

Research conducted on behalf of HMICFRS found that if people do not believe that the police treat the public fairly and with respect, they are significantly less likely to report crime either as a victim or a witness (BMG Research, 2018). How effective are measures in place to ensure that officers act with integrity and treat the public fairly and with respect? Your answer must be based on academic research rather than personal experience.

Trust in the police and the relationship between the public and the police is something which is an essential part of society. The UK's model of policing by consent only works if the relationship and trust between the police and public is good. The relationship between the public and the police has always been one of a volatile and easily broken one. This has also often been different for the different communities in the UK.

The integrity of officers and the fair treatment of the public has been criticised in past years, in this essay I will discuss some of the measures put in place to enhance the trust of the communities and in turn their willingness to report crimes.

The first method which has been implemented widely across the police is the use of Body-worn Cameras (BWCs).

The introduction of BWC's was to increase the transparency and accountability of officers when attending incidents 'Body-worn cameras can play a substantial role in improving police behaviour and enhancing public trust' (Ariel et al 2015).

There are numerous studies which back up the fact that they serve their intended purpose as well as decreasing the number of complaints made against officers. Body worn cameras not only hold police to account for their actions but also give an insight into why they have acted that way. In the past misconduct investigations have relied solely on the statements given by officers to justify why they have taken the action they have, with the use of body worn cameras, the footage can now be viewed and reviewed to see if the action taken was appropriate and leaves no ambiguity.

The difficulty with BWC's though is the fact that they are totally dependent on the officers turning them on. Incidents where integrity is being questioned may not be captured due to officers not turning their cameras on or as will all technology the cameras malfunctioning and not recording the incident. This can result in officers' integrity coming into question and investigations into why this is happening. Officers are often not scrutinised if they forget or don't turn their body worn cameras on occasionally but if it is a reoccurring thing then this may lead senior officers to question why they are doing this.

The next factor that has been used to ensure that officers are acting with integrity is the comprehensive training and education that all officers receive. During initial training and throughout their careers with the help of training days, officers continuously receive enhanced training which focuses on their integrity. In addition, they receive training on ethics, cultural competencies, and de-escalation techniques which have all been proven to improve police conduct, 'officers who receive training in procedural justice are more likely to treat people with respect and fairness' (PERF, 2016).

Training and continued education can massively effect officers conduct and this can be supported by studies demonstrating that 'well-educated officers are less likely to engage in misconduct and more adept at managing complex social situations' (Rydberg & Terrill, 2010)

In addition to the above which are both related to officers' actions, there are also external factors which can affect officers conduct and integrity. The use of internal and external investigations is crucial when maintaining the polices integrity. It is essential for trust from the public that they know that there are processes which investigate allegations of misconduct, and this is done by independent people rather than it being completely internalised 'External oversight bodies, such as civilian review boards, can play a critical role in monitoring police actions and ensuring accountability' (Archbold,2019)

It is also essential to understand how demanding, stressful, and often traumatic the job of being a police officer is. Research has shown that continued and ongoing mental health support for officers increases integrity and reduces the risk of misconduct 'psychological support and intervention can reduce stress levels among officers and improve their interactions with the public'. Due to the stress of the job a high percentage of officers often struggle with their mental health, if we are able to tackle this then we will increase integrity and decrease the risk of officers partaking in misconduct. 'Seventy-seven per cent of officers reported facing difficulties with their mental health during the last year with 90 per cent saying it was due to work, the report said' (Butterworth B, 2021)

The last factor which has been seen to improve integrity amongst officers is legal reforms and the adaption of existing policies. Legal reforms and policy changes play a vital role in shaping the behaviour that is tolerated by the police. This can be policies such as the mandatory reporting of any use of force, which has been seen to reduce the risk of tactics which could be seen as riskier such as chokeholds, 'policy changes that restrict use-of-force practices result in fewer incidents of excessive force' (Maciag, 2018). This has been seen to contribute to a fairer treatment of the public. Furthermore, consent decrees, often imposed by federal authorities in response to systemic misconduct, have led to significant improvements in police practices and community relations (Rushin, 2017).

In conclusion, the measures which are currently in place to ensure that officers act with integrity and treat the public with respect and fairness are multifaceted and have extensive grounding in academic research. The use of Body-worn cameras, training, psychological support, and legal reforms have all contributed to the goal of a higher integrity and accountability from officers. Whilst no measure on its own will make a significant difference, when used together the combination of these strategies presents a robust framework which can be added to promote integrity amongst the police. Continued research will be needed to address the ever-evolving challenges of policing and maintaining trust, but the above steps have certainly made a difference and will continue to do so.

Word Count - 973

How effective are cognitive interviews as a means of obtaining initial accounts from victims and witnesses? Your answer must be based on academic research.

Victim and witness' initial accounts and their accuracy are extremely important when conducting a police investigation since they are often used to decide what actions the police will take and how the investigation will progress. (College of Policing, 2020). Cognitive interviewing is a process used by the police to obtain more accurate accounts from victims and witnesses, which provides information regarding the crime scene and/or what they have witnessed (Mcloed, 2023). It is a four-stage process developed in the early 80's, consisting of: (1) reinstating mental context, (2) report everything, (3) recall events in different orders and (4) change perspectives (Greiselman et al, 1984).

The PEACE model is an adaption of Greiselman's process, containing the stages (1) Planning and Preparation, (2) Engage and Explain, (3) Account, (4) Closure and (5) Evaluation. It allows for the interviewee to give a free narrative, whereby they are asked open-ended questions. The model has been shown to increase the interviewees' depth of thought, which in turn increases the level of information obtained (Chung, 2021). Furthermore, the open-ended nature of questioning allows the memory to recall an event in the most efficient and systematic way possible. This maximises the accuracy of the account by minimising the interviewees misunderstanding or confusion (Smith et al, 2009).

The police introduced the PEACE model in 1992 as a part of the home office investigative interviewing strategy, it was introduced to produce best evidence from both witnesses and victims and is currently taught to all new recruits in England and Wales during their initial training. (ACPO, 2001).

A study conducted by Kohnken et al., 1994 has shown that participants subjected to the cognitive interviewing process were able to produce approximately 35% more information than those interviewed using non-cognitive procedures. In recent studies, this number has increased to 38% (MacDonald et al., 2017) and 46% (McLoed, 2023). Furthermore, MacDonald et al., found that a good rapport with the interviewee had positive effects on the information retained. According to Capella, 1990, mutual comfort is required to develop a rapport. This suggests that interviewee comfort will also have an impact on the evidence produced, and not just the technique that is used. This is described as establishing a harmonious working relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee (Abbe and Brandon, 2013).

The cognitive interview process has also shown to have a positive impact on the accuracy of initial accounts. A meta-analysis by Memon et al., 2010 identified that the amount of accurate information retrieved increased between 25-40%, which is believed to be due to specific techniques such as context reinstatement, and varied recall, which both stimulate several memory pathways in the brain and reduces retrieval inhibition. More recently, the study of McLoed, 2023 identified that up to 90% of the information recalled was accurate, reinforcing that cognitive interviewing largely benefits the accuracy of initial accounts.

Kebbel, 1999 argues that allowing a free narrative increases the duration in which the interviewee recalls information, subsequently increasing the overall duration of the interview which is impractical for officers. This is not ignored by other literature, but others would argue that the time put into the interview would result in a significantly more accurate account with a higher percentage of information recalled. The free narrative enables the interviewer to pick out sections that they would like to focus on, which allows the individuals to be able to go deeper into their memory than where they have supplied the free narrative from and produce more information at a greater accuracy (Sammons et al., 2019).

Sammons et al., also identifies that the potential for variability of the interviewee should be considered, which is dependent their memory ability, communication skill and emotional state. The variability is largely affected by the delay between event and interview, thus ideally the interview should take place as soon as possible. However, in any case, the variability should be considered when determining the interview procedure.

Dando et al., 2008 states that an efficient interview process can only be achieved if the interviewer is conducting the technique properly and that incorrect technique is largely due to inexperience. The study identified that officers who were inexperienced generally felt that the level of training was insufficient and that more practical training would increase their ability to carry out efficient interviews. Furthermore, Portsmouth University, 2015 identified that the standard of the interviews being conducted by the force was not of a standard that would be expected. This led to them holding training which was mainly focused on interviewing sexual offence victims and taking their first accounts.

To conclude, The use of cognitive interview techniques to obtain initial accounts from victims and witnesses has become an essential part of the policing. The findings from literature suggest that these techniques increase the efficiency in which the brain accesses memory (Memon et al., 2010) which causes an increase in recall content and accuracy. Studies have shown the possibility of 46% increase in recall content and the ability to recall 90% of content accurately (Mcloed, 2023).

Factors that are considered to affect the ability to carry out effective cognitive interviewing are rapport (MacDonald et al., 2017), gauging variability (Sammons et al., 2019), and correct technique (Dando et al., 2008). Research has shown that the current level of training may be insufficient (Dando et al., 2008), which could be improved to address these factors.

Time-consumption has been identified as a drawback of the cognitive interviewing process (Kebbel, 1999), but generally this is outweighed by the positive effects of cognitive interviewing.

As psychological research and the understanding of memory continues to develop, additional methods can be developed that may further enhance the cognitive interviewing process.

Word Count – 961

Examine the various socio-economic and psychological characteristics which can make people vulnerable to exploitation by criminal gangs. Your answer must be based on academic research rather than personal experience.

The topic of violent crime by youths which often involves gangs has become an issue for the United Kingdom after years of increasing violent crime such as homicide, knife crime and robbery since 2014 (HM Government, 2018).

A report by the Children's Commissioner, 2018 estimated that there are 27,000 street gang members between the ages 10-17 years. Similarly, in 2017 the NCA conducted research which found that in 80% of the areas that were surveyed, there were children being exploited by gangs. This is a significant number of children that have been exploited by organised crime gangs to be involved in criminal activity. This report examines the socio-economic and psychological characteristics that can make people vulnerable, and how organised crime gangs exploit these certain characteristics. It is valuable to note that research into gangs has identified that the one-dimensional approach of viewing gang members as violent individuals is outdated, and research suggests that these individuals can also be seen as vulnerable victims. This may explain how gangs are able to exploit these vulnerable individuals as they have themselves been in the same position (Beresford and Wood, 2016).

Vulnerability is explained by The College of Policing, 2021 whereby an individual's situation or circumstances can expose them to a certain harm or exploitation as they are unable to protect themselves or others. Socio-economic status can have an impact on an individual's circumstances. The University of Bristol, 2024 explained that Socio-economic status encompasses a range of different factors, these would include, education, income, and occupation. The link between socioeconomic status and criminal activity is evidenced by the research of Connolly, 2017 which identified that low socioeconomic status was a risk factor for delinquent behaviour in children, indicating that this behaviour could equally be represented in the children's propensity to engage in criminal activity.

Gangs can capitalise on the vulnerability that comes with being from a lower socio-economic background. Lower job prospects can be one of the drivers for youths to join gangs. This has been identified in the 2023 Census whereby in households where the parents or guardians have never worked or are in long term unemployment, the young people feel like they don't have a chance in life. Gangs can exploit this and present an alternative to what young people have experienced. It can offer an escape from poverty and the cycle of unemployment which they have experienced.

Poverty and economic deprivation which can be linked to a lower socio-economic background can increase a person's vulnerability to being exploited. In lower income areas with the highest levels of income deprivation in London, there were 40% more crimes recorded (Trust for London, 2023). This would in turn expose these vulnerable people to higher levels of crime and criminality increasing their likelihood of involvement.

Educational settings can also be seen as a target for gangs. Young people who are in pupil referral units, or with additional learning needs are often targeted due to their vulnerabilities, whether this be the fact that they already have behavioural issues meaning a change in their character and them potentially becoming more violent would go un-noticed, or the fact that they may not fully understand what it is they are getting involved in (O'Hagan 2021). Similarly, Thompson, 2019 argues that young people with learning difficulties are particularly vulnerable to exploitation as they have a sense of wanting to provide for their families while surrounded by a culture which has become difficult for them to find an alternative source of income. It is also key to note that despite a low socioeconomic background clearly being a risk factor to increase the chances of exploitation, this is not always the case. People from more privileged socioeconomic backgrounds can tend to also join white supremacist gangs, these would be due to an ideology which has been passed down through generations (Belew et al, 2021).

As well as the socio-economic factors which increase vulnerability to exploitation, there are also many psychological factors which can increase this as well. There has been the argument of nature vs nurture in the psychological field for decades, this argument would debate whether the people becoming involved in gangs were born to become violent individuals or whether their circumstances have meant they have ended up involved criminality (Mcloed, 2023).

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have a significant impact on a person's development, they can impact how they process situations and how susceptible they are to taking risks, this is why it is important that these types of factors are understood when looking at vulnerability. Weitzel, 2020 stated that when comparing members of gangs and non-members it was seen that the members had significantly more ACEs than those who were non-members, clearly linking and highlighting the fact that ACEs would increase a person's vulnerability to exploitation. Similarly, Frances, 2023 would say that ACEs can lead to a person having a complex relationship with violence, identity, and vulnerability, which often leads to an increased risk of exploitation, including exploitation by gangs.

Gang members have been seen to use music as a manipulation tactic, they prey on the vulnerable people's adverse experiences and make them think that they can make money by turning their experiences into music. The lack of mental health and support from the NHS for people with trauma has also been seen to be a push factor towards gang culture as, the offer of therapy through the form of music has become a realistic prospect (Levell 2019). As well as the exploitation through music the gang culture can often give these individuals a sense of belonging, it presents them with a 'family' who have often experienced the same trauma and have the same insecurities, this sense of belonging can also present the idea that they will be respected by their peers (Harris 2011).

Overall, it is clear to see that there is a link between socioeconomic background and psychological characteristics which influence individuals' vulnerabilities to exploitation, by understanding the links we can better equip ourselves to address the issues and to break the cycle of economic hardship and poor education resulting in involvement with the criminal network. The better we understand it the more we can do to combat exploitation of vulnerable people and help them to avoid criminality.

Critically assess the effectiveness of options available to reduce re-offending. You may choose a specific type of offence for this answer e.g. domestic violence, anti-social behaviour, knife crime. Your answer must be based on academic research, but you may make reference to relevant case studies.

Violence against women and girls has been an issue for as long as records go back. In 2023 the crime survey for England and Wales estimated that in people aged 16 and over around 2.1 million people experienced domestic abuse of some form, there was also no change from the previous year (Office for national Statistics, 2023). This is majorly concerning as this would indicate that the options which aim to reduce reoffending are not working sufficiently.

This essay will be focused on the effectiveness of the current options which are aiming to reduce reoffending and protect victims from repeated abuse.

One of the most popular interventions programmes is the Duluth Model, this was established in 1981 and was developed in the battered women's movement in the USA (McGuire et al, 2021). This model focuses itself on the re-education of males who have been seen to have an abusive past, by attempting to change the need for power and control over women. There have been many studies which have investigated the effectiveness of this model, and many have stated that generally there has been a reduced rate in violence. Despite this, the effectiveness of the model has not fulfilled the expectations that would be expected due to it being the preferred model when comparing it to other approaches (Karakurt et al 2020). In 2017, a systematic review was conducted by Bates et al., which investigates the success rate of this model. The review concluded that the model was unsuccessful in reducing reoffending and attributed this to there being a total disregard of any form of abuse predictors. In addition, the researchers also found that the model lacked any focus on emotional or psychological issues which could have an influence. The review concluded that there was a need for development of this intervention strategy and that risk factors which increase the chances of abuse be taken into account. As well as this, the model does not consider the fact that females can also be perpetrators, which in turn limits how useful the approach can be when attempting to intervene and reduce the re-offending (Graham-Kevan & Bates 2020).

Another method which is commonly used to reduce reoffending would be Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). CBT has had a significant amount of research and is one of the most researched psychotherapies. CBT therapies work by using behaviour changing strategies, they focus on cognitive development and how changing the beliefs and opinions of the perpetrators can help to implement strategies to manage behaviour, it has evidenced effectiveness in the treatment of mental health problems and has also shown success in improving emotion regulation (Nesset et al., 2019). The college of policing (2018) also stated that CBT would benefit violent offenders in managing anger, moral development, and prevention of relapse. A meta-analysis conducted showed that reoffending reduced by 25% in the participants who received CBT, compared to those who did not, this clearly shows that it has a significant impact on rates of reoffending and how it can be used to prevent further harm to vulnerable victims.

Travers et al., 2021 states that when comparing the two approaches it has been seen that the CBT therapy approach has showed a decrease in reoffending over a

three-year period compared to the Duluth method, this has been similarly seen in research conducted by Cotti et al., 2019 who also showed that the results from CBT were far superior to those of the Duluth method. Contrastingly it has been found that both CBT and the Duluth method have both presented results which are negligible when looking at reductions and that neither of the methods were better than the other (Vigrus et al., 2016).

Furthermore, as well as looking at the intervention methods for offenders, there have also been several ways in which victim support has had an impact on reoffending rates. Services such as Women's aid, Freedom project and Mankind have all supported the complainants with the skills which allow them to identify abusive behaviours, reducing re-offending by avoiding these relationships where there are 'red flags'. In addition to this support from IDVA's and Multiagency support meetings (MARAC) where agencies come together and make a joint educated decision in terms of risk and the subject's ability to change (Steel et al., 2010). As well as this in 2014 Clare's Law was introduced, as part of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, this allows the police to inform partners who have concerns about the person they are in a relationship with about their domestic violence past if there is one. In addition, in some cases where the police have identified a repeat perpetrator is in a new relationship they can approach the prospective partner and advise that they may want to request the disclosure. These two parts are known as the right to ask and the right to know, this allows people the chance to protect themselves before offending happens (Gov.uk, 2024)

Overall it is clear that the current methods are still debated as to how effective they are in reducing reoffending. The need for a reduction is clear with the prevalence of this type of violence which has not had a significant reduction over the past few years. Intervention strategies have some level of effectiveness but are not as efficient as you would hope in this type of violence. It is clear that more research and an adaption of current methods is needed in order to produce a more effective approach and to safeguard the vulnerable victims in which this type of violence effects.

Word Count - 924

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