

Developing a Science and Technology Profession for Policing

9 October 2024



Developing a Science and Technology Profession for Policing

Date: 9th October 2024.

Venue: Cranfield University.

Summary

This report collates and records the activities, discussions and resulting outcomes of a one-day workshop held at Cranfield University on October 9th 2024 concerning the National Police Chiefs' Council's (NPCC) vision of defining and developing a coherent Science & Technology (S&T) workforce. The workshop brought together key stakeholders in both policing, government and academia to examine the benefits of having an S&T profession in policing, what it could look like, what is needed to deliver change, and what continued professional development is required for the policing sector. A primary goal of the workshop focused on understanding how academia and related key stakeholders can contribute to the delivery of an S&T profession.

To structure the workshop, attendees were placed into four syndicates, each governed by a facilitator, and asked to discuss and respond to the following two questions:

Question1: *“How do we develop an agile and resilient S&T Profession relevant for Policing and what would this look like?”*

Question 2: *“What is the role of academia and other service providers in delivering an S&T Profession for Policing and how is this best achieved?”*

This report captures, collates and formally outlines all participant responses to the above two questions and is intended to directly support the NPCC to develop new and innovative ideas and concepts in relation to the delivery of an S&T profession, and how academia may contribute. Workshop briefings were also provided by the British Computer Society and GO-Science, giving an insight into their existing professional frameworks and the lessons they learned through the development and deployment of them.

.Following analysis of this data, the subsequent recommendations are offered:

Recommendations (Question 1)

1. A mapping exercise must be conducted to identify what specialisms exist within the vast domain of S&T, which of these can support and improve policing practices and how, and where such expertise lies.
2. The 'areas of challenge' faced by policing must be better understood and documented, allowing S&T specialisms that could offer support to be mapped against these.
3. A review and evaluation of how policing recruit, retain, train and develop their S&T staff must be conducted to ensure fitness for purpose.

4. Any developed S&T profession must be agile, and recognise the logistical and financial challenges that will be faced immediately and in the future. A robust plan must be put in place to address these.
5. For an S&T profession to succeed, 'buy in' and continued long term support must be sought from senior leaders who recognise the value of it for policing.
6. A plan must be put in place to effectively measure the success or failure of an S&T profession as it grows, allowing risks to be mitigated, errors to be rectified and good practices to be magnified. Doing so enables transparency in police practices and facilitates public trust.
7. Policing must look inwards and address the limitations in knowledge that exist in regard to an awareness of the merits of S&T by its staff and how they should engage with it.

Recommendations (Question 2)

1. Both academia and policing must endeavour to better understand the landscape that each exists within, including their operational remits and restrictions.
2. Both academia and policing must clearly identify and define what they consider a successful working relationship looks like, and the scope of it.
3. Lessons must be learned from any existing pockets of successful academic-police collaboration and any best practice disseminated. Equally, we must understand why such relationships have failed in the past and endeavour to prevent the same things from occurring.
4. Both policing and academia must also explore what working together may entail and clearly define any viable relationship, which may include mechanisms such as placements or secondments, training, consultancy, research and project based activities.

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