines within and beyond the social sciences and harnessing these in response to contemporary societal questions and policing challenges.² To this end, it seeks to foster cross-disciplinary collaborations within and among the N8 institutions where these are mutually beneficial. In forging multi-disciplinary teams it is intended that the research generated will provide new inter-disciplinary understandings and conceptual insights. Within N8, inter-disciplinary and cross-institutional teams provide world-class capability to tackle large-scale and ground-breaking research beyond the capabilities of a single institution.

6. Diversity of Research Approach

The N8 PRP is committed to an inclusive approach to the understanding of what constitutes and counts as ‘evidence’ in research-based policing. It includes different epistemological, methodological and theoretical approaches. It embraces critical and empirical research ‘of policing’ as well as research ‘for the police’ and other relevant partner organisations.

7. Innovation

The wide range of epistemological and theoretical approaches incorporated by the expertise underpinning the N8 PRP allows us a capacity to think in new ways about old problems. The work of the N8 PRP – through its capacity and innovation – will develop original research work, theory and practice that will allow the group to address generic (as well as local) policing issues in novel ways that contribute to world leading publications and international impact. It will develop new understandings through practical application about how different forms of evidence can inform innovative thinking and effective public policy interventions.

8. Co-production

The co-production of research will be fostered whereby research questions, problems and their resolution are co-determined by academic and non-academic communities. A co-production model will be used, where appropriate, as a means through which academic and non-academic partners generate a shared research agenda based on preliminary and ongoing deliberation about current problems and how they can be understood and addressed.

9. Public Engagement

Given that policing is conducted for, with, and by, members of the public, a central element of the co-production model deployed will entail and foster public engagement, both during the research and in its dissemination. The intention will be to produce knowledge that has a public purpose, engages with different publics and seeks to inform public debate and deliberation.

² The N8 PRP draws experts from criminology, law, business studies, sociology, social policy, psychology, health sciences, urban geography, politics and governance amongst other disciplines.