College of Policing

Going equipped

Issue 5 Autumn/Winter 2022

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Editorial

Chief Superintendent Katy Barrow-Grint ◆ Thames Valley Police

Welcome to issue 5 of Going equipped, our publication written by policing for policing. This edition is packed with excellent articles that I hope you'll enjoy reading.

The editorial board and the Going equipped team at the College of Policing work hard to find content that we think is informative and interesting, sharing innovative practice and ideas about policing across the country. We've had lots of positive comments about Going equipped and we value your feedback. Please use the QR code in this publication (or **get in touch** if you are reading online) to tell us what you think.

In this issue, you'll find articles spanning a wide range of topics. We have practice notes on a horse rider volunteer scheme, tackling spiking in the night-time economy and analysing Linked Series firearms to reduce discharges. You'll read about what it's like to be a custody detention officer, a digital investigator, a tutor constable or a police officer going to court as a victim of crime. And you can find out about telematics and an approach to neurodiversity training for frontline staff.

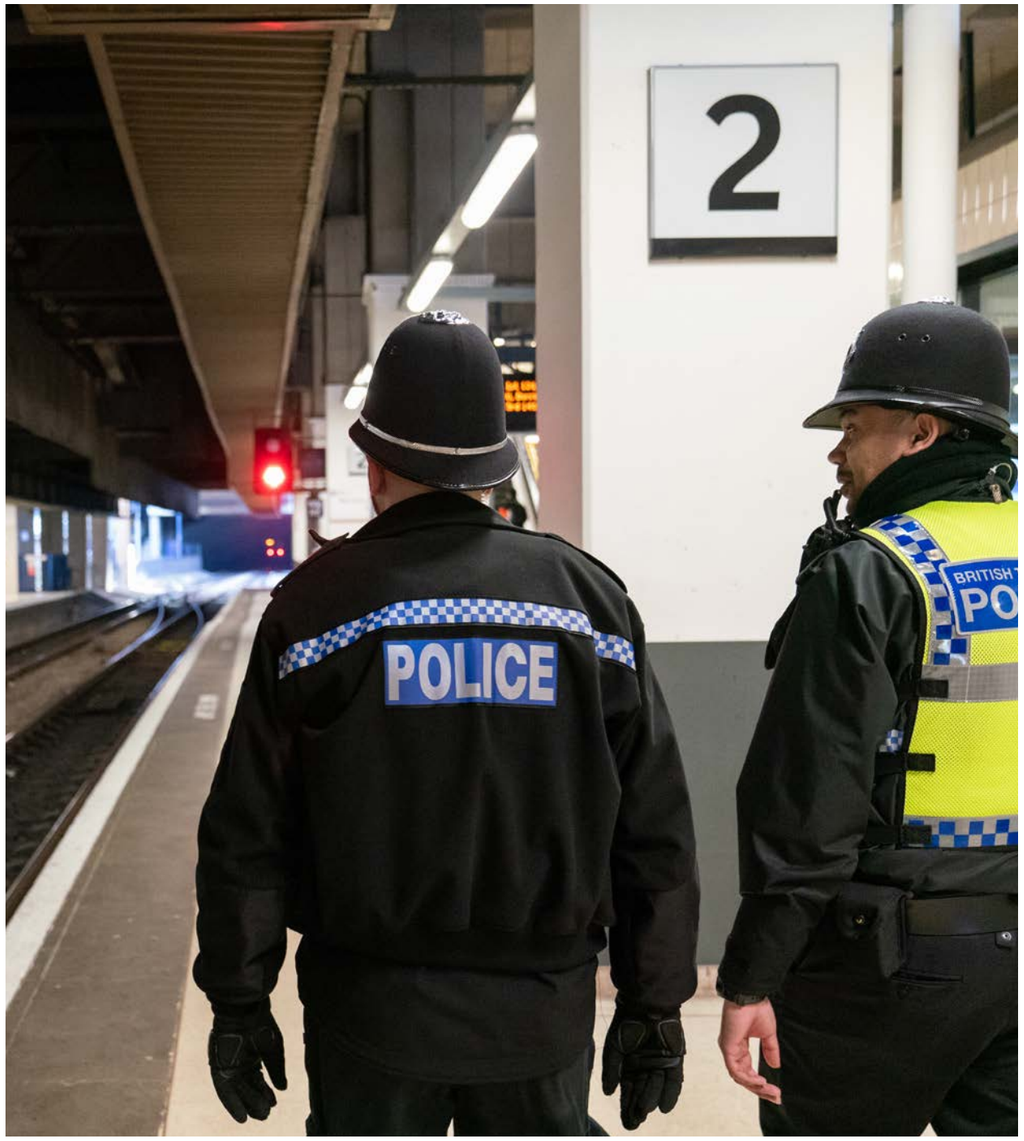
The long reads cover two fascinating topics. The first presents research on the likelihood of a missing person actively coming to harm, which may help policing when considering demand in this area. The second long read focuses on policing culture and the socialisation of student officers. This is an important debate, especially given the current Police Uplift Programme.

Finally, I'd like to bring your attention to this edition's book review

of ‘Listen’ by Dr Kathryn Mannix, which was written with the medical world in mind, especially patients being given palliative care. The article looks at how the delivery of unwelcome news is translatable into policing.

Going equipped is available to read across the world, but it’s written and reviewed by police officers and staff here in the UK, from all ranks and roles. If you’d like to contribute or be a peer reviewer, we’d love to hear from you. Please email **goingequipped@college.police.uk** and let the team know!

Enjoy reading!



Shift in the life of...

A digital investigator

Detective Constable Maddie deBuse ◆ Thames Valley Police

My day starts with a swift walk to my local police station. I base myself in the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) because members of the team are on a warrant this morning and the suspect is known to be an expert in encryption. I’m on hand in case the investigation team has any digital issues and it’s not long before I get a call from the officers on the scene. They’re in the process of arresting the suspect who has a smart phone and need to know how to seize the device without losing or deleting evidence. I answer their questions via video call so I can scan through the property with them and make sure nothing is missed. I advise on what can be left at the address and what needs to be seized.

I like being at the police station. It’s important that people know who I am and that I find out what they are working on. With anything digital, a common theme is ‘you don’t know what you don’t know’, which is where I come in. By making myself available, I find opportunities to add value. I overhear officers talking about a PlayStation 5 that has been used to commit a crime. They’re discussing whether digital evidence can link the suspect to the PS5 and prove

the offences, so I steer them in the right direction. The key is for officers to understand what to do and how to do it, and to be empowered and go on to educate their peers. We have an in-depth conversation about what’s better, PlayStation or Xbox. I can’t help it but sometimes the nerd in me escapes!

I work my way around to the neighbourhood departments. I say hello and they say they never have anything digital. I smile because there is that ‘you don’t know what you don’t know’ again.

I encourage them to keep an eye on wearable technology when they see their usual suspects, and to make sure they include this in descriptions and when they submit intelligence. Information provided by neighbourhood and response officers is vital. If they know how to preserve digital evidence, the investigation teams that take over cases have a much easier time down the line.

I make my way back to CID, poking my head into the inspectors' office on my way to see what's going on. The officers have returned from their warrant, so I help them prioritise the interrogation of their seized devices and advise how best to process the items in line with disclosure, data protection, policies and correct packaging. I also advise them on section 49 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000, which provides the power to serve a RIPA notice to a suspect, requiring them to disclose a password or code to allow access to electronic data. I contact our digital departments to request fast-tracking items to prevent any loss of evidence. This is agreed but the investigation team is interviewing and the search officers are busy, so I transport the digital items to our examination department.

I get a call from another department wanting advice on social media, in terms of what information they can get and how to go about it. I realise that this investigation needs a full strategy. It's a very serious case and I spend time reviewing the investigation, including the statements, exhibits and logs. I produce an advice document for the officer outlining how to achieve their objectives, the limitations of their digital evidence and how to proceed. I also include disclosure and file advice. This type of work is dynamic, so my advice will be the first version of many – I'll provide continuous advice and guidance as information changes.

> This type of work is dynamic, so my advice will be the first version of many.

Once that's done, it's time for me to end my shift, passing on the details of the warrant to our late-turn cover in case further support is needed from our team. A big part of my role is making other officers' jobs easier – that's what I do every day and I love it.

This article was peer reviewed by Temporary Detective Sergeant Mark Hibbert, West Yorkshire Police.

PRACTICE NOTE

Linked Series* analysis of discharged guns

Intelligence Analyst ◆ Force Intelligence Bureau

I've worked in Merseyside Police in the intelligence arena since 2004. I now work in a dedicated firearms intelligence team alongside colleagues in the serious and organised crime section.

The number of Merseyside illegal firearm discharge incidents has fluctuated over the years, peaking with 125 in both 2007 and 2012. Since the Firearms Investigation Team (FIT) was implemented in January 2020, numbers of discharges have notably decreased. There were just 43 incidents in 2021, the lowest number recorded for 21 years. The impact of COVID-19 and Operation Venetic (EncroChat investigations) are likely to be contributing factors here. However, given the increase in incidents in neighbouring forces at this time, as well as fatal discharges occurring early during the 'lockdown' period, there may be other explanations.

*For the purposes of this article, a 'Linked Series firearm' relates to a lethal-barrelled firearm that has been identified as being discharged in multiple shots-fired incidents, following examination of ballistic items by NABIS.

Our collaborative 'One Team' approach involves the whole force in the effort towards addressing firearm incidents, and is thought to have had an impact on reducing discharges. The FIT investigate all discharge incidents and most firearm recoveries. The monthly in-force Strategic Firearms governance meeting, chaired by the Head of Investigations, is attended by staff and officers across the force, as well as partner agencies. The aims and objectives are clearly expressed, with an emphasis on the 4P framework (pursue, protect, prepare and prevent).

Investigating the use of a specific firearm in multiple incidents enables us to build a clearer intelligence picture, providing additional forensic and investigative opportunities. This has also enabled us to identify a downstream supply network, by charting Linked Series of a particular firearm type and highlighting nominal association links. This has led to international liaison coordinated by the National Crime Agency and Europol, and has been a breakthrough in understanding the movement of firearms across the force area and the UK, with the findings continually verified.

After being notified of a Linked Series by the National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS), we follow this process.

1 An initial intelligence assessment is written regarding potential ownership, supply and use. This is shared with key individuals in force and with partner agencies.

2 A detailed assessment is written. The Linked Series is scored red, amber or green (RAG), with a management of risk in law enforcement (MoRILE) assessment. These are included in the monthly Strategic Firearms governance meeting presentation.

3 The Linked Series is discussed at the governance meeting and prioritised based on threat, risk and harm (TRH), combining the score with professional judgement (for example, a lower score could be prioritised over a high score because of short-term risk, any prior serious injuries and the behaviour of the suspect).

4 Linked Series activity is directed for the next month, using all available resources and assets from a local and central level, with covert assets also considered.

5 An in-depth Linked Series document and briefings are produced and circulated.

Linked Series intelligence summaries and documents consist of, but are not limited to, the following.

- An intelligence assessment based on all incidents and nominals involved, including investigative findings (CCTV footage, vehicles involved, telecoms) and forensic results. Prison data is also researched, as firearms movement has been linked back to prison alliances.
- Association charts, as the increased movement of firearms – within and across force boundaries – evidences a tangled web that a pictorial representation helps to illustrate.
- Open land opportunities based on the address of the suspect (and their family and associates), intelligence, previous firearm recoveries and areas of operation.
- Identifying addresses of people who may be open to exploitation for the storage of commodity (for example, due to vulnerabilities such as alcohol or drug dependency).
- The areas where the nominals operate their criminal enterprises and the locations they frequent are mapped. Vehicles are highlighted to provide stop-check and intelligence gathering opportunities.
- Forensic identification databases are researched to identify any additional potential disruption opportunities. Suspects are highlighted for comparison.

The ultimate goal is to recover the Linked Series firearm and bring those responsible to justice. The One Team approach has resulted in significant arrests and sentencing, as well as the recovery of firearms, ammunition, drugs and other commodities. Investment, liaison and joint working with partner agencies, for example, the North West Regional Organised Crime Unit, NABIS, forensic service providers, the National Crime Agency, European Firearms Supply Operations Group. is invaluable. Understanding the use, movement and supply of Merseyside Linked Series firearms will help inform the regional, national and international firearms supply network, as well as the overall picture.

This article was peer reviewed by Temporary Lead Analyst Darren Barber, Metropolitan Police Service.

What I learned from...

Going to court as a victim

Police Constable Jon-Jay Needham ◆ City of London Police

Putting ourselves in the shoes of a victim is not easy. I came from a family where it was considered a weakness to show any emotion or empathy. Aged seven, in the early 1980s, I was subject to terrible crimes while living in the care system. I was raped, abused and tortured on multiple occasions. My experience was so awful that it took me 26 years to talk about those events and report them. But this gave me the ambition to become a police officer. After overcoming many challenges, I joined the police service in 2009, which was one of the proudest days of my life. I wanted to help others who were vulnerable, just like I had been.

Reporting the crimes as a serving officer, I learned first-hand what a victim had to go through to report rape to the police, and how it feels waiting to find out whether the perpetrator will be arrested and charged. Waiting for news of a court date was agonising, as was the build-up for such a serious and life-changing case. I really discovered the immense pressure and stress that victims experience. I also noticed the strain that the officer in my case was under, particularly because they were a trainee detective.

From my own personal experience and my current work as an Ambassador for The Survivors Trust, I know that good communication with victims is vital. Some victims can find it difficult to relate to the police, especially when the perpetrator may have been in a position of authority. Victims are put at ease if an officer is professional, humble, compassionate and empathetic. Our tone of voice and our body language are important – never treat a victim as a suspect.

Remember that the vast majority of victims do not have knowledge of how police investigations work, or how the Crown Prosecution Service and courts operate. Victims will scrutinise every word of every letter, email and conversation. Each will have an impact on them. Even when the case has no developments, it's good to regularly contact the victims to reassure them.

I needed time to ask questions and discuss concerns. Some victims will feel self-conscious and guilty that they are taking the officer's time. They may apologise constantly, as I did. Be aware of approved support networks that are available for victims. Do your research, so that you know exactly what these networks do and how they can help the victim. This will help build trust and confidence.

I knew that many cases take several years to get to court and for many more, charges are never brought. I would have benefitted from a realistic and honest explanation of the timescales involved right from the start.

Going to court as a police officer in the role of a witness can be daunting at the best of times. However, going to court as a victim of child rape was another experience altogether. I sensed that every aspect of my life was being scrutinised under a giant microscope, all in public. Court was traumatic, triggering and nerve-wracking. I remember physically shaking in the witness box, forgetting the questions due to stress and feeling I was on trial myself. Having to stand up to attempts to discredit everything I said took its toll. I spent three years trying to recover from the court experience.

I believe I did the right thing in coming forward, even after so much time. I did not get the court result I hoped for, which initially was very hard to accept. But I feel immensely proud of myself and now see my experience as a very positive turning point. It has allowed me to start a new chapter, free from the burden of guilt and stigma that I carried for so many years.

Find out more about **Jon-Jay's story**.

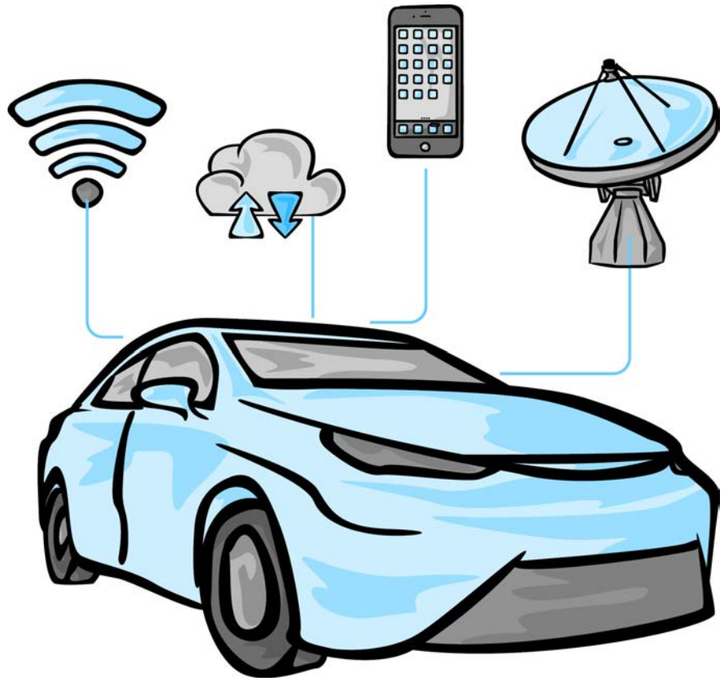
This article was peer reviewed by Detective Constable Holly Bluck, West Midlands Police.

Five things about...
Telematics

Police Constable Matt Huckson ◆ Surrey Police

1 Vehicle telematics describes a vehicle's onboard communication services and applications, which communicate with one another via GPS receivers and other telematics devices. Vehicles hold a vast amount of data, including:

- the vehicle's movements
- the functions of the vehicle (for example, braking, accelerating, speed, doors opening and closing)
- devices attaching to the vehicle by Bluetooth or USB
- various other data sets



2 Think of a car as a computer on wheels or a digital witness. Almost everything it does is recorded. When a lot of things happen at once, the car will choose which information is more important to save. A lot of valuable information can be harvested from vehicles.

3 All vehicles are different. Some give track points and breadcrumb tracks. Some give call logs and Wi-Fi service set identifier (SSID) information.

4 If you jump into a car, connect to Bluetooth, start the engine and pick up a friend, the following pieces of intelligence could be detected via telematics:

- driver door opened and closed
- iPhone connected (plus possible contacts)
- ignition on
- possible track logs and route
- vehicle and wheel speeds
- vehicle stops (location)
- calls logs
- passenger door opened and closed

5 Be aware that vehicles overwrite data. If you think telematics may be useful in an investigation, reduce your interactions – for example, how often you open and close the door. Disconnect the battery and make a note of everything you have done.

Every force will have their own policies for when telematics can be used, so always seek the advice of a digital media investigator or your telematics single point of contact.

This article was peer reviewed by Sergeant Steven Lefebve, Kent Police.

LONG READ

Which missing persons come to harm?

Superintendent Ryan Doyle ◆ Devon and Cornwall Police

Introduction

Missing persons, or 'mispers', is an interesting and complex part of policing. It is an area of demand – for example, here in Devon and Cornwall, missing people reports account for around 12% of what we do – and of risk and harm. In every force area, misper records tend to be made up of elderly people who are confused and lost, adults who are suicidal or in mental health crisis, children in the care system who are being exploited and other vulnerable people. In order to prevent mispers from coming to harm, it's essential that we understand the risk involved.

At all ranks, I have witnessed inconsistencies in the way that this risk is identified and graded, as well as how resources are applied to finding mispers. When it came to deciding on the topic for my master's thesis, misper risk assessment was top of the list. Thanks to support from the College of Policing Bursary Scheme, I was completing the Applied Criminology MSt at the University of Cambridge and had fallen in love with the concept of evidence-based decision-making in policing. It seemed to me that risk grading – and consequently, resource deployment – was applied to misper reports on a subjective basis. I wanted to know whether there could be a better approach.

Literature review

Despite the importance of misper investigations, in terms of the impact on individuals and families of those affected, and despite the volume of demand these incidents create for the police service, there is not a wealth of literature on the subject. A person is recorded as 'missing' every two minutes in England and Wales, with over 300,000 missing person reports created by police each year (Fyfe and others, 2015). The College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) states that going missing 'should be treated as an indicator that the individual may be at risk of harm' and bases the risk grades on the likelihood of this harm happening. Risk grades are described as:

- **high** – the risk of serious harm to the subject or the public is assessed as very likely
- **medium** – the risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as likely but not serious
- **low** – the risk of harm to the subject or the public is assessed as possible but minimal

However, this does not define how circumstances are determined as 'likely'. Do officers truly understand how the answers to the questions they ask affect the likelihood of a misper coming to harm?

APP also states that risk assessment decisions should be informed by professional judgement and provides a list of recommended questions for officers to ask the person reporting the misper. However, the research evidence base does not yet exist to test these questions. The 'Safeguarding missing adults who have mental health issues' report, released by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults (Coffey, 2018), specifically highlights this question set, describing how the lack of empirical research or validation may limit its efficacy and efficiency. The report outlines the importance of accurate risk assessments and warns of the tragic consequences that may follow when such assessments are not completed.

The experience and judgement of officers is clearly relevant and valued in the assessment of misper risk, but it is naïve to believe that these skills alone are sufficient to provide consistent and accurate predictions of the likelihood that a misper will come to harm. In a survey of 215 sergeants in one of the largest forces in England and Wales, Smith and Shalev-Greene (2014) found that almost half felt inadequately trained for appropriately assessing the risk of mispers and the potential for them experiencing harm.

An examination of police decision-making in the contexts of sexual violence and missing people investigations has highlighted that as the complexity of decision-making increases, so do the opportunities for officer error (Alys and others, 2013). There is a danger of officer indifference, which is more likely in cases where young people regularly abscond from care for short periods of time before returning of their own volition (Hayden and Goodship, 2013). They concluded that this culture and the sheer volume of missing children reports makes meaningful risk assessment for all cases impossible. My hope was that my research would inform the development of evidence-led decision-making support for colleagues.

Previous research noted that accurately predicting the likelihood of a misper experiencing harm is difficult. Each of the studies I read used low sample sizes – the largest was Tarling and Burrows (2004), with just over 1,000 records analysed. All studies found that the proportion of mispers that were reported as coming to serious harm or death was very low. A consistent theme from the research was the difficulty of developing a statistical risk prediction instrument. I remember the conversation I had with my thesis supervisor, Dr Geoff Barnes, as if it was yesterday: 'problematic doesn't mean impossible, challenge accepted'. In order to achieve my aim, I needed volume. This would have to be the biggest misper study ever (and at the time of writing, it still is).

Methodology

I undertook a retrospective analysis of the 92,681 Devon and Cornwall Police misper records on COMPACT, the record management system used by the force for mispers between 2008 and 2019.

I used a statistical test called odds ratios (ORs) to investigate how risk factors known to police at the time of report relate to harmful outcomes in missing person cases. It is worth pointing out that I am not a statistician. I started this research 20 years after scraping a C in GCSE maths, when I had never heard of ORs, let alone completed them on 92,681 records. However, I had a brilliant supervisor, an inquisitive mind and a research subject that I genuinely cared about. As it turns out, they really aren't that difficult.

The OR was calculated to determine the relationship between the misper case resulting in harm and the list of factors and characteristics below:

- age at time of missing report
- gender
- in care (at time of report)
- disability
- dyslexia
- learning disability
- hearing impairment
- visual impairment
- reduced mobility
- mental illness (of any kind)
- child sexual exploitation risk
- suicidal
- vulnerable adult
- previously reported as missing

For some factors, the sample was too small for meaningful analysis. For example, only 94 mispers were recorded as having a visual impairment, only 10 of whom came to harm.

I then divided the sample into gender (male or female) and age categories (juveniles, adults aged between 18 and 64, and those over 65), to develop separate analyses of predictive association. This allowed me to assess the importance of the predictors across age and gender categories.

Results and discussion

Of 92,681 missing person records made in Devon and Cornwall between 2008 and 2019, 14% were graded as high risk, 76% as medium risk and 10% as low risk. 54% of all mispers were males, while 46% were females. The largest cohort of mispers were juveniles (59% of all records), followed by adults aged 18-64 (35%) and mispers aged over 65 (6%). Because previous studies described a very low number of people who came to harm, I aggregated all misper records for this study that had a 'came to harm' marker attached to them. This meant that emotional harm, sexual harm and physical harm were all included, along with fatalities. This resulted in a sample of 3,481 mispers who came to any type of harm (3.8% of the whole sample), broken down as follows:

- 1.7% of juveniles came to harm, while 6.8% of adults aged 18-64 and 6.8% of those aged 65 or over came to harm
- a higher percentage of juvenile female mispers came to harm than juvenile male mispers (2.1% vs 1.2%)
- a higher percentage of adult female mispers aged 18-64 came to harm than adult male mispers aged 18-64 (7.4% vs 6.4%)
- a higher percentage of male mispers aged over 65 came to harm than female mispers aged over 65 (7.3% vs 6%)
- 3% of all low-risk mispers came to harm, 5% of all medium-risk mispers came to harm, and 14% of all high-risk mispers came to harm
- 84% of juveniles who came to harm had originally been assessed as medium risk
- 43% of adults aged 18-64 who came to harm had originally been assessed as medium risk

- 31% of those aged 65 or over who came to harm had originally been assessed as medium risk

The findings relating to medium risk stood out to me. I was interested that more than three quarters of all mispers were graded as medium, meaning harm was likely (but not serious), but only 5% of those actually came to any kind of harm. This suggests that we are not accurately assessing the likelihood of harm. I was also keen to understand why the amount of harm experienced was different across the age and gender cohorts, particularly in terms of those initially graded as medium risk.

There are a number of risk factors that indicate an increased likelihood of the misper coming to harm, regardless of their age and gender. Unsurprisingly, being suicidal is the strongest predictor of harm for mispers of all ages and is significant for all three categories. Adults aged 65 and over are the only category where being male can be considered to increase the likelihood of harm. For juveniles and adults aged 18-64, being suicidal, having mental illness, being female and having a disability are all significant predictors of a misper coming to harm. The characteristics considered as protective factors, which reduce the likelihood of harm, create interest when the sample is divided into age and gender groups. For juveniles, being a repeat misper, missing from care and child sexual exploitation (CSE) risk are all significant predictors of harm. When broken down into gender groups, all three of these factors remain significant predictors of harm for females. While all three factors remain predictors of harm for male juveniles, only being in care is calculated as being significant.

For adults aged between 18 and 64, most of the predictors of harm are common to both male and female mispers. However, there is one key difference. Being a repeat misper makes you more likely to come to harm if you are an adult female aged between 18 and 64, but less likely to come to harm if you are an adult male aged between 18 and 64. Being a first-time misper makes you more likely to come to harm if you are an adult male aged between 18 and 64, but less likely to come to harm if you are an adult female aged between 18 and 64. These results add further credence to the notion that the current risk assessment process is flawed, as it does not specifically consider the impact that the age and gender of the misper being assessed has on the likelihood of them coming to harm.

Conclusion

The results of this study supported the assertion of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults (Coffey, 2018) that the current process lacks efficacy and is not accurate. Medium-risk mispers are perhaps the most problematic when considering accuracy. Across all mispers in this study, more than three quarters (75.6%) were graded as medium risk. With high-risk mispers rightly being categorised as a priority, and low-risk mispers being categorised as no priority at all, where does that leave those assessed as medium risk? The high volume of medium-risk cases means that there is a likelihood of inconsistencies in the quality of investigation (depending on what else is happening at the time). With this category including so many mispers (70,046 in this study), it is not unreasonable to consider that there will be mispers who are close to being high risk, and those close to being low risk, all categorised as the same. The proportion of medium-risk mispers that come to harm increases for younger mispers (30.8% for over 65s, compared to 84.4% for juveniles). This suggests that our current practice of assessing mispers of all age bands and gender in the same way is flawed, as it does not have specific-enough grade categories. There are some limitations to this study, including the fact that there is no way of knowing how many mispers were prevented from coming to harm due to police intervention. However, analysing the largest sample size in known misper-related research has presented clear evidence to show that the three current risk grades are too wide in definition.

To help improve the accuracy with which resources and knowledge are used to keep the public safe, the police service and the College of Policing should consider developing an evidence-based risk assessment tool that uses the predictive value of known risk factors, as well as their impact on the likelihood of a misper coming to harm.

Recommendations

The recommendations from this research advocate for a departure from the current reliance on professional judgement and subjective decision-making, to a more structured system that considers the different risks of harm identified in this study.

1. Further research, as well as replication in other police services, should be completed to test the findings of this study. This should consider whether ethnicity and domestic abuse history are predictors of harmful outcomes. Additional predictive modelling should be completed using a more sophisticated method, such as a random forest approach.

2 The College of Policing may then want to explore the development and implementation of an evidence-based risk assessment for mispers that considers the age and gender of the misper, and the impact this has on which factors predict harm. This could consider whether a new system should feature more than three grades of risk, which could provide more clarity to police forces regarding the likelihood of the misper coming to harm.

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This article was peer reviewed by Sergeant Lorna Dennison-Wilkins, Sussex Police.

Spotlight on a role

Custody detention officer

Sophie Rost, Custody Detention Officer ◆ Devon and Cornwall Police

I've worked as a custody detention officer (CDO) at Exeter police station for five years. Despite wearing a similar uniform to our warranted police colleagues, CDOs are police staff. We have designated powers that are only authorised in the custody environment, like the power to conduct physical searches on detained persons (DPs). CDOs assist custody sergeants to process DPs through custody, while monitoring their wellbeing. We maintain the safety of the unit by performing daily checks, including inspecting cells, and we perform other administrative tasks to ensure the unit is fully operational.

On a typical day, we conduct three core roles: office, visits and biometrics. The office role requires a considerable level of multitasking to facilitate the interview process. This involves contacting investigating officers, solicitors and, where necessary, appropriate adults. We also ensure DPs' health by arranging for medication to be collected and by liaising with medics and/or mental health professionals, who ensure that DPs are fit to be in custody. If serious concerns are raised, diversion is arranged to a more appropriate setting. The visits aspect of our role involves conducting scheduled checks to ensure DPs' ongoing welfare, as well as providing blankets, food and drinks.

Finally, we obtain biometric samples from DPs in custody. This involves profiling their description and taking a photograph, fingerprints,

DNA sample and footwear impression. Biometrics are used to conduct a speculative search, to establish possible links to other offences, so a high standard is required.

A significant proportion of DPs who arrive in custody present in a volatile or emotional manner, which can be exacerbated by intoxication or mental health issues. Like police officers, we are trained to use approved restraint techniques, but these methods are only employed as a last resort. Rather, our aim is to deescalate the situation. A crucial function of our role is to use patience and good communication skills to build a rapport and manage their expectations. In Exeter custody, we have distraction items, including foam footballs, jigsaw puzzles and colouring books. These support DPs with neurodiversity or mental vulnerabilities, by providing a constructive diversion tool that helps us to have positive interactions.

To become a CDO, you need to complete an initial five-week training course, followed by a mentorship period in custody. There are regular refresher days that focus on first aid and personal safety training. In relation to career progression, the role provides a valuable insight into policing. By having a proactive approach to learning and development, CDOs can acquire a wealth of knowledge and experience. It can be a great opportunity to develop the necessary skills and attributes to become a police officer or to explore other staff roles.

This article was peer reviewed by Clare Fencott, Custody Detention Officer, South Wales Police.

Diary of a ...

Tutor constable

Police Constable Aaron Griffiths ◆ Northamptonshire Police

Introducing student PC Nick and myself, PC Aaron Griffiths. I'm a tutor constable on response policing in Northamptonshire. Prior to that, I was a special constable and a control room dispatcher, and I've also tutored specials. As soon as I started as a PC, I told my sergeant that I wanted to be a tutor once confirmed in rank. PC Nick came to me with no frontline policing experience but was keen to learn. This is a diary of some of the highlights from our shifts together.

Thursday, 23 June 2022

We head out to a report of a drink contamination (spiking) incident. We had gone through the operational order and trigger plan for these incidents, noting the required forensic samples. PC Nick takes to this well, and obtains a really detailed statement and description of the suspect. Although I assist PC Nick, I'm assessing his victim service, his statement taking, and his processing and packaging of forensic samples. I want PC Nick to understand not only the process of dealing with certain incidents, but also why we do it that way, so he has a greater understanding of how our actions fit into a wider investigative picture.

Friday, 24 June 2022

Control: 'Are you available for a grade 1 RTC persons trapped?'

Is this our first road traffic collision? No. Is every RTC different? Of course.

Arriving at the scene and establishing where to start can be the hardest part. I step back as PC Nick takes control of the scene. He ascertains that the report of persons trapped isn't exactly as it had been reported, allowing for a quick handover when the ambulance and fire services arrive. Arranging

recovery of the vehicles, exchanging details, and completing Police National Computer (PNC) checks and roadside breath tests are all underpinned by legislation, policy and procedure. It's for me to ensure that PC Nick knows all of that and applies them correctly.

Saturday, 25 June 2022

'Put us to the job, we'll assist with an area search.'

Heading off in search of a high-risk domestic abuse offender, Control highlights an officer safety flag of 'likes to fight police'. That can get the adrenaline pumping, and it does for PC Nick. I observe PC Nick's conflict management and how he applies the National Decision Model, ensuring he is lawful and safe. Only a week prior, we had a developmental discussion around conflict management and how adrenaline can give us the fight, flight or freeze response. It can be difficult to truly test this until you are in that conflict for the first time. Imagine my pride when – after CCTV spots the suspect and we arrive at the location – PC Nick dives from the car, runs to the suspect, takes control and shouts, 'You are under arrest!' When we get back into the car, I tell him, 'That is exactly what I wanted to see.' I can't help but smile even as I write this. PC Nick told me he hit a turning point, using his adrenaline to his advantage and preventing a potentially volatile situation from escalating.

Sunday, 26 June 2022

As PC Nick comes to the end of his tutoring period, he completes his student review, highlighting his progress around the competency and values framework. I review and comment on his development:

> 'From week one to where we are now, I have seen you develop from brand new PC Nick to student PC Nick and become more confident in your role as a police officer. I have watched you work with victims, witnesses, and suspects – you are respectful, honest, and professional, all attributes that make a great police constable.'

My role is to facilitate learning and development, and to be a support mechanism for my student, identifying when I need to take a step back or intervene. Support can range from praise to assisting a student after a traumatic or emotionally triggering incident. I am passionate about the job I do and about imparting my own experience on those who join the police.

This article was peer reviewed by Police Constable Alex Gregory, North Yorkshire Police.

PRACTICE NOTE

Wiltshire horse rider volunteer scheme

Police Constable Emily Thomas ◆ Wiltshire Police

As a PC in the Rural Crime Team of a large and mainly rural county, I've seen our work develop considerably – not just the number of officers and the amount of equipment used, but also the results we've achieved.

Wiltshire has many inaccessible areas where vehicles can't be used or are prohibited due to the large military presence, so I was interested when I saw another force using volunteers on horseback to help patrol their county. This gave me the idea of a horse rider volunteer scheme to gather intelligence on rural crime.

Finding a memorable name for the scheme was important to avoid confusion with our existing Horse Watch scheme, which detects and prevents horse crime. I also made the decision not to include 'police' in the name, to reduce any risk that the riders could be targeted.

I kept things simple and envisaged a 'Neighbourhood Watch on horseback', with no need for vetting or providing police ID. I knew from Horse Watch that Wiltshire has a strong horse-riding community and that we could find volunteers who were already riding regularly in the countryside.

Historic England funded our first high-vis tabards, which are printed with the words 'Wiltshire

Horse Rider Volunteer', as well as the Heritage Watch and Operation Apollo logos. The National Farmers Union Mutual supplied reflective bridle bands.

Working with colleagues in the Citizens in Policing team, we sent direct messages to our existing Horse Watch scheme members and used social media to seek volunteer horse riders. I was surprised by the uptake – we received over 100 applications!

When establishing the scheme, health and safety considerations were a key factor, as horses can be dangerous. Applicants are required to provide details of their liability insurance, to wear the correct British Horse Society hats and back protectors, and to confirm that their horse is fit, healthy and safe to ride.

In return, we provide a 45-minute session on recognising and reporting wildlife, rural and heritage crime, as well as personal safety and the **new Highway Code requirements**. Our training covers general crime prevention and more specific topics, such as poaching and birds of prey persecutions.

We focus on reporting methods and the relationship between local authorities and the police. We teach riders to use the What3words app to pinpoint locations, then to use Historic England and council websites for crimes that might be within their patch. We created a reporting form for volunteers, to assess whether the scheme was making a positive impact on reporting and disrupting rural crime.

Since our launch in December 2021, we have trained over 60 horse riders and have received positive feedback about the training sessions. Volunteers tell us that they have a sense of pride in doing something worthwhile for their community.

Riders have provided some useful intelligence. Often, information is linked to incidents of damaging 4x4s and misusing bridle ways that we couldn't have noticed from a car. Community policing teams and local councils have used this intelligence to solve problems.

The scheme is thriving. We've received more applications and we're continuing our training, which will include an update on hare coursing before the season starts. We emphasise to riders that every report, however small, helps us to develop the intelligence picture and to put resources into areas with identified issues. The volunteers provide Wiltshire Police with more eyes and ears on the ground, in places we may not be able to reach easily or quickly.

This article was peer reviewed by Sergeant Tamara Tatton, Cumbria Constabulary.

MY IDEA

Training officers to respond to neurodivergent people

Sarah Gardner, Project Manager ◆ Metropolitan Police Service

In my work with the Metropolitan Police Service, I led a listening circle focusing on supporting colleagues who are neurodiverse. That discussion underpins my idea to focus on developing two neurodiversity training programmes:

- management training to support neurodivergent colleagues
- training for frontline police officers to improve outcomes at incidents involving neurodivergent individuals

To support this, I have set up the Neurodiversity Tasking Action Group (NTAG). This is a national working group that aims to develop national guidance and training through expanding partnership working around neurodiversity.

It is important for all managers to have training, so that they can get the best from their staff and so everyone can benefit from being in a supportive work environment.

A recent study suggests that around one in three people moving through the justice system are thought to be neurodivergent (Kirby, 2021). The focus on training for frontline officers should be about understanding neurodiversity and how it can affect an individual's response to orders and actions during interactions with the police.

Sensory overload can lead to physical resistance, which may be wrongly interpreted by some officers as resistance or a lack of compliance. This can result in the use of force, which could exacerbate – rather than resolve – the incident. In turn, this can lead to an individual or officer being harmed, can undermine confidence

in the police and can criminalise neurodiversity.

The training will be aimed at all police officers and staff to increase awareness around neurodiversity, minimise conflict escalation and offer better support to the public, while also increasing public confidence.

Alongside training, initiatives such as guidance to call handlers will be considered, so that appropriate information is provided to officers when attending incidents where neurodiversity is a consideration. We will also consider pin badges to increase public confidence that officers are trained appropriately in dealing with neurodivergent individuals.

Sarah is the lead for NTAG, if you are interested in joining, please email **Sarah.Gardner@met.police.uk**

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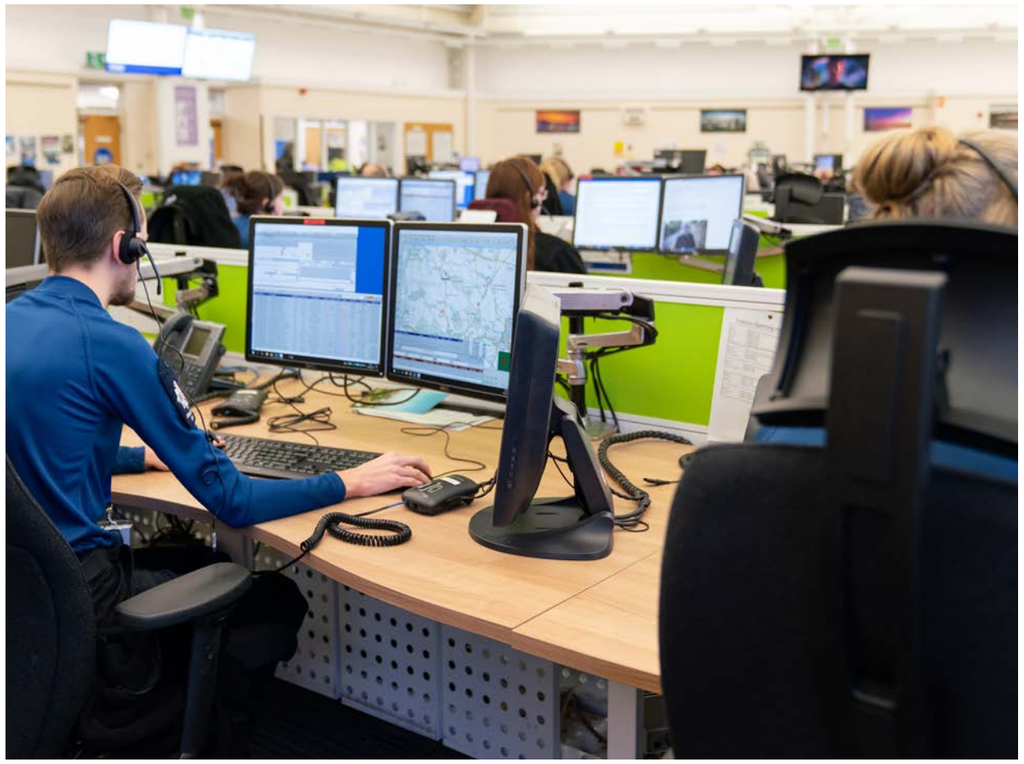
This article was peer reviewed by Sergeant Lee Johnson, Lincolnshire Police.



PRACTICE NOTE

Tackling drink spiking

Sergeant David Moore ◆ Devon and Cornwall Police

Drink spiking has been around for hundreds of years, originally to steal money and later in relation to committing sexual offences.

In order to respond effectively to reports of drink spiking, we need to understand the problem. An inconsistent police response to spiking has been a barrier to identifying spiking incidents. Spiking reports are usually made after a person's change of behaviour or level of intoxication leads them to believe they have been spiked. Less effective police actions include determining that the person is simply drunk and sending them home or to hospital, or taking a urine sample but not sending this off for forensic analysis.

When it's not verified whether a spiking has taken place, this can cause confusion. It does not support people who are spiked, nor does it help those who mistakenly believe they have been. Speculation about being spiked, circulated on social media, has led to an increased fear of crime, which can seem less remote and more personal because the individual is identifiable through the social media posts.

To address these issues, screening tests for drinks and urine were trialled in Plymouth in 2019. Coupled with a very simple working practice, bars and venues were supplied with drink-testing kits. These screening kits test for a range of drug types and provide a result in seconds. In tandem, police officers were supplied with urine-testing kits that could test for up to 16 different drug base types, giving results within 10 minutes. It should be noted that the effectiveness of the drink-testing kits is due to be checked and independently validated before a decision is made on national recommendations.

After receiving a report of a suspicious drink, venue staff test the drink. If there is a positive result, they secure the drink and advise the police to facilitate an early investigation. After a report of a person being spiked, police attend with a urine-testing kit and take a sample from the victim. The speed and consistency of this approach has provided a much clearer picture of the extent of spiking, and

has identified patterns and spiking incidents at a very early stage. It has also reassured people that their report is being taken seriously.

The Plymouth scheme has a number of benefits. For example, it:

- reassures the public that they are being believed and it confirms – or rules out – suspicions at a very early stage, without waiting weeks or months for a result
- assists in effective evidence gathering, which is essential to prosecute successfully
- saves a lot of time when the result is negative, not only for bar staff and door staff but also due to reduced demand on police officers
- 'target hardens' evening and night-time economy (ENTE) venues, potentially putting offenders off due to the increased risk of being identified and caught while they are still present in the ENTE
- reduces the number of social media posts claiming that people have been spiked when the test result is negative, thereby reducing the fear of crime
- allows for data gathering to identify factors, including – but not limited to – type of drug used, location of incidents, demographic of victim, method of delivery, date and time of offences, and type of linked offences
- can give a picture of what drugs are generally in circulation for those people voluntarily taking controlled drugs (such as ketamine among the student population)

From 21 August 2021, the trial has been rolled out across the whole of Devon and Cornwall Police's force area, with over 300 venues equipped with the drink-testing kits, including all late-night venues. Over the first 12 months, these screening tests have promoted an immediate police interaction, leading to more effective investigations. Several investigations are ongoing with a prospect of prosecution.

Urine-testing kits can be used for up to three days after an incident. Due to the timescales for gathering evidence, ENTE venue staff and door staff have regularly become a first reporting point where customers can seek help, which helps to ensure that as many reports as possible are recorded. Our partnership with venue staff is critical and the public have already expressed their confidence in the system, as have operational police officers and the licensing trade. This approach is giving us a fuller picture of the reality of spiking levels and fear of crime, as well as the opportunity to put more effective preventative measures in place.

This article was peer reviewed by Detective Constable Gail Fox, City of London Police.

LONG READ

Police culture: Exploring the socialisation of student officers

Police Constable Amy Pickering ◆ Leicestershire Police

Introduction

I started my career with Leicestershire Police as a special constable in 2018, while studying for my Criminology BSc degree at the University of Leicester. I then went on to do an MSc and finished my studies in 2021 with a distinction. After that, having resigned as a special sergeant and before starting my initial training as a full-time police constable, I worked as a local support team officer at the front desk of a local police station. My frontline experience offered a unique perspective and enhanced my understanding about the realities of policing. I found myself seeking approval from those around me and, as a result, adapted my own behaviour. Throughout my time working for the police, I found myself observing how officers viewed the social world and became interested in their decision-making.

I chose to look at the socialisation of police officers, as police forces are going through a period of change – specifically, increasing levels of recruitment and a relatively new-in-service workforce. This offers many challenges, but I wondered what impact it would have on policing culture and the socialisation of officers. In response to the declining experience on the front line, the police force I carried out this research with recently reformed their mentoring scheme. This resulted in officers being mentored

by more than one person, who were also relatively young-in-service themselves. The organisational culture of an institution – such as the police – reflects shared values and assumptions, so it is important to understand how these are formed. This research is concerned with police constables, who are the lowest rank and arguably act with the highest discretion.

Literature review

Occupational culture is not isolated to policing – it is simply the shared values, norms and behaviours of an organisation. Occupational culture binds people together and is used as a method to overcome challenges. Culture has a strong identity and is passed down from generation to generation as a result of storytelling. Robert Reiner's (2010) work has accounted for seven core characteristics of police occupational culture:

- mission-action-cynicism-pessimism
- suspicion
- isolation or solidarity
- conservatism
- machismo
- pragmatism
- racial prejudice

Often, policing culture is presented as conservative and supports the notion that officers are 'crime fighters'. As a result, policing culture arguably fails to highlight the breadth of the role (Punch, 1979; Mclaughlin, 2007). Significant moments in policing history have called for reform in relation to police occupational culture, as it is often presented as the root problem of issues. However, police occupational culture also denotes some positive mechanisms – for example, how it helps officers respond to stressful situations that are unique to their role (Van Maanen, 1973; Paoline, 2003). In his study of police canteen subculture, Waddington (1999) noted that the police canteen acts as a 'repair shop' for officers. Willis and Mastrofski (2018) argued that newer officers were taught about police work when 'war stories' were passed on by experienced officers, a notion referred to as 'craft' knowledge.

Exploring the link between initial training and new recruits' socialisation is fundamental in understanding the future of police occupational culture. Early research into organisational socialisation of police officers by Van Maanen's (1973) study, 'Observation of a policeman', highlighted the importance of the socialisation process for new recruits. Van Maanen concluded that initial socialisation was the main influence for later behaviour. Van Maanen also

> A key notion of police occupational culture is craft, which is developed by officers over time.

highlighted that applicants make a pre-entry choice while applying to the police – even at this early stage, they begin to subscribe to the values of police occupational culture.

A key notion of police occupational culture is craft, which is developed by officers over time. It is viewed as knowledge that cannot be taught and is gained by exposure to stories that are passed down from officer to officer. A pivotal stage in a police officer's development is widely understood to be their mentor (tutor), as they teach student officers how to act in a present moment (Charman, 2017). During the socialisation process, officers' external influences may diminish. Exposure to policing culture makes it difficult for them to be influenced by other external influences and they experience cognitive burn, whereby they solely view the world through the lens of police occupational culture (O'Neill and others, 2007).

Methodology

This research was conducted using semi-structured interviews with ten student officers with under two years' service, under the supervision of the University of Leicester's Criminology Department from May to September 2021. Participants' initial training was affected by COVID-19 in different ways, due to the restrictions in place. Participants had differing levels of social distancing and online learning, which may have had an impact on the findings. Snowball sampling was used and yielded participants from a range of different backgrounds. Three had past experience as a special constable, while one was previously a police community support officer (PSCO) and another was previously a call taker. Eight participants were male and two were female. Eight participants were White, while two were from ethnic minority backgrounds. The age range of participants was 20 to 43 years old. The officers covered a range of different police stations and length of service within their two-year probation period. Due to the ethical constraints, the police force and participants remained anonymous, allowing them to speak without fear of repercussions.

The project sought to explore how the socialisation process and police occupational culture affected newly recruited police officers' decision-making on the

front line. The interviews explored how newly recruited officers view their socialisation process and identified their biggest influence. The results were examined using police occupational culture theory and analysed using thematic analysis to produce codes and themes. These were broken down into practical recommendations about how to improve the socialisation of officers and their decision-making.

Findings

The research identified formal learning, the front line and craft knowledge as the main influences of officer's decision-making. These were broken down into smaller themes.

Participants felt that during initial training, a strong emphasis was placed on force policy and legalisation. While they understood the importance of this, they struggled to envisage how it would be applied on the front line. They felt that initial training was largely taught in isolation to reality – they described it as PowerPoint-heavy, which gave limited context. Those who had prior experience within policing – the special constables, police community support officer and call taker – felt this prior knowledge was invaluable, as it allowed them to apply their classroom training to reality more easily. It helped them to contextualise learning. Participants expressed empathy for those who did not have previous policing experience.

Participants valued the combination of mentoring alongside formal training. They explained that their mentor was the most influential factor in their decision-making. One participant described police training as a 'jigsaw' and said that the mentor allowed them to piece it all together.

> **Participant 7/H:** 'L&D [Learning and Development] gives you the jigsaw pieces and then your tutor sort of teaches you how they align up.'

This study was conducted during a time of change, as the structure of the mentoring programme had undergone reform. Officers had mixed feelings about this, but explained that having more than one mentor exposed them to different ways of responding to similar incidents. However, this lack of continuity meant that they received contradictory feedback. In this initial phase on the front line, student officers stated that their sergeant was one of the main influences on their decision-making. All participants found their sergeant approachable, as they believed that they understood the pressures of the front line.

Officers' accumulation of craft knowledge over time was developed by reviewing incidents and debriefing with their shift. Participants expressed that they felt the value and place of debriefing could have been emphasised more in initial training. This could have been achieved by showing them body-worn video (BWV) of previous incidents to help them contextualise their learning.

> **Participant 6/E:** '…show footage because you learn, I couldn't care less about the OST [officer safety training]. OST trainers have all these amazing stories of when they've held people's rib cages open whilst they're doing first aid, like massage their heart and first aid. Brilliant. Show videos of officers being assaulted, show videos of them […] Show us footage. Show us things. Give us these scary stories and that's how you learn from it. Show us officers doing the wrong thing. Show us officers doing the right thing.'

These findings were consistent across participants, despite them being from a range of entry routes and demographics.

Conclusion

This research found that officers felt a sense of mission on joining and were surprised at how paperwork-led policing work is. This research therefore supports that, although police occupational culture may be resistant to change, new recruits have the potential to influence it. However, the results suggest that recruits' influence on policing culture may be limited by their experience of initial training and their mentors, both of which were identified as tending to reinforce the values of police occupational culture.

While this research was limited to interviews with only ten officers, it is supported by previous studies that suggest that newly recruited officers identified the strongest influence on them to be their mentor or tutor constable. Participants outlined that exposure to incidents and development of craft knowledge helped them to become confident with decision-making.

Recommendations

The study produced the following recommendations to improve officer socialisation. These are divided into short-term, medium-term and long-term.

Short-term

- BWV of real incidents should be used more in initial training to help officers contextualise their learning.
- The structure of the training needs to be less focused on subject matter, and should reflect the context and ways that officers will be expected to work on the front line.

This recommendation is the most practical suggestion from the research and is relatively low-cost to implement. This study highlighted that exposure to incidents made officers feel more confident in their decision-making. More use of BWV would allow trainers to standardise the material that student officers are exposed to and develop their craft. Reiner (2010) identified the telling of war stories as a key component that has the potential to perpetuate negative stereotypes and police occupational culture. BWV can be used in training to help overcome this risk, giving a more contextual view to support training and a positive culture. Although officers could become hesitant of using their BWV out of fear of being highlighted as poor practice in initial training, consent from those in the videos would be essential to support development of skills and craft.

Medium-term

- Further study is needed around the role of the sergeants and their influence on student officers. This study highlighted the pressure on sergeants, due to the declining amount of experience of their shift.

This study supports the need for experienced practitioners to address the problem that the informal role of a 'senior PC' has become less available as a resource for new officers. A senior PC should have at least two years' experience to ease the pressure on shift sergeants. To retain experienced officers in this role, it would need to become professionalised and provide an opportunity for lateral career development.

Long-term

- On a local and national level, forces should focus on initial training as a mechanism to influence some of the more negative aspects of police culture and promote the positive ones.
- Recruitment processes needs to consider the ways in which police roles are advertised, to ensure that new officers have a realistic perception of policing.

This research confirmed that initial training and the initial probation period (two years) were instrumental in developing student officers craft knowledge. However, this knowledge is often informal and does not address negative issues related to police occupational culture. This research suggested that the training curriculum should encompass and develop craft knowledge in order to support change.

A criticism of the recruitment process that this research highlighted is that student officers felt surprised by the realities of their role, such as the unsociable hours, level of demand, number of procedures and the range of skills they were required to have (for example, mental health, traffic knowledge). Participants who had prior policing experience explained that they knew what they 'were getting themselves into' and would not have been able to cope without this prior exposure to policing. This current research therefore highlighted the importance of being exposed to craft knowledge, as it supports transition into the role. This supports Waddington's (1999) notion that craft knowledge is a positive function of police occupational culture.

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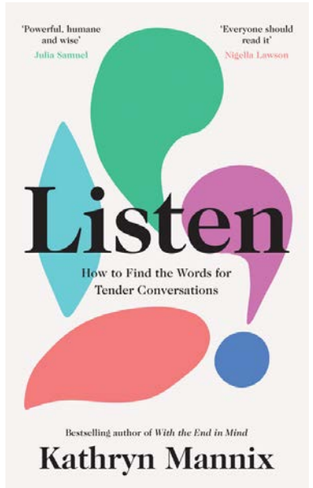
This article was peer reviewed by Inspector Upile Mtitimila, Cheshire Constabulary.

BOOK REVIEW

Listen by Kathryn Mannix

Detective Constable Fran Henderson ◆ Cumbria Constabulary

‘But what do I say?’ Jess, a Cumbria Constabulary recruit, looks terrified. She’s been asked to break the news to Nancy Jones that her husband, who she waved off this morning, has been killed in a road traffic accident. While Nancy is today played by a staff member, this role-play scenario is experienced by police officers and health care professionals across the country every day.



In ‘Listen: How to find the words for tender conversations’, Dr Kathryn Mannix suggests that while there is no single ‘right way’ to break unwelcome news, there are wrong ways, which are not just about the words we use. Instead of offering a script, Mannix uses stories – some from her own experiences, others fictional – to review and discuss some key principles and skills for those tasked with such difficult conversations.

Many police officers will recall the first ‘death message’ they delivered. In Chapter 3, ‘Building bridges’, the author recalls running away from a difficult conversation with a patient who asked her if she was going to die. Despite knowing this was very likely, Dr Mannix replied, ‘of course not’, removing the patient’s opportunity to say goodbye to her family. The patient died the following morning.

Mannix explains that empathy, rather than sympathy, enables us to identify sufficiently with someone’s suffering and to accept that there is no way to ‘fix it’. Such an approach will avoid the ‘at least -isms’ that the author speaks of, such as ‘at least he is not suffering anymore’ or ‘at least it was quick’. Mannix sees these as over-simplifications that ‘demean a person’s suffering’. Instead, we are encouraged to be ‘willing to be present’, acknowledging someone’s sorrow. This in-built desire to solve problems adversely affects our listening skills too. When did we last really listen to someone, not ‘thinking about formulating an answer’, but just ‘listening to understand’?

Like many officers, I have dithered ‘on the threshold with a mouthful of marbles’ when I needed to have a difficult conversation with someone. The ‘inner voices’ that the author talks about fed my anxiety and worries about ‘lack of confidence, experience, time, or not knowing the answers to questions asked’.

It requires courage to take the first step: ‘I have some very sad news’. This ensures that the person we are talking to understands we have something serious to say. It gives the person who we are talking to the opportunity to request the presence of another in advance of hearing the disturbing news.

Mannix refers to ‘opening the box’, ‘using silence’ and questioning the significance we usually place on eye contact during conversations. The expectation or insistence on prolonged eye contact has no place during tender conversations. Instead, she suggests that by respecting someone’s silence, we can look away for a moment, ‘holding a space for them’ in which to experience the pain of their loss.

Returning to our recruits in Cumbria Constabulary, Jess is receiving feedback from a trainer and a member of the charity Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide, where all volunteers have been on the receiving end of ‘death messages’. Echoing words used by Dr Mannix, Jess is advised to:

- give someone time to take the news in
- let them know you are sorry for their loss, thereby acknowledging their pain
- stay clear of terms like ‘the deceased, the body’ or defining them by their relationship to the person receiving the news – use the dead person’s name, as it really does make a difference

I recommend ‘Listen’ – and not just for professionals whose duties require them to break bad news. It is for all of us who, at some point, may need to find the words during our own tender conversations.

This article was peer reviewed by Sergeant Stuart Henderson, North Yorkshire Police.

With thanks to

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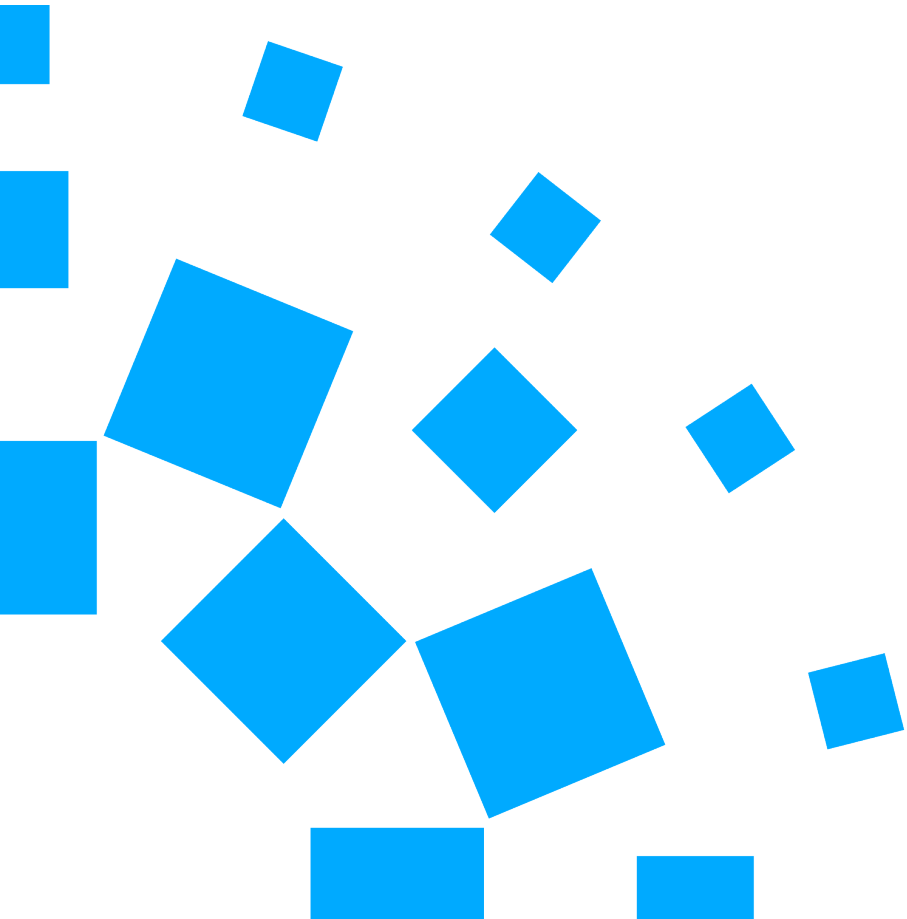

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