

## Canterbury Centre for Policing Research

### Problems and Solutions in UK Policing

Day 2 – 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024

#### Presenter abstracts

Abdul Hye Miah and Dr Neil McBride

#### **Understanding the Face. How Facial recognition can disconnect the police from the public and what can be done about it.**

Facial recognition is being presented as a ‘game changer’ in policing. Whilst this might be true, the practice is often challenged based on ethical grounds and in the context of discrimination and the infringement of human rights (e.g. privacy, informed consent, racial bias/discrimination, mass surveillance). Drawing on the work of Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (1969), this paper will take a philosophical approach to delve deeper and explore the moral injury risk facial recognition technology poses as its use advances and expands to the police-public relationship and to policing by consent. Levinas argues that we recognise in the face, the ‘other’ from ourselves projecting outwards to discover the other. But this projection also carries with it certain emotions that can lead us to want to harm the other. The face therefore demands an ethical response and responsibility. To overcome this, a necessary communication needs to take place that facilitates qualities of the self such as empathy, compassion and patience amongst others. Crucially, Levinas underlines the importance of physical presence for this to occur. Thus, notwithstanding the benefits facial recognition can bring to crime reduction and detection, the point will be made that facial recognition, in presenting the face as numbers on geometric points diminishes the necessary communication between the self and the other that enlists and facilitates ethical response. This, in turn carries potential unintended consequences for police and how policing is done in the United Kingdom. The uniqueness of the face and the use of technology to use it as a tool for policing demands more profound thinking than past ‘game changers’ in policing history such as a fingerprint or even DNA left at the scene of a crime. It touches on more fundamental issues of what we want our police to be, to do and how we want to be policed. Moreover, it carries risk of adding further to existent moral injury felt by some communities in how they been policed. Solutions will not be easy but the paper will provide principles and guidelines to follow towards a conclusion of the discussion.

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Peter Heath, PhD candidate, Canterbury Christ Church University

#### **Exploring the impact of education led professionalization agenda in policing: Professional identity and engagement with Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

The professionalisation of public sector services is nothing new, from health and social care roles through to teaching across all levels from Primary through to Further Education and,

since 2018 and the launch of the Policing Education and Qualifications Framework (PEQF) policing has become the latest public service to pursue an education led approach to professionalisation.

There has been consideration on how the new entry routes are impacting those new recruits joining policing, there has however, been less consideration on how this education led professionalisation approach is impacting upon existing officers. These existing officers have constructed their own professional identity, and their perceptions of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) are based upon a set of existing cultural norms. This presentation sets out the PhD study that seeks to explore the impact on the professional identity of existing policing officers that this education led professionalisation of policing has had, and how this subsequently influences how they view and engage in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities.

It examines this through the application of Bourdieu's (1977) theoretical framework which has been adapted based on the work of Grenfell and James (1998) that provided the notion of fields within fields. This study is exploring if there is any change to the culture from three different perspectives; macro (the service), meso (The force) and a micro (the team or individual) and what impact any changes might have on how existing officers construct or reconstruct their professional identity and the impact on their engagement with their CPD based upon the changing landscape and role education in policing.

The study utilises a comparative case study approach for the full study, using a mixed methods approach to gather data from full or part-time Police Constables who joined the service through a non-PEQF entry route across three separate forces. Using a two-phase data collection approach, an initial survey was followed by a series of interviews that employs the use of metaphor and drawing to help officers explore how they construct their professional identity and consider how this construction might be challenged or changed by PEQF. This presentation looks to share some of the initial findings from the data collected from the first of those three forces, which is acting as a pilot, and consider how the learning from data collection from this force will then impact on the data collection from the remaining two forces.

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Chloe MacDonald, Cardiff University

### **Exploring how police officers and appropriate adults perceive and respond to vulnerability in police custody.**

My research was undertaken as part of my MSc in Forensic and Investigative Psychology, at CCCU, which I graduated with Distinction earlier this year. My area of interest is policing, specifically police custody, vulnerability and the Appropriate adult (AA) safeguard, having eight years experience in this field, and currently researching these topics as a PhD student with Cardiff University. My central research question during this project was 'How do police officers and AAs perceptions of vulnerability impact the interventions they make in custody on behalf of vulnerable suspects'. A mixed method approach was utilised, including an online survey consisting of a questionnaire and vignettes, and through semi structured interviews. Findings illustrate that AAs and police officers construct vulnerability in contrasting ways, impacting how they both recognise and respond to vulnerability when encountering vulnerable suspects in custody. Additionally, findings from the interviews highlight problems in partnership working between AAs and police officers, which also impacts on how vulnerable suspects are supported within custody. Several recommendations stem from the

research, involving how to improve both recognition of vulnerability, and individual and collaborative ways to respond to it.

Police officers and AAs were asked to complete a bias and attitudes questionnaire regarding different offending populations. They were then allocated to one out of four possible vignettes detailing a vulnerable suspect and asking which type of intervention they would make during the processes at police custody, such as receiving rights, reading of the caution, the police interview and receiving the outcome. The four possible vignettes were as follows: (1) Juvenile suspect – Overtly vulnerable (2) Juvenile suspect – Covertly vulnerable (3) Adult suspect – Overtly vulnerable (4) Adult suspect - Covertly vulnerable. Regarding the vulnerability types, this represented the different ways in which vulnerability may present at police custody. For example, sometimes through a person's behaviour it can be easier to spot if they are vulnerable, if they perhaps verbalise their confusion, or are distressed. On the other hand, there maybe suspects who are quiet and withdrawn, which can be mistaken for them understanding a situation, which may mean their vulnerability is unidentified, leaving them at risk without the appropriate support. Both situations present vulnerability, but only one is often recognised, and therefore responded to, in police custody. The vignettes were carefully constructed to represent a suspect's journey in custody. The attitudes and biases from the questionnaire regarding offenders, was then compared to the interventions taken regarding suspects.

Follow up interviews took place with both AAs and officers, in which their perceptions of vulnerability were explored, as well as their experiences responding to and policing vulnerability. This included an in-depth exploration of the types of interventions both groups make in their roles when encountering vulnerable suspects, as well as any barriers to making these interventions. Police officers highlighted problems with policing vulnerability, referencing lack of training and managerial support. AAs voiced issues with their working relationship with officers, which impacted on the interventions they made. In summary, this study is well placed to comment on policing vulnerability and partnership working the in the criminal justice system.

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Kristina Massey, Canterbury Christ Church University

### **Missed Opportunities for Safeguarding of Vulnerable Victims: some findings from Operation Soteria.**

Charge rates for rape are rising in England and Wales, 3 years ago, 1.6% of rapes reported to the police in England and Wales were charged. This rate currently sits at 3.2%. This means that most people that report rape will get no protection from the Criminal Justice System, their perpetrator will not be charged let alone convicted. As such what is being done to protect vulnerable victims or rape and serious sexual assault? It is well established that victims of rape are known to their perpetrator making them vulnerable to repeat victimisation. Additionally, Operation Soteria found that an astounding 40% of reported rapes were domestic rapes (between partners or ex-partners). These victims have a host of vulnerabilities that make it difficult or even impossible to protect themselves from their perpetrator. Recommendations and good practice will be discussed for helping these vulnerable victims.

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Ian Palmer, University of central Lancashire (UCLan)

### **Reflective Practice as the missing component in police decision-making.**

#### **Reporting the results of a rapid evidence review of the influence of reflective practice upon police decision-making.**

The origins of reflective practice (RP) can be traced to the early 20th century writings of John Dewey, whose ideas were systematically applied into professional settings by scholars such as Donald Schon in the second half of that century. The positive contribution of RP is well documented in academic and professional literature, demonstrating the benefits to well-being, organisational effectiveness, and individual decision-making. The characteristics of a reflective practitioner are closely aligned to the hallmarks of a profession, which is a recognition that policing in the UK has long sought.

The Police Education and Qualifications Framework (PEQF) was introduced by the College of Policing in 2018 as a central plank of a professionalisation agenda in UK policing. The PEQF is a timely intervention, as the conduct of policing is of current concern in several western democracies, the root which appears to be individual officer decision-making, as opposed to political or sociological ideology.

The findings of Baroness Casey's 2023 review into the standards of behaviour and culture of the metropolitan police service, whilst located in one UK police organisation, are suspected to be present in varying degrees throughout the UK.

This presentation reports on the findings of a rapid evidence review (REA) of the relationship between RP and police decision-making, undertaken as part of a doctoral degree which is investigating whether individual police officer decision making can be improved through engagement with reflective practice.

Given the age of RP as a concept, and its established presence in other professions, such as teaching and healthcare, the expectation of a body of literature about the application of RP in policing was disappointingly unmet. Adapting an accepted methodology this REA identified a body of literature using the SPIDER search strategy (Sample. Phenomenon. Design. Evaluation. Research), whereby police decision making, and RP were present. The initial return of 716 documents was reduced through screening processes to a final collection of 42 documents. Of these only 6 reported findings of empirical studies into the phenomenon of RP in police decision making. Due to the scarcity of results the original parameters were extended to include non-empirical papers, that addressed police decision making and RP in explicit but conceptual terms, and empirical studies on police decision making, where RP could be inferred, through variables such as procedural justice.

The results of this REA articulate in the clearest of terms, the paucity of evidence about the relationship between RP and police decision making, against the backdrop of established evidence in other professions, an unrelenting demand within policing for enhanced expertise as decision makers, and an emerging consensus amongst policing scholars that RP must be part of a new emerging culture in policing. Of further significance, this REA informs a forthcoming doctoral study of police decision making and RP in a large northern UK police constabulary.

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Prof Jason Roach, University of Huddersfield

### **The future of Problem Solving and Evidence Based Policing, and why the biggest threat is police.**

The psychology of influence is a broad church, with many different aspects relevant for initiatives to solve crime problems and improve policing. Many, however, remain lesser-known and under-utilised as ways in which police, offender, and victim, decision making could be influenced to better prevent and reduce crime. Suggestions will be made for where and how policing and crime prevention might benefit most from adopting ways of influencing people beyond 'nudge'. Focus will also be placed on how problem solving and EBP need to become better integrated in future and why the biggest threat to EBP may be police themselves!

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John Bell, Ulster University and Sgt Michelle Martin, Police Service of Northern Ireland

### **A Partnership for Problem-Solving? A Case Study of the Collaboration between Ulster University and the Police Service of Northern Ireland on the Probationary Officer Development Programme**

Michael Davidson, Jonny Byrne, Philip McCready and John Bell (Ulster University)

There is a growing body of international research documenting the positive impact of Police-Higher Education Institution (HEI) collaboration on training, education and professional development (Engel and Whalen, 2010; Paterson, 2011; Guillaume et al., 2012; Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2014). At an organisational level, closer collaboration can help HEIs and police in their attempt to overcome differing principles and priorities (Bradley and Nixon, 2009). At an individual level, benefits to officers participating in Higher Education include the development of confidence, knowledge, communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving techniques (Jones, 2015). However, cultural and philosophical barriers within the police and HEIs (Steinheider et al., 2012), alongside organisational structure and the operational practicalities of policing (Norman and Williams, 2017), can limit the impact of the transfer of learning from theory to practice (McCanney et al., 2021; Watkinson-Miley et al., 2021).

Discussion around Police-HEI collaborations in a UK context has gathered pace in the wake of the 'professionalisation' agenda and the introduction of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) from 2020 onwards (Holdaway, 2017); yet there has been little research to date documenting the nature of any collaborations in Northern Ireland between the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Higher Education sector.

This paper seeks to remedy this knowledge-gap by focusing upon the collaboration and partnership work between Ulster University (UU) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland with regards to the training of probationary police officers. As part of this partnership, all probationary PSNI officers are required to complete either a BSc Honours Degree in Policing and Criminology (Applied Practice) (for those with no current degree) or a Graduate Certificate in Policing and Criminology (Applied Practice) (for those entering with a degree). The Graduate Certificate involves probationary officers completing two PSNI-led, UU accredited

modules which focus on 12 practical training themes such as Missing Persons, Mental Health and Vulnerability, Community Safety, Safeguarding and Ethical Practice. The Degree programme, taught within the University setting, requires probationary officers to complete these two PSNI-led modules alongside two UU-led modules which focus on Problem-Solving Policing and Community, Victims and Public Confidence. Reflective practice and operational applicability are core to the teaching and assessment across all of the modules.

The paper draws upon qualitative and quantitative data from the past two years of the programme, primarily via four focus groups with probationary officers (n=33) and a survey focusing on problem solving policing (n=129). The data highlights many positive benefits for officers in relation to their operational practice, particularly around issues such as interacting with victims, missing persons and adopting a whole procedural approach. However, statistical analysis of the problem solving survey data using SPSS software revealed a more complex interaction between theory and practice. While 97.7% of respondents post-course said they were confident that they understand what problem-solving involves, current operational pressures led to 89.8% of respondents suggesting it was difficult to fully implement in a response role.

The results illustrate that translating theory into operational practice for response officers in Northern Ireland, particularly with regards to problem solving, is challenging within the current climate where they are attempting to deal with resourcing and legacy issues as well as the increasing complexity of their role.

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Dr Louise Allen-Walker and Dan Williams, Cardiff Metropolitan University

### **Promoting ethical and moral reflection within higher education programmes that are concerned with enhancing community safety and wellbeing, in particular policing education.**

The National Police Chiefs' Council and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (2016) places ethics and moral education as a priority in the National Policing Curriculum, and so there is an obvious need for universities to place the interrogation of individual moral standards at the forefront of the training and education of policing students. This is often achieved through the embedding of moral philosophy within the curriculum and scenario-based reflection throughout the delivery of the degree.

To achieve this, it is necessary for practitioners to evaluate the effectiveness of different frameworks that can be used as delivery mediums within the classroom. One such framework belongs to Singer (1972), who created a set of moral calculus dilemma that require those answering to carefully consider moral behaviour and the impacts of their actions or lack of.

This also aligns with the Policing Education Qualifications Framework which prioritises moral and ethical reasoning as core skills for future police officers. By instilling students with the tools to consider their decisions from an ethical and moral standpoint, we are equipping them with reflexive skills that are required for employment within the police and related fields. We therefore feel that the utilisation of Singer's dilemma represents opportunities for authentic learning and assessment. Through the promotion of ethical and moral reflexivity, the aim is to create individuals that will be able to support their communities by making decisions based on critical consideration and introspection. Higher education can therefore play a role in

developing skills and attributes that underpin the Code of Ethics and are associated with understanding citizenship, such as tolerance, willingness to embrace alternative perspectives, empathy, and moral and ethical reasoning.

We are seeking to understand the contemporary relevance of this perspective. This will be achieved through consideration of decision-making principles and a reflection on the moral attitudes of practitioners and professionals.

This presentation will explore the relevance of these moral dilemmas within current policing education and related practice, while also considering the relevance of psychological research examining unconscious bias. Particularly in terms of the impacts of gender, age and race on decisions. Qualitative data from practitioners within related fields, e.g. social and youth work, social policy, as well as police officers will be utilised to understand the role of these dilemma in higher education. These participants will also provide quantitative data in the form of moral decisions within policing to enable examination of differences between these groups. Participants will also provide the reasons for these decisions. These moral scenarios, and the reasons for responses, are taken from the 'Virtues in Policing Project' (Maile et al., 2022).

Participants will discuss Singer's dilemmas and the moral scenarios, a group discussion of how these dilemmas could continue to be utilised within police education. Finally, we will compare and contrast the discussion responses with the responses from our data collection. Participants who attend our talk will leave with a potential teaching tool that they can utilise with policing students or police officers who are new to the service.

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Dr Andy Tatnell, Edinburgh Napier University

### **A Degree is not necessarily the answer to police professionalisation: A comparative analysis of police professionalisation through Higher Education (or not) in Scotland, Sweden, and Finland.**

Policing in Scotland is not following the graduate-entry only approach towards police professionalisation which has been adopted not only elsewhere within the United Kingdom

(England and Wales) but also in many other countries around the world.

In discussing why, this paper draws on some of the key findings from my recently completed doctoral study which explored the role of Higher Education as part of wider police professionalisation strategies, through the lenses of initial police learning in Scotland, Sweden, and Finland. Based on 49 individual semi-structured interviews with strategic, tactical, and operational police officers, police staff, police unions, academics, and those in quasi-political oversight and governance roles these findings showed that: policy in the case study countries had been formed largely on professional judgement and political ideology rather than research; that these judgements had been influenced by different socially, culturally, and politically constructed notions of profession, professionalism and professionalisation; that policing is a best a hybrid profession; and that the extent of interplay and the power relationships between the three worlds of politics, academia, and policing is important in the policy formulation pathway.

These findings provide new empirical evidence which help to explain why there is no consensus of approach to initial police learning, including the extent to which it should be aligned with, or involve, Higher Education. They also show that policing is not trait-based 'pure' profession which requires new entrants to be graduates but is at best 'hybrid' combining "professional and managerial principles" (Noordegraaf, 2015, pp.187-188) and that different degrees of hybridity might exist within different social, cultural, and political contexts. They also show that variables of social, cultural, and political context are important with regards policy formulation, particularly the extent of alignments and schisms within and between the 'three-worlds' of politics, academia, and policing, more so than research.

Given these findings, it is argued that the trait-based notion of profession, professionalism, and professionalisation associated with the 'classic' professions through graduate entry only is not necessarily the answer and that professionalisation strategies should reflect the social, cultural, and political contexts within which different police services operate.

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Steven Wadley and Matt Phillips, Birmingham City University

### **Uniforms and Degrees: Investigating Student Opinions of Higher Education and Policing**

This paper details a pilot study of student (under 18) attitudes towards higher education and policing and focuses on the feeder schools and colleges to Birmingham City University (BCU), who fall within the West Midlands geographical area. The purpose of this work is to better understand student motivations and appetites for both higher education and employment, with a particular focus on policing as a profession. Additionally, the study seeks to determine if students are aware of the range of career opportunities outside of the 'traditional' police officer role, recognising civilian staff positions as potential jobs of the future.

As of January 2020, the route into becoming a police officer became a graduate-focused profession, offering three distinct pathways: Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA), Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP) and Professional Policing Degree (PPD). However, recent developments within policing education have reinvigorated the Initial Police Learning Development Programme (IPLDP) pathway, offering a non-academic route alternative, with plans for the new Police Constable Entry Point (PCEP) to be offered at force level from April 2024 (College of Policing, 2023), as a successor to the IPLDP.

The shift from policing being a graduate only profession, to one with non-academic entryways, may mean that personal motivations to commit to a three-year university course such as the BSc in Professional Policing at BCU (just one of the 46 accredited PPD providers) may decrease, which could in turn, impact Higher Education Institutions (HEI) intakes and course numbers. Further exploration on the perceived value of a degree qualification and young people's perceptions of policing, will be key factors in the development and growth of professional policing and related academic offers at university - hence the need for this study.

Participants are recruited via Birmingham City University outreach events, where schools and colleges within the broader West Midlands area, request HEI's to deliver university level



lectures and talks in disciplines such as Policing, Criminology and Sociology, either at the school or college itself, or on Birmingham City University premises. Participants access a QR code (shown at the end of the outreach talks) and are asked to complete an anonymous MS Teams questionnaire, offering low-cost and timely access to a niche participation group (Wright, 2017).

Over the next three months (October to December 2023) we will be gathering our initial tranche of data from our feeder schools and colleges and in the following two months (December 2023 to January 2024) will prepare our first presentation showing preliminary findings and emerging themes linked to higher education and policing. Further findings will be disseminated via professional networks, conferences, and the generation of journal articles, with the potential to be shared with policing organisations.

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Dr. Sharda Murria, Senior Lecturer in Policing and Criminology, Birmingham City University

### **Balancing legality and legitimacy in stop and search encounters in the era of BWVs.**

This paper examines the interaction between officers and citizens during stop and search encounters as understood via observations of Body-Worn Video (BWV) footage, officer interviews and community stop and search scrutiny panels. The paper examines the use of BWVs, both as a visibility tool for gaining a more in-depth understanding of how police stops unfold, and as an evidentiary tool capable of increasing police accountability and perceptions of police legitimacy. It draws upon a mixed-methods Ph.D. study which included the social systematic observation of BWV footage of 65 stop and search encounters, 22 observations of community stop and search scrutiny panels, and 30 interviews with police officers and community scrutiny panel members at West Midlands Police. The social systematic observation of BWV footage of stop and search encounters provides an insight into *how* stop and searches are conducted. Officer interviews explain *why* officers conduct their searches in that manner, and community scrutiny panel observations and interviews with panel members provide a further understanding of *how should* searches be conducted from a community perspective.

The misuse of stop and search powers has resulted in a loss of public confidence and has negatively impacted public perceptions of police legitimacy (Bowling and Phillips, 2007; Delsol and Shiner, 2015). It is widely acknowledged that a lawful stop and search is not necessarily a 'good' stop and search. Both public expectations and police guidance have evolved to require both lawful *and* legitimate stop and searches, the latter requiring fairer policing strategies such as adopting the procedural justice model. The detrimental impact of failing to adhere to the procedural justice model during stop and search encounters is well-established in academic literature (Bradford, 2017). However, there is no clear definition of what constitutes a 'good' stop and search and the literature is primarily derived from surveys, with few studies having examined how officers interpret and demonstrate procedural justice adherence in practice.

This paper examines how officers demonstrate compliance with legality, via GOWISELY, and compliance with police legitimacy, via procedural justice. It explores the methods and tactics which officers use during their interactions with the public to conform to these expectations and how these may be received by citizens. The paper also discusses influences and barriers

officers encounter in adhering to these expectations including variations in officer teams, training, BWVs, operational concerns and risk management, and the 'new visibility' of policing (Goldsmith, 2010).

In addition, the paper also considers the impact of the BWV itself. It discusses how BWV footage has prompted a shift in community stop and search scrutiny panels engaging in greater scrutiny of procedural justice, often at the cost of scrutinising lawfulness. It also considers the extent to which BWVs provide greater transparency and accountability over stop and search encounters and the practical limitations of BWV footage in providing a true and accurate understanding of stop and search encounters as they unfold. It also examines opportunities for wider learning and development to strengthen stop and search practice.

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Arianna Barbin, University of Suffolk

### **Police Specialism in England and Wales: an exploratory review**

**Background:** Although the concept of specialism has not been researched in criminal justice contexts as much as it has been in other fields, our understanding of specialism can be more broadly extended and translated to the reality of police forces. For instance, specialist tasks are very generally regarded as tasks that go beyond the traditional day-to-day duties of a police officer and that are used to appropriately handle specific types of crimes, victims, and perpetrators. However, the absence of validated criteria, tailored for a policing context to differentiate specifically what police specialism looks like in England and Wales, creates confusion and misunderstandings. This lack of knowledge means we, as of yet, have little understanding of how police specialism affects officers' wellbeing, perceived competence, and performance. Improving the clarity around police specialism is becoming increasingly relevant. Especially, as emerging needs for further professionalisation have been clashing with the localist structure of police forces. Thus, frequently results in diluted expertise and unnecessarily duplicated resources.

**Purpose:** This is the first out of three PhD studies intended to shed light on police specialism in England and Wales. More specifically, the researcher was interested in documenting the first-hand experiences, perceptions, and opinions of specialism among police officers. The study's aim was to establish what police specialism looks like in practice, and what the current literature tells us about how specialism affects policing, adding valuable insights towards academic and police knowledge on the topic, but most especially giving a voice to police officers.

**Methods:** Data collection was divided into two separate strands: a review of academic and grey literature (Strand 1) and an online survey shared with police personnel (Strand 2) across all forces in England and Wales.

**Findings:** This preliminary investigation highlighted some of the socio-cultural, policy-based, and historical information that contributed to the development of specialism in the police in their contemporary form. A scarcity of original studies published on the topic, showed a

consistent lack of appropriate terminology of how specialism is defined in practice and implemented across forces. Overall, common patterns have been identified as for how and why specialist units have been instituted in England and Wales over time. For instance, it was possible to highlight that specialist units are delineated by crime type and availability of resources, but also that the potential of units is not always maximised or protected. There is also some evidence that specialist units might have an impact on police efficacy, and that the specialist knowledge of officers working for within specialist units is frequently inferred – rather than measured. This is a characteristic that seems to be unique to policing. Additional findings revolved around insights on specialism from the police officers that took part in the study.

**Conclusion:** Findings from this preliminary study informed the next stages of research, which will gather even more data on the potential advantages and the perceived challenges of specialism within policing, in the attempt of shaping what specialism should look like based on policing needs and concerns.

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**CCPR 17-18 January 2024 Conference**  
**CCPR annual conference: problems and solutions in UK policing.**

Theme 3: Crime and Harm Prevention and Reduction: Innovative strategies, technologies, and partnerships to prevent and reduce crime and harm.

Nadine Hendrie, University of Kent, Helen Glasspoole-Bird Open University, & Alex Stevens University of Kent.

**Police Drug Diversion (PDD): A realist impact, process, and economic evaluation- Collaboration, Manualisation and Theory of Change.**

While drugs policing often involves enforcement interventions that seek to tackle drug problems through criminal sanctions, in England and Wales diversion now occupies a central position in police responses to people suspected of either a drug offence or an offence related to their drug use. Police-led drug diversion (PDD) schemes have the potential to reduce the harms that are done by, and to, people who use drugs (Spyt & Kew in Bacon & Spicer, 2023). They are offered to people who are caught by the police in unlawful possession of substances that are controlled under the UK's Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. People can be diverted away from prosecution and criminal sanctions and towards educative, therapeutic or support services. Diversion schemes are shaped by both national and force-led policy.

In this paper we present the initial findings of a large-scale Cabinet Office funded national evaluation of three contrasting PDD schemes in Durham, Thames Valley, and West Midlands. This ongoing mixed methods project led by the University of Kent adopts a realist framework to evaluate the effects of PDD on crime, health, public spending and to explore any inequalities in the use and effects of PDD schemes.

The first phase of the evaluation was producing PDD scheme manuals in order to inform a fidelity assessment. The process was collaborative and workshops were held in the three scheme areas as well as a national stakeholder's workshop. Representation included police

management, front line police officers, diversion service providers, academic partners, researchers from a lived experience organisation and people with direct experience of being policed. Prior to the workshops, descriptions of the schemes were captured through a TIDieR Framework (Template for Intervention and Replication, Cochrane), which was used to interrogate the scheme's complexities, compare scheme specific elements of diversion and gain operational insight into how diversion operates. The workshops also tested ideas that emerged from the literature and informed the programme theory of change.

A programme theory based on a realist review of alternatives to criminalisation for the Irish government (Stevens et al., 2022) informed the initial design for this research project. The review established that depending on specific combinations of contexts, mechanisms and outcomes, alternative measures can reduce harms imposed by criminal justice processes without increasing drug use or related health and crime harms. A rapid review of more recent evidence (published since June 2018) was conducted to produce a revised programme theory of change of how diversion schemes work. This theory of change will be used to inform other phases of the project which include the collection and analysis of qualitative data (including interviews with police, diversion provision partners and those with lived experience of being diverted) and quantitative data (including data from Police National Computer and NHS databases) to answer the research questions.

The evaluation outcomes will expand a limited UK evidence base for police drug diversion and will inform the Government 2025 spending review.

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Dr Michel Funicelli, Canterbury Christ Church University

### **The Complex Trial Protocol, an innovative way to get to the truth**

Abstract: The P300 is a well-studied electrical brainwave which appears as a positive (P) deflection on an electroencephalogram (EEG) and occurs about 300 to 600 ms (300) – ergo the label P300 - after a person is presented with a meaningful and novel stimulus. It is detectable by placing electrodes on the scalp of a person and it is considered as a reliable index of memory recognition, underpinned by robust scientific evidence. The leading theory of this brainwave is the orienting reflex, an involuntary psychophysiological reaction to a stimulus that is new to an organism's environment, and which carries special significance. The Complex Trial Protocol is a reliable and sound methodology in analysing P300 brainwaves. In forensic circles it can be used to determine if a person involved in a crime, as a witness or a suspect, recognizes or not crucial pieces of information in relation to that crime and only known to the perpetrator or witness, and the authorities.

The P300 brainwave used in the context of a Concealed Information Test (CIT) can determine if that person is in mental possession of that crucial piece of information or not, and an inference of guilt or innocence can be drawn, by the trier of fact, from the findings. The CIT is easy to understand. A person is presented with a crucial piece of information (called '*probe*') on a computer screen, such as the murder weapon, the wound pattern of a victim, the crime scene, the face of an accomplice or the face of an attacker, in the case of a victim, and it is assorted with a series of neutral alternatives (called '*irrelevants*'). Following a statistical analysis, significant spike differences, measured in microvolts, between the *probe* and *irrelevants*, provide a quantitative value of the memorial recognition of stimuli presented.

Performed on a suspect prior to a formal interview, this memory recognition technique can easily be incorporated as a form of credibility assessment within an interview strategy. For example, if a suspect's pre-interview test confirms the recognition of crucial stimuli only known to the author and the authorities and is followed by the suspect's denial of the same information during the interview, the test can be a useful element for an interviewer.

Alternatively, the same test could be administered to crime witnesses. A major problem faced by law enforcement agencies worldwide is the unreliability of eyewitness identification and scarcity of physical clues at crime scenes. The body of evidence in mistaken eyewitness identification as a major contributing factor to wrongful convictions is considerable. Police agencies only collect physical evidence in approx. 15% or less of crime scenes. This relatively inexpensive and non-invasive technique is most likely to benefit law enforcement and national security agencies throughout the world in reducing erroneous suspect identification.

This presentation features the unveiling of recent data from 4 lab experiments involving autobiographical data, verbal versus pictorial stimuli and levels of processing in a mock theft scenario, and the use of multiple pictorial probe stimuli (i.e., explosive device, crime scene, and face of accomplice) in a mock terrorism scenario.

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