

N8 PRP
Annual Report
2019/20



POLICING
RESEARCH
PARTNERSHIP



Contents

Foreword by Andy Cooke	3
Director's Introduction – Adam Crawford.....	4
Introducing the New Leadership Team:	
Academic Co-Director - Geoff Pearson.....	6
Policing Co-Director – Ngaire Waine.....	8
1 Partnerships and Evidence-Based Policing	
Policing and the N8 Research Partnership – Annette Bramley.....	10
In Conversation with Justin Partridge	12
In Conversation with ACC Chris Sykes	15
From Evidence-Based Policing to Practice – Andy Fielding	16
You Cannot Claim To Be Aspirational About The Future Whilst Clinging So Tightly To The Past – Rob Ewin.....	18
Fragile Alliances: Culture, Funding And Sustainability In Police-Academic Partnerships – Matt Bacon, Joanna Shapland, Layla Skinns and Adam White.....	20
Co-Production In Crisis? Shared Challenges For Policing And Academia – Liz Aston.....	22
Forty Years Of Conducting Research For, And With, The Police – Johannes Knutson.....	24
2 Data Analytics and Training	
Reflecting on the Role of Data Specialists in Policing – Fiona McLaughlin.....	26
Training and Learning: A Review – Jude Towers	28
Why the Programme for 'Data Specialists in Policing' is more important now than ever – Scott Keay.....	30
Practitioners' Experience of the N8 'Empowering Data Specialists in Policing' CPD Course – Andrew White.....	32
Practitioners' Experience of the N8 'Empowering Data Specialists in Policing' CPD Course – 'Northern Analysis Group'.....	34
3 Evaluation, Impact and the Small Grant Scheme	
First Four Years of the N8 PRP – Tiggey May, Richard Sen and Mike Hough.....	36
Police/Academic Perspectives on Evidence: Implications for Co-Production – Mike Rowe, Pam Davies, Donna Marie Brown and Paul Biddle	38
Unquantifiable Benefits: Some Notes On The Evaluation Of The Small Grants Programme – Geoff Page	40
Identifying Sexual Trafficking Online – Xavier L'Hoiry, Dr Alessandro Moretti and Georgios Antonopoulos.....	42
Policing Child-to-Parent Violence: Lessons from England and Wales – Sam Lewis, Ella Holdsworth and Jose Pina-Sánchez.....	44
4 Insights from Policing the Pandemic	
Police And Research Collaborations In A Covid-19 World – Gloria Laycock	46
COVID-19: Predicting Crime in a Pandemic World – Eric Halford	48
The N8 PRP's Response to COVID-19	51
5 Innovation and Leadership	
Tackling Knife Crime from Existing Resources – Steve Brookes	52
Developing and Implementing a Violence Reduction Strategy – Rachael Staniforth.....	54
A Strategic Review of Policing – Rick Muir.....	56
Legitimacy, Leadership and Governance – Ian Shannon.....	58
Police Use Of Body Worn Cameras – Declan Falconer.....	60
Alcohol And Mental Health: Reducing Stigma And Harm In Uk Police Officers – Patricia Irizar	62
N8 PRP BY NUMBERS.....	65



Foreword

I am delighted to provide this foreword to the 2020 Annual Report, as the N8 Policing Research Partnership moves to a new phase in its development with the establishment of a co-funding model with a shared directorship by academic and policing partners.

The world is changing faster than ever and so too is the landscape of crime and how we tackle it. Added to those challenges, is how the UK will look as we emerge from the ravages of the pandemic and what impact this will have on criminality and vulnerability. These challenges and complexities necessitate a nimble, effective and professional response and such skills are enhanced through partnerships like the N8 PRP. This has been evidenced in recent evaluations of the N8 Policing Research Partnership (including the Birkbeck College study reported here) which demonstrate how the partnership has helped to foster police innovations through research, enabled collaborations, provided skills training for analysts and fostered organisational learning across policing.

My own force has a vision to work as one team, putting its communities first and recognising that the effectiveness of policing will depend on the quality of our relationships with our communities. Partnerships, such as that with the N8 PRP, are instrumental to the effectiveness of our policing capability and this has been demonstrated in Merseyside through the Coercive Control research and evaluation funded by an N8 PRP small grant. In this the role of the N8 PRP was crucial as the principal facilitator of the collaboration between Lancaster University and Merseyside Police's Evidence Based Practice Hub. The research provided a significant and crucial insight into our response to Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control, the results of which highlighted some vital organisational learning points and best practice. Consequently, a training package was developed, incorporating the results of the research, which was delivered to over 700 staff across the force and has since been embedded into the training programme for the long term.

I am very much looking forward to further collaborations through the N8 PRP and the benefits that such partnerships produce across UK law enforcement. I am delighted that one of my colleagues, Chief Superintendent Ngaira Waine will help provide the N8 PRP with leadership as the new Co-Director of the partnership.

*Andy Cooke QPM
Chief Constable
Merseyside Police*



Director's Introduction

It gives me considerable pleasure to introduce the fifth Annual Report of the N8 Policing Research Partnership (N8 PRP), my last as Director. Since we launched the nascent partnership in 2013, the collaboration has grown in scope, purpose and reputation. The vision remains to build on and expand the investment in collaboration between academics and policing partners and to consolidate the activity into a recognised centre of excellence in policing research and innovation which will deliver new knowledge and evidence that impacts operational policing.

To ensure the sustainability of the partnership, in light of the end of the Catalyst Grant in 2020, which has underpinned the N8 PRP over the last 5 years, a business plan for all partners to co-fund the core activities, infrastructure and assets of the partnership from 2020/21 was developed and agreed last year. In negotiating the agreement and financial commitments from the eight universities and eleven police forces and Offices of the PCCs, it was both gratifying and reassuring to hear the very positive feedback from senior representatives of all the policing and university partners. Collectively, they highlighted the diverse benefits that derive from the scale and ambition of the collaboration.

The new funding model moves the partnership from one which has been externally funded by a third party to a co-funded model, with concomitant co-leadership, shared administrative support / secretariat and collaborative governance structures. It is my firm belief that this new arrangement will provide greater direct investment and ownership by the partners in ways that will sharpen partner buy-in, improve inter-organisational coordination and engagement and maximise benefits. Moreover, the new model conforms more closely to the aspirations and ideals of research co-production.

It is therefore with great pride and pleasure that I pass on the leadership of the partnership to the incoming co-Directors Chief Superintendent Ngaire Waite and Dr Geoff Pearson. It is a great credit to the standing of the partnership that we have managed to secure the commitment and direction of two people with clear ambition in driving forward the partnership (see p.6-9). I will continue to provide whatever support I can in the development of future plans to the new leadership team and look forward to the continued prosperity of the partnership in safe hands.

Looking back over the years, a number of things strike me about the way the partnership has developed; here, I will highlight just a couple*. First, the commitment, energy and enthusiasm for collaboration that has been shown by many policing practitioners both at the front-line and in senior managerial positions as well as researchers from diverse disciplines has taught me that intellectual curiosity and a thirst for knowledge to inform improvements in practices and beneficial social outcomes is to be found littered across many parts of large public organisations. Nurturing this by giving it some lights and space to breathe and grow, for me, has been one of the most enduring successes of constructing the N8 PRP.



I will continue to provide whatever support I can in the development of future plans

Secondly, the body of work that the N8 PRP has developed around the broad (and somewhat contested) concept of policing 'vulnerabilities' has been truly impressive. In the research that we have supported, vulnerability has frequently been deployed in ways that prompt us to rethink our understandings of how policing might be focused, prioritised and delivered. It has prompted a wider understanding of crime-related harms as multifaceted, relational and interdependent, whereby vulnerabilities sit along a continuum and evolved across time. It has also encouraged a focus on prevention and up-stream interventions, often embedding policing in complex relations with other service providers. Additionally, it has brought a focus

on those people whose vulnerability derives from their precarious and sometimes problematic relationship with the police as an institution; those who due to their social disadvantage, marginalisation or deviant lifestyles are frequently the subjects of police attention.

While much of the work reported here was conducted across 2019, inevitably our more recent focus has been influenced by responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, both in terms of how the N8 PRP continues to operate in beneficial ways that serve our partners productively and the implications for policing. In the light of government restrictions, we have had to reschedule a number of planned events and activities. Our international showcase conference – initially organised for June 2020 – has been postponed to 23/24th November, which we hope we will be in a position to host a face-to-face event, with additional remote accessibility. Similarly, the third cohort of the data analyst CPD programme (which is covered from diverse angles in a number of articles – see p. 26-35), is being restructured and repurposed for current conditions.

As Gloria Laycock notes in her contribution to this report (p. 46-47), the policing of the COVID-19 pandemic has presented new challenges and opportunities for police and partners. Policing the pandemic has highlighted acutely what Herman Goldstein (who sadly passed away earlier this year) noted many years ago, that 'everything in policing is inter-related, but also that what other sectors in society do or don't do affects policing' profoundly. It has brought to the fore the manner in which policing sits uncomfortably at the intersection where conflicts between coercive government authority and freedom are played out. Ultimately, public compliance with (either mundane or extra-ordinary) rules is

dependent on much more than the coercive powers to enforce and punish transgressions. It depends on the complex interplay between a diversity of actors and agencies with differing competencies and responsibilities, the effective coordination of such relations or processes and (crucially) the self-policing and compliance by members of the public. In the case of COVID-19, this has reinforced the centrality of relationships between police and public health in protecting the vulnerable. The urgency of the pandemic has challenged many public services to open up their traditionally siloed ways of working. This presents real opportunities for new ways of joint working and the linking together of existing organisational datasets for research and innovation purposes.

Too often in recent years, the police have come to be seen as a default public service of last resort for all manner of problems and social ills. When other services 'close', 'fail' or are inadequate, policing is invariably left to pick up the pieces both directly (i.e. mental health and social care) or indirectly (i.e. education, housing and employment). As such, significant interactional and spill-over effects structure policing's relations with other public services; such that demands and changes in other services impact on policing and what the police are called upon to respond to. Consequently, an increasing range of social problems have become cast as 'police problems' with insufficient critical assessment of what problems the state is asking the police to solve and whether the police are really the best suited to solve them, given their fairly limited set of tools, competencies and capabilities.

What is clear is that the research community has much to offer our policing partners in the co-production of new knowledge that learns from and can enhance future response to tumultuous events like the COVID-19

pandemic. I have been impressed by the varied ways in which collaborations between researchers and front-line officers, as well as policing managers, have been mobilised so rapidly to assist with unfolding challenges of policing.

In this and other aspects of building the N8 PRP, I look forward to supporting Ngaire and Geoff and the N8 PRP Steering Group as it navigates the next phase in the development of the partnership and hopefully secures its long-term sustainability. The achievements and benefits to the different partners secured to date have been varied and considerable. The focus has been on building a secure partnership premised on mutual understanding, respect and trust as well as a shared vision of how data can be mobilised, knowledge deployed and research applied to policing policies and practices in ways that have beneficial outcomes for communities.

On a personal note, I will continue to lead the delivery of the remaining goals and outcomes associated with the Catalyst Grant – which comes to a conclusion at the end of 2020. I would like to thank our funding bodies at the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and subsequently the Office for Students (OfS), which assumed responsibility for managing the grant, and in particular Matt Jennings who has remained our contract manager throughout and provided support and understanding, given the evolving nature of our delivery plans.

Adam Crawford, Director of the N8 Policing Research Partnership (from 2013 until May 2020), Director of the Leeds Social Sciences Institute and Professor at the University of Leeds.

* A more extended discussion of some of the lessons and insights from the partnership is to be found in my contribution to in Nigel Fielding, Karen Bullock and Simon Holdaway's recent edited collection *Critical Reflections on Evidence-Based Policing* (Routledge, 2020) entitled: 'Effecting Change in Policing Through Police/Academic Partnerships: The Challenges of (and for) Co-production'.



Introducing the New Leadership Team

Geoff Pearson, Academic Co-Director

I am delighted to take up the role of academic co-Director of the N8 Policing Research Partnership (N8 PRP), having been involved in the N8 PRP almost since its inception, primarily through my previous role organising the annual Innovation Forum.

Since those early days, N8 PRP has developed a firm foundation and is well-positioned to continue its work driving forward cutting-edge research, knowledge-exchange and evidence-based policing across the North of England and beyond. It is important to recognise that this has only been possible due to initial funding from the Police Innovation Fund grant, the five-year HEFCE (now Office for Students) Catalyst Grant, and match-funding from the N8 Universities and 11 northern police forces. Our progress to date has also been testament to the work of our Advisory Board and Steering Group members, institutional leads, police force SPOCs, and of course our former Director Professor Adam Crawford, who will continue to oversee the delivery of the outstanding elements of the Catalyst programme.

In 2020, we move into the second stage of N8 PRP. The partnership will be funded exclusively by the N8 Institutions (the Universities of Durham, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and York) and 11 northern police forces (Cheshire, Cumbria, Durham, GMP, Humberside, Lancashire, Merseyside, North Yorkshire, Northumbria, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire). The key elements of the N8 PRP will remain under this new model, the Police Innovation Forum, the Small Grants, KE Internships, and Data Analytics Service,

although obviously the timing of the delivery of some of these has been severely affected by the Covid-19 crisis. We are also pleased to have appointed Chief Superintendent Ngairé Waine from Merseyside Police as the N8 PRP Policing co-Director. This position will further enable the forces to drive the N8 PRP in a direction that best suits the demands and requirements of the police service and improves knowledge exchange across the 11 Northern forces.

Beyond the immediate challenges of developing research in the age of Covid-19 restrictions, the key priority for N8 PRP is to secure funding for its medium – to long-term future. First, we need to move to a position where the partnership is funded over a number of years without needing to revisit its support on an annual basis. This may require a modest baseline foundation from which we are in a good position to bid for external grants, research centre grants, and knowledge-exchange projects. Key to securing longer-term funding is ensuring that we continue to deliver the best value for both the N8 institutions and the police forces that we can. Also essential is that we continue to engage academics that have both the experience in, and enthusiasm for, carrying out research in this area, and police practitioners who are in a position to champion N8 PRP and effect evidence-led change.



It is essential in this respect to also retain and develop our links with organisations such as the College of Policing and the UK Home Office.

I also have hopes for how we can make sure that N8 PRP opportunities and research reaches out across institutions and delivers increased impact. Rather than just focusing on the traditional disciplinary homes for studies of, and with, the police (criminology, sociology, social-psychology, and law), we need to ensure that institutional leads are able to engage with colleagues who have expertise to share with forces across disciplines and faculties. We also want to provide additional assistance for those who have been successful in small grant applications, in particular supporting grant holders to pursue larger follow-on funding and increasing and evidencing the practical impact of their research. After all, both academic and policing partners in N8 PRP share the aim of developing, changing, and improving police policy. Delivering a stable, vibrant, and impactful partnership between academia and the police service will have wide-ranging benefits not only across the North of England but nationally and internationally, particularly in such uncertain times.

Dr Geoff Pearson is N8 PRP Academic Co-Director and Senior Lecturer at the University of Manchester Law School.



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Introducing the New Leadership Team

Ngairé Waïne, Policing Co-Director

I am thrilled to become the first Police Co-Director of the N8 PRP. I joined Merseyside Police in 1994 and I have been in predominantly uniform roles with Merseyside ever since, apart from a short attachment to Cheshire Constabulary as an Assistant Chief Officer. I head up the Criminal Justice Department in Merseyside, which is a diverse department incorporating the Coroners Department, the Safer Roads Unit, the PNC bureau and Disclosure and Barring as well as what would be more commonly perceived as criminal justice such as Custody and ID units, Evidence and Records, and the Prosecutions unit. I was born in New Zealand, hence the strange spelling to my Maori name, I grew up in Norwich and then came to Liverpool University where I did a BSc. and subsequently my MSc. in maths. I taught in Kenya for a year before finally settling down in policing. I have been married for 20 years and I have one 13 year old son, who isn't enjoying lockdown.

In my time as a Chief Superintendent I've been responsible for a Basic Command Unit in Liverpool; the Call Centre and Crime Management Unit where I amalgamated six call centres into one and my most challenging role, oversight of a force restructure that resulted in Merseyside moving from a geographic to a functional model for delivery of service.

In 2006, I completed an MBA by distance learning at Bradford University, my management project was called 'Closing the Gap – Setting standards to achieve policing quality'. It examined performance measures and the concept of success in terms of public expectations. At the time it had limited influence on measures of performance in Merseyside due to the lack of any structure to use evidence to inform practice. However, it whetted my appetite for academic research

providing new insights into police practice and when I started to hear about evidence led policing I attended a number of conferences organised by the Society of Evidence-Based Policing, bringing back to the force information about studies that were presented.

The conferences inspired me to try my own randomised control trial in the call centre. I had seen a successful model of designated crime call handlers in a control room of another force and I wanted to evaluate the impact this model would have in my call centre. One team was to identify two call handlers who would take low level crime calls. When the other teams saw that the concept might work they all put it in place, intermittently, and I could never really evaluate it. I recognised that far more thought needed to have been put into the methodology of the trial.

I then became a temporary Assistant Chief Officer in Merseyside Police, just as the force had been awarded transformation funding for a partnership with Liverpool John Moore's University to train officers in evidence-based policing. All the officers would complete a research project. I now had the opportunity to set up a governance process for evidence based policing within Merseyside Police ensuring that the projects the officers completed would address priorities in the force and would add to knowledge and perhaps affect practice in those areas. This proved to be harder than it sounds, but it was a start.

When I saw the Policing Co-Director role advertised, I was immediately drawn to a key aim of the N8 PRP: 'To enhance the impact of higher education research in the policing sector through the development and testing of mechanisms of knowledge exchange to strengthen the evidence base on which police policy, practice and training are developed and so support innovation and the professionalization of the police.'

I look forward to working alongside police forces and Dr Geoff Pearson to increase the amount of knowledge exchange that is taking place between universities and the forces within the partnership. I intend to work with police SPOC's to find ways to increase engagement in co-production both between police forces and police and academics. I'm looking at ways to support forces to move evidence based policing from a niche domain



I look forward to working alongside police forces and Dr Geoff Pearson to increase the amount of knowledge exchange that is taking place between universities and the forces within the partnership

of a few enthusiasts to being part of the organisational culture of policing, building on the considerable developments that have already taken place nationally and through the N8 PRP. This means I'll be working with all partners to ensure research is innovative, impactful and focused on current policing challenges and priorities and that the evidence is influencing practice. Alongside

ensuring police partners articulate current priorities, I will endeavour to communicate the activity of the N8 PRP and the impact that has had on policing to enable me, with others, to deliver a sustainable funding model for continued N8 PRP activity.

Ngairé Waïne is Chief Superintendent with Merseyside Police where she is Head of Criminal Justice.



Thinking about the numerous strands of activity that the partnership has undertaken over the past five years, I am impressed by the sheer breadth and variety of work that has been undertaken

Policing and the N8 Research Partnership

Annette Bramley

The aspiration of the N8 Policing Research Partnership (N8 PRP) is to work with policing partners to transform the way research evidence is co-produced and used. Over the five year HEFCE Catalyst funded programme, N8 PRP has achieved this by harnessing skills, capabilities and resources from universities, police forces and others across the North to deliver at a scale and with real impact. The testimonies and case studies brought together in this report are themselves evidence of the importance of this type of collaborative funding to develop new relationships that can help us address challenges of social and technological change.

What these case studies and measurable impacts cannot capture, however, is the immense amount of social capital and other intangible benefits that have been generated by this programme. How can the value of the increased levels of trust between the policing partners and the academic researchers possibly be measured? Developing this trust was essential for the success of the collaboration, and the collaboration could only proceed at the speed that trust was built.

A key success factor for N8 PRP was to focus on taking the time and building

the right structures to enable successful collaboration. The independent evaluation of the programme, undertaken recently by Birkbeck College, identified the establishment of an organisational infrastructure for N8 PRP as a significant achievement, pulling together the whole of the North for the first time to focus on helping to address the problems of policing in the 21st century. As we deal with another new demand on our policing partners, the global pandemic of Covid-19, the ability to mobilise, gather evidence and apply our learning at scale could not be more timely.

Although it has not always been straightforward, a commitment on both sides to the co-production of research and to the values of the partnership has enabled significant strides to be made, with clear benefits for both sides. The police now have access to a significant concentration of research and expertise to support the development of evidence-based policing, and researchers have the opportunity to apply their work and better get to grips with the challenges of doing so in the real world. It is clear from what our policing colleagues tell us that moving to evidence-based policing still involves overcoming a number of hurdles, but that N8 PRP has contributed to creating a positive attitude towards its adoption.

Thinking about the numerous strands of activity that the partnership has undertaken over the past five years, I am impressed by the sheer breadth and variety of work that has been undertaken; from the extremely popular small grants scheme, to data sharing and analytics, staff exchanges and PhD studentships. The themes that

have been addressed are significant and timely, including cybercrime, domestic abuse and mental health. I have also been delighted to see the partnership adopt and evolve the annual Policing Innovation Forum. The most recent event – which took place in Liverpool in November 2019 – exemplified the power of the forum approach and the ethos of the N8 as a whole. It brought together academics, police and a range of inspiring community organisations all seeking to tackle the problem of knife crime from a public health perspective.

It would be impossible to talk about the achievements of N8 PRP without mentioning the leadership of the outgoing Director, Professor Adam Crawford. Adam has steered the partnership successfully to its current position and, along with colleagues from each of the eight universities, the 11 police forces / PCCs and others, has laid a strong foundation for the next stage of its evolution. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank him for his dedication and vision over the past 7 years.

Looking to the future, the partnership has agreed an exciting vision for the next phase of its development, based on deepening and extending the co-production ethos. This will be supported by a move to a model of co-governance and co-financing between the university and policing partners, including a co-leadership structure. I am delighted that Dr Geoff Pearson has been appointed as the new Academic Co-Director, following on from his successful stewardship of the Innovation Forum strand alongside his University of Manchester colleague and current Deputy Director, Dr Steve Brookes. I am also immensely pleased that the partnership will benefit from the dedicated leadership that Chief Superintendent Ngaire Waite will bring as the incoming Policing Co-Director. I know that Geoff and Ngaire are both excited about the challenges of leading the partnership and charting a course for its future direction.

The vision of the N8 Research Partnership as a whole is to be an exceptionally effective cluster of research, innovation and training

excellence, delivering benefits to the economy and communities in the North of England and beyond. N8 PRP embodies this vision. It has grown over the last 7 years into a highly successful example of joint working across the North of England and beyond. I wish everyone involved with N8 PRP every success with their future collaborative endeavours.

Dr Annette Bramley is the Director of the N8 Research Partnership, a collaboration of the eight most research intensive universities in the North of England. The N8 PRP forms part of its portfolio of research programmes.



In Conversation:

Justin Partridge

Justin Partridge has been a long-standing member of the N8 PRP Steering Group and played an important role in the supporting diverse initiatives including the development of the Data Analytics CPD programme and the Data Analytics Strand more generally. Here, Justin reflects on his involvement with the N8 PRP across the duration of the Catalyst Grant, drawing upon both his work with the North East Region collaboration of seven police forces and his role within Humberside Police.

What were your main motivations for initially wanting to work with the N8 PRP?

A police force is a complex, multidisciplinary organisation, generating and using huge amounts of data to deliver the services it provides to communities. Despite lots of policing research in areas such as criminology and law (as well as research into culture, organisation, systems IT and many other areas that are also relevant to policing) there seemed to be little connection between the academic and the operational. The N8 PRP was designed to address this gap, using co-commissioned research and jointly identified priorities to ensure that where there was an evidence gap research could be commissioned, and where research was commissioned it could be used to improve operational practice. This joint approach allows both sides to learn from each other.

From a policing perspective, what would you say have been the benefits from working collaboratively with academics as part of the N8 PRP over the last 5 years?

There are many benefits. Some are personal, such as development opportunities for staff from both forces and academia; and I include the many opportunities for informal

conversations and sharing of knowledge in this as well as formal training events. Other benefits include specific research that has made an impact on how forces do business, access to research skills and support where forces were trying to develop solutions themselves from scratch. On a personal level, I have made some great like-minded contacts from universities and other police forces, developed my own formal and informal learning and commissioned research into issues that directly affected my area of business.

Have attitudes towards the importance of research in policing changed over the last few years?

I think there has been a gradual shift in the understanding of the importance that research can play in improving policing in the last decade or so. Back in 2010, I was involved in conversations at a national level about the need for more evidence informed approaches to policing, and the establishment of the N8 PRP and similar groups across the country, plus relationships with local universities has all helped to drive understanding of where and how research can help policing (and vice versa). I do think there is still a long way to go, however. Proper joint research into policing is often funded

from a patchwork of sources, and staffed by those who are passionate about the topic, and we could always do more. I am personally encouraged by wider initiatives such as the degree entry scheme for police officers, as I think formal recognition of the level of training that police officers already do together with a better understanding of the value of academic disciplines in policing will further drive the changes across UK police forces.

At present, what do you see as the biggest challenge facing policing, and what role do you see research partnerships playing in tackling the issue?

There are many challenges in policing, which are ever changing. If I had to pick a few, I might include the changing nature of the profession of policing itself (degree entry schemes, the need to better represent society as a whole, changes to career patterns), the changing nature of criminality (a move to online crimes or online investigation opportunities for traditional crimes, increasingly cross border crimes) and the changing nature of organisations (the rise of home working, new technologies, exponential increases in data, cultural changes and more). Each of these areas could easily provide multiple PhD theses, and if scoped out jointly with police forces could improve how we deliver services to the public and keep people safe.

What are your hopes and aspirations for the future of the N8 PRP?

Firstly, to continue for another five years, and continue to develop the high quality research that has been the mark of the last five. I would also like to see the whole policing research



I think there has been a gradual shift in the understanding of the importance that research can play in improving policing in the last decade or so



agenda be more widely discussed at the highest levels of policing – at the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and at chief officer level within individual forces – in order to ensure that police and academics are researching the topics that really matter and can make the greatest difference.

Justin Partridge is Assistant Chief Officer for the Regional Collaboration, North East Region and has been for a number of years the Humberside Police representative on the N8 PRP Steering Group.



Most definitely, there is no doubt that there is a greater recognition and understanding of the importance of policing research, and the benefits of working with independent academics who provide new insights and expertise

In Conversation

Chris Sykes

In his capacity as Assistant Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police responsible for Local Policing Delivery and the Information Services Transformation Programme, Chris Sykes has been a keen observer of the N8 PRP, its activities and work. Here, Chris reflects on his views of the benefits of the N8 PRP for GMP and its contribution to fostering evidence-based policing.

What were your main motivations for initially wanting to work with the N8 PRP?

Over the past few years, Greater Manchester Police (GMP) has worked hard to develop an evidence-based practice approach. We have built up a network of over 80 evidence-based champions across the force and established a Research Hub at the centre to coordinate activity. However, at an early stage, we recognised that so much more could be achieved through working in partnership with others, and the benefits that such partnerships can bring to both police forces and academics. Naturally, we were therefore very keen to be involved in a new collaboration of police forces and universities stretching across the whole of northern England.

From a policing perspective, what would you say have been the benefits from working collaboratively with academics as part of the N8 PRP over the last 5 years?

One of the main benefits to us has been access to the Empowering Data Specialists in Policing course for analysts, which a number of GMP staff have now completed. We also received N8 PRP Small Grant funding to undertake research into policing bitcoin, which brought together experts from a variety of disciplines

and practices to explore the challenges associated with investigating and prosecuting offences surrounding the use of cryptocurrency. The annual Innovation Forum as well as other N8 PRP events have provided useful and thought-provoking networking opportunities.

Have attitudes towards the importance of research in policing changed over the last few years?

Most definitely, there is no doubt that there is a greater recognition and understanding of the importance of policing research, and the benefits of working with independent academics who provide new insights and expertise. However, we still have further work to do in embedding this approach across the police service to ensure that research and evidence are central to all the decisions we take.

At present, what do you see as the biggest challenge facing policing, and what role do you see research partnerships playing in tackling the issue?

As I write this, we are currently in the grip of a pandemic which has presented us with many operational and organisational challenges and increased demand for policing services. Some of these challenges present real opportunities which we

can learn from and develop, such as more innovative ways of working and delivering services to ensure we make the best use of our resources and technology. Research partnerships have a crucial role to play in this – particularly in terms of helping us make the best use of research, data and information to understand, manage and predict demand and deliver better outcomes for the public we serve.

What are your hopes and aspirations for the future of the N8 PRP?

As the N8 PRP moves to a co-funded model, I welcome the appointment of a Policing Co-Director, and hope that this will strengthen the links between policing partners and ensure that the partnership continues to identify research around critical policing demands and threats. I hope that the partnership continues to support forces in further building evidence based policing capability and practice, as well as contributing to the evidence base within policing at a national level. Too often, research findings gather dust or sit on a computer system. Police forces and universities have a joint responsibility to ensure that research findings add value and are put into practice.

Chris Sykes is Assistant Chief Constable with Greater Manchester Police where he has worked for the last 23 years. He has lead responsibility for Local Policing Delivery and iOPS Futures, the GMP integrated computer system.





From Evidence-Based Policing to Practice: A case study of a partnership between Merseyside Police and Lancaster University supported by the N8 PRP

Andrew Fielding

Merseyside Police knowledge hub

In 2017 Merseyside Police set up its innovative Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) Knowledge Hub forming part of the Performance Analytics and Evaluation (PAE) Team within the Corporate Support Department. Following some extensive research within the force, a growing relationship with academic partners and a national thirst for using an evidence based approach, the hub set out objectives to facilitate the growing use of EBP by creating governance to its already widening use. This allowed the force to work closer with researchers (internal or external) ensuring that any evidence arising from research addressed force risk, current force issues whilst ensuring its relevance to policing in general.

Since the introduction of a structured EBP Hub, several Police officers, support staff of differing ranks/grades and various departments have completed research to assist in solving crime, addressing vulnerability and ultimately shaping policies by connecting evidence to experience(s). The force now hold a repository of some 150 research documents, reports and theses completed by staff within Merseyside, readily available on a bespoke EBP intranet page.

In October 2019 Merseyside Police hosted an EBP event, supported by the N8 PRP, which showcased both internal and external studies and allowed staff from across the force to hear innovative work being done with the event proving a huge success.

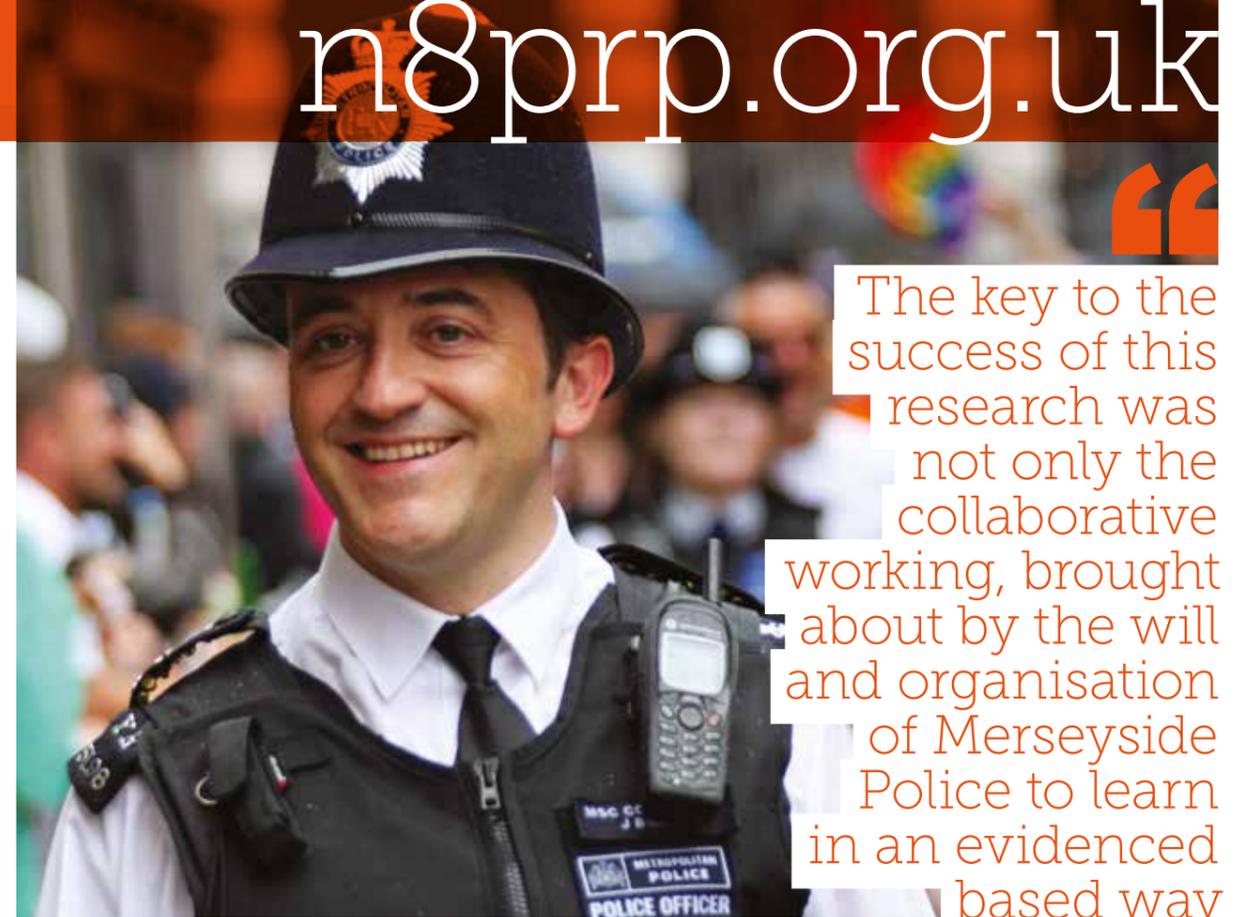
Case study N8 PRP research:

In 2016 as part of a successful N8 PRP Catalyst grant scheme, Lancaster University headed by Charlotte Barlow and Kelly Johnson began research in partnership with Merseyside Police, who provided access to thousands of domestic abuse (DA) records. The study was to determine the impact the investigation of DA cases had on the victims and to identify gaps in the process to better support the victim and assist investigations. The research used a both qualitative and quantitative approach, by assessing such records whilst also speaking to staff and victims.

The key to the success of this research was not only the collaborative working, brought about by the will and organisation of Merseyside Police to learn in an evidenced based way. This two way communication meant that the objective, to improve Polices and understanding of coercive control to improve the care for victims of domestic abuse where met.

In 2018, the results of this research were produced and the findings proved of real value to the force. The highlights were that the research quantitatively analysed Merseyside Police's domestic abuse data from January 2016-June 2017 and qualitatively analysed all coercive control cases (156) and a sample of domestic assault cases that caused actual bodily harm (102) over the same time period. Other key findings include:

- Of the 18,289 domestic abuse related crimes recorded by Merseyside Police over the 18 month time period, only 156 of these were listed as S.76 coercive control offences.
- Coercive control cases were less likely to result in an arrest and be charged comparative to ABH.
- Officers struggled to demonstrate experiences of sustained, patterned abuse within victim statements in particular. Officers tended to investigate isolated 'incidents' rather than effectively capturing a web of abuse
- Evidential opportunities were sometimes not capitalised upon by officers, such as third party witness statements, physical or digital evidence.



The key to the success of this research was not only the collaborative working, brought about by the will and organisation of Merseyside Police to learn in an evidenced based way

This research produced results that gave Merseyside Police an opportunity to further understand their responses to coercive control. As well as this and a key element to the partnership, the researchers produced a learning tool that Merseyside Police could use, which incorporated a multitude of evidence, such as victim stories, Police officer input and the figures from the research and originally designed with help from woman's aid.

In 2018, a team of officers and staff from across Merseyside Police worked to shape this learning tool into a training package for officers/staff in force. Focus groups and meetings were held to ensure the content was sufficient, using the evidence from the research. At the same time the force recognised the need for unified vulnerability training.

In 2019, a two-day learning package, encompassing Coercive Control and vulnerability was produced and after further discussion it was agreed that Lancaster University would evaluate the programme on an initial 6 month basis. The training package started in April and uniquely involved a mix of staff, 20 at a time from investigations, control room and emergency response.

The training was completed in October 2019, reaching nearly 100 staff and

delivered not only in a truly evidenced based way but specifically using feedback from victims and officers within the Merseyside community.

The initial results of the evaluation have been extremely positive. Attendees were asked to score on a scale of 1-10 the following questions on feedback sheets:

- What was your knowledge of coercive control before the vulnerability training? Average: 5.1 (out of 10)
- What was your knowledge of coercive control after completing the vulnerability training? Average: 8.9 (out of 10)
- How confident were you responding to a coercive control case before the training session? Average: 5.2 (out of 10)
- How confident were you responding to a coercive control case after the training session? 8.9 (out of 10)

From a series of focus groups; 92% felt that they had a better understanding of what to do in a coercive control case and 89% stating they better understood about signs to look for in victims and perpetrators.

Some analysis of the data has also been completed showing positive

initial findings. The number of cases recorded as coercive control significantly increased after the training for the treatment group (i.e. those who had completed the training). The volume of officers who recorded a crime as coercive control trebled compared to before they completed the training. Arrest rates for CC increased from 14%, pre training to 28% for the treatment group.

Coercive Control training has now already been included in Merseyside Police 2020/21 training schedule and the full results of the evaluation will be available within the next few weeks (delayed due to sickness and Covid-19).

This project has undoubtedly been a huge positive for not only Merseyside Police and the researcher's involved, and provides further proof that policing research is hugely beneficial in a variety of ways. The use of evidenced based research is increasing and with the help of projects and partnerships like the N8 Merseyside Police continue to develop ways of integrating this approach across the force.

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You Cannot Claim To Be Aspirational About The Future Whilst Clinging So Tightly To The Past – Valuing Those Who Value Us



Rob Ewin

Cumbria is a unique place to live, police, and foster partnerships. Its geography makes it sparsely populated in some areas, and travel distances to remote stations can create additional challenges. This is especially the case during adverse weather events where response times can be increased. The county also has a large tourism influx during the summer months, and a number of events and festivals take place which contribute to a transient but vibrant community. Like any modern policing organisation, Cumbria Constabulary invites and encourages research collaboration and opportunity and is a fully-engaged partner in the N8 PRP. We are becoming a technologically advanced policing service with the delivery of various technology projects which help bridge challenges offered by rurality. In recent years, we have held a close relationship with the University of Cumbria. Many of its graduates work within our teams, and many of our senior leaders participate within the masters programme. We also have staff working towards a PhD and a wider number increasingly benefit from the College of Policing Bursary Scheme. These activities are encouraged at a senior and local level to foster and embed research-informed activity. In Cumbria, we host a wide number of research-informed professional development opportunities, including: Research inspired CPD Events, an electronic Research Hub group, Lunchtime lectures from visiting academics, research designed events for key specialisms (i.e. research analysts, roads policing, and vulnerability) and strength-based coaching.

In Cumbria we also encourage experimental and discovery research around: Domestic Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation, Ethics, Digital Infrastructure, County Lines and contextual approaches to safeguarding.

To this end, the N8 PRP's broad priority theme of 'vulnerabilities' has been particularly well received and connects well with our own work. Within a recent project around Domestic Abuse, we recognised the challenges faced

within the competing demands on front-line supervisors to evidentially review domestic case-work. We held high conviction rates but some cases were screened out too early. Through a research inspired pilot we tested the use of one-to-one coaching with sergeants. This was to embed an evidence-led approach using the latest research. In isolating this to a number of key individuals we were able to make the work more focussed. Domestic case-load was diverted to these key decision makers and over the course of the three months the number of cases referred for prosecution increased, the number screened out without further action decreased, case quality increased, and overall service quality improved. At a similar time we conducted research in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire to understand key trends in risk. The key aspect of this, in research and policing terms, is to value the role of the 'research-broker'. It is recognised that academic work can sometimes offer a language and contextual barrier to front-line policing. To think of research only at a strategic policy level detracts from the central value that the research may have for practitioners on the ground. The 'research-broker' acts as both translator and advisor but we have found that creating opportunities for people to understand research means that we equip staff to recognise alternative evidence-bases



This may seem blue-sky but being productive and working ethically are inextricably linked and being mindless



for their vital work. This may not mean changes but being research informed can underpin working practices.

One of the other values in being a research-informed organisation is the prospect of being able to steer and contribute to research. Academic organisations like the N8 universities are rich in people with key experienced analytical skills. They also offer a great source of inspirational young people who are keen to learn and want to test their skills on data. We have hosted both law and psychology student learning experiences where they have been able to gain an insight into our work. In turn, some have used our data to construct their own research at undergraduate and master's level. In recognising this as a distinct value we want to promote future generations to become involved within our organisation. Some students have also become vetted to work with more sensitive data and have been able to contribute to our research projects with partner universities including N8 PRP supported research, such as: University of Cumbria, Lancaster University, the University of Leeds, Northumbria University and the University of Central Lancashire. It is recognised that partnerships within research

is a good thing and we have been able to draw upon the support of our academic colleagues to help critically analyse our data and problematic areas of work. At each stage there has been a focus on the front-line, and to enhance this our researchers have been speaking with officers during day, night and weekend shifts to make the research accessible to them. Our research is mostly mixed method design. Thus far, we have not explicitly relied upon the tradition or notion of evidence-based policing to understand what opportunities can come for police-researcher collaborations.

In more recent activity, we have been working on more abstract concepts, such as: productivity, ethics and values, and the psychology of mindlessness in higher volume working environments around disclosure principles. This work might appear more abstract to the front-line, or too academically focussed. However, these ideas have a policy and strategic value with hopeful outcomes being improved front-line efficiency. In a current pilot around supervisory productivity in a serious volume crime environment, we foster the idea of mindlessness, solvability and crime harm indexes to attempt to understand 'investigative-labour'.

This may seem blue-sky but being productive and working ethically are inextricably linked and being mindless to alternative aspects to situations can leave elements of the workforce somewhat stagnant in development. We involve and 'broker' research to the front-line and in any experiment we do not try to predict the outcome with traditional policing focus. Instead, we introduce the experimental phase as necessary to try and plot ideas and create learning. To this end, we hold dearly the learning from any mistakes and findings, but accept that clinging to this too tightly inhibits our overall aspirational values in doing this work. We know that academia has a lot to offer policing, and we know that policing has a lot to offer academia. Budgetary challenges make much of this work an 'in-kind' collaboration and, whilst successful in some funding, we hold value in the kindness and opportunity that is offered in our staff having exposure to evidence-led work, technology and shared front-line partnerships.

Rob Ewin is Detective Sergeant with Cumbria Police



Moving Forward With Police-Academic Partnerships

Matthew Bacon, Joanna Shapland, Layla Skinns and Adam White

Police-academic partnerships have developed significantly in scope and size over the past decade or so, spurred on by the expansion of the evidence-based policing movement, the increasing value attached to impactful research in the academy, the ascendance of the professionalisation agenda in the police, and the growing necessity of cross-sectoral collaborations under conditions of post-financial crisis austerity. This trend – largely confined to a select few countries in the Global North, in particular Australia, Belgium, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the UK and the US – has given rise to a burgeoning literature in the discipline of criminology which is concerned with charting the progress of these partnerships and setting out the ideal conditions for their future expansion. But making police-academic partnerships function effectively can be difficult, even elusive.

In a recent article published in the journal *Evidence & Policy*, 'Fragile alliances: culture, funding and sustainability in police-academic partnerships', we advance a sympathetic critique of this literature, adding a note of caution to its largely optimistic outlook. Our methodology combined a narrative review of the international literature on police-

academic partnerships with insights from elsewhere in the social sciences and observations from our experience of running the International Strand of the N8 Policing Research Partnership. Between 2015 and 2018, the Strand organised panels and workshops on police-academic partnerships at the American Society of Criminology, the European Union Agency for Law

Enforcement Training (CEPOL), the Stockholm Criminology Conference, and two international conferences at the University of Sheffield. It also facilitated two field trips: the first, to the Oregon Center for Policing Excellence and the Criminal Justice Policy Research Institute at Portland State University; and the second, to universities and police agencies in Norway and Sweden. We used these events and visits to question and corroborate our search results.

We recognise that police-academic partnerships have certainly come a long way and have the capacity to make important contributions to police work. From isolated initiatives and a climate of mutual suspicion, there has been a considerable growth in research for and with the police. However, we argue that the optimism about the development of police-academic partnerships needs to be cut with a healthy dose of caution. There should be more appreciation of the complications involved. In the

foreseeable future, these partnerships can, we suspect, only be fragile alliances. Cultural differences, unreliable funding streams, and difficulties in sustaining individual and institutional relationships across the professional divide are likely to haunt attempts at partnership working. This is especially the case for collaborative endeavours that involve both sets of actors in all stages of the research process, from formulating the problem, to designing the data collection strategy, to disseminating the results.

We do not, however, make these comments to diminish the significance of police-academic partnerships. We believe they have a positive contribution to make to the policing landscape, especially under conditions of austerity where the police are being asked to do more with less. Moreover, as we write, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic brings into sharp relief the importance of research-informed decision making and the need to come together and cooperate for the public good. For this reason, we do want to offer some suggestions from our research as to how partnerships can be nurtured moving forward. In keeping with the cautious outlook of our article, these suggestions are not based on wishful thinking. They do not involve, for instance, legislative changes to create a statutory basis and budget

for police-academic partnerships. They instead revolve around the more pragmatic and immediate process of maintaining inter-institutional relationships during those periods when the obstacles relating to culture, funding and sustainability are all in play. They include:

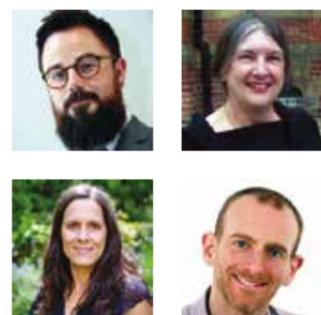
- (1) maintaining a small number of personnel in each organisation who take responsibility for responding to requests for research;
- (2) tasking a small number of personnel in each organisation with communicating a profile of new research and findings to senior staff and frontline practitioners;
- (3) bringing together key individuals at regular intervals to exchange ideas;
- (4) scoping new opportunities for acquiring resources to undertake research; and
- (5) committing to implement those initiatives which research and evaluation have shown to be beneficial, even if they are no longer the highest priority to senior management.

These suggestions thus involve achievable measures for smoothing over the rough patches when there is cultural dissonance, funding is sparse and key personnel are moving on. In this way, police and academics

can be more prepared for those important moments when culture, funding and elite interests do line up.

While these pragmatic measures may help police-academic partnerships keep going during difficult periods, we want to end by emphasising that a degree of fragility is by no means a bad thing because it helps to protect the integrity of the two professions. Cultural differences need to exist so as to prevent the blurring of occupational boundaries. If research does become too closely tied to the organisational interests of the police it runs the risk of losing its critical edge and becoming preoccupied with 'what works' rather than 'what matters' in policing.

Dr Matthew Bacon is a Lecturer in Criminology, Dr Joanna Shapland is Edward Bramley Professor of Criminal Justice, Dr Layla Skinns is Reader in Criminology and Dr Adam White is Senior Lecturer in Criminology. They are all in the School of Law at the University of Sheffield and comprised the team leading the International Strand of the N8 PRP.



We recognise that police-academic partnerships have certainly come a long way and have the capacity to make important contributions to police work





Co-Production In Crisis? Shared Challenges For Policing And Academia

Liz Aston

Co-production in policing and its challenges

In a similar vein to other policing research partnerships – like the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) – the N8PRP aims to foster high quality independent research and facilitate research-based contributions to policing policy and practice. Furthermore, the N8PRP admirably includes facilitating public debate as an aim, and overtly aspires towards co-production. Indeed the ‘small grants’ scheme has delivered co-production by funding teams of academics and practitioners to work together to develop policing research and knowledge. That said, challenges to both meaningful public engagement and co-production have been identified (Crawford, 2020), such as timescales and perceptions from policing partners of the partnership being academically driven. As Martin and Wooff (2018) argue the reality of these partnerships, at least in Scotland, is closer to collaboration than co-production.

Coronavirus: what role do Policing Research Partnerships have in a crisis?

Policing research partnerships certainly have an important role to play in bringing together practitioners and academics, and enhancing understanding and engagement. In addition to building relationships, having a formal infrastructure to underpin partnerships means that they are well placed to collaborate and be responsive during a crisis like a global pandemic.

COVID-19 has caused a huge societal shift and impacted everyone in many different ways: from concerns about our health and the wellbeing of others, to juggling caring responsibilities for example. The police have been under pressure given their role in enforcing emergency public health legislation. One of my first thoughts as SIPR Director was ‘how can we best support police during the current crisis?’ However, it is also an important time for academics to provide scrutiny of expanded police powers. So how can policing research partnerships best facilitate both constructive and critical input on key policing issues?

On the most basic level perhaps ‘support’ could involve removing non-essential requests to policing organisations related to data collection, knowledge exchange and impact. It can also involve drawing together rapid research evidence reviews on topics of relevance to policing pandemics (e.g. Collier et al., 2020). This may also be a way for research evidence to feed into policy and practice at a time when much anticipated knowledge exchange and impact activity will have been put on hold. Established links with academics through policing research partnerships can also be used to support new oversight mechanisms (e.g. the Independent Advisory Group in Scotland). Blogs, social media and international academic networks can be used to exchange ideas on policing of lockdowns globally.

What are some of the challenges we are currently facing?

As a policing researcher I am often struck by the fact that as academics we spend time analysing policing and making recommendations for improvements to policy and practice, but when we actually take a good look at own institutions we realise that we share similar challenges – and academia does not have all the answers. Here I briefly consider the role of policing research partnerships in the context of some recent societal challenges.

Physical distancing: Policing organisations have increasingly been dealing with matters remotely via telephone, or encouraging online reporting. However, we do not know enough about the impact of increasingly technologically-mediated contact (Wells et al. 2020) on police legitimacy. In a similar vein academics are increasingly teaching and supporting students online and we expect to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. We know that sustained routine interactions are important (Nutley et al. 2007) in relation to research evidence shaping policy and practice, so how do we keep policing and academic communities engaged and having those sustained routine interactions virtually during this time? Whilst webinars provide an opportunity to expand ones audience internationally, online events do not provide the same opportunity as face-to-face events for bringing police and academics together for the first time. However,



policing research partnerships may be able to build on existing links to facilitate online discussions on research gaps and engage in co-production.

Diversity: Policing research partnerships are well placed to consider global responses to police violence, racism, and implications such as calls to ‘de-fund’ the police. When it comes to increasing diversity and actively being anti-racist, again shared challenges are faced in policing and academia. It also raises a question regarding what role policing research partnerships have. Particularly if the mission includes public engagement, in addition to increasing research capacity, fostering knowledge exchange and evidence informed policy and practice, is there also an expectation of speaking out on key societal challenges and being ‘scientifically’-led? This poses a challenge as science is neither neutral, objective nor ‘a-political’. Perhaps we have a duty to acknowledge that knowledge is socially and culturally produced when we share evidence. We should also collectively consider new steps to challenge systemic racism and improve BAME diversity in policing, academia and policing research partnerships.

Austerity: The resultant financial crisis will impact further on public services, police and universities. In

an increasingly pressured financial situation it is important not to move into siloed working and withdraw collaboration at a time when it is most needed. Indeed austerity can result in assistance with knowledge production being seen as being mutually attractive (Crawford 2020). Coming together to share information, evidence and shape policy and practice becomes increasingly important, but partnerships may be on shaky ground financially. Drawing on their work for the International Strand of the N8 PRP (and summarised in this Report, p. 20-21), Bacon, Shapland, Skinns and White (2020) have discussed how these alliances are ‘fragile’. However, this may be a positive in terms of maintaining independence and a healthy critical distance which would arguably be difficult to sustain if true co-production were reached. Furthermore, societal challenges may provide opportunities to reflect on and push for change in the criminal justice system. It would be a shame to let a good crisis go to waste.

Dr Liz Aston is Director of the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) and Associate Professor of Criminology at Edinburgh Napier University. She is a member of the N8 PRP Advisory Board.



COVID-19 has caused a huge societal shift and impacted everyone in many different ways: from concerns about our health and the wellbeing of others

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Forty Years Of Conducting Research For, And With, The Police – Confessions By An Early Police Researcher

Johannes Knutsson

Johannes Knutsson reflects on his personal and the wider intellectual and institutional journey that applied police research has taken over his career...

I belonged to the first cohort studying criminology at Stockholm University in the late 1960s. However, I soon grew to be uneasy since I could not discern the utility of the “radical” and “critical” criminology dominating Swedish academia during this era. Virtually nothing about police or policing was taught; one reason was the lack of such studies. When asked by the police in the mid-1970s to conduct studies on commission basis, I accepted. However, the sceptical attitude of my university colleagues motivated me to affiliate with the police, and distance myself from the university. It did not help that, in the early 1980s, I conducted studies confirming the soundness of situational crime prevention.

The police furnished me with an office at police headquarters, and for decades I have been one of the very few researchers in Scandinavia who has carried out research for and with the police. To get first-hand knowledge I spent long hours observing the police performing the various activities under study. And, of course, I learned a lot in more or less formal interviews and conversations with the officers – some of which became my friends.

The police gave me free access to the organization and its data. Over time, conditions for research changed. Initially, since this was something new, there were no regulations, and decisions about studies, how they could be set up, and the data needed were mostly made in an informal way. In fact, during the years I have occasionally ended up with data I formally should not have been given access to. By contrast, today research is strictly regulated where approval from an ethical board is a requirement to commence a study. The “wild west”-situation in the past saved a lot of time and red-tape. However, most, but not all projects could probably have been carried out even with present standard.

To begin with I was heavily influenced by the early studies from the US Police Foundation; along with other studies that questioned the “professional” model of policing. I still hold the Kansas City Preventive Patrol as one of the most important police studies. I soon became involved in the teaching of middle-rank leaders, and those in careers to become Commissioners. To acquire basic facts, I conducted a couple of studies on uniformed policing and the clearing up of crimes.

Given the dearth of empirical studies, even rather unassuming descriptive studies were helpful. A challenge has been to present useful, and for the police understandable studies that also were accepted as sound by academia. My first reports for the police were part of my dissertation, and in that sense were of sufficient standard.

Already as a university student I was interested in evaluation studies, and have been involved in about a dozen for the police. Two were unplanned. In one case results from a study motivated the introduction of preventive measures, and one way of checking their effectiveness was to make a follow-up study employing the same procedures for data collecting. In the other a unit had already planned an intervention that I did not know of. Thus, it was a matter of gathering post intervention data. My free hands made it possible to exploit the appearing opportunities.

My posture to evaluations has changed from distant observer approach to an openness for an action research model. The clearest example was supporting a police district in carrying out a full-blown problem-oriented policing project to demonstrate the effectiveness of the philosophy. Since mid-2000s, I have been a Herman Goldstein Award judge, and have examined a couple of hundred submissions. During the



The police furnished me with an office at police headquarters, and for decades I have been one of the very few researchers in Scandinavia who has carried out research for and with the police



last ten years or so, the number of thoroughly executed projects have increased markedly. A common denominator is participation of academically trained analysts.

As for impact, I have one strong case. In Norway, the police are trained in the use of firearms but, as a general rule, do not have immediate access, as the Swedish police. Normally in Norway, the firearms are stored in police cars. Police use of firearms was compared in an empirical study, showing less use in Norway with fewer injured and killed persons, and no indication of adverse consequences for the Norwegian officers. The comparison was widened in a new study by including the other Nordic countries, and later on followed up with an edited book of police use of force in international perspective. Since there regularly have been debates whether the Norwegian police should shift policy, these studies have contributed with basic facts.

Consistently, based on the available evidence, I have argued for keeping the Norwegian policy. High officials have stated that without these studies, the Norwegian police would now carry firearms as a matter of routine.

To support the police research community and practitioners dedicated to improve policing, I have organised and edited a number of edited volumes with contributions of leading experts. The last two have dealt with meta-issues. The title of the second last edited collection is telling in itself: Applied Police Research – challenges and opportunities. The last volume – Advances in Evidence Based Policing – was motivated by a wish to advance and develop the evidence concept itself. It sought to explore a more inclusive understanding of evidence that informs evidence based policing and includes reflections on the work and contribution of the N8 Policing Research Partnership. RCTs are simply

far too restrictive as an evidence base. Essential undertakings are how to assess the validity of experiential knowledge, and how to infuse useful research knowledge into policing. This takes a partnership between police and academia where the parties understand and respect each other's preconditions. And to stimulate such collaborations is one core idea of the N8 PRP project.

Johannes Knutsson is professor emeritus, Norwegian Police University College. He has held positions as researcher at the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, the Swedish Police Academy, the Swedish National Police Board, and the Norwegian Police University College where he was appointed Professor of Police Research in 1998.



Digital transformation is not only about new technologies and ways of working, it is also about forces changing the relationship they have with their data



Reflecting on the Role of Data Specialists in Policing

Fiona McLaughlin

In 2019, the N8 Policing Research Partnership's Training and Learning and Data Analytics strands delivered a second round of their innovative continuing professional development programme "Empowering Data Specialists in Policing". This inter-disciplinary endeavour has involved academics and practitioners from universities and police forces across the north of England co-producing the programme with a view to refresh quantitative research skills, introduce data science skills, and demonstrate practical applications of research to police analysts. The programme delivered eight days of training to 45 participants, over a period of eight months.

Are the Days of the Analyst Numbered?

Back in 2015, when the Catalyst Grant of the N8 PRP project began, I was alarmed to hear reports that the days

of the police analyst were numbered. Austerity was driving forces to search for ever greater savings in their staff budgets and the idea that teams of analysts could be replaced by a

single data scientist was a seductive proposition. Thankfully, five years on, this dispiriting scenario has failed to materialise and there are encouraging signs that police analysts are once again being valued and are recognised as part of the solution. This matters to me because having worked as an analyst in policing and community safety settings for almost 20 years, I know the contribution that analysts have to offer. So why did analysts become easy pickings during austerity?

Constrained by Expectation

Analysts occupy difficult territory; their status within a hierarchical organisation is unclear. They are simultaneously the data expert advising

managers and informing decision making on the front line and the data minion providing numbers and reports because it has always been done that way. Although analysts are very much part of service delivery, they do not wear a uniform, do not (usually) attend incidents and are most often found behind the scenes. Being out of sight often means the contribution made by analysts is not fully recognised and it becomes hard for them to break free from the expectation that they are there to 'Find me the data that shows...'. This is a vicious circle; analysts become adept at finding the data, this pleases whoever has requested the data, the analysts feels rewarded by a job well done, more data are requested and the cycle repeats itself, but finding data is not analysis and over time the role of analyst becomes devalued.

What the National Intelligence Model did for the Analyst

The National Intelligence Model (NIM) was developed as a business process model for intelligence led policing. The model, backed by a code of practice created common standards, setting out a clear framework where analysis of information and intelligence would drive policing activity through tasking and co-ordination. The NIM formalised four 'Intelligence Products' backed by a toolkit of nine analytical practices. Furthermore, the NIM recognised people as assets with essential roles (including analysts) having formally agreed competencies and occupational standards.

While the NIM placed analysis and analysts at the core of its business model, the practical response relied upon templated assessments to service meetings and analysis fell into the trap of being a description of the 'who, what, when, where and how?' of the problem, at best offering limited insight into causation, the 'why?' Analysis had become a data-led narrative rather than a process of data-driven challenge.

Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is not only about new technologies and ways of working, it is also about forces changing the relationship they have with their data. Historically, data have been collected in siloes with little consideration of the practicalities of making high quality data available for analysis or the time spent by analysts in making data fit for purpose. While tools such as self-service analytics allow analysts to break away from being data providers, simply introducing modern tools using traditional data models is not enough and there is still much work to be done on improving data quality. Self-service analytics may allow many more users to explore data but the output lacks the context and situational awareness that an analyst can provide, with manual coding needed to answer many of the questions of most pressing concerns, these technologies support but do not replace analysts.

Machine learning can automate and bring speed and precision to repetitive tasks, with predictive policing tools capable of identifying trends and patterns in a fraction of the time that it would take an analyst to complete manually. However, while technology automates existing processes, it learns from input. Algorithms can be highly sophisticated but they cannot cover every eventuality. A predictive policing model may include parameters for time, place, vulnerability and opportunity but not be sensitive to unexpected changes in the same way that an analyst is.

What Happens When Society Changes?

When crime patterns change overnight the analyst can react in a way that is beyond the present capabilities of artificial intelligence. The policing implications of the social distancing measures introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic being a case in point. Using a combination of critical and strategic thinking the analyst

can synthesize the new information, assess how the reduced movements of people will instantly reduce the opportunity for many acquisitive crimes, while simultaneously increasing the risk of violence and abuse within the home. Meanwhile a predictive policing algorithm is less flexible, it will take time for the software to learn the new normal and adapt and change assessments to include these new parameters.

The Rise of Data Specialists in Policing

Having a long history of extensive and expansive data collection policing organisations are data rich and the technologies and techniques of big data, machine learning and predictive analytics are becoming more accessible. Despite these advantages, forces often struggle to turn their data into information that can be used to make practical differences to the public. Enabling police forces to harness the full potential of data analytics applications provides an opportunity for analysts to re-emerge from the behind the scenes and become Data Specialists in Policing.

Fiona McLaughlin is N8 PRP Research Officer based in the School of Law at University of Leeds working on the Data Analytics Strand of the Catalyst Grant. Together with Dr Jude Towers and colleagues she co-designed and delivered the N8 PRP Data Analysts CPD programme. In 2020, they were the recipients of an award for Excellence in Analysis by the International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts (IALEA) for their work.



Training and Learning – a review

Jude Towers

The focus of the Training and Learning strand of the N8 PRP in 2019 – 2020, in collaboration with the Data Analytics strand, has been to focus on the second cohort of the CPD programme for police analysts. Taking the learning from the pilot year, the programme was further developed into an eight-module programme and successfully delivered to a larger than anticipated cohort of 40 analysts, predominantly from the N8 PRP police forces, but also from Fire and Rescue and local government.

The modules explored a wide range of traditional and emerging topics, including: defining the role of the data specialist; POP; visualisation; modelling; ethics and data management; and predictive policing. With discussions continuing about the importance of the analyst role in evidence-informed policing; and how the continued support, development and promotion of the value of analysts as central 'change-agents' in the developing evidence-informed agenda across the public sector.

Emerging from the programme a self-organising network group – 'Northern Analysts Group' (NAG) – has been established. At the first meeting in February 2020, NAG stated: "Following the 2019 N8 'Empowering Data Specialists in Policing' CPD events, a number of attendees spoke of the unexpected benefits of meeting up with fellow analysts from other police forces and disciplines. Some academics and presenters from N8 and supporting universities have also voiced the benefits of meeting with practitioners. Lancashire Police and South Yorkshire Police, along with Leeds University and

Edge Hill University, have decided to pilot what has become known as the NAG; the Northern Analysts Group. The intention is that this relatively informal and 'relaxed' body enables some sharing of research and best practice, as well as offering some get-togethers and maybe training in time. It is not the intention to create an administrative monster, nor an unwieldy organisation, but rather a forum to support analysts from across the N8 region."

In other good news, the N8 PRP CPD programme was nominated and won international recognition: Dr Jude Towers and Fiona McLaughlin were both awarded individual prizes for Excellence in Analysis 2020, from the International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligent Analysts for their work in developing and delivering the programme.

The final period of Training and Learning activity under the Catalyst grant will see the design and delivery of a workshop on policing people trafficking and Vietnamese OCGs to be held in Liverpool. There is also a specialist workshop with a subset

of police analysts from the CPD programme, who will work with Dr Nick Malleson and Dr Dan Birks from the University of Leeds to 'real time' solve policing problems using machine learning techniques.

Training and Learning activities continue across the N8 PRP with funding available for the co-ordination of small events, more information can be accessed on the project website – <https://n8prp.org.uk/training-and-learning/>

Dr Jude Towers is Senior Lecturer in Policing Studies at Liverpool John Moores University. Until 2018, she was a lecturer in the Sociology Department at Lancaster University where she took on the lead for the Training and Learning strand of N8 PRP which she has continued to lead on since moving institutions.



N8 PRP CPD programme was nominated and won international recognition: Dr Jude Towers and Fiona McLaughlin were both awarded individual prizes for Excellence in Analysis 2020, from the International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligent Analysts for their work in developing and delivering the programme



Why the Programme for 'Data Specialists in Policing' is more important now than ever.



Scott Keay

The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programme for 'Data Specialists in Policing' (police analysts) designed and delivered by the N8 PRP has now completed two full cohorts: in 2018 and in 2019. Both can be considered as hugely successful. Perhaps for the first time for many of the participants, police analysts have been exposed to a series of modules that expanded their knowledge and tested their existing skill sets. Even now, the substance of training and level of investment for analysts is a mixed picture across the UK. The N8 PRP's pioneering CPD programme has been a welcome addition to those luckily enough to attend, particularly as many forces are now requesting analysts to work in new areas such as data visualisation, the analysis of 'big data' and the use of algorithms. All of these topics were covered across the CPD programme.

The Data Specialists in Policing programme was a series of modules, designed and delivered in the most part by Dr Jude Towers and Fiona McLaughlin. The programme has been co-produced with input and feedback from practitioners and academics to provide core ideas, training, research and data tips to improve the assimilation of rigorous scientific and academic research into policing, whilst also improving the analyst role; including skills and knowledge to meet the challenges of new and changing technologies. The programme took analysts into new territory and examined a number of interconnected topics that covered traditional crime analysis through to data science. The programme built up over the sessions and rather than be run as a full-time two-week course, the sessions were split over the year to ease abstractions

from the workplace. This allowed participants the chance to return to their organisation and apply new ideas and then return the following month to the next CPD session and discuss their progress. A significant difference with this series of CPD events is that it was delivered by academics, practitioners and industry leaders. This collaboration allowed the discussions and material to consider themes and issues related to intelligence and crime analysis but may not have been previously considered.

Appropriately, both Jude and Fiona were recipients of the 2020 International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts (IALEIA) 'excellence in analysis' award for delivering the CPD programme. It was a fitting tribute to the two of them and the N8 PRP for its vision, persistence and dedication over 3

years to design, develop and run the programme. The CPD programme is currently being revised to be delivered in late 2020 in a blended learning format that is more conducive to the current work environment and context in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Why was this programme important for analysts?

It is fair to say that the analyst role has evolved considerably since the National Intelligence Model (NIM) placed the role centre stage in intelligence analysis back in 2000. In the last couple of years UK police forces have been emerging from a backdrop of austerity. During austerity the analyst role had been significantly cut and this was an issue that bothered me enough to publish an article entitled 'Police Analyst and the Influence of Evidence-Based Policing' (by Keay and Kirby, 2018) in *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*. With evidence-based policing (EBP) gaining traction, it was clear that there was a gap in analyst skill sets, particularly around scientific research and analytical methods. Many forces had started working in collaboration with academic institutions to conduct more objective and scientific research. For example, Lancashire Constabulary worked successfully with Leeds University on a machine-learning project to identify hate speech on Twitter. This exposed analysts to new ways of working and developing important intelligence to prevent hate crime. In return, the researchers at Leeds University were afforded the



exposed analysts to new ways of working and developing important intelligence to prevent hate crime



opportunity at working directly within 'industry'. This work was showcased, along with similar projects, during the programme to demonstrate what can be achieved when analysts go beyond the traditional NIM role description. The use of big data, machine learning and algorithms is changing the very nature of established intelligence protocols and policing procedures and it is essential that analysts are trained and supported in keeping up to date with cutting edge technological change. The N8 PRP's CPD programme has been a significant and welcome step in this direction.

My own career shift and support for EBP and the analyst role

On a personal note, I spent 20 years with Lancashire Constabulary in a variety of police analyst roles. During that journey I learned an

awful lot of policing research and analysis. This also led me to work with the N8 partnership and Jude and Fiona. I would love to see this CPD programme continue to run. I believe that the programme provides an excellent foundation for further analyst development and potential courses in key topic areas. Working in collaboration with academic institutions is providing police forces the opportunity to improve its own research. This has also seen me recently move across from policing into academia where I teach EBP, problem-oriented policing (POP) and 'information and intelligence'. I am still committed to positively influencing the development, growth and training of analysts. It is a role that is essential to crime and intelligence analysis and one that still has a huge future ahead of it.

Scott Keay is a Senior Lecturer and Researcher in Policing at Edge Hill University. He worked for Lancashire Constabulary for almost 20 years in various analytical positions including; Criminal Intelligence Analyst, Senior Community Safety and Partnership Intelligence Analyst and Data Analysis and Insight Manager. He was involved in the development of crime analysis through a series of CPD events funded by the N8 PRP and his work in developing crime analysis with the N8 PRP led to being the recipient of the 2018 IALEIA Service Award for "outstanding contribution as a supervisor to the achievement of law enforcement objectives".



Unlike many internal CPD sessions the programme utilised a wealth of presenters, many of whom are senior lecturers of the N8 group of universities



Practitioners' Experience of the 'Empowering Data Specialists in Policing' Course

Andrew White

Through the eyes and experiences of a practitioner, attending the N8 PRP-derived 'Empowering Data Specialists in Policing' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) course has been incredibly worthwhile. The course embarked by taking participants back to basics; why analysis matters, challenging biases, identifying bad habits and practices. This was complemented by reiterating the proven and evidence-based worth of the intelligence analysis within a police setting. Steadily throughout the well-considered programme the participants were exposed to new technologies and methodologies, concluding with sessions on machine learning, algorithmic applications and the correct uses of 'big data'. Ideally, and regardless of experience, analytical discipline (whether that be more intelligence, partnership, performance or statistical) or length of service, I feel all intelligence analysts would benefit greatly from attending such a structured programme of learning.

through exposure to new techniques, systems software and mind-sets. I strongly feel that the N8 region will now be in a much stronger position by having colleagues who have attended the CPD course and I have no doubt that their work will continue to benefit policing for a considerable time. By empowering analysts in the way that has been enabled, the whole analytical profession within policing and intelligence may find itself elevated.

Andrew Wright is a Strategic Road Safety Partnership Analyst at Lancashire Constabulary

Unlike many internal CPD sessions the programme utilised a wealth of presenters, many of whom are senior lecturers of the N8 group of universities, to ensure the course content was robust, soundly evidence-based and current. Course delivery by such notable figures has undoubtedly increased the credibility of the course and widened the peripheral visions of those attending.

The corraling of such a broad range of analysts from across the region was also an appreciated by-product of the sessions; in times of shrinking budgets and teams it has become increasingly difficult and rare to share and discuss our works; the benefit of informal face-to-face workshops

was noted by many attendees. From this, and with the support of Fiona McLaughlin and Jude Towers, a small group of participants of the CPD course have drafted the concept of a 'N8 PRP Networking Group'. It is hoped that the introductions made, and the momentum which was built, during the CPD sessions will continue both virtually and also in person.

To conclude; irrespective of experience within analysis and exposure to methods, systems and products, the 'Empowering Data Specialists in Policing' CPD course benefited all. Younger in service analysts were exposed to what really can be achieved and produced whilst some more seasoned attendees were reinvigorated



Practitioners' Experience of the 'Empowering Data Specialists in Policing' Course

Northern Analysis Group

I found the N8 PRP Continuing Professional Development programme for data analysts to be a useful insight into the different approaches that can be taken to problems that affect other forces as well as our own. Interacting with data analysts from other forces helped me to understand the similar techniques we share, as well as differences, and how there are common issues across them all. It was also good to understand the different structures of other forces, whether their analysts are centralised or disbursed across their force area.

The variety in modules gave a good taster for each topic and modules that included a practical element made initial discussions with other analysts easier.

The module on Algorithmic Decision Making gave a good introduction to how we can use technology to get more value out of large data. It is

something that obviously needs to be embraced as the world changes at an accelerating pace. It is insufficient to keep using the same techniques over and over with the expectation of them working on new and changing datasets. There is definitely reluctance with regards to change but it is not something we can ignore as a force.

Problem Orientated Policing is something that is POP-ular (pun intended) in our police force at the moment and the module was a useful refresher for techniques and considerations when faced with chronic problem areas that don't seem to be getting any better. It's one of those topics that, when presented to you, it seems obvious, but you might not have thought about it on your own.

Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the module on 'visualisation using R', but the links on the n8dads.org.uk website allowed me to have a go in my own time. I think that some of my colleagues found the programming aspects of some of the modules daunting, but when they saw what the application of the programs could achieve, they were more interested. The algorithms that looked at Tweets could have really useful applications for our work as a lot of time is wasted manually going through free text fields of crimes and incidents because we don't currently have any other way of doing it.

The speakers for each of the modules were very knowledgeable and the events themselves were well put together. I've recommended the

programme to other analysts at GMP because I think it's really beneficial and interesting, whether someone is a new analyst or has been here for a while.

This article was provided by a member of the new 'Northern Analysts Group', a self-organising network group that was formed as a result of the 'Empowering Data Specialists in Policing' course.



Problem Orientated Policing is something that is POP-ular





The N8 Policing Research Partnership: Examining the First Four Years

Tiggey May, Richard Sen and Mike Hough

As part of the N8 Policing Research Partnership (N8 PRP), York University, the evaluators of the overall programme, commissioned Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR) at Birkbeck College, London to undertake a six month evaluation focusing on police officer/staff use of research, their views of the value and usefulness of research evidence, the reach and impact of the partnership, and the challenges it faces. The evaluation covered the partnership's first four years.

Aims of the evaluation

Our six-month evaluation was conducted alongside the N8 internal evaluation but independent of it. Its aims were to:

- Examine the effectiveness of the N8 PRP model for delivering and embedding evidence within the 11 N8 PRP police forces;
- Examine the perceived impact of involvement in an N8 PRP research partnership
- Examine the challenges experienced during the first four years
- Conduct an on-line survey to examine the use of N8 research products; and
- Examine interviewees' thoughts on what the future direction and priorities for the N8 PRP should be.

Methods

The evaluation was conducted over a six-month period during 2019. Methods comprised of 20 in-depth qualitative interviews with senior police officers, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and

national policy leads, all of whom were knowledgeable about the N8 PRP and evidence-based policing (EBP). We also undertook a survey of staff in the N8 PRP police forces. The qualitative interviews aimed to evaluate the benefits and challenges of the first four years of the N8 PRP from the perspective of regional and national policing experts. The survey was designed to assess uses made of N8 PRP products and to see how the partnership was seen by police officers and other staff. In addition, we mapped the 'products' of the N8 PRP. Police officers and other staff were encouraged to participate, but take-up was disappointing, and only 151 respondents completed the survey.

Awareness and impact of the N8 PRP

Several interviewees thought that it was "just too early" to measure the impact of the programme, these findings are consistent with research which evaluated the College of Policing's "What Works" programme conducted by Hunter et al (2017, 2019). Whilst making research evidence available to the

police is straightforward, embedding its use within the fabric of police decision-making is a more ambitious and long-term agenda. Whilst the survey suggested that awareness of the N8 PRP was low amongst junior ranks, with only 35% being aware of it, those interviewed in depth highlighted that the idea of embedding evidence within policing is a generational project. As one interviewee stated:

No amount of anything is going to change police culture in the three years that N8 has been operating. It would be unrealistic to expect, even with an investment of £7m or even £27m, a change in police culture. It is going to take a long time. [Interviewee 06]

Interviewees highlighted the difficulties of embedding evidence into the fabric of the police service and the



The N8 is an example of genuine co-production between the police and academics

organisational culture of all ranks of police officers and staff. Acceptance of EBP will remain fragile so long as it is promoted and spearheaded by individual evidence enthusiasts. The survey did find generally positive attitudes toward the principles of EBP. Fifty-seven per cent said that research had affected their working practices, with almost all senior officers and civilian staff agreeing that collaboration between police and academics was vital to enhance greater use of research evidence. However, respondents were pessimistic about levels of organisational support for EBP: almost two-thirds of respondents believed there were no organisational emphasis on the use of research in decision-making, and 57% thought there was a general lack of understanding in their organisation about the relevance of research evidence to everyday policing. The overall sense from the survey was that evidence enthusiasts are champing at the bit to move their force onward towards EBP but felt that organisationally there is still a long way to go. This pattern was consistent across ranks.

A consistent theme from the in-depth interviews was that the initial funding period needed to be about laying the structural foundations through the N8 PRP Steering Group and forming local partnerships through research and training activities. Most interviewees agreed that to ensure sustainability a coherent and workable regional structure needed to be in place to enable co-production and use of evidence by police and academics:

The N8 is an example of genuine co-production between the police and academics, it's far too soon to talk about realising benefits... N8 is probably the best example of a major funding programme to particularly facilitate the relationship between academics and the police... I think the police attitude to research has changed dramatically...

I think the approach N8 takes and the funding for the small projects and what they've managed to produce has been absolutely excellent. [Interviewee 06]

The benefits of N8 PRP engagement

The in-depth interviews identified the perceived benefits of the N8 PRP, which included the advantages of working in partnership, the small grant projects, being part of the decision making process regarding funding allocation, PhD and career development opportunities, establishing relationships beyond the work of the N8 PRP, being part of innovative research projects and attending forums. Some were very positive indeed, referring to the ways in which collaboration provided practical benefits as well as opportunities for staff development.

The future

A significant theme to emerge from the evaluation was the need to plan and resource the implementation of research recommendations. Several interviewees suggested that police and academics need to work better together to implement research recommendations. For example:

I saw a lot of output [from the N8 PRP], but I didn't see a lot of implementation... I didn't see, this is an initiative, the collaboration found this, and it's been implemented across these number of police forces with this level of impact. I never saw that. I saw a lot of good things, I listened to a lot of good discussions, a lot of interesting discussions, but I never saw the impact [Interviewee 05].

Interviewees were unanimous in their view that the N8 PRP should continue to promote, enable, and provide a regional structure for the co-production of police academic knowledge. All agreed that sustaining

and supporting the N8 PRP was important for both the region's police forces and academics. However, most said that the continuation of the N8 PRP will require several things to happen: the necessary funding being available: EBP being fully embedded into the organisational fabric of forces; and senior police officers and PCCs being able to see an organisational benefit to being part of the partnership. For example:

Evidence based policing needs to become a part of the overall cardiovascular system of policing, don't strip it out. [Interviewee 13]

To combine the knowledge of the police with the intellectual academic firepower that N8 has available to it would be formidable [Interviewee 04]

In conclusion

Interviewees were unequivocal in their support for the continuation of the N8 PRP; all were largely impressed with the distance travelled by the partnership in its first four years. Many interviewees discussed the teething problems the partnership had experienced, as well as the accomplishments. Moving forward interviewees want the partnership to evolve, from one that produces research to one that commits to assisting the police to embed evidence and implement recommendations. There was a consensus that the police need to start seeing the tangible benefits from their partnerships with academics.

Tiggey May is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research, Birkbeck, School of Law, University of London, where Richard Sen is a Research Assistant and Professor Mike Hough is Emeritus Professor



N8 PRP demonstrates, there is huge potential for co-production of knowledge

Police/Academic Perspectives on Evidence: Implications for Co-Production

Mike Rowe, Pam Davies, Donna Marie Brown and Paul Biddle

In our recent paper 'Understanding the status of evidence in policing research' published in *Policing & Society* (Davies et al., 2020), we reflect on the quality and status of research evidence in policing through a focus on innovations in policing domestic abuse as examined in three English police services (Northumbria, North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire).

The discussion follows from a research project we conducted with support from the N8 PRP Small Grants Scheme between 2017-18. We make these observations in the broader context of police professionalism and the growing number of large-scale regional police-academic collaborations across the UK which are a part of this shift. These developments reflect an international context in which Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) is shaping approaches to training and operational work. Our article provides insights of significance to these wider shifts in policing. First, we make some observations about the key bodies involved in the professionalisation of policing. We then provide an overview of our own study that sought to understand success and to build capacity in relation to innovations in policing domestic abuse. This includes a description of how we operationalised the research, focusing on an innovative practice in each of the police service areas. Next, we reflect upon understanding success in the context of policing domestic abuse. Our main argument is that police staff and academic researchers do not always share the same conceptualisations of what constitutes 'evidence' and 'research'.

These perspectives are not necessarily contradictory or non-reconcilable and they can be explained by different institutional cultures and practices. It is important, though, to recognise, acknowledge, account for and perhaps reconcile these differences as academic researchers engaged in the expanding field of policing studies and in the move towards co-production of research.

A central objective of the project was to help transfer innovative practice around domestic abuse as well as, more broadly, to provide police and academic researchers with greater understanding of the mechanisms and contexts shaping successful changes in operational practice. Prior to our research, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary reports in 2014 and 2015) had provided indications of the limitations of the police service response to victims of domestic abuse at the same time as they had highlighted pockets of successful practice. The same HMIC reports provide short descriptions of innovations in policy and practice for tackling domestic abuse in several forces. Within the N8 PRP area alone,

police services had (among other things) created specialist posts and new training packages; piloted Domestic Violence Protection Orders; led on Domestic Violence Disclosures; and introduced multi-agency teams, school liaison officers, and victim advocates. The aim of our project was to uncover the factors that explain the success of the initiatives identified. We worked in collaboration with police staff from three police forces. Our intention was to identify core conditions for success that could be transferred to other police services and areas of innovation.

We found key differences in how understanding and conceptions of 'evidence' varied between academic and police partners; these differences reflected organisational and working cultures and traditions. For more effective co-production of research – of the sort advocated through the N8 PRP – these contrasting definitions need to be better acknowledged and understood. Some of these are articulated below. In practice, our research found that each project was underpinned by some professional knowledge and evidence but that the nature of this was considerably adrift from most social science standards of research methodology notably the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale advanced by some proponents of EBP.

In each of the three innovations we examined, practice was originally derived from the basis of evidence that referred to internal police data. External

scientific research did not feature as the root of these innovative practices and so there was a limited evidential base. None was based on large scale, multi-site research but more typically based on routine performance data. In one police service area, for example, the project to deploy a 'DA Car' had been developed following analysis of police statistics, such that the car was deployed in relation to 'hot spots' and 'hot times' apparent from operational data on cases reported. Equally, the 'success' of the intervention was judged in terms of the amount of cases responded to, and victim satisfaction with the response provided. This is a relatively modest research base, and our interviews showed that what constitutes research evidence varied among officers, staff and us as researchers. For some it is professional insight and/or expertise, for others it is rigorous evaluation demonstrating particular effects. Often it was implied that the evidential basis of the work stemmed from the insight of local police leaders who had instigated the work, implicitly privileging their professional expertise. In a deferential and hierarchical environment, the experiential perspective of senior leaders was regarded by subordinates as a sufficient evidential basis.

What was apparent from our study was that 'good research' and 'robust evidence' were understood only through negotiated agreement, there was not an inherent shared understanding of what such terms mean. This suggests a further challenge in the development of cross-sector partnerships that can engage in the co-production of knowledge. Academic researchers and police colleagues are hampered by different expectations, organisation, and cultural practices. Our reflections suggest that when pushed police who are engaged as respondents in research and evaluations of initiatives, will interpret robust research as research which is akin to what they typically understand as evidence. Police

evidence tends to be understood in instrumental terms, as would evidence for forensic purposes: it is valuable if it is useful to a further end, whether that be to strengthen a case for prosecution or another criminal justice outcome.

One of the other police service areas had selected a project that was overtly innovative, and (due to its budget being from the Police Innovation Fund) had 'permission to fail' rather than being 'doomed to success'. This reflects a widely noted cultural and organisational imperative for projects to be seen as successful and that this is associated with the career development of those who lead them. One person interviewed noted *"there was less cynicism around the project, and internally we were under less pressure. Because it was an 'innovation' fund, we were given more room to experiment and staff bought into it more easily"*. This suggests that shifting the cultural environment within policing such that it can become more receptive to innovation, trialling new projects and critical reflection is possible, albeit in this case this was only achieved because the project was identified as outside the mainstream of police activity.

As the N8 PRP demonstrates, there is huge potential for co-production of knowledge but there are, inevitably, a series of challenges. This research has found that arriving at what constitutes 'evidence' is neither straightforward nor monolithic when researching what works in policing domestic abuse. In some ways, this is related to broader dilemmas that policing researchers and policing professionals face when conducting collaborative research. We need to be attentive to the challenges raised when multiple stakeholders aim to work together.

Contemporary discourses around policing research suggest a destabilizing of the historic hierarchy

that situates academic researchers as experts in designing, conducting, evaluating and disseminating research findings. It is a welcome and positive development to see policing professionals move away from being positioned as the subject of external scrutiny and instead becoming accepted as active participants in collaborative research. However, it would be naïve to assume that such collaborative working will be seamless and without difficulty. As we experienced in our study, working across professional boundaries will raise new and important discussions and debates about what should be researched, how it should be researched and why it is important. As opposed to being a weakness of collaborative working, the different views of the multiple stakeholders about what constitutes 'evidence' opened up very productive conversations about what works in the policing of domestic abuse as elsewhere.

Mike Rowe is Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at Northumbria University and was the Principal Investigator on the N8 PRP small grant 'Innovation in Policing Domestic Abuse'. He is also a member of the N8 PRP Advisory Board. Pam Davies is Professor of Criminology at Northumbria University. Donna Marie Brown is Senior Lecturer in Applied Social Science at Durham University. Paul Biddle is Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Social Sciences at Northumbria University.

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Unquantifiable Benefits – Some Notes On The Evaluation Of The Small Grants Programme

Geoff Page

In this short article, my aim is to explore briefly some of the features of the evaluation of the N8 PRP small grants scheme, and to review some of the benefits that were apparent through our work – as programme evaluators – but proved very difficult to evidence or quantify. In what follows, my purpose will not simply be to provide a short summary of the evaluation of the N8 PRP’s small grants programme, given that a Summary Findings report has already been published and is available on the N8 PRP’s website, describing who applied; why; how coproduction was embedded in their work; and measurable aspects of impact and legacy. Rather, I will reflect upon some challenges for ourselves as evaluators presented by problems of ‘unquantifiable benefits’.

To give a brief overview, within the structure set out for the five-year Catalyst grant, York has been responsible for evaluating and monitoring the work of the N8 PRP. From the outset, we have wanted to take an appreciative stance towards the PRP’s work – looking for outstanding examples of impact-focused work and coproduction with the intention of identifying the ingredients that can support effective partnership work. The small grants programme has been consistently highlighted by both policing and academic partners as a work package that fits this bill. This programme involved competitive awards of up to £25,000 made available each year for between three and five projects. Each successful bid had to involve at least one of the N8 PRP’s universities and at least one of the policing partners, with broader partnerships encouraged. Grants were available for one year with an

expectation that funding would ‘pump prime’ subsequent research and yield practical applications.

As lead researcher, I sought to deliver a small-scale qualitative evaluation of the programme, requesting interviews with key partners from all funded projects from the first three years (2016-2018). In an attempt to reach beyond the obvious, I also sought interviews with people who had not secured funding. Following emailed requests for interview, I spoke to 13 academics and 3 police officers, who had worked on (and mostly led) 9 funded project and five unfunded proposals.

A significant challenge – and one that I could not overcome – was assessing the value delivered by a £25,000 small grant. It was very clear that many projects were borne of passion, curiosity and commitment. Teams had often identified real-world

policing problems and badly wanted to crack them. However, contracted staff salaries could not be paid for from small grants – and so the contributions of many senior academic and police staff were given as payments in kind. In some instances, full teams of senior academics worked on every element of a project from start to end – from fieldwork, to analysis, to write-up – without any cost being incurred by the N8 PRP. In others, policing partners gave extraordinarily generously of their time to ensure project deadlines were met. Two officers who led an investigation into Bitcoin, for example, delivered almost all of work in evenings and weekends; whilst North Yorkshire gave weeks of a data analyst’s time and organised over 30 interviews with frontline officers in multiple sites to support an investigation into the policing of cannabis. Programmes and initiatives were also used to bring additional resources to bear, for example harnessing internship schemes to support data sanitisation and analysis.

It was clear, then, that the value generated by small grants was often vastly more than the £25,000 notional limit on expenditure. However, quantifying or substantively measuring this proved impossible. Despite early attempts to contact and interview all those involved in projects, in practice (very understandably!) it was only usually principle investigators who responded. This left policing partners under-represented, and with access



looking for outstanding examples of impact-focused work and coproduction with the intention of identifying the ingredients that can support effective partnership work



to (at most) half of each project team quantifying the hours of work or the value that this represented proved impossible. This left the evaluation with a bit of a quandary – the added value generated by the small grants in terms of financial as well as human capital was clearly huge, and arguably the key benefit of the programme; but evidencing this with a nailed-down figure was beyond our reach. We have consequently described the impact insofar as we could within our report, but the outstanding value generated by the small grants merits a dedicated mention here.

The value of the small grants also reached further, and interviewees gave a real sense that the small grants scheme has been a reputation-maker for the N8 in many core and external institutions. This was particularly visible in the bids and partnerships that originated in or drew on the expertise of non-N8 PRP forces and universities. Some early bids included no N8 PRP partners at all (and so, were

not shortlisted). In later proposals, non-N8 institutions found clearer ways of becoming involved – by finding a partner in an N8 institution to support a developing bid, for example. One interviewee even described his involvement in a bid he had no substantive involvement in at all, being ‘cold called’ by a police team with a fully worked-through proposal and asked to append his name to it. The interest generated by a £25,000 funding pot for co-produced research projects with a streamlined application process was also apparent in N8 institutions. The scheme thus carried the N8 PRP message well, inviting investment from a broad range of parties.

If a core message has emerged from the evaluation of the N8 Policing Research Programme, it is that generating sustained, concrete engagement is difficult. Securing and maintaining buy-in between very large organisations who may have competing research relationships is difficult, and policing and academic

partners often speak different languages. However, sometimes there are initiatives or programmes that absolutely work – that capture interest, that generate buy-in, that create excitement and motivation on all sides. And that multiply the value invested in them several times over in terms of both immediate commitments of resource, and sustained impact and partnerships. Through the provision of relatively small awards of open-ended funding for swift-turnaround projects, the small grants scheme seems to have hit this sweet spot – and in so doing has generated value well in excess of its cost.

Dr Geoff Page is a Research Fellow at the University of York. He was the lead researcher working on the Evaluation Strand of the Catalyst Grant for the N8 PRP.



In recent years some law enforcement agencies have begun to proactively investigate ASWs to try to identify instances of trafficking

Identifying Sexual Trafficking Online

Xavier L’Hoiry, Dr Alessandro Moretti and Georgios Antonopoulos

One of the fourth round of N8 PRP small grants (2019-20) included the project: ‘Identifying Sexual Trafficking Online’ conducted by a team including researchers at Sheffield and Teesside Universities and police practitioners at South Yorkshire Police. Here, team members reflect on the project and its impact.

Although human trafficking and sexual exploitation are not new phenomena, over the past decade such activities have experienced an unprecedented boom and widespread facilitation due to the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs). In the UK, the government has highlighted the immense difficulties of tackling serious and organised crime in the context of constantly evolving ICTs. In the context of sexual exploitation, researchers, policy-makers and practitioners have identified escorting websites and/or online classifieds such as Adultwork and Vivastreet as key platforms used by offenders to advertise victims’ sexual services. These websites, known as Adult Services Websites (ASWs), have fundamentally altered the marketplace for sex work and created a virtual red light district connecting supply and demand online in an environment at relatively low risk of law enforcement attention as compared to street-based sex work. Though ASWs are used consensually by independent sex workers, these same

platforms have also vastly facilitated the exploitation of vulnerable people by organised crime actors. However, it is also true that the very websites that facilitate these activities may prove to be useful for law enforcement. Offenders’ use of ASWs offers law enforcement agencies an unprecedented opportunity to monitor the behaviours of these actors, whose activities online inevitably leave so-called digital fingerprints. With this in mind, in recent years some law enforcement agencies have begun to pro-actively investigate ASWs to try to identify instances of trafficking. Our study has sought to aid these types of investigations.

Our Study

Emerging research has shown that offenders using ASWs to facilitate human trafficking and sexual exploitation often display similar patterns of behaviour, including the use of key words, phrases and other patterns in the adverts posted online. Our N8 PRP small grant study, undertaken in collaboration with

South Yorkshire Police, has built on this early research by: first, carrying out a literature review of existing academic and practitioner research on this issue; and secondly, engaging with key practitioners and other stakeholders to build our understanding of offender behavioural patterns on ASWs. We conducted 26 interviews with key stakeholders in the UK, Europe and the US, ranging from law enforcement representatives to academic experts and NGOs in the field of human trafficking and Modern Slavery.

This culminated in the creation of a matrix – the Sexual Trafficking Identification Matrix (STIM) – which synthesizes such behavioural and technical patterns of offenders’ activities on ASWs. This matrix will allow law enforcement officers to identify and target high-risk adverts with greater precision and efficiency by using the matrix as a triage tool during proactive investigations of suspect profiles and adverts posted on ASWs.

The Sexual Trafficking Identification Matrix

We identified several key indicators that, according to experts and based on existing literature, were more likely to be found in adverts posted

on ASWs by offenders (as opposed to independent sex workers):

- The ethnicity/nationality of the subject matches the demands of the local market (often Eastern European; Vietnamese);
- More than one subject advertised at once;
- Use of third person language (‘she’, ‘they’);
- Poor use of language with spelling mistakes and broken English;
- Use of emojis to create love hearts or breasts;
- Low prices for services (as compared to broader market pricing);
- Wide range of services offered, including ‘specialist’ services;
- In-calls only – suggesting lack of independence/autonomy and control of movement;
- References to spas, massage parlours;
- Indicators of recent arrival/ movement ‘new in town/just arrived’.

Additionally, there were common features that could be

identified by comparing multiple adverts simultaneously:

- Same phone numbers used in different posting by separate subjects;
- Same background can be identified in photos from different adverts;
- Similar/identical text used (including errors) in multiple adverts;
- Same advert appearing in multiple geographical locations.

At the time of writing, officers and analysts in South Yorkshire Police’s Specialist Crimes Unit are ‘road-testing’ the STIM in their live investigations and the final phase of the study (to be completed in July 2020) will involve receiving feedback from SYP on the efficacy of the STIM in triaging adverts deemed high-risk. At the conclusion of the study, the STIM will be delivered back to SYP, having been re-designed to account for their feedback.

Finally, a common theme during our dialogue with practitioners was the considerable diversity of law enforcement approaches to investigating fraudulent use of ASWs in the UK. Very little exists by way of a standard,

systematic approach to investigating ASWs across the country. Some forces instruct staff to manually search ASWs, while others use (expensive) commercial software (such as Traffic Jam or Spotlight) to identify potential trafficking activity on ASWs, relying on methods including data scraping and facial recognition technology. It remains unclear the extent to which police forces are sharing knowledge and best practice with one another and indeed some participants in this study were not aware that these types of commercial software even existed. This perhaps highlights the potential for a tool – such as the STIM – that could serve to maximise existing police resources, and deliver more targeted, intelligence-based interventions.

Dr Xavier L’Hoiry is lecturer in criminology and social policy and Dr Alessandro Moretti is Research Associate, both in the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield. Dr Georgios Antonopoulos is Professor in the Centre for Social Innovation at Teesside University.



Cases of 'domestic violence' between individuals aged 16 and over are routinely 'flagged' in police databases.



Policing Child-to-Parent Violence: Lessons from England and Wales

Sam Lewis, Ella Holdsworth and Jose Pina-Sánchez

The repeated infliction of physical, emotional, psychological or financial harm by children upon parents and carers remains 'one of the most understudied types of family violence' (Simmons et al 2018: 31). As with all forms of family violence, the police are at the forefront of dealing with Child-to-Parent Violence (CPV). Despite this, there is a lack of knowledge, data and practice guidance around this aspect of policing. In addition, little is known about families' experiences of the police response. This N8 PRP funded project was developed in collaboration with two northern police forces to address these knowledge gaps. In doing so, it builds upon the first national study of local responses to CPV, conducted with over 200 (primarily non-policing) practitioners from across England and Wales (Holt and Lewis, 2020).

In England and Wales, the official non-statutory definition of domestic violence and abuse describes domestic violence as:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. (Home Office 2013: 2)

This definition embraces a wide range of behaviours, including CPV

by children aged 16 and 17 (Home Office 2015: 2). An expanded version of this definition is expected to be put on a statutory footing with the enactment of the current Domestic Abuse Bill. The inclusion of CPV by some children but not others in official definitions of domestic abuse has particular relevance for this project.

Research aims

The project aimed to build a detailed picture of the characteristics and behaviours of children and young people aged 10 – 19 years who came to police notice for CPV between 1st January and 31st December 2018, and of the parents and carers who experienced CPV. The research was also designed to examine the police response to CPV, consider how it is shaped by the problematization of CPV as a form of domestic violence, and examine what obstacles the police face when dealing with CPV. Further, the project aimed to gather information from parents and carers about their interactions with the police in the context of CPV.

Research activities

Cases of 'domestic violence' between individuals aged 16 and over are routinely 'flagged' in police databases. Thus whilst cases of CPV by children aged 16 and over were 'flagged' by police officers in the research sites, those by children aged 10 – 15 were not. The research team worked closely with the collaborative partners to extract details of all CPV by children aged 10 – 19 that came to police notice over a 12-month period. Interrogation of police databases identified over 4,000 cases of CPV from across the two sites, involving over 2,500 children and over 2,700 parents and carers. This constitutes the largest research dataset of cases of CPV reported to the police in England and Wales to date. This is also the first study of police responses to CPV to incorporate data from more than one site, enabling comparisons to be made between areas.

In addition, between November 2019 and April 2020, 36 semi-structured interviews were conducted with front-line police officers from the two sites about their experience of responding to CPV. Although the majority of interviews were conducted in person, four that were scheduled to take place on or after 23rd March, during the 'lockdown' period when Coronavirus-related movement restrictions were in place, were conducted by telephone. The officers spoke in detail about issues such as the nature and perceived causes of CPV, the characteristics of the families concerned, the expectations of parents and carers, case processing, safeguarding procedures, and the barriers and obstacles that officers face when responding to CPV.

Finally, an online survey was developed for parents and carers who had called the police in the context of CPV. The survey, which was launched in March 2020 and remained open for four weeks, was publicised on social media by the research team, practitioners and other individuals and organisations working with children and families. In total, 41 parents and carers from across England and Wales provided detailed accounts of their children's violent behaviour and their interactions with the police.

Planned outcomes

The findings of the research will be presented to police collaborative partners in summer 2020, accompanied by a Research Findings Briefing Paper. The findings will make a significant contribution to knowledge, and support the development of bespoke (CPV-focused) policy and practice guidelines. The findings come at a critical time in the development of family violence policy and practice. The Domestic Abuse Bill was debated during a second reading in the House of Commons on 28 April and is expected to conclude the Committee Stage by 25 June

2020 before progressing to the Report Stage and Third Reading. Alongside this, the Home Office is updating its Information guide: adolescent to parent violence and abuse (APVA) (2015). This research has been discussed with policy advisors involved in the task, and a seminar presentation of the findings will be delivered to Home Office officials in summer 2020. Over 60 people were registered to attend a dissemination conference for practitioners at the University of Leeds on 30th April, which included papers from other academics and practitioners working in the field of family violence. After being postponed because of the Coronavirus pandemic, the conference will now take place as soon as is practicable once restrictions are eased. Further, a series of peer-reviewed journal articles exploring the implications of the findings for theory, policy and practice is planned.

Dr Sam Lewis is Associate Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Dr Ella Holdsworth is Research Assistant employed on the N8 PRP small grant and Dr Jose Pina-Sánchez is Associate Professor of Quantitative Criminology. They are all based in the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Leeds.

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Police And Research Collaborations In A Covid-19 World

Gloria Laycock

The N8 PRP programme of research and knowledge exchange has demonstrated the value of police and researchers working together on problems. Such partnerships have much to commend them – the police with the practical and positive approach to problem solving and the academic with their knowledge of research methods and science. The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown up a host of new questions and areas for research that were not dreamed of even six months ago, so it is now even more important than ever to work together and address these many emerging issues.

Two examples:

1. Changing crime rates? What is going down? How should we be responding to the changes? There is good evidence that domestic burglary has decreased, as (not surprisingly since the shops are shut!) has shop theft, vehicle theft has largely reduced and street crime is down, reflecting the reduction in people on the streets, and the closed bars and pubs.
2. And which crimes are increasing? Commercial burglary has increased in some areas as industrial estates remain empty and workers stay at

home. There is also evidence that domestic assaults have increased, although this is not well reflected in reports to the police. Children are also at increased risk being kept at home for prolonged periods and away from school. Cyber-crime also appears to have risen, perhaps because of the increased use of the Internet as people have been locked down. The opportunity to sell fake goods (like testing kits or COVID 'cures') has also been recognised by offenders.

These examples point to opportunities for the police and research

communities to work together and base future policing plans on a firm footing. How, for example, can we ensure that the reductions in domestic burglary are maintained? Where are the vulnerable homes that might be at most risk as the lockdown eases? What will the effect of gradually opening schools be on parental comings and goings? Importantly, as we return to our former routines of work, travel and school, what will happen to 'volume' crimes?

One thing we can be fairly sure of as the lockdown eases, is that unemployment will rise significantly. All the forecasts are for various degrees of economic collapse. In which case we can expect property crime to go up across the board, particularly shop theft and burglary. There is good research evidence that the health of the economy is related to crime patterns. How might we best prepare for these changes?

Beyond the immediate effects on crime, the pandemic has affected policing in general. Public health emergencies often test emergency plans to their

limits, with pandemics in particular risking staff shortages and absenteeism. The police have been highly visible in policing the lockdown and appear to have been remarkably successful in doing so without engendering public objections. Of course there have been a few incidents of what might be seen as over-zealous enforcement, but given the haste with which these measures were introduced and the lack of opportunity for clarification of the rules and training of staff, the exercise must be considered a success. All that said, the number of deaths as a consequence of the pandemic, and the police involvement in responding to sudden deaths can cause significant impact on officer wellbeing and might point to the need for reviews of policies and practices in the light of what will have been a unique experience. Hopefully established research evidence can contribute to that process.

Some potential crimes exposed by the pandemic are completely new. For example, conspiracy theories have suggested that the pandemic may have been a deliberate act by a hostile

government. Unlikely as this is, it does illustrate to terrorists and others the potential damage that can be caused by bio-engineering. According to Elgarbry (2020), a recent systematic review of emerging bio-crime, showed eight potential crime harvests that were enabled by biotechnology. These included bio-hacking and illegal gene editing. Twenty percent of the articles described attack mechanisms that involved virus engineering for malign use. Are we prepared for such attacks? Would we recognise them and do we have the protective equipment that might be needed by the emergency services, including the police, were such an attack to take place?

The UK Government has made constant use of scientific advice during the course of the pandemic. This has not been straightforward. Science seldom gives un-caveated answers to complex questions and some of the advice has been challenged. Nevertheless in our field there is a substantial body of knowledge on which to draw, and the pandemic has provided a unique opportunity

to investigate the effect on crime and policing following massive changes in the routine activities of huge swathes of the population. It would be a shame not to take advantage of this and learn from it. With this in mind, perhaps the existing police/N8 committees might meet with some urgency to discuss the implications of the pandemic and post-lockdown period on the research agenda. Hopefully this will be a once in a lifetime opportunity and we should take it.

Gloria Laycock is the Jill Dando Professor of Crime Science at University College London and is Chair of the N8 PRP Advisory Board.

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Some potential crimes exposed by the pandemic are completely new





COVID-19 – Predicting Crime in a Pandemic World

Eric Halford



In March 2020 governments around the world restricted movement of people, using social distancing and lockdowns, to help stem the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The effects of these measures on Police demand, crime and capacity was an unknown. Over the following days and weeks many predictions were made that leaned towards increases in demand in online exploitation (The Guardian, 2020), rises in violent gang crime (The Independent, 2020) and abuse within home environments, most notably, domestic abuse and coercive control (Microsoft News, 2020; MEN, 2020). We now understand how the lockdown restrictions have impacted Policing and we have come to understand that many of the predicted outcomes have not come to bare. This has led me to ponder a few key questions; Why did we do this? Why were so many predictions wrong? What can we learn from this experience?

In the face of what was an unprecedented global epidemic, the likes of which the modern world had never experienced, it is understandable to try and seek comfort and control by predicting what might happen next. This is especially relevant in policing where decisions around capacity and capability are the cornerstones of planning to meet demand. Because of these reasons it was hard to stop ourselves jumping to intuitive thinking, myself included. In beginning to unpick these questions I saw a consistent theme. Many of these predictions were based on professional judgement, the views and opinions of professionals within policing, politicians or the media. Research has proven time and again that such 'fast thinking' is often flawed and inaccurate (Kahneman, 2020). The result of such predictions was a flurry of contingency planning to meet core services and to a large

degree, the absence of a considered approach to how a new Policing environment would look and feel, and what capabilities and capacity were required to meet it. Arguably, this was borne out of an understandable necessity to 'do something'. However, since the lockdown began research has been able to prove that the impact on crime has been significant (Halford et al, 2020), but not in the ways many predicted. By one week after the 23 March lockdown, it was identified that in some force areas all recorded crime had declined 41%, with significant decreases across a number of areas: shoplifting (-62%), theft (-52%), domestic abuse (-45%), theft from vehicle (-43%), assault (-36%), burglary dwelling (-25%) and burglary non-dwelling (-25%) (Halford, Dixon and Farrell et al, 2020). Several weeks after the lockdown it became clear that unpredicted consequences were beginning to take effect. These

changes disproportionately affected the vulnerable. These included an inability to reach 'locked in victims', partner agencies such as children's social care struggling to monitor children on child protection plans and at the highest risk of harm, rises in anti-social behaviour and a lack of traditional diversionary avenues available to quell such ASB to name a few.

It is easy to say now, perhaps, but it could be argued that a 'slower' and more considered way of thinking may have proven more fruitful. Several strong predictions, backed by fundamental criminological theory were made (Farrell and Tilley, 2020) and when combined with mobility data (Google, 2020) could have provided strong predictions on the impact of crime and demand in Policing. But how effective were Police and academic collaborations at pro-actively pooling their knowledge and contributing to the emergency planning phase? Doing so would have enabled rapid research evidence reviews, collaborative workshops between Policing, partners and Academia and effective capability mapping against evidence based predictions to take place. As the pandemic has progressed these relationships have gathered momentum and interventions put in place, including shifts in the capacity and capability of resources to meet the identified hidden demand. In Lancashire for instance, a multi-agency domestic abuse service was implemented providing immediate access to Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA's) 7 days a week, resulting in an over 40%



It could be argued that a 'slower' and more considered way of thinking may have proven more fruitful



increase in positive outcomes in domestic abuse cases as access to safeguarding, refuges and expert advice increased the level of co-operation, especially from repeat victims. Furthermore, multi-agency working with children's social care has seen Police in areas of Lancashire help fill the gap in service provision as a result of capacity reductions due to shielding of staff. This has meant more children on child protection plans have been visited by professionals to ensure they are safe and well.

Hindsight is 2020 but it is highly likely that a post lockdown policing landscape could see this situation repeat itself. Predictions are beginning to emerge regarding the impact of the removal of restrictions on crime and Policing (Express, 2020). If the experiences of the response to the implementation of lockdown is not to be repeated it is essential that collaborations between the Police and

academic partners take place urgently. Considered and evidence based predictions as to what is likely to occur should be made, and the necessary realignment of capacity and capability should be made to meet the predicted increases of crime and demand. It's not a time for 'putting a finger in the air', otherwise we risk certain areas of business being overwhelmed and as occurred at the outset of lockdown it is likely the most vulnerable in our communities will suffer. That is why Lancashire have agreed to enter into two distinct academic collaborations to research the impact and responses to COVID-19. These include research with the University of Leeds and University College London into "Reducing the Unanticipated Crime Consequences of COVID-19", funded by UK Research and Innovation, and research with Liverpool John Moore's University on "Police reporting, recording and responses to domestic abuse in COVID-19: how can we best safeguard the silent, repeat and most

vulnerable victims in lockdown?", funded by a Coronavirus Pandemic: Rapid Response Research Grant. Knowledge from these vital research projects will enable a significantly more evidence based response to Policing during future pandemics and as a result, reduce the risk and harm to the most vulnerable in society.

Dr Eric Halford is Detective Chief Inspector with Lancashire Constabulary. He has a PhD from the University of Central Lancashire which examines the physical, offending and geographical characteristics of foraging serial offenders.

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N8 PRP will also be actively supporting a number of Covid-19 related N8 research programmes in response to the UKRI and ESRC Covid Funding Schemes



The N8 PRP's Response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the world of policing globally and across the North of England. The N8 partner forces have been on the front line of enforcing lockdown regulations and managing protest and other gatherings that have taken place during the pandemic, and have needed rapidly to adapt their own strategies, deployments and practices to take into account the various challenges posed. Academics from the N8 Universities have also been involved in advising the Government on the policing response, with a number involved in the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), particularly in the SPI-B Behavioural Science Group and its Policing and Security sub-group.

N8 PRP responded to the crisis by launching its Policing COVID-19 call under its small research grants scheme. This will run alongside the annual small grant call and will support awards that focus on the challenges posed by, and lessons to be learnt from, policing the pandemic. N8 PRP will also be actively supporting a number of COVID-19 related N8 research programmes in response to the UKRI and ESRC COVID Funding Schemes. Two major projects have already been successful in securing significant funds

including: 'Responding to the Shadow Pandemic' (Sandra Walklate and Barry Godfrey, University of Liverpool), and 'Reducing the Unanticipated Crime Harms of COVID-19 Policies' (Graham Farrell, Dan Birks and Nick Malleson, University of Leeds with colleagues at UCL). Over forthcoming months we will be looking to support further valuable research that enables policing to learn from recent experiences of the pandemic and to inform the post-COVID-19 recovery.



Tackling Knife Crime from existing resources: Social capital brought to life!

Stephen Brookes

Our fifth Policing Innovation Forum was held at Goodison Park, the home of Everton Football Club, and represents the first time that we've actually taken the forum to where the policing problem was being tackled, in situ. A packed forum was privileged to hear from an impressive array of speakers who have made a real impact on reducing the incidence of knife crime in Runcorn, Cheshire, through a true multi-agency approach through passion and dedication rather than government funding. Delegates were also invited to attend a range of practical workshops that were predominantly led by impressive charities and a social enterprise focusing on working with young people at risk of knife crime (as both perpetrators and victims) through both education but also individual coaching. Dr Stephen Brookes, one of the leads for the PIF Innovation Forum along with Geoff Pearson describes the Runcorn project as an excellent example of achieving mutual benefit which builds improves social capital in vulnerable communities. He also says that it is in keeping with the overall theme of vulnerability which has emerged as a key policing issue for the forum over the last five years. This started in 2015 with cybercrime through to domestic violence (2016), coercive control (2017), mental health (2018) and – in 2019– focused on the very challenging but topical issue of 'tackling knife crime through multi-agency interventions'.

Stephen said:
"Our fifth forum has been our most successful to date in terms of encouraging discussion and innovative research in relation to tackling knife crime through the inclusion of a range of workshops in which other preventative and interventionist approaches can be explored from a multi-agency perspective. This year, the third sector played a key role in our forum".

The forum began with a keynote address from Will Linden Deputy Director of the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) which targets violence wherever it occurs whether it's on the streets, in schools or in our homes. Supported by the Scottish Government the unit has adopted a public health approach, treating violence as an infection which can be cured. Will drew on the experience of his long-term involvement with



the development of the Violence Reduction Strategy in Scotland, having joined the original Glasgow VRU in 2005. In his presentation, entitled 'Beyond Symptom Management', he outlined an holistic approach to tackling knife crime that seeks to address the complex causes of the problem, in which 'education – in its widest sense – is key to prevention'.

Sue Gregory who heads 'Everton-in-the-community' (and as host of the forum) provided an inspirational account of why the football club is so much part of the community's response to this topical issue. This was followed by the session led by Superintendent Sarah Health of Cheshire Constabulary supported by members of her team and other partner agencies. Delegates heard about an inspirational and innovative approach in tackling knife crime by a constabulary which did not qualify for Home Office funding due to the relative low level of knife crime. Cheshire has one of the lowest rates of knife crime in England, but statistics show that the number of serious knife offences which are committed in the county decreased by nearly 15 per cent from the year ending July 2018 to the year ending July 2019. As well as deploying both traditional and innovative enforcement tactics, Sarah explained how officers are working with partner agencies such as community groups, housing associations and Trading Standards to educate young people and other residents about the laws



Our fifth forum has been our most successful to date



surrounding buying and carrying knives and in changing attitudes and behaviours. Everton-in-the-community also led a workshop. The social impact was clear for all to see and, as Karen Byrom (Corporate Research and Analysis Manager for Cheshire Constabulary) said in response to a participant question on the validity of the results, the project had restored 'trust and legitimacy' within the community which is a key component of Mark Moore's classical concept of demonstrating public value. This was very well received by the delegates and the presentation by Cheshire Constabulary showed how much can be achieved through dedication, passion and collaborative endeavour in which a range of different agencies share their resources in the absence of funding.

The purpose of the afternoon was to use an innovative conference design through a series of workshops that focus on early intervention in several areas. This year, a number of third sector and charities led workshops to show the real impact that this sector can bring. The first was street doctors, led by John Valentine (Partnership Manager), which is a youth social

action movement with a network of young healthcare volunteers who provide safe spaces to explore attitudes to violence and to empower young people to keep themselves and others safe. The second, led by Clare McGregor, Founder of Coaching Inside and Out (CIAO), explored her charity's approach to coaching for children released from custody who have been involved in knife crime in Salford, Greater Manchester. Clare reflected on her involvement in the Forum:

"We can all make change happen and N8 PRP's cross pollination with researchers and police greatly increases the impact of that. This was an invaluable opportunity to develop practical ideas, as well as using coaching to challenge our own assumptions about something we'd like to change."

The third workshop was led by Queensbury APP who work with children at risk of expulsion from mainstream school and include early interventions aimed at young people who, through their behaviours and choices, may be at risk of being involved in criminalised behaviour. Queensbury support the work being

undertaken by Cheshire Police and Everton-in-the-Community. Finally, the Joint Heads of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit, Superintendent Lee Berry and Rachel Staniforth led a workshop which considered and explored both the challenges and opportunities of creating a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), drawing on the experience of partnership activities across the county. Rachel reflected: "It was great to share our learning so far with so many partners. The event allowed us to make links and create contacts that we may have missed otherwise."

Once again, our fifth policing innovation forum has shown that both funded and non-funded activities can co-produce the collective leadership that is needed in tackling one of society's current 'wicked problems'.

Dr Stephen Brookes is Senior Fellow at the Alliance Manchester Business School. Until May 2020, he was a Deputy Director of the N8 PRP and co-lead of the Innovation Forum Strand of the Catalyst Grant.



Developing and Implementing a Violence Reduction Strategy



Rachel Staniforth

In June 2019, the Home Office announced £35m of funding available for 18 police forces areas to establish violence reduction units that would take a public health approach to preventing and reducing violence. Funding was allocated on the basis of hospital admissions for injury with sharp object. Police and Crime Commissioners were to bid for and oversee the funding, in partnership with representatives from local authorities, police, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), youth offending teams, education, voluntary, community and faith sector and probation services. A successful bid was made in South Yorkshire, with £1.6m of funding awarded in August 2019. A number of requirements accompanied the grant, including: production of a needs assessment and problem profile (which we called area profile), development of a response strategy and a minimum of 20% of the funding to be spent on early intervention and prevention.

I was recruited to establish the unit in July 2019. I am a public health professional, currently on a career break from Public Health Specialty Training to be Head of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit. I have passed both membership exams for the Faculty of Public Health (DFPH and MFPH) and am a member of the faculty. I was joined by Joint-Head Lee Berry (Temporary Detective Superintendent) at the end of August.

Our first task was to define what we mean by a 'public health approach'. The words have been used by many, to mean different things. Luckily, just prior to the Home Office announcement, Helen Christmas and Justin Srivastava published an excellent document A Public Health Approach to Policing. The description of a 'public health approach' within it could be applied to anything, and formed the basis of our approach to reducing

violence. Our public health approach takes the five common elements outlined in the document. These include prevention, data and evidence base, looking at what causes violence, taking a population level approach and working together in partnership.

What this means, is that we start with the needs of the population rather than individual people. Understanding the situation in each local area, from different perspectives (including that of our communities), is essential to enabling effective targeting of resources and helping avoid unintended consequences or assumptions. Skilled use and interpretation of data and the evidence base is central to taking a public health approach. Using evidence based, 'what works' approaches, agreed at local level, is key. This aligns really well with the priorities and work of the N8 PRP. It was good to see that the focus of

the N8 PRP Innovation Forum in late 2019 was directly about this theme and included contributions from the well-established and internationally regarded Scottish Violence Reduction Unit and other work across the north of England in this regard.

Analysing what drives violence is imperative. These are often 'social determinants' or 'structural factors' and include things like: access to services, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma, family and social support, education (schools, colleges and universities), housing, community cohesion, income, work and physical/mental health, all of which underpin people's lives. These drivers illustrate the need for partnership working, especially with our communities – the heart of our approach. The volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous nature of violence (and the causes of it) makes collaboration across many professions and services essential. Each partner has access to different skills, levers and mechanisms to affect change.

It has been our intention always to start with the voice of communities across South Yorkshire, combining this with evidence of what works, to ensure a comprehensive approach that reflects the reality of life in local areas.

Since August, we have achieved so much. We now have a fully operational team, including seconded staff from each local authority. We have an Executive Board established, chaired by Dr Alan Billings, Police and Crime Commissioner, with attendees from all

aforementioned organisations, as well as an Elected Member Reference Group with representatives from each local authority. We have spent over 50% of our funding on early intervention and prevention, through the provision of:

- Hospital and Custody Navigators (to support those who receive a violent injury or who are arrested for a violence related offence, to make positive changes in their lives),
- Assertive Outreach Workers (to work with those who frequently go missing from home),
- A Community Violence Reduction Fund (which supported 25 organisations to carry out preventative activity with young people and adults),
- A Fortify fund (which provided funding for partner organisations working to reduce serious and organised crime),
- Mentors in Violence Prevention (which takes a bystander approach and focuses on healthy norms),
- Domestic Abuse Matters (training for frontline staff across South Yorkshire),
- Shed Load of Cakes (aiming to give people with previous convictions fair employment at the living wage and support them to develop their skills),
- YOYO sport (providing sporting activities for young people), and more!

We have worked closely with our N8 partners and have submitted a bid for some funding to explore the use of knife crime imagery and impacts on young people.

One of our greatest successes are our paid community working groups, where we paid community members to provide input into our response strategy, before we had developed it. This is extremely rare, as community

members are usually 'consulted' after the finished product is already on paper. We listened to our communities and asked them what they thought should go into it. We then went to our other partners and added their views, to produce our strategy-on-a-page. Once we had a draft, we went back to the same community members to ask them whether we have represented their views correctly. This method has been so successful – in strengthening relationships, providing rich information and ensuring that communities are at the heart of the violence reduction unit – that we are planning to use the same model to produce our action plans.

Further success comes from the Plan B Custody Navigator programme. In the two months they have been operating, the Plan B Custody Navigators have engaged 34 detainees who had been arrested for a violence-related offence. Twelve of these are receiving ongoing support from the programme. Out of this twelve, four have enrolled with a college, five are receiving therapeutic trauma counselling and three have started new jobs.

A large part of our role is strategic leadership and direction setting. As part of this, we held an event in January 2020 to bring together over 150 key stakeholders involved in caring for looked after children, with the aim of improving processes and upskilling staff to prevent and reduce missing episodes. The feedback from this was excellent and we now have a South Yorkshire wide missing from home and care protocol. Following on from this, we will be delivering four bespoke training packages on joint-decision making for social workers and care workers, to help them better understand and manage risk. This will mean that police contact with young people is minimised and the levels of unnecessary criminalisation of children and young people are reduced.

We have recently been informed that we were successful in our multi-agency bid for a further £1.6m of funding for 2020/21. This presents some challenges as the funding is for a longer time period (12 months, instead of 8) but is excellent news for South Yorkshire. We are looking forward to seeing what can be achieved in partnership over the next 12 months and hopefully there will be more opportunities in the future to collaborate in this field across the north of England via the N8 PRP.

Rachel Staniforth is Head of the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit established in 2019

“What this means, is that we start with the needs of the population rather than individual people”



It is increasingly important that we see policing as part of a wider system of public safety, collaborating much more extensively with others in order to achieve public safety goals

A Strategic Review of Policing

Rick Muir

The landscape in which the police operate has been transformed over the last twenty years. Since 1995, vehicle theft has fallen by 80%, burglary has fallen by 74% and violent crime by 72%. High levels of concern about anti-social behaviour in local neighbourhoods has fallen by almost two thirds since 2002. In place of these traditional crime and disorder issues the police face new and more complex challenges. Cyber-crime and fraud now make up 56% of all crime experienced in England and Wales. Reports of sexual assault have increased by 180% since 2013 and reports of domestic abuse incidents by 77% since 2016. The number of mental health flagged incidents recorded by the police has increased by 28% since 2014.

It is in light of these changes that the Police Foundation has launched the Strategic Review of Policing in England and Wales, an independent inquiry into the future of policing chaired by Sir Michael Barber.

In its first phase the Review has been looking at the nature of the public safety and security challenges facing policing, and the country, as we

look to the 2020s and 2030s. The second phase of the Review will look at what changes will be required to the police workforce, finances, partnerships, organisation and governance so that the police service can effectively meet these challenges.

The Phase 1 report will be published in July 2020 and it has already become clear to us that the scale

of the shift in crime and harm in recent years requires a fundamental rethink of the way society is policed. We need to think about what the appropriate role for the police should be in areas like cyber-crime and the protection of the vulnerable, where many other actors and agencies play an equally important role.

It is increasingly important that we see policing as part of a wider system of public safety, collaborating much more extensively with others in order to achieve public safety goals. In the prevention space, for example, it is clear that we need a much more systemic approach to preventing crime and harm, particularly that which occurs online and on platforms controlled by overseas tech companies.

We also need to consider the way in which the police service is organised and held to account. The police service is still structured along basically

the same lines as recommended by the 1962 Royal Commission on the Police, even though there has been a huge shift in crime off the street and into an information space that pays no regard to local or international jurisdictional boundaries.

In its second phase, the Review will also look at the police workforce and within that the police service's knowledge strategy. This is where the role of organisations such as the N8 PRP comes into play. In my view, Evidence-Based Policing will play a crucial part in making sure that the police service is as effective as possible at improving public safety. We need good quality research evidence to complement the professional knowledge that police officers develop on the job. Both the 'science' and 'craft' of policing should support and complement each other, so that police professionals are as well prepared as possible to meet the challenges of a more complex society.

Despite there being more empirical research evidence than ever before, much of it increasingly being generated in this country, there remains a challenge of ensuring that the evidence is actually informing operational police work. This is the big challenge for Evidence-Based Policing in the years ahead: becoming an intrinsic part of the police culture, such that there is an expectation that officers (and their leaders and supervisors) should be aware of what the evidence base says about their work.

It seems to me that police force/university partnerships – like the N8 PRP – are going to play a key role in making this happen. Bringing together academics and police professionals in a systemic rather than ad hoc way is going to be crucial, and that is why the work of the N8 PRP is so vital and pioneering.

Meeting all of these challenges will require agile, collaborative and

inspiring leadership. In order to think about the challenge of police leadership in the 2020s, N8 PRP and the Police Foundation will be partnering in September this year on a Police Leadership Symposium that will explore what kind of leadership the police service will need as it looks to the future. The symposium will explore how the police service should recruit its leaders, what skills and competencies they will require and how they should operate in an increasingly complex system of governance. If colleagues are interested in attending the event or receiving the written output from it they can email stephen.walcott@police-foundation.org.uk and access information via the N8 PRP website.

Rick Muir is Director of The Police Foundation



Legitimacy, Leadership and Governance

Ian Shannon

The N8 PRP and the University of Leeds are sponsoring and hosting a Police Leadership Symposium on 16th September 2020, thanks to a grant from Research England. This event is being organised in collaboration with the Police Foundation and aims to generate ideas to assist police leaders in responding to contemporary challenges. As a starting point to trigger discussions a number of short papers are being commissioned. Amongst these is a summary of findings from my recent research, which used data from interviews with chief police officers in England and Wales, to examine the ways in which they are overseen and given political direction (their governance), the affect this has on them and how this may make them act, and the implications this has for police legitimacy. This is important because what chief officers do, and how they do it, is influenced by police governance arrangements. In turn chief officers, through their directions and behaviours, affect what more junior police attend to and the ways they do so and, as Ian Loader (2020) has argued, what police do and how they do it largely determines police effectiveness and legitimacy.

An overarching theme emerging from the research was that chief officers worried about how they were overseen and directed. Although, they stressed the importance of checks and balances in explaining the right to exercise power (alongside justifications concerning the law, consensual policing and protecting people, particularly those perceived to be the 'most vulnerable'). The importance of these mechanisms, they claimed, lay in providing parameters for the use of power.

These concerns were part of a pattern of apprehensions associated with national institutions within the policing landscape. Many chief officers, for instance, expressed exasperation with a distancing of the Home Office

since 2010 and suggested this allowed it to exert influence, whilst evading responsibility and/or accountability. Others lamented changes to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and raised questions about its expertise and independence. Equally, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (and its predecessor the Independent Police Complaints Commission) was a source of angst, as chief officers questioned the quality of its investigations and were unsure of its intentions. And opinions concerning the College of Policing were a mix of annoyance, ambivalence, and support.

However, the relationship between Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and chief officers raised most



concerns. Chief officers considered that the one-to-one nature of the oversight relationship was unhelpful and unduly weighted towards the PCC and were anxious about PCCs' power to recruit and remove chief constables, which they saw as sometimes unfairly exercised. This contributed to chief officers' perceptions of a diminution of their supposed 'operational independence'.

Interviewees (including some chief constables) also felt that the relationship between chief constables and deputy chief constables and assistant chief constables has changed. Deputy and assistant chiefs no longer have the potential support of a police authority or mentoring from HMICFRS, and some were concerned that their career prospects were contingent on the immediate view of both their chief constable and PCC. This indicates that the governance changes introduced by the Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011 put too much emphasis on the interface between the PCC and chief constable. Insufficient account was taken of the potentially adverse implications of these alterations for all chief officer ranks and for their confidence and effectiveness, and consequently for legitimacy.

Overall, new governance arrangements heightened chief police officers' anxieties about their job security, career prospects and operational autonomy. This saps their confidence and may lead to them failing to resist partisan and political demands to encroach on civil liberties, prioritise the needs of the powerful over those



These concerns were part of a pattern of apprehensions associated with national institutions within the policing landscape



of the marginalised, and challenge policies that neglect the priorities of many people. This endangers legitimacy. Nonetheless, checks on chief officers' power and performance remain important in ensuring that police are effective and legitimate. Consequently, the following suggestions for police governance are offered for consideration by policy makers, practitioners, and researchers.

Firstly, the relationship between PCCs and chief constables seems unduly weighted towards PCCs. Chief officers' anxieties about this imbalance might be ameliorated by strengthening the roles of HMICFRS and Police and Crime Panels in relation to the powers and conduct of PCCs; more research would support deliberations about such changes.

Secondly, anxieties about police governance are not confined to chief constables, or to concerns about PCCs. Chief officers of all ranks worry about their oversight by national institutions in the policing landscape and their political direction.

For deputy and assistant chiefs their concerns include the impact that chief constables and PCCs have on their career trajectories. This area has received little attention and would benefit from further research.

Finally, decisions about policing priorities are inevitably political but chief officers need protection against improper partisan influence. The potential for such interference is not confined to PCCs, as the Home Office remains influential, both directly and, as Jones and Lister (2019) have set out, by steering other national policing institutions. Consequently, it is suggested that the indistinct concept of operational independence and its application should be revisited by researchers and policy makers.

It is intended that these ideas and others will be discussed at the Police Leadership Symposium in September and the proposals and thinking generated by this event will inform the Police Foundation's Strategic Review of Policing in England and Wales and contribute to building an evidence

based approach to police governance, leadership and legitimacy. A report summarising the discussions and conclusion of the workshop will be published in collaboration with the Police Foundation on the N8 PRP website towards the end of 2020.

Ian Shannon QPM is an ESRC Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Leeds. He served as a police officer in London and Merseyside and from 2005 to 2013 he was assistant chief constable, deputy chief constable and temporary chief constable in North Wales.

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Police Use Of Body Worn Cameras: An Ethnographic Study Of Frontline Police Work In A Time Of Technological Change

Declan Falconer

When I began my research for my N8 PRP funded PhD, body worn cameras (BWCs) were rapidly gaining a great deal of media and academic attention as a 'new technology' in policing. While they had previously been piloted in Plymouth as far back as 2006, substantial investment across the police in Britain, and elsewhere, saw many forces move to equip their frontline officers with the latest version of the technology. Support for BWCs was widespread, both from within and beyond the police as a wide range of benefits were envisaged from reduced complaints, better evidence gathering and more efficient justice outcomes to greater transparency and increased accountability. Now, as I come to the end of my PhD, BWCs have become the new normal – reported not as an innovation but an expectation. My research looks at how frontline uniformed officers in West Yorkshire Police (WYP) experienced this period of technological change by exploring the impact of BWCs on their everyday work.

Through the established links of the N8 PRP, I was able to work closely with WYP, gaining access to the working world of frontline officers to conduct an ethnographic study. In total, I spent over 600 hours observing frontline officers, in both neighbourhood and response teams across two districts, and conducted 28 semi-structured interviews towards the end of my time in the field. In taking this approach I committed to embedding myself in the teams I studied and so followed their shift patterns as much as possible. Consequently, I not only observed a great number of police-public encounters across early, late and night shifts but also became embedded in the

more 'backstage' regions of police work during the time between encounters.

My approach of 'putting in the hours' with the same teams paid off as officers were able to grow accustomed to my presence and many confided that they were happy that I was seeing what policing was 'really all about'. In line with much existing research around new technologies in policing, most officers confessed that they were initially hesitant to use BWCs. They explained how they lacked faith in the 'real reasons' why BWCs were introduced and were doubtful that they, as the frontline users of the technology, would actually benefit.

The study identified how officers journeyed from such a sceptical position to embracing BWCs. It explored how a combination of the material properties of the cameras, and the policy context governing their use, allowed officers to embrace the technology as enhancing, rather than disrupting, their working routines and practices. It provides insights into what this means for the use of BWCs in police-public encounters and how officers have adapted their behaviour, in small ways, for managing new prospective audiences. Beyond these visible impacts on encounters, consideration is also given to the increased emotional labour of policing 'on camera'. It is revealed how officers embracing of the technology is contingent on their maintaining time 'off camera' to recharge from the demands of police work. Such findings provide timely insights not only into how BWCs have influenced police-public encounters but also into how this new technology has been adopted and implemented by those on the frontline.

However, while BWCs have transitioned into an accepted part of the everyday 'kit' of frontline policing, the technology does not stand still. Already forces are moving to adopt models with expanded features, including automated activation and live streaming functionality that



could have substantial implications for how the cameras are perceived and used. I hope that my research, in offering novel insights on how officers adopt new technologies, can prove useful in navigating the developments which follow.

Declan was first involved in conducting policing research in the run up to the formation of Police Scotland, while completing his MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Edinburgh. He has since worked across the public sector, from the Home Office to the British Parliament and has a longstanding interest in policing, technology and how change is experienced by those on the frontline of organisations. It was these interests, and the opportunities presented by the strong links between academia and practice forged by the N8 PRP, that drew Declan to undertake his PhD at the University of Leeds where he has also enjoyed teaching at both undergraduate and masters level.



The study identified how officers journeyed from such a sceptical position to embracing BWCs





There must be efforts to challenge the stigma around mental health and alcohol problems in police officers

Alcohol And Mental Health: Reducing Stigma And Harm In Uk Police Officers



Patricia Irizar

Due to the stressful nature of policing, police officers have a greater risk of suffering from mental health problems, compared to the general population. There is a well-established relationship between mental health problems and heavy alcohol use or alcohol problems, putting police officers at greater risk of alcohol problems. However, there is a dearth of research exploring alcohol use in UK police officers. Understanding consumption of alcohol and other drinking behaviours (e.g. binge drinking) in police officers is vital to ensure that interventions are in place to prevent alcohol harm. Research suggests that there may be higher levels of stigma around seeking help for mental health problems in male dominated occupations. Workplace education and signposting is needed to ensure that police officers receive the help they need.

The UK relies upon police officers to provide support and protection for the public. Police officers are trained to operate under high pressure situations and are frequently exposed to traumatic situations during work. This frequent trauma exposure appears to put police officers at a high risk of suffering from poor mental health and well-being, with a recent study showing that, in police officers who have been exposed to a traumatic event, one in five will develop post-traumatic

stress disorder (PTSD) (University of Cambridge, 2019). Moreover, due to recent budget cuts, police officers now face greater job demands and less control than ever, which has an adverse impact on mental health.

There is an abundance of evidence showing the link between PTSD and heavy alcohol use, suggesting high comorbidity (multiple conditions occurring together). Similarly, common mental health problems, such as

depression and anxiety, also frequently co-occur with heavy alcohol use. According to the self-medication hypothesis, alcohol is sometimes used to relieve negative symptoms of a mental health problem, or as an attempt to forget about traumatic experiences. Several studies have shown that drinking to cope is a key motivation for alcohol use, particularly in those with a mental health problem.

Despite police officers being an occupational group at risk of developing mental health problems and comorbid alcohol problems, there is very little research into alcohol use in UK police officers. A large Australian study showed that the level of heavy alcohol use in police officers was double that of the Australian general population, and those who reported high stress were more likely to drink heavily (Davey et al., 2000). There is a considerable evidence showing high levels of alcohol problems in UK armed forces personnel, and due to occupational similarities, such as frequent trauma exposure, it is plausible that police officers show similar levels.

Understanding the extent of heavy drinking in UK police officers is vital, as research from armed forces personnel showed that they were less likely to seek both formal and non-formal help for alcohol problems, compared to other mental health problems (Stevellink et al., 2019). The police service is male dominated, like the armed forces, so police officers may also be less likely to seek help for an alcohol problem. According to the Home Office, police officers who test positive for alcohol in a breath test are disciplined, which may prevent them seeking help, through fears of losing their job or being ostracised by their peers.

There must be efforts to challenge the stigma around mental health and alcohol problems in police officers, and a first step is to conduct robust research to identify what proportion of the population are likely to meet criteria for heavy drinking and alcohol problems. Stigma surrounding mental health problems appears to have lowered in recent years, predominantly in response to a number of high profile media and public health campaigns, with specific programmes tailored to occupational

groups, such as military personnel, in response to academic research recommendations. However, recent interviews with UK police officers found that the "macho" culture of policing prevented officers from disclosing their mental health problems, through fears that they would appear weak and because of negative comments from colleagues (Edwards and Kotera, 2020). This stigma prevents police officers from getting the early interventions that they need, to prevent long-term mental health problems. Without formal help, police officers may be more likely to use alcohol to self-medicate, which could lead to alcohol problems.

In the UK, there are many campaigns aimed at reducing the stigma around mental health problems, particularly for men, who are three times more likely than women to die by suicide. But stigma still seems to be a major issue for police officers. Workplace education, within police forces, should focus on reducing the stigma around mental health problems and alcohol problems. Signposting to local mental health and alcohol services should be available through all police

forces. Academic research is needed to determine whether UK police officers are an occupational group at increased risk of alcohol harm, so that tailored alcohol interventions can be implemented, if needed.

Patricia Irizar is a doctoral researcher at the University of Liverpool affiliated to the N8 PRP. Her PhD is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and Alcohol Change UK.

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N8 PRP in Numbers



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