

N8 PRP  
Annual Report  
2018/19



POLICING  
RESEARCH  
PARTNERSHIP



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## Director's Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this, the fourth, Annual Report of the N8 Policing Research Partnership (N8 PRP). In late 2018, we celebrated the fifth anniversary of the inaugural conference at which the N8 PRP formally was launched in November 2013. In looking back, it is evident that much has been achieved since then. This report broadly covers the third year of the HEFCE (now Office for Students) Catalyst Grant – from May 2018 to April 2019. What follows does not set out to constitute a comprehensive summary of all that has been done or achieved in that 12 month period – that would be a rather boring tome, I fear. Rather this report seeks to highlight and narrate a selection of the features, impacts and stories of change that have occurred in recent months. It affords an opportunity to hear from some of the people and organisations with whom we have collaborated closely about their experiences, gains and challenges. It is my sincere hope that these insights into the working of the partnership help informed the ongoing dialogue about how best to enhance the evidence base for policing and how to foster organisational and cultural change among policing practitioners and researchers.

This report draws together articles that touch on diverse priorities and strengths of our partnership. We highlight the role that the N8 PRP has been playing in generating new knowledge through the small grants scheme and some of the co-production projects that we have supported, the impacts they have made and the people that have benefited from them (see pp 6 – 15). **These small grant projects have consistently demonstrated how significant, curiosity-driven and application-oriented research with considerable impact can be fostered with small levels of investment and a large dose of enthusiasm, commitment and institutional support from within a partnership framework that nurtures knowledge co-creation.** Additionally, we feature some of the work the partnership has pursued in promoting organisational learning and innovation (pp 16 – 25). The challenges of mobilising and utilising data in evidence-based

policing has been a major focus of the partnership and we report on some of the activities and initiatives that the N8 PRP has been pioneering, including: the data analysts continuing professional development (CPD) programme – now in its second year – and data mobilisation workshops (pp 26 – 29).

While the N8 PRP is partnership rooted in and focused on the north of England, from the outset we have accorded significant regard to the national and international engagement and impact of our work. In this light, a number of articles engage with national debates and draw upon contributions from our national advisors, including Gloria Laycock and Sara Thornton (pp 30 – 31 & 34 – 35). We also include a number of reflections from our international work and the relations we have been building with international partners (pp 38 – 43). These highlight the abundant opportunities and benefits that derive from cross-national



I look forward to working with our new advisors and existing partners in planning for next five year stage of development from 2020 to 2025

collaborations, comparative lesson-sharing and organisational learning. I am also delighted that we are able to include some of the insights, learning and knowledge exchange that have been derived from the cohort of collaborative PhD studentships working with the N8 PRP (pp 46 – 51).

**Throughout, the principles and methodologies of knowledge co-production inform the design and ethos of the N8 PRP.** Over the past five year we have been seeking to advance the case for knowledge generation in policing that is socially distributed, application-oriented, trans-disciplinary and subject to multiple accountabilities, as the basis for a transformation in the way academics engage with policing practitioners and the value and application of knowledge, data and evidence within policing. In this report, Gloria Laycock likens co-production to a 'marriage made in heaven' (p.30). Like many marriages, however, it requires a lot of work, negotiation, reflection, compromise, consideration and mutual understanding. The practice of co-production is never easy, but always rewarding.

**Our experiences from implementing the N8 partnership highlight that science or 'evidence' alone is not enough to ensure the utilisation of research. They underscore the complex interplay between knowledge (evidence), values (politics) and implementation (behaviour change).** As such, they highlight the need for a pluralistic notion of what constitutes evidence and the appropriate methods for its production, as well as a nuanced, relational and non-linear understanding of the social processes through which knowledge generation, translation and application occur. Realising organisational change demands building relationships of mutual respect, fluid and permeable disciplinary boundaries, the absence of a rigid hierarchy of knowledge forms and a normative concern with action.

For partnerships like ours to play an evident role in transforming organisational cultures (amongst both policing and research communities), they also need to be embedded and sustained in frontline practices. As such, they necessitate the active participation and involvement of those who are charged with applying knowledge in the process of its production. The reality is that successful inter-organisational research partnerships need to be forged, nurtured and supported at all levels by people committed to realising the benefits of collaborative working and exploiting the (sometimes disruptive) opportunities for innovation and cross-cultural learning that boundary crossing and knowledge co-production provide.

**Co-production has both ethical and practical inferences. Sheila Jasanoff (2004: 6) puts this well: 'Co-production is not about ideas alone; it is equally about concrete, physical things. It is not only about how people organise and express themselves, but also about what they value and how they assume responsibility for their interventions'.**

On behalf of the partnership, I would like to express thanks to a number of people who have contributed considerably to the development and work of the N8 PRP but have now left us due to retirement, change of employment or transfer to a different role. First, Nicky Miller left the College of Policing in late 2018 and stepped down as our primary point of contact with the College. Since, the launch of the Catalyst programme, Nicky has been a close friend, adviser and supporter of the N8 PRP. We always benefited from her sage counsel and from contributions to the Steering

Group. Nicky also served on the Independent Panel of Assessors for our small grants awards and we wish her well in her future plans. However, we are delighted that she has been replaced, as the College's link, by Rebecca Teers. Dr Jude Towers has been an immensely important member of the N8 PRP team leading the Training & Learning Strand and playing an instrumental role in the development of the data analysts CPD programme. Jude has now moved from Lancaster University to a Senior Lectureship at Liverpool John Moores University, where she has continued to support the N8 PRP in collaboration with Lancaster colleagues. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her commitment, inspiration and energy from which we have all benefited greatly. I would also like to thank Sara Thornton both for her contribution to this Annual Report and to her support for the N8 PRP over the years. I am very pleased that Martin Hewitt, Sara's replacement as Chair of the National Police Chief's Council has agreed to join our Advisory Board.

I look forward to working with our new advisors and existing partners in planning for next five year stage of development from 2020 to 2025. I hope that you find this report informative, enlightening and engaging and if you wish to find out more please contact the project team – s.abraham@leeds.ac.uk – or visit the project website at: [www.n8p.k](http://www.n8p.k)

*Adam Crawford, Director of the N8 Policing Research Partnership and Professor at the University of Leeds.*





## Foreword

I am delighted to be given this opportunity to share my views about the positive engagement with the N8 Policing Research Partnership (N8 PRP) over the last 5 years.

The police service operates in an environment of change linked to increasing complexity and demand. Calls for service from the public, and recorded crime levels, are rising, so the challenge continues of providing a sophisticated response with reduced resources across the public sector.

Forces need to continue to adapt to the modern policing environment and keep pace with on-line offending, to deliver a victim focused service that ultimately protects communities, tackles criminals and problem solves to manage demand.

There continues to be immense appetite from Durham Constabulary as a key policing partner within N8 PRP, for greater collaboration and aligning academic research with police priorities. Through events, such as the Policing Innovation Forum and the N8 PRP's register of experts, Durham Constabulary has gained a means of accessing research expertise on a plethora of subjects.

Personally, I consider relationship building and networking as one of the 'big wins' to come out of the N8 PRP membership which has enabled many cross collaborative opportunities.

I look forward to our further partnership working.

*Ron Hogg*  
Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner





## Introducing Small Grants

Jill Clark

The Small Grants scheme sits within the Co-production strand of the Catalyst project, managed by Newcastle University. The overall aim has been to offer funds to support pump-priming, development, and innovative exploratory projects. Through a competitive process, we have – over the course of 4 rounds – funded 15 projects to the tune of some £340K.

The application process. The process for bidding and awarding funds has deliberately been designed to be robust, transparent and as easy as possible to apply. We have launched each round at the annual Policing Innovation Forum (PIF) in the November, with closing dates of mid-January each following year. Each PIF has been themed – Cybercrime, Domestic Abuse, Early Intervention Policing and Policing Mental Health. We encouraged some applications related to each theme. However, this did not limit our scope and we received other applications each year, some of which were funded. The application form itself is not onerous, with fixed section lengths, eligibility criteria and required information. This has worked particularly well to ensure a level playing field although several applicants over the years have tried to (unsuccessfully) subvert the system by expanding boxes, reducing font sizes and adding supplementary appendices!

The review process. Following each closing date, a team from Newcastle University – Dr Jill Clark, Karen Laing, Dr Pam Woolner and Dr Laura Mazzoli Smith have reviewed all applications each year to short-list. In terms of numbers, this equates to 71 applications received in total over the 4 rounds,

shortlisting to 36 bids in total. The team at Newcastle has a combined 75 years of research experience and represent a variety of discipline areas and methodological expertise, which we drew upon each year when reviewing. The process was very rewarding and enjoyable, as we looked for examples of co-production, innovative approaches to research and potential impact within each application. Those applications that we rated higher on these criteria were more likely to be shortlisted.

Reflections. Each year we have noted that the quality of the applications has increased, with bids demonstrating stronger potential impact and well-established partnerships. Our eligibility requirements state that each application must include an N8 university and policing partner, and what have noted that each year the teams have become larger, and have included multiple policing partners, and those outside of academia and policing, such as charities and community-based organisations.

Another point to reflect upon is the 'joining up' of the small grants scheme with other strands of the Catalyst project. There is a danger that the scheme sits isolated, but the direct link with the Policing Innovation



Forum has been particularly effective. There has been a variety of activities undertaken, particularly with the Training and Learning strand, where we have offered several sharing/dissemination events and the summer schools, where the small grant holders have featured centrally. Finally, the small grants awards are inextricably linked with the Evaluation strand of the project and the general impact evidence collection exercises by the Leeds team. The real impacts of the small grants scheme may not be seen for several years, and it is important we track and follow these as much as we can. It will be fascinating to see exactly what an award may lead to, whether it is changing policing practice and/or policy, feeding into CPD and training, leading to further funding or impacting on working relationships between academics and policing partners.

*Dr Jill Clark is Principal Research Associate and Executive Director of the Research Centre for Learning and Teaching, Newcastle University*

## In Conversation

Phil Larratt

One of the first round of N8 PRP small grants (2016-17) included the project: 'Policing Bitcoin: Investigating, Evidencing and Prosecuting Crime Involving Cryptocurrency' conducted by a team including: Philip Larratt (National Crime Agency), Paul Taylor (Greater Manchester Police), David S. Wall (University of Leeds), Syed Naqvi (Birmingham City University), Matthew Shillito and Rob Stokes (Liverpool University). Here, Phil Larratt, a member of the team, reflects on the project and its impact.

### What were your personal motivations for involvement in the N8 PRP Small Grant project?

In 2014, we investigated a complex case of cryptocurrency money laundering. At the time there was a lack of knowledge across UK law enforcement regarding both investigative methods and evidential opportunities. Following the conclusion of the investigation we searched for opportunities to further develop our understanding and identified the N8 research fund.

### Have there been any personal benefits to you by being involved with the project?

Yes, as a result of partaking in the N8 PRP project Paul Taylor [one of the other team members] and I both successfully applied for the College of Policing research grant – we are both now in the final stages of completing Masters degrees which are directly linked to cryptocurrency research.

### Have there been any professional or career development benefits from your involvement in the project?

As a result of the N8 PRP project, I spoke at various conferences and subsequently moved from local law enforcement to the National Crime Agency where I am still actively involved in live investigations and

tactical advice to UK law enforcement. Paul Taylor has moved from Greater Manchester Police to the North West Regional Cyber Crime Unit, which also gives him oversight of local and regional cryptocurrency investigations.

### Did the project allowed you to gain significant specialist knowledge in an emerging field?

Yes, the N8 fund gave us the autonomy to conduct some primary / practical research. The findings have been subsequently applied to real world investigations, which has resulted in several prosecutions and significant seizures of cryptocurrency assets.

### Has the project strengthened your links with academic colleagues and provided you with a better understanding of their field?

As per the above, working with academics as part of the N8 PRP encouraged us both to apply for post-grad degrees to further consolidate our learning and improve our writing / research skills. The report that was published by the N8 PRP as part of the research has been cited in various journal articles and reports regarding cryptocurrency investigations. Also Paul Taylor has recently had a paper published in the Journal Digital Communications and Networks entitled "A systematic review of blockchain cyber security".



### Reflecting on the developments since undertaking the project, what impact do you feel the research has had on best practice approaches to cryptocurrency and its associated criminality?

Since the project we have presented our findings at national and international conferences. We have also designed and delivered training to UK law enforcement and other key stakeholders. As a result, we have been able to lead and influence best practice by sharing our knowledge and learning with key law enforcement partners at local, regional and national levels.

*Phil Larratt is Senior Officer, National Cyber Crime Unit at the National Crime Agency.*



It has afforded me a brilliant opportunity to acquire specialist knowledge in an emerging field

## In Conversation

Michelle Addison, Kelly Stockdale and Iain McKinnon

One of the first round of N8 PRP small grants (2016-17) included the project: 'Exploring Novel Psychoactive Substance (NPS) use and its consequences for police practitioners and substance users in the North East of England' conducted by a team including: Michelle Addison, Kelly Stockdale, Ruth McGovern, Will McGovern, Iain McKinnon, Lisa Crowe, Lisa Hogan and Eileen Kaner. Here, three members of the team reflect on the project and its impact.

### What were your personal motivations for involvement in the N8 PRP Small Grant project?

**IAIN:** I think that the grant and the project overall opened up an opportunity to develop my knowledge and skills of NPS and qualitative methodologies. It was also a really

good opportunity to meet new collaborators and professionals via the engagement events. I think it has strengthened some of the police colleague links especially locally and has allowed me to take a wider view beyond my previous experience in risk assessment and health screening.

**MICHELLE:** The grant enabled me to acquire a greater understanding of an under-researched illicit substance and the impact this can have on an individual and the wider community. It was revealing how much pressure managing the repercussions of NPS had on custody staff and how dwindling resources made this even more challenging. The need to develop a suitable intervention was highlighted in our research, which N8 PRP made possible. This research also highlighted the connections between particular criminal offences (theft, breach of the peace, violence), access and supply of NPS, and increasing vulnerabilities amongst socially excluded individuals (young adults, homeless community).

**KELLY:** The grant was a fantastic opportunity to make links with new colleagues in other Universities, and disciplines, to my own. It also helped me to develop more specific knowledge in relation to NPS and also in relation to the police custody environment. I think the opportunity to do small research projects such as these – and specifically the collaborative nature of the project – has had a wide and long-lasting impact on my research career; inspiring further research, developing new ways of doing research, and developing good working relations.

### Have there been any personal benefits to you by being involved with the project?

**MICHELLE:** I have developed my knowledge of a range of illicit substances and the links to particular criminal offences as a result of partaking in this N8 PRP research. It has been a fantastic opportunity as an early career researcher to demonstrate my own Project Investigator skills and to deliver a project successfully and on time.

**KELLY:** There were many personal benefits from taking part in the research. Due to the nature of the N8 project the skills developed are much wider than research and writing, for example: working as a team, working in collaboration with the police, organising events, disseminating knowledge to different audiences. I feel like I have developed and consolidated my skills in all of these areas.

### Have there been any professional or career development benefits from your involvement in the project?

**MICHELLE:** It has been a fantastic opportunity, as an early career researcher, to demonstrate my own Project Investigator skills and to deliver a project successfully and on time. We were able to support an application to ERANID / DoHSC to

explore pathways into illicit substance use by evidencing some of the work we did through the N8 PRP award.

**KELLY:** Since working on the project my research career has focused more on drugs and the impact of drugs, for example I am currently working on a project with Durham Constabulary around drug markets, and I am also working on a new project with Northumbria Police around serious organised crime and young people. The project has also been developed further in summer 2018 we conducted research exploring the impact of NPS within a prison environment. In November 2018 I travelled to the Netherlands and spent time with their police custody staff with the aim to develop further comparative research in the future.

### Did the project allowed you to gain significant specialist knowledge in an emerging field?

**MICHELLE:** It has afforded me a brilliant opportunity to acquire specialist knowledge in an emerging field – in 2016 the Psychoactive Substances Act (PSA) was only just being introduced and as such the ramifications of curtailing NPS were unknown. Our research helped to provide some insights into the effect of the PSA 2016 on users and on the Police.

### Has the project strengthened your links with police and practitioner colleagues and provided you with a better understanding of their field?

**MICHELLE:** It has absolutely strengthened my links with the police – I am now working directly with Northumbria police to deliver on the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship at Northumbria University where I am now employed as a Lecturer of Criminology.

### Reflecting on the developments since undertaking the project, what impact do you feel the research has had on best practice approaches to NPS and its connection with offending behaviour?

**MICHELLE:** Since undertaking the study we have had communication with the Home Office to share the outputs of our research on NPS and we also submitted evidence to the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs: Call for Evidence – Custody-Community Transitions (2018). We have highlighted the impact of NPS on the area, police, and users at a high profile local event in the North East which included policymakers, health professionals, practitioners, academics and police. I think this study has provided solid foundations to take forward further research related to the prevalence of NPS now, and the development of an intervention that could perhaps be provided within a custody setting (e.g. prison, police custody).

*Dr Michelle Addison is a Lecturer in Criminology at the School of Social Sciences, Northumbria University; Dr Kelly Stockdale is Senior Lecturer in Criminology in the School of Psychological and Social Sciences at York St John's University; Dr Iain McKinnon is Honorary Clinical Senior Lecturer at the Newcastle University.*





## In Conversation

Kirk Luther

One of the second round of N8 PRP small grants (2017-18) included the project: 'The Manipulative Presentation Techniques of Control and Coercive Offenders' conducted by a team including: Dr Kirk Luther (Lancaster University); DI Julie Jackson (Cheshire Constabulary); Dr Steven Watson (Newcastle University); Professor Paul Taylor (Lancaster University); and Professor Laurence Alison (University of Liverpool). Here, Kirk Luther, a member of the team, reflects on the project and its impact.

### What were your personal motivations for involvement in the N8 PRP Small Grant project?

The N8 PRP Small Grant project was my first research grant after arriving in the UK to work at Lancaster University. The grant was the catalyst to working directly with Detective Inspector Julie Jackson (a member of the research team) and Cheshire Constabulary on an applied and important societal issue – the behaviours exhibited by coercive control suspects during investigative interviews. Overall, I am keen to ensure that my research is informed by real-world issues facing practitioners. Working directly with Julie ensured that we could conduct a collaborative research project that would hopefully lead to some real-world change.

### Have there been any personal benefits to you by being involved with the project?

There has been a wealth of personal benefits to being involved with the project. First and foremost, I have developed an excellent working relationship with Cheshire Constabulary and work in close collaboration with Julie. Julie is absolutely great to work with – she is passionate, knowledgeable, and keen to use empirical findings to inform policy and practice. Without a doubt she is the ideal collaborator! In addition, I have

gained invaluable specialist knowledge of the inner workings of the UK police and how their practices are similar to those in Canada and where they differ.

### Have there been any professional or career development benefits from your involvement in the project?

Being involved in the project has provided me with the opportunity to gain experience in managing a research grant, supervise a post-doctoral research assistant, and work across disciplines and professions. Further, the current project has already led to a follow-up research project that involves UK and international academics, as well as international police collaborators. Taken together, these are invaluable skills that have remarkably enhanced my professional development as an early career researcher.

### Did the project allowed you to gain significant specialist knowledge in an emerging field?

I have definitely gained significant special knowledge in an emerging field. The coercive control legislation is relatively new (enacted in November 2015) and there is a major gap in research examining this issue. Working with Julie Jackson, we have been able to accomplish something

that no other published research has – we have peered into the investigative interview to examine the behaviours of those suspected of coercive control to provide a picture of the manipulative behaviours being used by suspects. Once we have a better understanding of such behaviours, we can develop interventions to mitigate their negative effects.

### Has the project strengthened your links with police and practitioner colleagues and provided you with a better understanding of their field?

The N8 PRP Small Grant has, without a doubt, strengthened my links with police colleagues. Julie connected me with Inspector Andy Miller at Cheshire Constabulary. Andy and I were successful in obtaining funding from the ESRC to study the issue of young people's comprehension of their legal rights in a project entitled: 'Safeguarding the Legal Rights of Youth'.

### Reflecting on the developments since undertaking the project, what impact do you feel the research has had on best practice approaches to policing?

Our research is still in the early stages in terms of being able to inform best practice approaches. However, we are keen to continue our work so that it can, in the future, lead to real-world change.

*Dr Kirk Luther is a Lecturer in Investigative Expertise in the Psychology Department at Lancaster University.*



Once we have a better understanding of such behaviours, we can develop interventions to mitigate their negative effects







## Mapping the Contours of Modern Slavery, two years on

Rose Broad and David Gadd

### Small Grant project

'Mapping the contours of modern slavery' project was initially a collaboration between the University of Manchester, Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and University of Leeds. The main aim of the collaboration was to map the contours of modern slavery as they appeared in 2015 data recorded for the Greater Manchester area by GMP and the Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) – formerly the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC). Conducted over 12 months in 2016/17, the research mapped the victims, suspects and geographical distribution of the cases known to GMP in 2015. It found that the victim population at the time was two thirds female and one third male and almost a quarter of victims were children; many more were young adults. Suspects were predominantly adults: one third was male, two thirds female. Suspects were on average ten years older than victims, but there was considerable variation by type of modern slavery. The geographical distribution correlated broadly with areas scoring more highly on Indices of Multiple Deprivation. The analysis revealed a concentration of modern slavery – particularly sexual exploitation – in the City Centre as well as two other northern towns. The research found that facilitating travel for exploitation represented a substantial part of the intelligence picture.

The research concluded that efforts to tackle the more organised aspects of modern slavery should address the interface with British offenders as these

may facilitate longevity in a market that is shaped by rapidly shifting patterns of migration and border control. Care needs to be taken to ensure that knowledge of the breakdown of the international business of modern slavery is not obscured in favour of coding by exploitation type.

The research identified considerable knowledge gaps and data issues and concluded that more information needs to be retained about the role suspects play in modern slavery, whether in terms of facilitating travel, direct exploitation, or the perpetration of violence and sexual violence. The generational gap between exploiters and exploited, often of the same nationality, together with the gendered patterning of exploitation, evidence the need to address the ways in which modern slavery is organised through communities and in response to economic circumstances as much as via organised crime networks.

### New Project

In 2018, in part as a follow-on to the initial research, we were successful in being awarded grant funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for a new project entitled 'Perpetrators of Modern Slavery Offences: Motivations, Networks and Backgrounds'. It is the first in the UK to study three sources of data about this group: National Referral Mechanism (NRM) outcomes; police crime and intelligence records; and primary research interviews – conducted in this project – with those convicted under modern slavery legislation within the UK.

Using a mixed methods approach the research seeks to expose the connections, tensions and interdependencies among victims, perpetrators, those involved in allied business activity (whether licit or illicit) and regulatory, law enforcement and border control agents. The research will seek to demonstrate, from official and offender vantage points, how perpetrators organise and carry out their activities. The project aims to draw on offenders' own accounts of their role in the crimes for which they were convicted and will look at how they justified this to themselves, what specifically was said to those they trafficked, to what extent they understood the laws they were breaking and any attempts they have made to leave the businesses of modern slavery behind.

The project will also develop an understanding of how offenders become involved in modern slavery. It will examine the relationships perpetrators have with those who worked alongside, beneath and above them in such activities, including how kinship, romance and intimacy, and/or financial indebtedness impacted on their engagements with trafficking and/or migration journeys and how they knew their victims. Additionally it will generate a better understanding emerging models of modern slavery from which practice and policy interventions can be derived.



How kinship, romance and intimacy, and/or financial indebtedness impacted on their engagements with trafficking and/or migration journeys and how they knew their victims

### Reflections on the Impact of the Small Grant project

The N8 PRP award allowed the development of the quantitative element of the proposal which has since been funded by the ESRC. The work that we were able to do as a result of the N8 PRP funding enabled the research team to explore the data, pilot the methods, develop the access arrangements and further build on existing relationships with colleagues in Programme Challenger in GMP. This was led by Professor David Gadd along with input from colleagues who are conducting some specialist parts of the quantitative analysis; Dr Elisa Bellotti at the University of Manchester and Dr Carly Lightowlers at the University of Liverpool.

The N8 PRP funding also allowed us to work with a police analyst from GMP's Programme Challenger team. This partnership allowed us closer contact with the wider Programme Challenger team and helped to develop a better understanding of how the work might have operational impact. The research to practice element of the research is very important and something that we wanted to highlight in the ESRC project – the N8 PRP project assisted with the development of the research to practice in terms of thinking about policing and multi-agency approaching. Without knowing about the decision making process of the ESRC, it is reasonable to assume that the progress that we had made, familiarity with the data and evidence that the research was

feasible and achievable, helped towards the positive decision from the ESRC. The N8 PRP project also helped us to build on existing relationships with the Home Office Modern Slavery Research Unit who were interested in the N8 PRP research and who have subsequently supported us with the ESRC application and are on the Steering Group for the project.

*David Gadd is a Professor of Criminology and Dr Rose Broad is a lecturer in Criminology at the University of Manchester.*





## Ransomware – Hackers are making personalised ransomware to target the most profitable and vulnerable.

Lena Connolly and David Wall

Once a piece of ransomware has got hold of your valuable information, there is very little you can do to get it back other than accede to the attacker's demands. Ransomware, a type of malware that holds a computer to ransom, has become particularly prevalent in the past few years and virtually unbreakable encryption has made it an even more powerful force.

Ransomware is typically delivered by powerful botnets used to send out millions of malicious emails to randomly targeted victims. These aim to extort relatively small amounts of money (normally £300-£500, but more in recent times) from as many victims as possible. But according to police officers we have interviewed from UK cybercrime units, ransomware attacks are becoming increasingly targeted at high-value victims. These are usually businesses that can afford to pay very large sums of money, up to £1,000,000 to get their data back.

In 2017 and 2018 there was a rise in such targeted ransomware attacks on UK businesses. Attackers increasingly use software to search for vulnerable computers and servers and then use various techniques to penetrate them. Most commonly, perpetrators use brute force attacks (using software to repeatedly try different passwords to find the right one), often on systems that let you operate computers remotely.

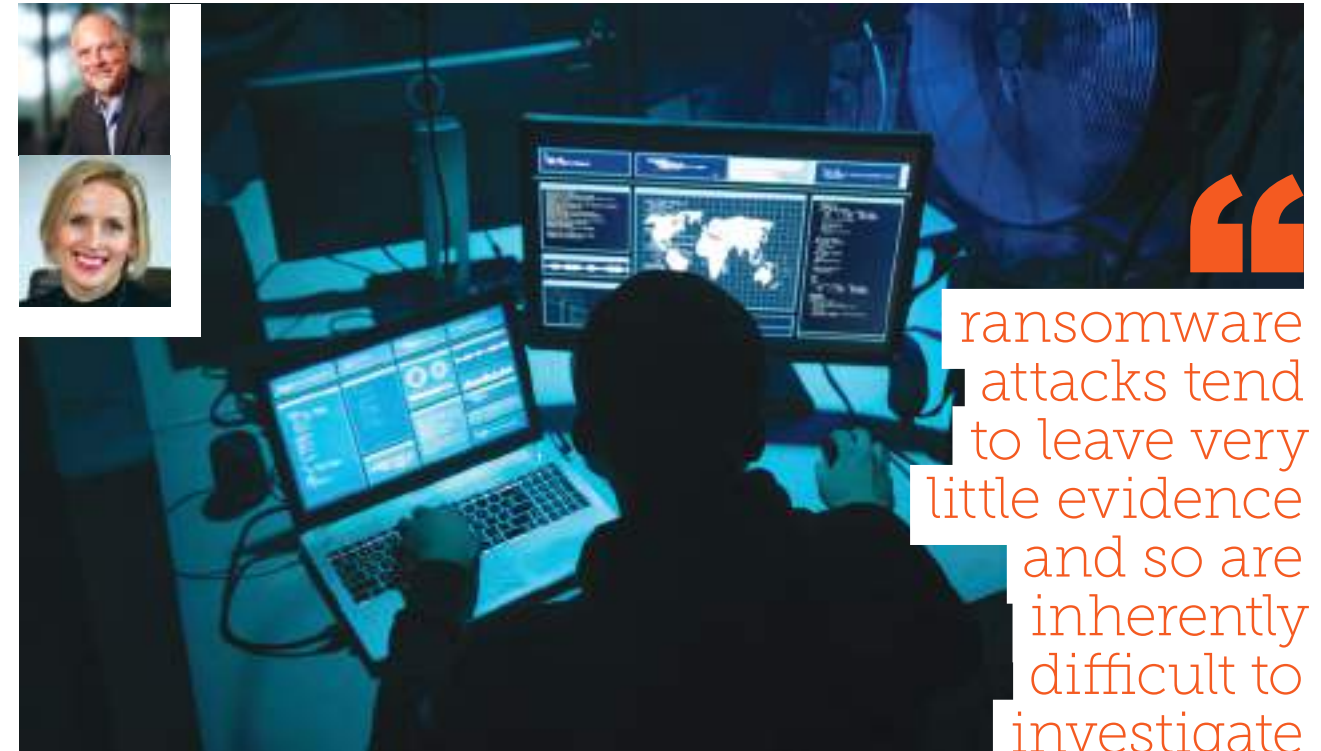
If the attackers gain access, they will try to infect other machines on the network and gather essential information about the company's business operations, IT infrastructure and further potential vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities can include when networks are not effectively segregated into different parts, or are not designed in a way that makes them easy to monitor (network visibility), or have weak administration passwords.

They then upload the ransomware, which encrypts valuable data and sends a ransom note. Using information such as the firm's size, turnover and profits, the attackers will then estimate the amount the company can afford and tailor their ransom demand accordingly. Payment is typically requested in cryptocurrency and usually between 35 and 100 bitcoins (value at time of publication £100,000-£288,000).

According to the police officers we spoke to, another popular attack method is "spear phishing" or "big game hunting". This involves researching specific people who handle finances in a company and sending them an email that pretends to be from another employee. The email will fabricate a story that encourages the recipient to open an attachment, normally a Word or Excel document containing malicious code.

These kind of targeted attacks are typically carried out by professional groups solely motivated by profit, though some attacks seek to disrupt businesses or infrastructure. These criminal groups are highly organised and their activities constantly evolve. They are methodical, meticulous and creative in extorting money.

For example, traditional ransomware attacks ask for a fixed amount as part of an initial intimidating message, sometimes accompanied by a countdown clock. But in more targeted attacks, perpetrators typically drop a "proof of life" file onto the victim's computer to demonstrate that they control the data. They will also send contact and payment details for release of the data, but also open up a tough negotiation process, which is sometimes automated, to extract as much money as possible.



“ransomware attacks tend to leave very little evidence and so are inherently difficult to investigate”

According to the police, the criminals usually prefer to target fully-digitised businesses that rely highly on IT and data. They tend to favour small and medium-sized companies and avoid large corporations that have more advanced security. Big firms are also more likely to attract media attention, which could lead to increased police interest and significant disruptions to the criminal operations.

### How to protect yourself

So what can be done to fight back against these attacks? Our work is part of the multi-university research project EMPHASIS, which studies the economic, social and psychological impact of ransomware. (As yet unpublished) data collected by EMPHASIS indicates that weak cybersecurity in the affected organisations is the main reason why cybercriminals have been so successful in extorting money from them.

One way to improve this situation would be to better protect remote computer access. This could be done by disabling the system when it's not in use, and using stronger passwords and two-step authentication (when a second, specially generated code is needed to login alongside a password). Or alternatively switching to a virtual private network, which connects machines via the internet as if they were in a private network.

When we interviewed cybercrime researcher Bob McArdle from IT security firm Trend Micro, he advised that email filters and anti-virus software containing dedicated ransomware protection are vital. Companies should also regularly backup their data so it doesn't matter if someone seizes the original. Backups must be tested and stored in locations that are inaccessible to ransomware.

These kind of controls are crucial because ransomware attacks tend to leave very little evidence and so are inherently difficult to investigate. As such, targeted ransomware attacks are not going to stop any time soon, and attackers are only likely to get more sophisticated in their methods. Attackers are highly adaptive so companies will have to respond just as smartly.

*Professor David Wall is Chair in Criminology and Dr Lena Connolly is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies in the School of Law, University of Leeds*



# N8 Policing Innovation Forum

Steve Brookes and Geoff Pearson

The Policing Innovation Forum plays a fundamental role in the operation of the N8 PRP, bringing together the needs of the police service, expertise of academics, and opportunities for funding. It provides an annual forum that brings together academics, police, and practitioners from other services and organisations, focusing on a highly topical area of policing. A focus for the forum is chosen annually at the N8 PRP steering group and is driven by the needs of the police service who are represented on the group. The areas chosen to date have been Cybercrime (2015), Domestic Abuse (2016), Vulnerability and Early Intervention (2017), and Mental Health (2018).

The forum itself runs for a full day, starting with keynote speakers who introduce the challenges and new developments. Delegates are then encouraged to engage with the debates through thought-provoking interactive exercises which have included plays performed by professional actors. The second half of the day consists primarily of workshops run by academics and practitioners introducing innovative

solutions to the topic in focus. Finally, delegates are informed of the funding opportunities available and there is an opportunity for networking with a view to establishing future research and knowledge exchange partnerships.

The forum is timed to coincide with the annual launch of the N8 PRP Small Grants, which delegates are encouraged to apply for. This has been a success with around half of all small

grant applications each year being made by delegates from the forum and focusing on that year's topics. A number of these have been successful, resulting in completed projects in the areas identified in the forum.

In 2015/16 following the first PIF theme of cybercrime, a successful application focused on the policing of bitcoin in terms of investigating, evidencing and prosecuting crimes involving cryptocurrency, with outcomes that included a guide to the policing of bitcoin and the identification of a number of practical and intellectual issues for further research.

In 2016/17, the theme of domestic violence led to three further successful applications. One focused on innovation in domestic violence, in which the central idea is for academics and police officers and staff to work collaboratively to identify areas in which innovation

has been successful, and to develop a deeper and richer understanding of the enabling circumstances and how these might build capacity in other police services. A second examined manipulative presentation techniques of control and coercive offenders and the third considered police officer responses to coercive control. In all cases the key findings reports, published on the N8 PRP website, identified both practical guidance and further research opportunities.

In 2017/18 the theme of vulnerability and early intervention was also successful in two projects that are considering early identification of honour-based abuse and policing vulnerability, which is an evaluation of the sex work liaison officer role in west yorkshire police. Both of these projects are ongoing. Following the 2018 forum on policing mental health a number of applications have been submitted to the Small Grant Fund which are still under consideration.

Delegates at the forum have also been encouraged to apply for other funding opportunities such as monies available for training, staff exchange and internships.

In keeping with its aim of encouraging innovative research, the Forum has also been able to support projects falling outside of the annual foci which promise the use of innovative methods or approaches. For example, in 2017-18, the forum was able to support Enable UK, a project building the capacity of a number of police forces to evaluate and develop their approaches to policing football matches through a system of trialling of new tactics and subsequent peer-review.

Feedback from delegates who attend the forum has always been positive. Following the 2018 event, very positive feedback was given, with strengths including the opportunities for networking, discussion opportunities

and the morning's interactive plenary session with actors was very well received. The opportunity was also taken to gauge opinion in relation to the future charging for the event once the funding for the PRP ceased. The majority said that they would pay for attendance.

One representative comment on the strengths of the workshop, that it helped the delegate "to understand the different innovations and hear the initiatives which are being implemented" and continued by referring to the ability "to link in with like-minded individuals on other welfare concerns – such as our own staff welfare".

*Dr Steve Brookes & Dr Geoff Pearson, University of Manchester*



Delegates are then encouraged to engage with the debates through thought-provoking interactive exercises which have included plays performed by professional actors







## A Mental Health Response by the Most Appropriate Agency?

Superintendent Dan Thorpe



As an operational Police Superintendent, having been the Strategic Mental Health Lead in both the Metropolitan Police Service and now in South Yorkshire Police, I was delighted to support the 2018 N8 PRP Policing Innovation Forum in November last year at the Lancaster House Hotel. The theme – ‘Policing Mental Health: Improving services, reducing demand, and keeping people safe’ – was both a topical and pressing one. With demands on police forces in most areas of the UK increasing, mental health is seen as an area where police are stepping in to fill the void left by other agencies that are struggling to meet their own demands. When I ask frontline police officers what their top three operational concerns are (excluding pay, pensions, resources, etc.), mental health consistently features, with the main concerns involving the apparent lack of support from other agencies/health services. The reality is that at 4am when police have been called to an occupant of a private home who is experiencing a mental health crisis, who else is on hand to provide expert (effective) support?

For me, these are very interesting times for policing and the mental health agenda, as police forces up and down the country are starting to ask fundamental questions: How have we ended up in the current position? What is the role of the police regarding mental health? What problems are we (as police) trying to fix? These are some of the questions we now need to be asking and in response to which we need to be seeking greater understanding. The role and benefits of ‘Street Triage’ is also the subject of much debate and again more questions are being asked about triage and its possible benefits. What is the appropriate role of the police officer in such schemes? and, if there was a true 24/7 mental

health crisis response, would we need to fund street triage schemes? In my opinion, any triage scheme serves merely as a ‘sticking plaster’, one that offers short-term solutions until a suitable more sustainable health provision is introduced.

Having worked in various London Borough’s for over 23 years and then having moved to South Yorkshire, I have seen how different parts of the country and different public services, respond to a myriad of calls linked to some form of mental health problem. This may vary from somebody experiencing an urgent mental health crisis, to an offender who has a rich history of mental illness and generally appears not to be able to cope with

the pressures of contemporary UK society or to someone who has been diagnosed with a mental health illness but is at home with little by way of support and is feeling suicidal and needs to speak to someone or get a response from the emergency services. I have seen, and continue to see, the huge gaps in service provision, which results in the police being the 24/7 service and whose officers try to do their very best to support people who are simply unable to cope.

How well do we understand the demand coming into the police service? Forces up and down the country are certainly getting better at thinking about demand. Police IT systems are now able to extract more reliable data about all demands on the police service. This is of paramount importance as we strive to work more collaboratively with partners and to try to forecast and plan for future demands. There has never been a more important time to work collaboratively with partners; sharing data and using the evidence base to influence how services (including health services) are commissioned. I would imagine that most police forces have similar demand profiles, in that around 20% of demand coming into the police service is crime related, another 20% is anti-social behaviour, around 45-50% is ‘public safety’ and the remainder covers administration, transport and other elements. So what does the category of ‘public safety’ actually comprise? It consists of the more complex areas of police demand, such as ‘Looked After Children’, Missing From Home reports, Missing People investigations,

Mental Health demands, calls to service to support Emergency Departments experiencing various challenges with outpatients leaving the department without being adequately assessed. Ultimately, ‘public safety’ demands consist of incidents in relation to which the police rely on other partner services to find long-term, sustainable solutions. These can often be the most complex problems to resolve. In many

cases, these demands are falling to the police due to inadequate service provision elsewhere. In my opinion, mental health care is a prime example.

In 2017, Sir Tom Winsor in the HMIC annual State of Policing report, declared: ‘the police are increasingly being used as the service of first resort. This is wrong... The provision of mental healthcare has reached

such a state of severity that police are often used to fill the gaps that other agencies cannot. This is an unacceptable drain on police resources.’

Is now the time when mental health services receive the funding and support that they so desperately need to enable people with mental health issues to receive the help they need at a time that they need it and from



the police are increasingly being used as the service of first resort. This is wrong... The provision of mental healthcare has reached such a state of severity that police are often used to fill the gaps that other agencies cannot. This is an unacceptable drain on police resources.





the most appropriate service? Time will tell, but with the Government's announcement of substantial increases in public spending within the NHS and with the published NHS 10 Year Plan, which specifically includes mental health, I remain optimistic that the future will be positive and that mental health care will change dramatically for the benefit of those who need these vital services. The stated intention is that about 2 million more people who suffer from a mental health condition such as anxiety or depression will benefit from at least £2.3 billion extra funding in the sector by 2023-24. It is anticipated that an estimated 350,000 more children and young people will be treated and an extra 380,000 more adults offered access to talking therapies, over the next five years. New support teams in schools will help identify mental health problems earlier and support those in need. Crisis care will see improvements to services and will allow the NHS 111 helpline to be used which will provide 24/7 support. If this actually happens, it will bring huge benefits to those people who need these services.

Meanwhile, local NHS Trusts, Police Forces, Police & Crime Commissioners and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have all attempted to improve things in their respective areas by introducing 'Street Triage' schemes. These can vary, from being a telephone-focused service via a Mental Health Crisis Line to an unmarked police car, which has a police officer, paramedic and mental health professional contained within, who respond to spontaneous mental health related calls. I have some strong views about triage, which I appreciate are views that not everyone agrees with and although schemes are introduced with only the best of intentions, I question the police role in this agenda and are we now accepting that the police service is a core element of a mental health crisis response? Is there

a risk that the UK public will assume that policing now has a mental health Crisis Response provision, so when they are experiencing difficulties, their expectation is that the police are the appropriate service to respond? I'm not convinced that this is where we should be today. I am yet to read any report that evidences triage to be the solution to the current problem. If it is not the solution, what is it? Should 'triage' be a health response, which is properly commissioned by health CCG's? If so, police would need to be on hand to support where there is a need and where core principles are activated (i.e. to keep the peace, prevent crime and disorder, protect life, etc.)

However, the focus should not just be about crisis responses. To ensure a 'whole systems' approach, collaborations need to look for opportunities for early interventions and pathways into appropriate services. There is also a gap in mental health and social services provision that does not cater for wide sections of the community who do not fit in a descriptive box of medical/mental or other diagnosis – often linked to alcohol, drugs, personality disorder and a bland descriptor of 'depression'. In my view, public services have not kept up with social realities. We are focused on responding to the types of calls that were prevalent 20-30 years ago. Since then, very little has changed in mental health legislation, service provision and capacity to make long-standing differences in public sector demands.

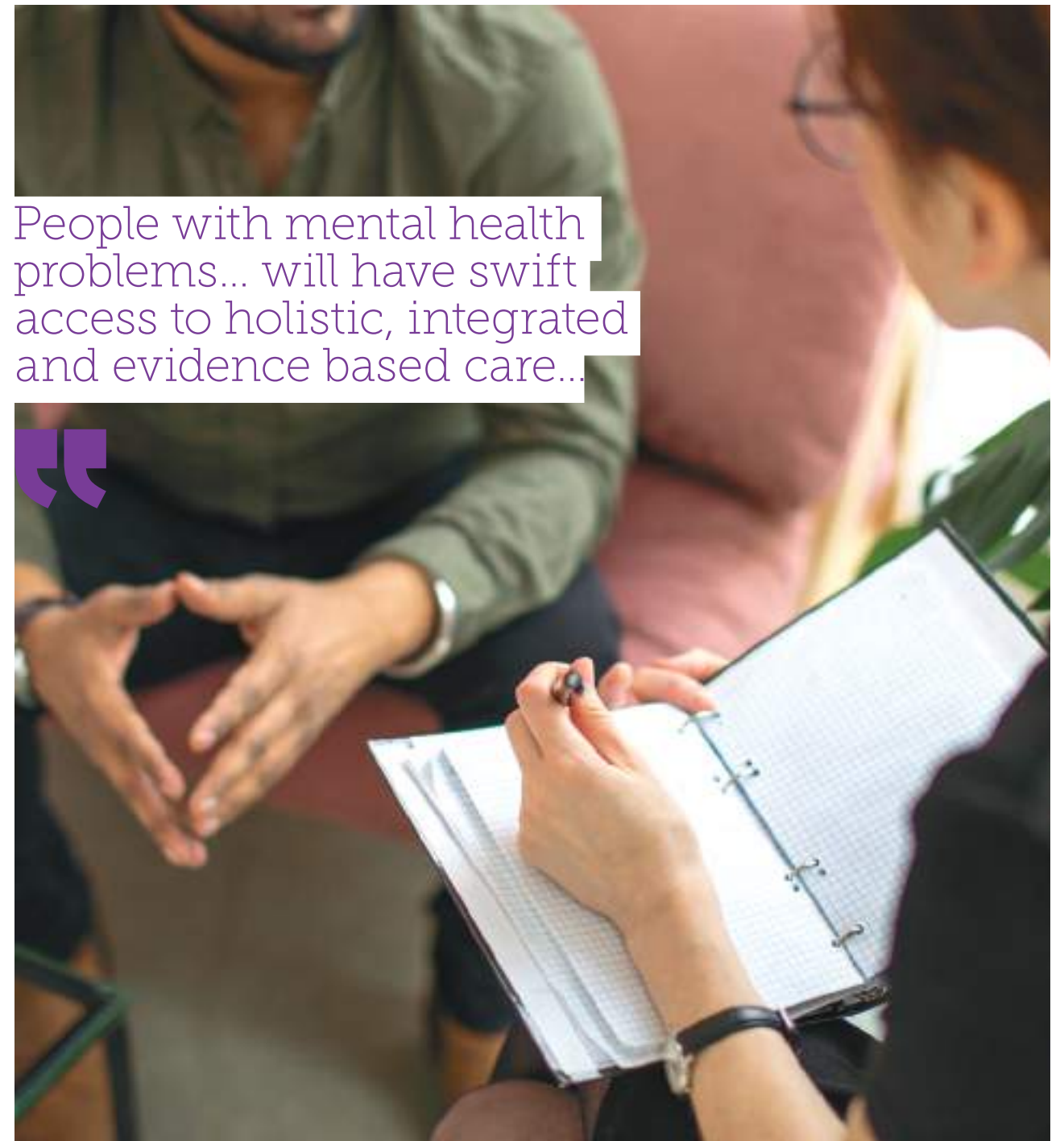
Whether or not we acknowledge it, policing is absorbing more and more demands from other services. We need to make a bold move and draw a line in the sand. Health and other partner services need to be held to account for commissioning services that are better than what we generally have at present. After all, there are many published reports which promise considerable changes to this agenda. For example,

the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health, published by Public Health England in 2017 asserts: *'People with mental health problems... will have swift access to holistic, integrated and evidence based care... By 2020/21, there will be a comprehensive set of care pathways in place... reducing the reliance on acute care services... There will be a 7 day NHS providing urgent and emergency mental health crisis care 24 hours a day... delivering 24/7 intensive home treatment and not just crisis assessment.'* (p. 31)

With this in mind, surely the time has come to see dramatic changes within the mental health care system that will bring huge benefits to the people in need of such services, and regardless of the required mental health response, this should be delivered by the most appropriate agency.

*Superintendent Dan Thorpe is the Strategic Mental Health Lead, South Yorkshire Police*

In my view, public services have not kept up with social realities



People with mental health problems... will have swift access to holistic, integrated and evidence based care...







Some forces will already have people in specific 'innovation' roles, others may consider nominating those with responsibilities in areas such as horizon scanning, evidence-based policing or organisational learning

## Innovation Sharing Network: A College of Policing Initiative

Rebecca Teers

### What is the College of Policing's innovation sharing pilot?

The College of Policing has recently launched a new pilot which aims to speed up the sharing of local innovation across policing. The innovation sharing network, which is supported by Police Transformation funding, will support the identification and sharing of local 'untested' innovation within and across forces. It will involve a network of innovation brokers within forces who will identify and share innovative practice from their force. This sharing of local innovation at a national level will allow ideas with potential to be formally tested, feeding into the evidence base of what works in policing and crime reduction.

### Why is it important?

Recent work by the Home Office as part of its Review of Frontline Policing, the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council through its Police Reform and Transformation Board has highlighted an 'innovation gap'. Officers and staff are put off sharing ideas because of barriers such as time, worry about risk and not being sure about exactly what to share and how, which leads to missed opportunities and duplication.

Forces and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have identified a need for faster ways to identify and circulate local innovation. A key barrier to the identification and sharing of innovation is the lack of independent sharing by police officers and staff who are innovating in forces. Officers and staff need encouragement to

share innovation and effective mechanisms to get knowledge to the right people at the right time.

The proposed network seeks to address this, by developing and testing mechanisms which identify and effectively disseminate innovation more quickly.

### What will it involve?

The College has asked senior officers for their help by identifying people in their forces who can support the sharing of local innovation. Some forces will already have people in specific 'innovation' roles, others may consider nominating those with responsibilities in areas such as horizon scanning, evidence-based policing or organisational learning.

Once the network of brokers has been set up, they will be asked to attend an event to develop and support them to find and share innovation in the most effective way. This may include running local surgeries or events, a dedicated email inbox and force wide advertising. The College has provided a small payment to each force to support them in these activities.

The pilot will focus on innovation around specific priorities or current national challenges. Brokers will continue to share innovations occurring in their own force, but this will also allow them.

The brokers would continue to spot and share good ideas locally, whilst the College supports them in building

connections with people doing similar work in other forces and allowing them to quickly access other forces' ideas. We will be responsible for sorting, analysing and categorising the information received from forces, determining which ideas and practices are suitable for local and/or national dissemination and how they can best be shared back with force contacts and PCCs as appropriate via a variety of media.

We hope that by identifying ideas early, we will also be able to work with forces to test innovation with potential national benefits, with evaluation support, to help build the evidence base.

### What happens next?

The innovation network itself will be evaluated to identify the benefits and the best tactics for sharing local innovation, and any development of the evidence base in policing. The findings will be used to inform the future of the approach and help us determine whether more funding to support the network is worthwhile.

*Rebecca Teers is Research Evidence Partnerships Manager at the College of Policing and the College's representative member of the N8 PRP Steering Group.*



## Restorative policing – a subject for public deliberation?

Ian Marder

In 2018, I worked as a Research Associate for the University of Liverpool to organise and conduct a deliberative event, as part of the N8PRP's Public Engagement Strand. The event took place on 24-25 July and involved a small group of residents from Chapelton in Leeds coming together to discuss restorative policing. Participants were recruited 'blind' – they only knew that the event was about 'police reform' and that they had to be willing to listen to different points of view and discuss their own opinions with others. Upon arrival, they were told that the event was structured around the following question: 'Should the police use "restorative justice" and, if so, how and in what circumstances?'

In the preceding months, I worked closely with Dr. Sarah Mosedale to plan the event. This involved determining its exact purpose and location, designing and overseeing the participant recruitment process, selecting and liaising with partner organisations and prospective speakers, and deciding on session order and content.

The two days involved the following sessions:

- a brief explanation of restorative justice, followed by small-group discussions of its potential benefits and risks and a whole-group feedback session;
- several presentations, all of which were followed by a Q&A and a whole-group discussion, including: one by myself on how the police use restorative justice in practice (inclusive of some video clips); one by the manager of West Yorkshire's Police and Crime Commissioner-funded restorative justice service; one by a West Yorkshire Police Constable who often uses restorative

justice in his work; and one, again by myself, on the research evidence around police-led restorative justice;

- and a session in which the participants, in small groups, discussed which were the best justifications of police-led restorative justice and which were the most significant risks, before a final whole-group discussion in which we reflected on the totality of the event.

A more detailed review of the discussions and the results of the groupwork can be found in Update 8 of the Public Engagement Strand (Mosedale and Turner, 2018). Suffice it to say that, over the two-days, the participants engaged in fascinating and wide-ranging discussions around restorative policing and related issues. Still, I left with some questions regarding the extent to which this could be considered a successful example of a deliberative event.

On the plus side, the event brought nine lay persons together to think

about and share their views on policing and restorative justice in general, and restorative policing in particular. The sessions were entirely pleasant and people who seemed strongly to disagree, were visibly keen to listen to each other and to explore the topic respectfully and with open minds. As such, perhaps the greatest success was the learning which took place on all sides of the room. Most participants had not heard of restorative justice or restorative policing; that is certainly no longer the case. They also had an opportunity to learn about why others might hold different views on policing and criminal justice issues. The researchers learned about the challenges involved in planning and delivering such an event, and the ambivalences which can exist within public attitudes towards policing and restorative justice. As the only scholar of restorative policing present, it was a great opportunity for me to discuss this subject with those who were neither academics, nor criminal justice students or practitioners. In this sense, the event had all the benefits one might expect of a two-day seminar in which a group of academics, practitioners and lay persons gathered together to discuss, debate, learn and think about an interesting criminological issue.

At the same time, there were, in my estimation, some barriers to meaningful deliberation. The first of these was the complexity of the subject matter itself. Fracking – an issue on which there have been successful deliberative events in the past – may be scientifically complicated but is conceptually simple: shoot chemicals into the ground, enabling



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you to extract fossil fuels. Do you believe that the benefits outweigh the risks – both of which can be estimated quantitatively – or not?

In contrast, restorative policing is simultaneously broad, vague, multifaceted, contingent and nebulous. Discussions often came back to the fact that restorative justice is conceptually elastic. It has been said to mean 'all things to all people' (McCold, 2000: 357) and 'restorative policing' is similarly contested (Clamp and Paterson, 2017; Marder, 2018). This meant that, while participants could identify relevant issues, the 'whole picture' of restorative policing was never quite established as a basis for the discussions. For example, participants had plenty to say about whether the police should divert more or fewer people from prosecution. However, this is only one aspect of the restorative policing debate, as the police can use restorative justice with non-crime incidents and refer cases to a specialist service, irrespective of whether or not the offender is prosecuted. Additionally, while participants identified some potential

benefits (such as victim catharsis) and risks (such as revictimisation) of victim-offender dialogue, they found it harder to assess the likelihood of these benefits or risks being realised, given the sheer breadth of activities which take place under the umbrella of restorative policing. How can people be expected to estimate the benefits and risks of something which can be anything and everything?

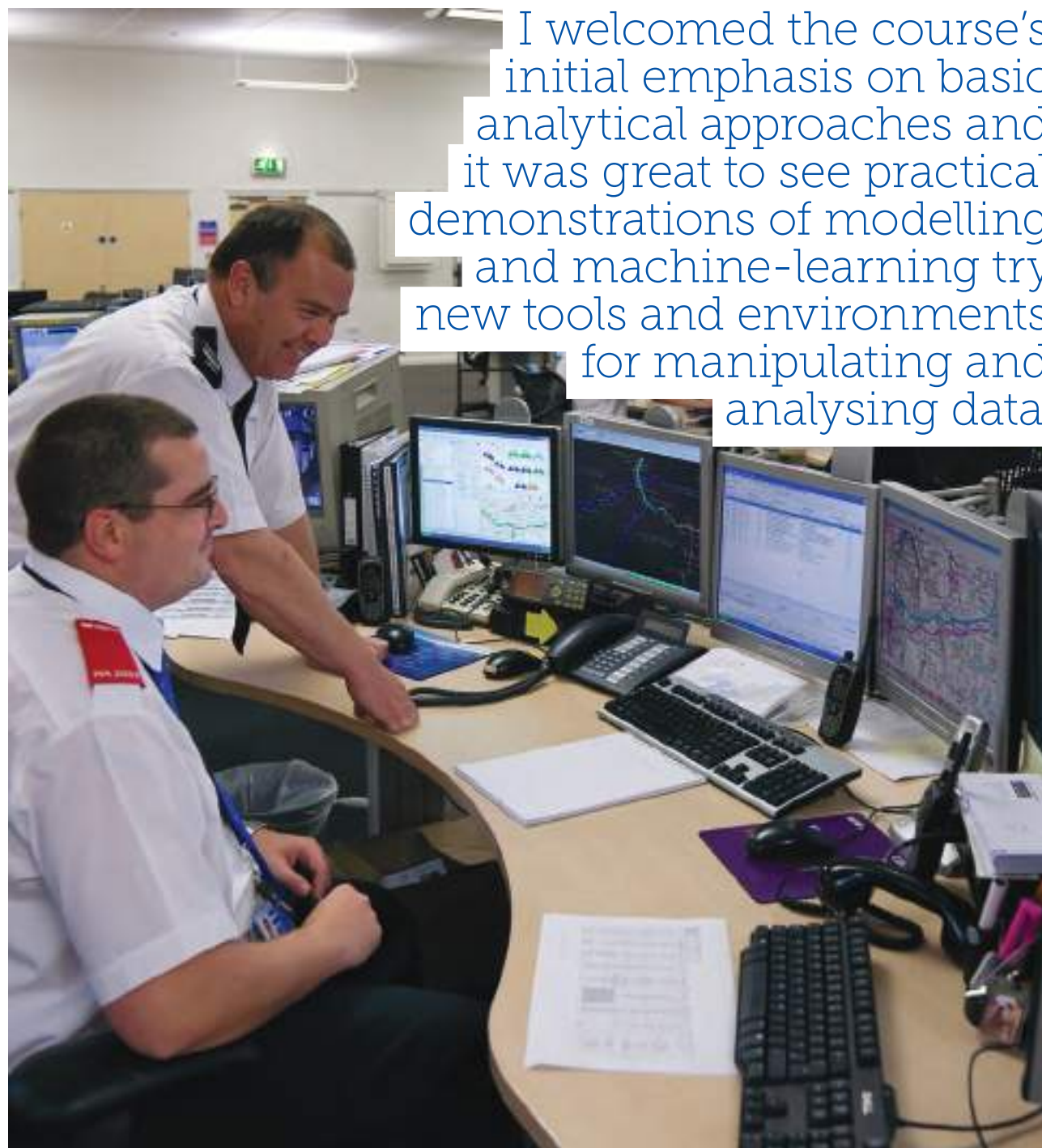
This relates to the second barrier to meaningful deliberation: the lack of a genuine, authoritative and specific dissenting voice. Our initial idea was that the practitioners would provide the case for restorative policing, while I would give the case against it. However, this felt too artificial when, in reality, all the speakers could contribute to discussions on both sides. On the day, however, none of us could really argue that it shouldn't happen at all – just that it needed to be carefully managed so that the benefits were maximised and the risks, minimised. We could have found plenty of speakers to argue in favour of harsher criminal justice, less diversion, more police accountability

or a crackdown in discriminatory policing practices. Yet, while these concepts were all relevant and raised at the event, none of them could really function as the diametric opposite of the arguments in favour of restorative policing. Restorative policing is such a broad notion that it is difficult to articulate a case against it as a whole.

This is not to say that different approaches to operational policing cannot be discussed in such a setting. Rather, it seems that combining it with restorative justice created an excessively-broad and overly-complicated subject matter for such an event. Future deliberative events in policing might wish to focus on somewhat narrower subjects; whether the police should divert more or fewer people from prosecution, for example, might be an easier starting point.

*Ian Marder is a Lecturer in Criminology at Maynooth University*





“ I welcomed the course's initial emphasis on basic analytical approaches and it was great to see practical demonstrations of modelling and machine-learning try new tools and environments for manipulating and analysing data.

## Developing the People That Count

Fiona McLaughlin



In 2018, the N8 Policing Research Partnership's Training and Learning and Data Analytics strands delivered an innovative continuing professional development (CPD) programme to a cohort of police staff engaged in data analysis work. Through a series of co-produced modules covering the methods and theoretical understanding underpinning recent advances in data analytics, the aim was to augment the skills and knowledge of practitioners undertaking roles involving the extraction, manipulation, analysis and reporting on data and information. In short, its purpose was to empower Data Specialists in Policing.

Scott Keay, Data Analysis and Insight Manager at Lancashire Constabulary describes his experience of working in police analyst roles and the importance of developing the analytical skills base.

During the last two decades that I have worked for the police, the police analyst role has seen its fair share of ups and downs. Back in 2000, the police analyst was placed centre stage by the National Intelligence Model (NIM). Analyst numbers grew, as did opportunities and resources for analyst development with conferences dedicated to crime analysis and the publication of useful guides such as *Become a Problem-Solving Crime Analyst* (Clarke and Eck, 2003).

Despite this, something wasn't quite right and when austerity measures hit there was a significant negative impact on the police analyst role and most forces experienced reductions in analyst numbers. Crime analysis was not fully integrated into policing, hindered by a dearth of training, rigid structures, a lack of time and available resources.

More recently, Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) practices have been gaining momentum. This has brought a positive shift towards the analytical function and put the police analyst back into the spotlight. However, with the rise of interest around EBP, there is an elevated need for improved research methods and associated analytical techniques.

From my perspective as an analyst manager the N8 PRP Empowering Data Specialists in Policing programme has given an insight into a variety of new areas to explore that are not covered in conventional police analyst courses. The next step now is to enhance and develop the skills and knowledge that has been expertly delivered on this series of training days.

Paul Mason, Performance Review Officer, South Yorkshire Police attended the programme and relates his experience.

I welcomed the course's initial emphasis on basic analytical approaches and it was great to see practical demonstrations of modelling and machine-learning try new tools and environments for manipulating and analysing data.

Overall, I felt it was a very worthwhile and enjoyable experience. It was great to be part of a cohort of people with (largely) similar experiences of analytics in policing and tackling these new ways of working for the first time.

I think I've made some good connections for future collaboration, this doesn't just apply to the analysts I met from other forces – the programme actually gave me time to get to know the other analysts from my own force better! I would recommend it to anyone in our area of work as an opportunity to get a broader outlook on where policing analytics might be going over the next few years.

*Fiona McLaughlin is an N8 PRP Research Officer, University of Leeds*



## Harnessing advances in data science to support crime reduction

Dr Dan Birks

Police agencies are data-rich organisations and data analytics is one tool that is becoming invaluable in supporting police and their crime reduction partners to make the most of the information that is routinely collected in day to day policing. The goal is to support the effective and ethical delivery of crime reduction resources in evidence-based ways that maximise safety and minimise harm in our communities. University researchers, are at the forefront of this new science and are therefore ideally placed to support police forces with data analytics projects. However, there are often legal, administrative and infrastructural barriers that prevent forces and universities from being able to collaborate on data-intensive projects.

The N8 PRP Data Analytics strand aims to reduce the impacts of these barriers through streamlined sharing of data, knowledge, practice and tools. It has attempted to achieve this by developing a long-term programme of engagement with university, industry and policing partners. This article highlights some of the exciting work the strand is currently engaged in.

### Extracting Actionable Insights from Police Free Text Data

Each year policing agencies and their partners collect increasingly large volumes of data for operational and administrative purposes. For a number of reasons these data are often underutilised in comparison to the collective investment in their capture. To illustrate, police routinely record 'modus operandi' free-text data describing the means by which an offence was committed. The large volume and unstructured nature of these data dictate that they cannot be analysed en-masse using existing analytical approaches: and are instead

often used only for investigatory purposes. Working with Safer Leeds, strand researchers and the Leeds Institute from Data Analytics are investigating ways to analyse free text data from crime reports – a process which requires natural language processing and machine learning techniques to look for patterns within large volumes of crime reports. The work aims to develop methods of automatically identifying crimes whose reports share similarities, regardless of how they were officially recorded. In preliminary tests examining residential burglary data, algorithms developed were successfully able to automatically identify unique types of crime commission; such as burglaries where offenders were targeting vehicles by stealing car keys rather than other valuables – tracking trends in these specific offences over space and time. Combining these new types of analysis with other existing data sources, in the future it's hoped that these tools will help crime analysts better understand patterns of crime

and offer an early warning system for emerging criminal behaviours.

### Machine Learning for Cloned License Plate Identification

In another example, strand researchers funded under the N8 PRP Small Grants Scheme are collaborating with West Yorkshire Police to develop machine learning methods that aim to provide new insights into vehicle crime. Researchers are developing ways of analysing pictures of vehicles collected from ANPR cameras to recognise those likely to be displaying cloned number plates. The approach uses neural networks trained to automatically recognise the make, model, year and colour of vehicles. These classifications are then compared with vehicle registration data. Discrepancies between these data allow software systems to flag vehicles associated with number plates that may be cloned – warranting further investigation – and with the hope that identifying them might disrupt future criminal activity.

### Evaluating and Advancing Analytics for Police Resource Deployment

Threat, risk, harm and vulnerability are not distributed evenly across jurisdictions – with some locations, at some times – experiencing more significant problems than others. In response, police demand and the subsequent allocation of resources that seek to respond to and prevent these problems is not uniform across communities. Recent rapid increases in the quantity and quality of data collected by public and private sector agencies, and the ICT



Taking a broader look at criminal behaviour, strand researchers are also developing advanced computer simulations of crime and policing



capacity to analyse them, have led to the development of 'predictive' analytics designed to support day-to-day service delivery in these complex environments. However, the effectiveness of this concept has been subject to limited research in UK policing environments. In collaboration with Durham Constabulary, strand researchers are developing software to allow police to assess the likely effectiveness of techniques devised to forecast future crime risk, with the aim of optimising the delivery of crime reduction resources. The team aims to make these tools available to N8 PRP police services, supporting decision making in assessing whether financial and logistical investments in such technologies are worthwhile. Moving forwards the project will also explore whether new techniques can be devised to better reflect the increasingly complex needs of police – where resource allocation is a nuanced enterprise that requires police and their partners to balance

multiple constraints including crime risk, seriousness/harm, with the likely effectiveness and resourcing of varying types of responses.

### Computational Models of Police Resource & Demand Dynamics

Taking a broader look at criminal behaviour, strand researchers are also developing advanced computer simulations of crime and policing. These models, sometimes described as 'synthetic societies', can be used to better understand links between individual offender, victim, and crime preventer behaviours and crime trends observed across society. The models, which allow experiments to be carried out that would otherwise be impossible in real world settings, let researchers explore the possible impacts changes to societal behaviour (such as increases in reporting of certain crimes), police practice, or public policy might have on crime and policing dynamics. Dr Birks has recently received funding from the Alan Turing Institute to explore how

these simulation techniques might be used in practice. Working with multiple police partners the goal is to see if tools can be developed to help police better understand the complex challenges of resourcing and demand.

Ultimately, we expect our police forces to deal with an increasingly diverse number of problems – from tackling burglary and violent crime to safeguarding vulnerable communities and responding to critical incidents. And while the nature of crime is changing, the tools and datasets we have for understanding and combatting it are also evolving.

*Dr Dan Birks is an Academic Fellow in Quantitative Policing & Crime Data Analytics.*





The emergence of County Lines demonstrates that criminals can operate beyond their usual geographical limits. However, police ICT struggles to do the same; agility is needed to tackle county lines crime.

## In Praise of Co-Production

Gloria Laycock



I was listening to a programme on Radio 4 recently. It was an interview with a Harvard professor – Shoshana Zuboff. She was talking about her new book ‘The Age of Surveillance Capitalism’. She said that in the old days the world was free. Nomads wandered around; they didn’t own the land, or the water, or even many of the animals. Then capitalism arrived and all these things became commodified; they were bought and sold. We’re now used to the idea (although if you think about it a bit you can see the nomads point!). Her argument was that data are now similarly being commodified. Facebook, Google, and the rest ‘own’ vast amounts of data about all of us. The analysis of these data is being used to influence our behaviour; how we vote, what we buy, what we think. And the analysis of big data sets is revealing more and more about how to change our behaviour.

The private sector has been working in this area for a long time. Tesco and M&S know more about my buying habits than I do. And they use that information to influence what I buy. It is often called nudging – it sounds fairly benign. But people don’t like the feeling of being manipulated. Many years ago, as a prison psychologist, I was responsible for a training course on the token economy. Token economies arose from an interesting series of experiments in US prisons, which involved giving inmates tokens for good behaviour which they could exchange for ‘treats’ – tobacco, cinema viewings etc. They seemed like a good idea and we wanted to try them in the UK. I ran the training course as a token economy, so delegates were rewarded for sitting on the front row, asking the first question after a lecture and so on. By the end of the week, there had been several rows about seating and one unfortunate lecturer was asked, before he had begun his talk, what his

journey had been like – much to the amusement of the assembled class. We had to explain that we had incentivised the asking of the first question. The outcome was a realisation that this process was very vulnerable to unintended consequences and that it was probably not the best idea for a prison. If a bunch of (presumably) law-abiding psychologists broke the spirit of the rules, how well would this work with prisoners?

Despite the potential for abuse in exerting covert influence on behaviour, data analysis – including the analysis of ‘big data’ – can be used for good. It can help in understanding how to improve medical outcomes or reduce crime. But who decides how it is used and what for? For me, this speaks to the importance of ensuring a strong ethical dimension in the training of the software engineers, data gatherers, programmers, users... and of course the public. There needs to

be some consequence to the abuse of data. This notion has never been more important than it is today.

So, sharing data is increasingly seen as ‘risky’. How do we manage that? Let’s unpick this a bit. If the police share data there will ideally be an increase in knowledge and in the best case a reduction in crime and increase in public safety. If they don’t share their data then there are sometime serious consequences. One example comes from the case of the Soham murders, which occurred on 4 August 2002. The victims were two 10-year-old girls, Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman. Ian Huntley, a caretaker at local secondary school was convicted of the girls’ murder and sentenced to two terms of life imprisonment, with a minimum term of 40 years. After Huntley was convicted, it was revealed that he had been investigated in the past for sexual offences and burglary, but had still been allowed to work in a school as none of these investigations had resulted in a conviction. The then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, ordered an inquiry into these revelations, chaired by Sir Michael Bichard. In his final report, Bichard criticised the lack of information sharing between police forces.

A recent advert for an article placed online by Policing Insight said: ‘The emergence of County Lines demonstrates that criminals can operate beyond their usual geographical limits. However, police ICT struggles to do the same; agility is needed to tackle county lines crime.’ (Richard Helson, Chorus Intelligence 17/03/1)

It may be time to look again at Bichard’s recommendations. And this is about the police sharing data with each other – never mind academics.

One of the things the police and academics do share is an interest in working for the good of society; reducing crime, increasing the

evidence base and contributing to police knowledge. How are we going to do that? How are we going to reduce crime and increase public safety? How are we going to make best use of scarce police resources? For me, the answer is that we need to behave like scientist and engineers. What do they do? Scientists understand the importance of data and theory (the academic bit) and engineers solve problems (the policing bit). If we work together and play to each other’s strengths, imagine what might be achieved.

Today we call this co-production; solving problems together: both the analysis of the data and the use to which it is put. Data do not speak for themselves; they have to be interpreted, and this is one of the things that both the police and academics can work on together.

### A marriage made in Heaven?

The police have all the necessary information to specify the problem – or if they don’t, they know where to get it; they can work on a solution and they are brilliant at implementation. Academics are good at analysing the data; they too can work on a solution, drawing on the academic evidence base; they can support implementation, and of course help with the assessment – did it work?

In the context of a fashion for evidence-based policing, financial stress on police budgets, the emergence of ‘new’ crimes often driven by the Internet there is, or should be, increased enthusiasm for sharing data. But we also have increased sensitivity about data sharing with the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation.

It is important that we don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater. We shouldn’t let the huge gains that might accrue from co-production to be a hostage to increased regulation.

Co-production – a marriage made in Heaven – can help to overcome risks of data sharing by bringing together the organisational and ethical strengths of the police and academics thus guarding against abuses of data, developing an evidence base for policing and giving academics a welcome opportunity to make an impact.

### What does the future hold?

There is a massive and growing agenda of important work waiting to be done. For example, current offence classifications, whilst they may be the best way to report to parliament on crime rates, are not always helpful in identifying problems that need to be prevented. For example, a credit card theft might be included in a burglary, handbag snatch or theft from a vehicle, so becoming very difficult to identify from police data. And some of the new offences, which could be nipped in the bud if identified early, are similarly lost in a sea of irrelevance. An early warning system for these emerging threats is a high priority and one that is being developed by N8 PRP academics right now – with the support of the police. Working together has a multitude of advantages including generating a sense of mutual respect between two very different agencies. It might begin to address what one academic paper described as a ‘dialogue of the deaf’.

This is an abridged version of a presentation that was given as the introductory plenary to the N8 PRP ‘Mobilising Data’ event on 25th March 2019 in Leeds.

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



# Embedding Research and the Evidence Base into Police Strategic Planning

Rebecca Tennyson



In West Yorkshire, we have developed a strong partnership with academia, in order to implement an evidence-based approach to tackling force priorities. Our Strategic Assessment identifies the threat, harm and risk facing the force and our force Management Statement identifies our current and future demand pressures, as well as our capacity and capability to address them. These two important assessments inform the development of our Strategic Plans, which deliver against the force strategy and PCC's Police and Crime Plan.

In complying with the National Intelligence Model, forces are well versed in developing intelligence requirements in order to help address their crime threats. In West Yorkshire, we have applied these principles in respect of our knowledge and research gaps, and have developed a 'Strategic Research Requirement', which identifies the research that is needed to help develop a more evidence-based approach to tackling our priority areas. This Strategic Research Requirement has helped us to focus on the areas that are most important, so that as a force we commission the right research, as in the past this has been disparate and un-co-ordinated.

Research and innovation have now become an integral part of our strategic planning process and we have sought to maximise the opportunities that being in the N8 PRP brings. We have had particular success around the Small Grants rounds, which have led to a number of research projects being funded around priority areas such as domestic abuse, sexual exploitation and honour based abuse. In the latest round,

the force has benefited from research and evaluation around our mental health hub nurse approach (which is helping to reduce policing demand around mental health incidents) and research to identify the scale and extent of child to parent violence (as our force Management Statement suggests this is an increasing, yet hidden area of domestic-abuse related demand).

At the recent N8 PRP Data Mobilisation Event, we pitched three important areas where research is needed; violent crime and knife crime, exploitation of children and vulnerable adults and domestic abuse risk assessment. In particular, we are now working with the University of Leeds around domestic abuse risk assessment, as this is a significant demand pressure in our force Management Statement and as part of our approach to tackling violent crime and knife crime; we are reviewing recent research around offender motivation/risk factors as well as patterns of self reported violent crime victimisation.

The N8 PRP's Innovation Forums have also been beneficial, as they have focussed on areas of policing importance such as domestic violence and mental health. They allow practitioners in these fields to mix with academics, partners and fellow practitioners in order to share ideas, good practice and discuss potential research requirements.

Being involved in co-produced research is important to the force as it brings academic rigour to our policing policy decisions. The importance of embedding an evidence-based approach is recognised, with the establishment of an Evidence-Based Policing Board in West Yorkshire (which has representation from the N8 PRP) and an Organisational Learning Portal. The aim of both is to identify, share and embed good practice within the force, commission research to address knowledge gaps and develop a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

The force is acutely aware that undertaking research is not an end in itself; the research must inform practice and stimulate discussion about whether policing policy/process needs to change. In West Yorkshire our research project 'Enable UK', which was funded by the N8 PRP, led to a more proportionate approach to the policing of football and resulted in financial savings for both football clubs and the force. Our research project with University College London around



predictive analytics led to a Home Office funded project 'Patrolwise', which sees the effective targeting of resources to hotspot locations.

The force now has a Research Map, which captures all the research that is or has been undertaken. This includes N8 PRP research, research with other universities and also, the research that the staff within the force have undertaken as part of their own studies. There is a wealth of research and knowledge within the force that we need to maximise.

Part of the Strategy Team's role is to identify the research and good practice that is ongoing nationally, which may inform decision making in West Yorkshire. The Organisational Learning Portal has links to the College of Policing's Research Map, Crime Reduction Toolkits and the N8 PRP. We have also recently established a conference log to ensure those who attend conferences share the learning after the event. After the Society for Evidence Based Policing conference in March, some potential good practice from research was identified around key areas such as Investigations, Positive Action and Risk Assessments, which the force is now following up, to establish whether these initiatives could work in West Yorkshire.

The focus on research and evidence-based policing has increased significantly over the last couple of years. This is because within the

context of increasing demand and reducing resources, it is imperative that we implement 'good practice' and also learn from the things that do not work. As research, good practice and organisational learning sit within the strategy function, we have ensured in West Yorkshire that they have become integral to the strategic planning function. The research we take part in is informed by our assessment of threat, harm and risk meaning that it is targeted to the most important priorities and demand pressures facing West Yorkshire Police.

The Force now has a Research Map, which captures all the research that is or has been undertaken

*Rebecca Tennyson leads the strategy function within West Yorkshire Police and has responsibility for the force Management Statement, Strategic Assessment, Strategic Planning, Policy, Research and Organisational Learning. She is also the link with the College of Policing around Innovation and sits on the N8 PRP Steering Group.*





## 'Not a Minority Activity': A Challenge

Sara Thornton

Changing threats, increased expectations, growing complexity and less money are all compelling reasons to focus on evidence-based policing and what research can tell us about what works. In 2000, when I was on the Strategic Command Course I completed the Cambridge University Diploma in Criminology and since then I have been a supporter and advocate of making the link from research to practice.

In the subsequent 20 years I have seen a significant increase in research undertaken, greater awareness in policing of the benefits of research and consequently the body of knowledge has increased. There is still a long way to go but I would support Hunter, May and Hough's cautious optimism in their review the 'Evaluation of what works' published in 2017. I agree that the long-term aim is to increase the use of research evidence for policy and strategic decision-making and to make this a professional norm. To do this we need to ensure that it is accessible, relevant to the issues facing operational policing and relentlessly focused on application.

I have concluded that it is very hard to argue for significant new investment in policing unless there is greater clarity on how that investment would make the public safer. Of course policing is under severe stress and desperately needs more resources. Our officers and staff know this, the public know this and many political leaders know this. However, we are in competition for resources with many deserving causes – a healthy public, effective defence of our country or well-educated children. It is not enough to complain that policing has been cut

by over 25 per cent while demands have increased. We need to use data and evidence to develop a compelling long-term plan to make citizens safer and our country more secure.

In 1972 Archie Cochrane, an early advocate of evidence in health spending, wrote: 'If we are ever going to get the optimum results from our national expenditure on the NHS we must finally be able to express the results in the form of the benefit and cost to the population of a particular activity and the increased benefit that could be obtained if more money were made available.'

This is equally true for policing and while I would agree that we overdid performance targets and measurement 20 years ago, I think that the fact that we currently have no national or local objectives undermines our ability to explain to the public how their lives would be safer and more prosperous with more investment in policing. The public do care how much crime is committed and how many cases go to court.

In the last year, the National Police Chiefs' Council has been working closely with the Home Office on

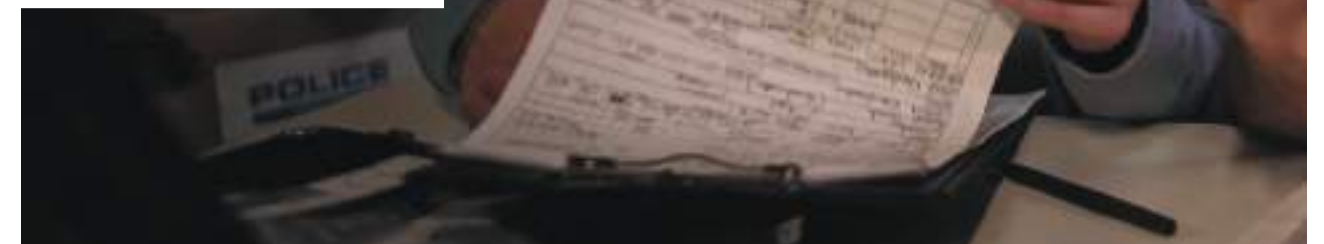
the case for greater investment in policing over the next ten years and I would have preferred to be able to rely on evidence much more than is possible at this stage. At a macro level we suspect that spending money on increasing safety and security will enhance the prosperity of the country but we have no evidence to make that case. At a more tactical level our arguments in favour of investing in capability to tackle knife crime need to be stronger. We can all rehearse the mantra 'we can't arrest our way out of the problem' but our understanding of the effectiveness of various prevention interventions is not strong. There are lots of good ideas and imaginative projects – but what will give the best return on investment?

I have often quoted the Pfeffer and Sutton Harvard Business Review article when asked about the role for police leaders: 'Demand evidence, examine logic, treat the organisation like an unfinished prototype and embrace the attitude of wisdom'. I have tried to do that as a chief officer for nearly twenty years – and when I have failed to ask questions, it is often when I have failed. I have also found that politicians and officials are much more persuaded by assertion that is followed by example and evidence.

I have also worked with UCL, Oxford and Cambridge, the Open University and the N8 PRP consortium to increase the contribution of academia to policing. I have enjoyed those interactions and been challenged to see problems from different angles. Relationships in general



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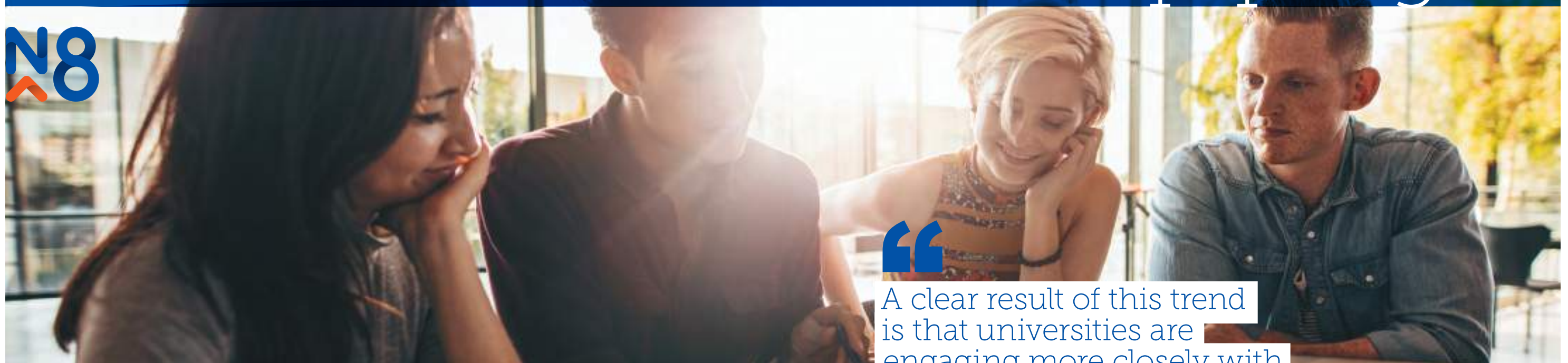


have matured across the country and great progress made. The recent Society of Evidence Based Policing conference was lively and well attended. There is excellent work in many forces led by practitioners.

However, I will leave you with a challenge. We will only have succeeded in ensuring that policing is informed by the best thinking and practice

when our instinctive response to a new threat is to consider research at the same time as we consider policy and powers in the National Decision Model. The wisdom that comes from research and academic study should not be a minority activity but should be a key component of what it means to be a professional police officer making good decisions.

*Until late March 2019, Sara Thornton CBE, QPM was the first Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council and a member of the N8 PRP Advisory Board. As of May 2019, she will take up a public appointment as the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.*



## In Conversation: N8 Research Partnership

Stephen Parkinson

### How do you feel the N8 PRP fits into the wider N8 partnership? What have been your personal reflections during your time in the role so far?

Since joining the N8 towards the end of 2018, I have been struck by the range and variety of collaboration that exists between the eight universities and their partners, both across the North and far beyond. Nowhere is this better encapsulated than in the work of N8 PRP, with its sense of a genuine partnership between the academic institutions and 11 police forces. The model of co-production that informs all of N8 PRP's work sets, I believe, a standard to which all of our other collaborations, both current and future, should aspire.

The N8's vision 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'. To my mind this ambition is needed now more than ever, as we face the uncertainties surrounding the UK's departure from the European Union at the same time as the opportunities presented by devolution and the Northern Powerhouse agenda.

These latter two in particular point towards a crucial role for more place-based research and innovation that address the challenges the North faces and which help to generate jobs and growth, as well as improving our vital public services. There is little doubt in my mind that the work of the N8 PRP is helping to deliver on these aspirations.

### Do you feel the ways in which and the reasons for universities engaging in research is changing?

Whilst universities – especially research-intensive ones – see part of their role as being to create the conditions to support curiosity-driven research, there is undeniably a movement underway whereby universities of almost all kinds are increasingly recognising the value of research that is inspired by, and is directly relevant to, their locality. In the UK, this move has been further catalysed by the emergence of place as a key feature of public policy, through a commitment on the part of government to both devolution and guided industrial policy, via the Industrial Strategy.

Universities play a crucial role in this landscape, as so-called 'anchor institutions' in their local areas. There

is also an increasing focus on the importance of universities' civic function and responsibilities, as major contributors to the economic and social wellbeing of places. As more and more institutions seek to embed this civic function at the very heart of their strategic plans, it inevitably impacts on the type of research they engage in but, equally important, where they undertake that research. As the recent report of the Civic Universities' Commission noted, tests of a civic university include whether its activity is aligned to public wants and whether its national and global activity supports and strengthens its civic activity.

A clear result of this trend is that universities are engaging more closely with a range of actors in their locality on both research and innovation activity – whether that be local SMEs and large firms with a base in the region, local government and public service providers, or charities/ third sector organisations active locally. A key feature of many of these collaborations is the use of methods of co-production – involving the users of research and those who will be impacted by it from the very beginning, rather than merely 'pushing' the results of research out to them. In this way, the research undertaken is firmly rooted



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in the needs of those who are mostly likely either to use or benefit from it.

The N8 PRP Policing Innovation Forum is an exemplar of this kind of user-driven research activity, bringing together police and other practitioners from across the North with researchers from the N8 universities and beyond, to identify novel research opportunities, stimulate knowledge exchange and drive innovation on topics that are timely and directly relevant to current policing practice.

### Do you feel there is an increasing interest in what the academic sector can bring to the public sector, especially in times of austerity?

Public services and the public sector more generally in the UK are under increasing pressure to adapt to the changing needs and demands of society, pressure that is only increased by the budgetary pressures brought about by austerity. Government at all levels, from national to local, increasingly recognises the part that the academic sector can play in developing better knowledge and understanding about the innovations that can help to deliver public services

in new and more efficient ways, as well as making them more user-centred and empowering for citizens.

Perhaps central to this is looking at the potential for technology to transform the way in which public services are designed and delivered, making them both more efficient and user-friendly. Allied to this, the potential to improve services through the effective and responsible use of the vast amounts of data held by government and service providers represents a huge opportunity.

Researchers working at the cutting edge of fields such as AI and data science clearly have a great deal to contribute in this regard but so too do those working in the social sciences, when it comes to understanding the issues that public services need to address and people's needs in accessing such services. Similarly researchers in the arts and humanities can make a vital contribution in relation to designing tools and services that are citizen – and user-centred, as well the ethical and legal challenges that the increased use of technology presents.

N8 PRP's workstream on Data Analytics represents an excellent example of the value that academic researchers – working closely with policing colleagues – can bring to bear on these sorts of challenges. The Data Analytics Digital Service (DADS), for example, is a unique digital resource that provides a one-stop-shop for police and researchers to work together on a range of questions and projects which either rely on data or can be supported by the use of data. Similarly, the Empowering Data Specialists in Policing CPD Programme supports the development of range of skills in data science, analytics and machine learning for members of police forces across the North and in the UK more widely.

*Stephen Parkinson is Research Partnership Manager at the N8 Research Partnership. In his role Stephen sits on the N8 PRP Steering Group.*





## A critical “cog in the wheel”? The role of police training and education in integrating research into police practices

Matthew Bacon and Layla Skinns

There has been growing recognition of the need for police and academics to work together in collaborative partnerships (i.e. research with the police) to advance knowledge exchange, translation and use. This alignment of police and academic institutions has been driven by the growing status of criminology and police studies and the need for impactful research that engages directly with practitioners. It has also been facilitated by a narrowing of the cultural divide between police and academics, growing police professionalisation and recognition by police of the need for research-informed practices and decision-making, and external input on their work, in light of an ever more complex role in 21st century societies. However, these partnerships are still in their infancy and sometimes founded on uneasy alliances rooted in cultural differences, and in difficulties with resourcing and sustainability.

In Spring 2018, members of the International Strand team at Sheffield University embarked on research trips to Oregon in the US, Norway and Sweden to interview police practitioners and academics engaged in partnership work. In February 2018, Matthew Bacon visited the Center for Policing Excellence (CPE) in Oregon and the Criminal Justice Policy Research Institute (CJPRI) at Portland State University where he conducted 13 interviews. In May 2018, Layla Skinns visited Norway and Sweden interviewing 13 senior police officers and researchers. The two field trips had a shared aim to examine developments in police-academic partnerships and the contribution

they have made to the development of evidence-based policing.

Here, we offer some preliminary reflections on the role that police training and education play in the development of research-informed police policies and practices. This is especially topical given the introduction of Police Constable Degree Apprenticeships in England and Wales in 2018 and the ambition for all new recruits to be educated to degree level by 2020. However, this was also a theme that cut across the two field trips. Before discussing what we found on this theme in Norway and Oregon (Sweden is not reviewed here), we briefly set out the context of police

work. The Norwegian Police Service is organised into 27 policing districts each headed by a Chief of Police. Their work is overseen by a National Police Directorate which deals with high-level strategic decision-making and is supported by a police academy, the Norwegian Police University College (Politihøgskolen), which focuses on training, education and research. There are 172 policing agencies in Oregon, with 45% employing ten or fewer officers. In 2013, the Oregon legislature established the CPE as part of the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. The CPE is charged with delivering training on leadership, problem solving and the application of research findings, as well as developing opportunities for researchers and practitioners to collaborate on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of policing.

In Norway, the mandatory requirements for all new recruits to undertake a bachelor's degree in policing at the Police University College was seen as a critical “cog in the wheel” with regards the integration of research into police policies and practices. This higher level of education of police officers in Norway was seen as helping to break-down cultural divides between police officers and researchers, enabling them to better understand and accept each other. One interviewee regarded an



educated police workforce as a better fit in knowledge-based societies, in which citizens increasingly wanted a well-educated police officer “knocking on their door”. These developments in Norway were also the result of strategic intent. On recognising the benefits of education and training, senior officers and researchers involved in police reform over the last two decades set up the Police University College, introducing accredited police degrees, as well as encouraging police officers to continue to participate in education including through Masters and PhD programmes. The flip side to this, though, is growing debates between more educated and research-focused police officers and police officer-researchers, and traditional academics about whose version of ‘the truth’ should prevail in situations of conflict, including in critical decisions about police practices. It would seem that traditional university-based academic research and expertise may be displaced by a police workforce able to do the research themselves (e.g. as police officer-researchers based in the research unit at the Police University College). These researchers are not only able to challenge academics on their own terms, but also provide possibly deeper insights that come from having also had a career as a police officer and from easier access to data and to police research participants.

In the US, becoming a police officer does not rely heavily on formal education; the minimum requirement is usually a high school diploma, although an increasing number of agencies require applicants to have an associate's degree. For many officers, therefore, the CPE is their first exposure to the concept of evidence-based policing, and experience of using research to inform their decision-making. Reflecting on police receptivity to such training, one interviewee said that, by the end of the course, trainers usually managed

to “at least tweak their curiosity”. Much of this initial success was attributed to requiring all students to complete a project where they identify, research and propose a solution to an actual problem in their community or agency. They were also provided with coaching and feedback on ways to enhance projects to increase the likelihood of success should they be implemented. Another key mechanism for promoting the use of research was said to be making knowledge accessible and translating it into a format that could be used by practitioners. Launched in December 2015, the Oregon Knowledge Bank ([www.oregonkb.com](http://www.oregonkb.com)) serves as an online resource that enables practitioners to learn about successful policing programmes operating in Oregon, view practical research summaries, and connect with colleagues to share information and expertise. Besides collaborating on an annual problem-oriented policing conference, academics did not play a significant role in the activities of the CPE. In part, this was explained by police distrust of academics and the belief direct and practical experience is most valued: “nobody knows what we know therefore nobody else can offer us anything”. A further challenge for police-academic partnerships in Oregon is the small number of policing researchers and university's that offer relevant programmes. Indeed, interviewees stressed that the evidence-based movement cannot rely on such collaborations. A mission of the CJPRI was thus to provide training and education in research design and crime analysis so that policing agencies could develop the capacity to do their own research.

Our preliminary reflections reveal that research-informed police policies and practices arise in a variety of ways. Police-academic partnerships, including multi-force and multi-university ones like the N8 PRP, are part of this picture, but so too is

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Traditional university-based academic research and expertise may be displaced by a police workforce

training, education and the provision of accessible, up-to-date information through digital knowledge-banks. The latter may be particularly helpful in locations like Oregon, where the geographical distances are great and the capacity to undertake training is low. However, as with police-academic partnerships, the alliances formed can be uneasy, particularly in a ‘post-truth’ world in which different groups may seek to make claims and counter-claims with regards the ownership of and messages contained within research on, with and sometimes by, the police. Notwithstanding these difficulties, developments in Oregon and Norway suggest that the recent investment in degree-level education for new recruits in England and Wales is likely to be money well spent.

*Dr Matthew Bacon and Dr Layla Skinns work in the School of Law at the University of Sheffield and part of the team leading the International Strand of N8 PRP.*



## Learning Police Organisations, Knowledge and Innovation Management



**S**irpa Virta of Tampere University in Finland provides some comparative insights, reflecting on her involvement with the N8 PRP as an international advisor and a recent N8 PRP event that she attended.

In her opening speech at the N8 PRP Data Mobilising conference in Leeds on 25th March 2019 (a version of which is reproduced in this report at p30), Professor Gloria Laycock posed a question: 'Who decides what the data is for and how it is to be used?' This question is important but too seldom asked. I found the discussions on evidence-based policing and research co-production familiar to those heard in Finland and also from the wider European context. Despite the differences between police organisations, police training and education systems, I would argue that more strategic approach to evidence-based policy in general, and to evidence-based policing in particular, is needed. The police are slowly acquiring the capacity and realising the need to be a learning organisation. The N8 PRP itself has been a learning process to all participants, including myself, as a foreign observer.

Finland, like the other Nordic countries, has a unified, state-organised, centralised national police force under the political supervision of a separate government minister (the Minister of the Interior in Finland). The recent police reforms in 2009-15 have been implemented in three phases, and the administrative restructuring has reduced the number of police districts from 90 down to 24 and further down

to 11. It has been argued that policing regimes are in transition in the Nordic countries in general, and that this is the case in Finland too (Virta and Taponen 2017). Finland has moved from the so-called 'Scandinavian model' towards the 'European model' of security governance and policing (Virta 2013), mostly due to the rapidly changing security environment but also because European Union membership and EU strategies are now such important drivers of development.

Evidence-based security, policing and law enforcement is a wider trend in Europe. In the European Union innovation strategy From Research to Security Union (EC, Migration and Home Affairs, 2017) the EU-financed research is seen playing an important role in developing innovations, solutions and technologies for use by police and other law enforcement officials. CEPOL (European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training) has promoted research-practice co-production since its establishment in the European Council summit in Tampere, Finland, in 1999. The first CEPOL seminar I attended was in Lyon in 2001, and the reason I was sent there by the Finnish Police was the very idea of bringing new ideas and knowledge to the police officers studying at Tampere University.

The cooperation between the Police University College of Finland and Tampere University has been particularly close relationship during the past 20 years. It is an illustration of the value and benefits of academic-practitioner collaboration in the field of police education, science and research. The Master's Programme of Police Management that we ran between 1998 and 2018 Tampere University was specially tailored for senior police officers. So far, more than 200 police officers have completed their graduate thesis and Master's Degrees, and eight officers have gone on to complete a PhD. There is a long tradition of research-practice co-production, however the police in Finland still lack a strategic approach to police research and evidence-based policing, as well as robust mechanisms or processes of translating research into practices and action. The Finish police organisation's ability to absorb and put to use new knowledge is not well developed yet, although there is evidence of some significant new learning in this regard. It seems that police organisations tend to adapt new ways of thinking and doing quite slowly. Regulation and legislation, hierarchical structures and organisational cultural traditions may be obstacles but creative thinking and innovations need to be encouraged and rewarded.

Research-practice co-production of knowledge and the processes of translating scientific research results in to the police training and policing practices are important characteristics of a learning police organisation. A

complexity theory-informed approach to policing suggests that policing and police services are parts of a complex adaptive system that has three levels: the policy system, the organisational system and the individual practitioner level. At all levels, but especially at the policy level and the organisational level, knowledge and innovation management are seen as a response to govern the complexity and uncertainty of the environment, like changes and challenges of societal security, crime, disorder and emerging threats. It has been argued that within the context of complexity theory, arguments are made for the importance of creativity at all levels of the system (Virta and Gustafsberg 2018).

It is my view that innovation management should be included in to the leadership and management structures and processes of the police organisation. Dialogue between researchers and practitioners is very important, and should be facilitated and made possible it adds mutual value. The N8 PRP Mobilising Data event in Leeds was a success in this sense too; giving voice to, and taking account of, everyday knowledge and experience of police and other relevant partner authorities, increasing mutual respect between professions and fostering organisational and individual learning. I think that there are many comparative lessons to be learnt from the N8 PRP experiences, results and outcomes that would be of value to us in Finland and to other police-academic partnerships across Europe and beyond.

*Sirpa Virta is Professor of Police Management and Security Governance at Tampere University and an international member of the N8 PRP Advisory Board.*



“It is my view that innovation management should be included in to the leadership and management structures and processes of the police organisation”





## A View from Down Under: Evidence-Based Policing in Queensland

Tracey Hartley

Tracey Hartley, Acting Inspector with the Queensland Police Service (QPS), will be visiting the UK in October 2019 on a research trip funded by the Suncorp Police Scholarship. Tracey has a personal interest in the safety and protection of children and one of the primary objectives of her visit is to observe the work of the Safer Schools project delivered by West Yorkshire Police. She is also working as part of the internationally renowned collaboration between QPS and three Queensland universities. In this article, Tracey provides an overview of the QPS Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) partnership, the purpose of her research visit, and how she hopes it will inform best practice in QPS.

### The QPS Model

The QPS has a long standing commitment to working with the academic community to progress and

advance EBP. This has been achieved through a partnership with the three leading universities in Queensland; Griffith University, Queensland

University of Technology (QUT) and the University of Queensland (OU). EBP is an important part of contemporary policing and the QPS is a strong advocate and practitioner of EBP. Since its inception, the formal collaboration has resulted in QPS partnering with a number of researchers across the partner universities on a range of different EPB research programmes.

One of the partnerships most notable initiatives has come from embedding police officers within dedicated research teams at the partner universities as Visiting Police Fellows. This began through a bilateral relationship with Griffith University

in 2007. The key component of the Visiting Fellow role is to build relationships and facilitate research between universities and industry partners. Police Visiting Fellows also provide critical liaison, acting as a key point for the exchange of information, and to facilitate the meshing of police practice and research. Over time the initiative has proven to be particularly valuable both for the individuals and the institutions. By embedding our Inspectors as Visiting Fellows in the university, it benefits not only our organisation through the sharing of information, but also the national and international experts engaged through our Visiting Fellows are extremely important.

In addition, the QPS has partnered with Griffith University to create the Social Analytics Lab. The Social Analytics Lab is a custom-built, secure research facility that stores, manages and analyses sensitive administrative data for research and teaching. Underpinned by industry standard security protocols that enable the storage of individual level data, the Social Analytics Lab offers a unique platform where cutting edge academic research can be applied to the complex real world problems of a rapidly evolving 21st century society.

Within QPS itself, we have a Research and Evaluation Unit which guides and coordinates research and evaluation activities across the organisation. It is tasked with developing new knowledge to inform the evidence base for improved organisational decision making and service delivery. The Unit is responsible for conducting proactive research, evaluation assistance, project planning, leading collaboration with internal and external stakeholders (including universities and researchers), training and reviewing findings from published research. Engagement with EBP practices is also encouraged through our leadership centre,

with the opportunity for police officers to apply for scholarships similar to the one which is funding my international research.

### International Research Scholarship

While serving with QPS, I have been a Detective working in the child abuse area and am currently a Tactician, with a focus on community safety through the implementation of proactive crime prevention strategies. Both personally and professionally, I am interested in the safety and protection of children and want to ensure that as an organisation we are assisting with early intervention strategies for these young people to reduce harm, victimisation and re-offending. The main objective of my research is to examine the framework of our School Based Police Officers (SBPOs) to enhance community safety and security. SBPOs are an extremely beneficial resource to our organisation, our key stakeholders and the community. By examining the framework regarding role or functions according to policy, SBPOs themselves and our stakeholders I hope to make best practice recommendations and improve our SBPO framework for the future.

I have been very fortunate to be awarded the Suncorp Police Scholarship. It is allowing me to undertake research that will benefit the QPS and wider community in the area of crime prevention. There are a number of aspects to my research including interviews with QPS SBPOs, engagement with Queensland Education and international best practice by travelling to Los Angeles, Washington DC, Canada, UK and Scotland. Further, I am reviewing the current evidence based policing research that has been published and linked to SBPOs.

With the scholarship award I am able to travel and observe international best practice first hand, assessing whether any evidence based research or projects would be adaptable or suitable for our SBPOs in Queensland. An area of particular interest is the evidence based review of the Safer Schools Project being implemented by West Yorkshire Police. I am aware that the paper currently being written is looking at engaging young people over the next five years. Our Queensland Government priorities and Organisational strategies are also structured around organisational shift and preparation for the future. By visiting the UK I endeavour to speak with academics, researchers and police officers regarding the framework of their SBPOs and engagement strategies.

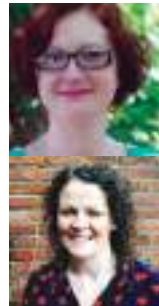
Preliminary research indicates that early intervention must be occurring early in life, in the primary school years. Through this early intervention I would like to give consideration to vulnerable young people, enhancing collaborative partnerships, intervention strategies and evaluate concept of crime prevention utilising the SBPOs. The learnings from the UK could assist me in enhancing our policies, relationships with stakeholders and the current framework of the SBPOs.

*Tracey Hartley is Acting Inspector in the Commissioner's Office of Queensland Police Service. She will be visiting West Yorkshire Police between 14-18th October 2019 and is keen to hear from policing colleagues working in the area of her research. She can be contacted at: Hartley.TraceyL@police.qld.gov.au*



The Unit is responsible for conducting proactive research, evaluation assistance, project planning, leading collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, training and reviewing findings from published research





## Fostering Knowledge Exchange

Nicole Westmarland and Donna Marie Brown

The aim of the People and Knowledge Exchange Strand of N8 PRP has been foster greater mutual understanding and trust between the partners via people exchange, including secondments, internships, and placements, and also to facilitate research into priority policing issues.

Thus far, the following Staff Exchange and Postgraduate Researcher Internship awards have completed:

**Dr Rose Broad** (Manchester University) completed her Staff Exchange Project with West Yorkshire Police (WYP) anti-slavery team and Barclays Bank. The importance of financial evidence in building modern slavery cases had been recognised by the WYP team and an operation had been developed and implemented to use banking data to inform operational activity. This project presented an opportunity to build on the existing research expertise enhance by an earlier small grant (see p.12) and the operational and practical experiences of the WYP team and Barclays Bank representative to consider systematically the financial aspects of modern slavery and how these might be used to inform operational practice.

**Professor Liz Campbell** (Durham University) completed her Staff Exchange project with Durham Constabulary, which explored the suitability and nature of work of policing ethics committees. It provided academic input towards the shaping of the ethics committee at Durham Constabulary.

**Dr Kelly Johnson** (Durham University) completed a Postgraduate Researcher Internship with Cumbria Constabulary and Greater Manchester Police. This study mapped the potential trajectories of domestic abuse cases as they progressed through the criminal justice system. It identified shared policing practices for recording and responding to domestic abuse incidents, as well as local force policies and procedures. The information produced from this work has been of benefit to researchers, practitioners and service users.

**Nikki D'Souza** (Durham Constabulary) conducted a case study examining the possibilities for using restorative justice in working with Organised Criminal Gangs (OCG). This project extended the work that she had previously conducted alongside Dr Xavier L'Hoiry (Sheffield University) through their Staff Exchange award. Engaging OCG members in restorative justice piqued the interest of the public, policing partners and academics alike. Nikki has published a report for the College of Policing, a think piece for The Conversation and has an academic article that she has written with Xavier under submission with a leading academic journal.



A rolling open call will continue to provide funds to support projects into targeted and important areas of policing work

The following Staff Exchange awards are ongoing:

- Dr Charlotte Barlow (Lancaster University) is collaborating with Merseyside Police to develop and deliver a tool for measuring and monitoring the policing of coercive control.
- Dr Donna Marie Brown (Durham University) is currently working with Northumbria Police to explore how hate crime is reported, recorded and responded to and to share examples of good practice.
- Detective Chief Inspector Louise Cass-William (Northumbria Police) will be working alongside Jeannine Hughes (Northumbria University) to examine Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse in an attempt to improve police responses.
- Dr Alison Jobe (Durham University) is working with Northumbria Police and Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland to investigate people with learning disabilities experiences of the criminal justice System in cases of sexual assault/ rape.
- Dr Simone Santorso (Hull University) will be working alongside Humberside Police to evaluate the deployment of body worn cameras.

A rolling open call will continue to provide funds to support projects into targeted and important areas of policing work, where the gaps in knowledge are most prominent and where research benefits are of greatest value.

### Knowledge Exchange Conference

In June 2018, the annual Knowledge Exchange conference focused on 'Improving Policing Research and Practice on Child to Parent Domestic Violence and Abuse'. It brought together key police experts, academics and practitioners focusing on this

important but often neglected topic. In setting the scene, Helen Bonnick (Helen Bonnick Associates) discussed 'Child to parent violence and abuse: Should you call the cops on your kids, and other questions'. Dr Sam Lewis (University of Leeds) presented her research on: 'Conceptualisations of, and responses to, child-to-parent violence in England and Wales'. Dr Simon Retford (Greater Manchester Police) offered insights into the complexities of working in this area in his presentation: 'Policing Parent Abuse: Collaboration opportunities for preventative intervention'. Dr Hannah Bows (Durham University) extended the focus of the discussion by encouraging us to move away from focussing on the violence of young children: 'Where parricide meets eldercide: an analysis of child to parent/grandparent homicides in the UK'. The day concluded with an interactive workshop delivered by Detective Superintendent Melanie Palin (South Yorkshire Police), Amy McKenzie (Doncaster Children's Services Trust) and Tania Percy (South Yorkshire Police) entitled: 'How do we secure data to understand the real prevalence of child to adult violence?' Feedback from the day and following the event has demonstrated the importance of this conference in providing a forum to discuss this important policing issue and offering networking opportunities for future collaborative research.

### Masters Bursaries Scheme

In response the increased appetite of Masters students to get involved with N8 PRP and the lack of opportunities available to them, we have developed a Masters Bursary Scheme. The scheme was opened up to all N8 PRP universities who currently deliver Postgraduate Taught courses with a dissertation component. Each university could apply for a maximum of five bursaries. Working with local policing partners, universities were encouraged to identify policing

priority areas that could be used as the focus for Masters dissertations. Masters students are then able to apply to conduct a dissertation within one of the policing priority areas and they will receive a bursary of up to £2,500 to support them in their study. Beyond the requirement to do a high quality dissertation, the scheme requirements are that the student (and supervisor and policing partner if appropriate) are willing to write a short briefing note appropriate for a policing audience. To date, we have awarded four bursaries to Durham University and five to the University of Leeds.

### Domestic Abuse Network launch

Across the N8 PRP there has been a lot of activity and research related to domestic abuse, including small grants, conferences, and staff and PGR exchanges. To draw the greatest long-term value from this body of work, Nicole Westmarland and Kelly Johnson of the Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (CRiVA) at Durham University have established a new listserv network for academics, police (officers and staff) and policing partners, to use to exchange knowledge to positively impact on the policing of domestic abuse.

*Professor Nicole Westmarland is Director of the Durham Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (CRiVA); Dr Donna Marie Brown is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology.*





# Police Understandings of Community Engagement

Lisa Weston

The opportunity to develop insights into the day-to-day reality of criminal justice work inspired me to apply for a PhD studentship in policing. Before I returned to academia, I worked as a practitioner in a criminal justice agency extensively affected by austerity. In my view, the subsequent organisational changes that occurred involved insufficient consultation with staff and limited comprehension of the practice context.

The experience demonstrated the significance of understanding criminal justice agencies, including the skills, perspectives and knowledge of frontline staff, the workings of service delivery and the impacts of organisational changes on practice. These insights not only motivated me to get involved in academic research, but also inspired my approach to studying the subject of community engagement in policing. Understanding how the police work with and involve the public in policing is the central focus of my PhD.

The reduced resources brought about by austerity, increasing demands on service and the changing nature of crime have required police forces to make changes to how they deliver policing. I was interested to understand what police-community engagement looks like in this context and how police officers and staff can make sense of and deliver this type of work. Based on my personal experience and the nature of the research topic, I decided that the most suitable way to explore police-community engagement was to observe police officers and staff during their routine shifts. Therefore, I conducted 20 observations, totalling 150 hours, of Police Constables, Police

Community Support Officers and Sergeants in two Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT) in one police force in the North of England.

The observations provided the opportunity to 'see' community engagement as perceived and experienced by police officers and staff, including being there for the unspoken and unexpected aspects of their practice. It is through this research lens that I became aware of the different interactional spaces that police officers and staff occupy during foot and vehicle patrols of neighbourhoods. As a result, I am examining the distinctive communication spaces of patrol and how they can influence the type and nature of contact police officers and staff experience with the public. This analysis of foot and vehicle patrol will inform understandings of community engagement practice by illustrating how NPTs can foster two-way dialogue with the public and a detailed understanding of localities. The experience of applying and developing my knowledge and skills in policing research has been invaluable to my learning at the same time as facilitating unique insights into community engagement work.



“ This analysis of foot and vehicle patrol will inform understandings of community engagement practice



# Police Joint Working: From 'Crime-Fighting' to Safeguarding and Vulnerability

Lindsay Youansamouth

## Topic

At least since the implementation of the Children Act 1989, joint working has been a recurrent theme in legislation and policy. Multi-agency working is viewed as a way to transform fragmented services into a more comprehensive system that addresses the multiple needs of families. Emphasis is placed on a need for professionals to work together to identify and find solutions to issues which traverse professional boundaries. Highly publicised incidents including the deaths of Victoria Climbié and Peter Connelly have repeatedly exposed failings in inter-organisational relations. Meanwhile, financial constraints have prompted police forces to devise innovative, yet practical ways of complying with changing bureaucracy, whilst managing demand and maintaining effectiveness and efficiency; a situation which has contributed to a need for agencies to pool their reduced resources together. One might argue that the mandate for joint working has never been greater.

## Methodology

This ethnographic study explores how police work with other public and voluntary sector agencies, including: education, probation, housing, social care, health, ambulance service, fire and rescue, alcohol and drugs services and domestic abuse services. During the 18-month fieldwork, I observed meetings, shadowed non-warranted police staff and warranted officers, followed police operations and

'hung-out' in offices and rest rooms. Pro-longed immersion enabled in-depth insights into front – and back-stage behaviours, perceptions and attitudes of frontline and strategic police employees. Observations were supplemented with informal interviews and documentary analysis.

## Findings

- Contemporary research into police joint working is limited: reports often predate the 2008 recession; focus on the merits of a particular model (e.g. co-located teams); or lack insight into the 'messy realities' of implementation.
- Often research fails to acknowledge 'natural' talk 'behind closed doors': which is essential to understanding the challenges of joint working.
- Police officers value the opportunity to voice their opinions: anonymously to an 'outsider' who they trust.
- Police cultures play a key role: police pragmatism impressed other professionals; meanwhile, there remains a widespread officer preference for 'crime-fighting' rather than safeguarding and vulnerability.
- Absent facilitators are fundamental to the success (or not) of joint working: including time, trust, supervision, support and reflexivity.
- Non-human elements are imperative to professional 'boundary-crossing': including repeatedly shared spaces

(e.g. streets, cars, meetings, buildings) and material practices (e.g. technologies, hardware, software and forms).

## Recommendations and impact

I am engaging in ongoing collaborative work with the Evidence-Based Research Hub, Organisational Development, Futures Team and the Head of Crime at Lancashire Constabulary in order to translate the research recommendations into outputs. This includes the co-production of a media video for frontline officers; data regarding police officer perceptions to inform the child protection action plans; and the development of a multi-agency trauma informed approach. Recommendations advocate a need for:

- A move away from bureaucratic approaches to greater emphasis on fostering professional expertise;
- Development of reflexive practice to support professionalisation ;
- More formalised supervision in policing (including multi-agency supervision).

"I didn't realise research was like this. I thought it was just people working with numbers, interviews or those focus groups. It's been quite therapeutic this whole process, you know, off-loading to someone external, who you trust, someone who doesn't judge what you say. A chance to speak our minds without fear of repercussions".  
Police Constable, Response



Lindsay graduated from Durham University with a BA (hons) in Psychology in 2011. Whilst studying, she worked in residential schools for children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Upon graduating, Lindsay worked extensively across community, acute and secure forensic mental health settings before being awarded a bursary to fund a MA in Social Work. During her studies Lindsay trained as an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor. She later practiced in child protection, during which her interest in multi-agency work grew. Perhaps unsurprisingly – at the same time – the local police force were seeking research exploring contemporary practices of joint working. In consultation with Lancashire Constabulary, Lindsay secured Economic and Social Research Council funding to complete a PhD in policing and multi-agency working. Alongside her N8 doctoral studentship, Lindsay teaches social work at Lancaster University. In 2017, she was appointed as a Research Associate on a Nuffield funded mixed-methodology study exploring fathers' experiences of care proceedings.

“ I didn't realise research was like this. I thought it was just people working with numbers, interviews or those focus groups. It's been quite therapeutic this whole process, you know, off-loading to someone external, who you trust, someone who doesn't judge what you say. A chance to speak our minds without fear of repercussions. ”





## The policing and regulation of illegal drugs at music festivals

Verity Smith

The music festival industry is worth over a billion pounds, with attendance at UK music festivals reaching 27.7 million in 2015, making them an integral part of the UK's 'experience economy' and a staple leisure pursuit of the British summer. Amongst many other reasons, some festivals remain popular for the liminal and immersive experiences they provide to customers. That is, the sense that the rules, norms and constraints of everyday life are suspended and transgressive behaviours are temporarily permitted. In particular, festivals with a strong dance music component are more likely to attract a drug-using crowd, providing an attractive market for drug dealers.



My research investigates how festival drug policy and policing operates within these commercial, legal and political tensions and interests



Festival drug use increasingly presents a commercial risk for the festival management, in terms of customer safety, liability and reputation. Recreationally used 'party' drugs such as cocaine and MDMA (in pills or crystal form) are much stronger at street level than have been for years, and a number of deaths in both nightclubs and festivals have been attributed to an adverse reaction to a high dosage of MDMA. When festival customers engage in excessive, experimental and poly drug use, the risk of drug related harm occurring is greatly increased. Furthermore, drugs bought on-site are more likely to be mis-sold. How festivals manage and respond to these risks is a pertinent issue, as getting it wrong can have harmful consequences for both customers and the festival.

In response to the steadily increasing rate of recreational drug-related deaths, a drug safety testing service called 'The Loop' was set up in 2013. The Loop has been operating at festivals with full police cooperation, providing both 'Back of House' (BOH) testing since 2013, and 'Front of House testing' (FOH) since 2016. On-site festival testing in 2018 revealed there were a number of pills in circulation containing three times the standard dose of MDMA. In 2017, The Loop identified that N-ethyl pentylone, a novel psychoactive substance (NPS) which leaves the user with psychosis and insomnia, was being mis-sold as MDMA on-site at Kendal Calling. These findings led to social media drug alerts being jointly shared by The Loop and festival management.

There has been widespread support for drug safety testing in the media, especially in the aftermath of drug-related deaths. However, the introduction of FOH testing must be negotiated at a local level with agreement of the police and licensing authority. The four objectives of the Licensing Act 2003 must be satisfied

for the event to be granted a license. Relevant to drugs, there must be a plan to prevent crime and disorder, and to maintain public safety, which often translates into a 'zero-tolerance' policy to drugs when interpreted within council licensing guidelines. The widening availability of drug safety testing has been instrumental in challenging 'zero-tolerance' status quo of festival drug policy, given that FOH testing requires a form of drug tolerance zone to operate and can be seen as an acknowledgement that drugs can get onto site.

My research investigates how festival drug policy and policing operates within these commercial, legal and political tensions and interests. It explores the process of policy negotiation between stakeholders, the agreements made, and their subsequent implementation on-site. In the summer of 2018, I spent over 180 hours observing policing across five UK music festivals, at pre-festival meetings and on-site during festival time. With an understanding of 'policing' as encompassing the decisions and activities of formal agencies that control, manage and respond to the use and sale of drugs, I observed alongside festival management, the police, private security officers, welfare services, and on-site drug testing services. The research is ongoing with further stakeholder interviews and observations planned. The following provides a flavour of my preliminary analysis.

My research reveals some of the unique practical challenges for controlling and policing drugs in the festival environment. As outdoor events, the weather often plays a significant role in how policies are implemented. For example, when customers are queuing in the rain or the scorching sun, drug searches may be deprioritised in the interests of customer satisfaction and safety. By necessity, festival drug policing

is particularly discretionary, with the majority of drug offences detected by security never coming to the attention of the police unless a substantial quantity of drugs are found. Written policies can only reveal a limited picture of policies, since there are a range of informal agreements and understandings between police and security that guide the use of discretion when a drug offence is detected. Instances of festival attendees being caught with an 'above threshold' amount of drugs on them can lead to multi-agency negotiation of how to respond appropriately. The decision-making behind drug alerts of substances of concern (identified by on-site drug testing) is another arena where drug policy is the product of ongoing partnership negotiation.

Beyond the festival context, the research can help enhance our understanding of police work within temporary, ad-hoc multi-agency partnerships within commercial environments. It provides insights into some of the cultural and organisational tensions between policing partners, their differing perspectives of each other and what contributes to good partnership work. It can also contribute to the ongoing debate about the structural position of the police in relation to the private sector. As local police forces have differential (and sometimes very limited) experience and familiarity with the festival environment, it is interesting to consider the ways in which the police seek to establish and maintain a 'steering' role over festival policing in these circumstances, such as through national intelligence operations. Given the growing popularity of festivals, an in-depth investigation into how policing partnerships work in these environments can be illuminating and valuable.



# N8 PRP in Numbers







## Get in touch

<https://n8prp.org.uk>

**Project Manager: Steph Abraham**

s.abraham@leeds.ac.uk  
+44 (0) 113 343 9622

**Events and Communication Coordinator: Oliver Abe**

o.ab@leeds.ac.uk  
+44 (0) 113 343 7041



@N8PRP