

What impact can the challenges of operational policing have on individual and group wellbeing? Why is it important to manage mental wellbeing in policing? Your answer must be based on academic research rather than personal experience.

Policing is a highly stressful occupation (Abdollahi, 2002) and the effects that stress can have on an individual's mental and physical health and wellbeing is well researched and documented (McEwen, 2008). There are many challenges and stressors associated with operational policing such as organizational stress and the trauma of attending critical incidents, all of which can have a detrimental impact on the psychological, physical, and spiritual health of an officer and their family (Conn, 2016). This essay will explore what impact the challenges of operational policing has on an officer's health, both mentally physically as well as the impact that such challenges can have on group wellbeing, and why it is important to manage wellbeing within policing.

Wellbeing can be described as a person's inner subjective state of how their life is going and how satisfied they feel (Layard, De Neve, 2023). Wellbeing can also be categorised into three subjective aspects such as evaluative wellbeing (or life satisfaction), hedonic wellbeing such as an individual's level of happiness, stress or pain and eudemonic wellbeing which relates to a person's sense of purpose (Steptoe, et al, 2015). All of which have a direct impact on a person's day to day life.

Stress can be defined as the resulting feeling from the physical, emotional, and mental reactions to situations that cause an individual to feel, fear, uncertainty, danger, or change (Sewell, 1981). The stress associated with being a police officer can lead to significant health problems (Habersaat, et al, 2015). Whilst many police officers begin their career in good health, some officers retire early or even die early due to the impact that cumulative stress has on their physical and mental health (Waters, Ussery, 2007).

Burnout and occupational stress have long been identified as occupational hazards for police officers (Griffin, Sun, 2018). Burnout is defined as a prolonged response to job related chronic and interpersonal stressors (Maslach et al, 2001). Studies suggest that there are many as nine different dimensions of policing duties which can adversely affect an officer's wellbeing, with officers also showing inferior wellbeing to that of their police staff colleagues (Juniper, et al, 2010). Therefore, when assessing the impact that operational policing has on an individual's wellbeing, it is important to understand what drives a person to pursue a career in policing in the first place to determine why an individual would willingly subject themselves to such high levels of stress and pressure.

There have been several high-profile controversies that have plagued policing in the 21st Century, one of which being the tragic murder of Sarah Everard by then service Metropolitan police officer Wayne Couzens (BBC, 2021). Landmark events such as these can shake the fundamental idea of public trust which the police service was founded on, and increase the

pressure and scrutiny that police officers endure from the public. However, for the majority of serving officers, the feeling of wanting to make a difference, and to serve and help their communities, remains the fundamental motivation for pursuing a policing career. Studies have shown that the motivating factors for becoming a police officer tend to be for altruistic reasons such as the opportunity to be help people, as well as more personal factors such as job benefits and security. (Raganella, White, 2004). Other studies have also pointed to the desire to be an enforcer of law to be an important motivating factor, however contrary to expectation, those who rated law enforcement highly as their motivating factor, also equally rated the desire to be of service to people (Lester, 1983).

Despite the positive factors that encourage an individual to enter a career in policing, there are well observed negatives. Police officers are exposed to a wide array of inherent stressors such as organisational pressure, high workloads, call demand and the inherent dangers of frontline response policing (Purba, Demou, 2019). It is the chronic and acute stress of the job itself that requires any person who undertakes the profession to be aware of their personal wellbeing and the effect that job related stress has on them and those around them.

Poor management and care of an individual's wellbeing can have lasting consequences on their health outcomes. There is growing evidence to suggest that poor mental health, specifically, those suffering with anxiety and depression can have a direct correlation with poor physical health (Kolappa et al, 2013). The flight or fight response to acute stress has a direct effect on an individual's physiology, such as rapid changes in the cardiovascular, nervous, and immune system and the uptake of negative coping strategies, such as substance use, overeating and lack of sleep and exercise (Larzelere, Jones, 2008).

Having an effective police service demands that a police officer is mentally and physically fit in order to be able to carry out the duties required of them. On a daily basis, officers are expected to make dynamic risk assessments and decisions in pressured and unpredictable circumstances that could have long lasting impacts and consequences. Research into work related stress specific to police officers has confirmed that police officers suffer both psycho-social and physical stress whilst on the job, anticipating stress as they go about their work and anticipating stress prior to starting each shift (Anderson et al, 2002) The results of this study also revealed that officers do not fully recover from this stress before terminating duty. Therefore, it is imperative that any person who undertakes the profession is in a position to maintain their wellbeing and put themselves in the best possible position to be able to carry out their duties to the best of their abilities.

There have been conflicting studies regarding whether police officers are at higher risk of poor mental health. (Van der Velden, et al, 2013) conducted a study that found that despite Policing being viewed as a high risk vocation regarding the susceptibility of suffering poor mental health, there was no evidence to suggest that self-reported mental health disturbances were more prevalent in police officers than those in who were employed in occupations that were not considered to be high risk such as supermarkets and banks. However, a study conducted by (Jetelina et al, 2020) highlighted that 12% of officers who were surveyed had reported having a lifetime mental health diagnosis and 26% reported

that they were currently suffering from symptoms of poor mental health, and few of those officers were referring themselves for support. This discrepancy could be explained by the institutional attitude among police officers not to disclose that they are suffering with poor mental health. Research has found that job related trauma can lead to the development of post-traumatic stress disorder, however there is a stigma associated with seeking mental health treatment which is associated with law enforcement (Velazque, Hernandez, 2019).

There are personal and economic costs that are associated with mental ill health, and the effects are increasingly recognized by organisations and governments (Dwyer, et al, 2020). A 2005 wellbeing study concluded that there were six occupations (of which policing was one) that were reporting worse than average scores for each factor regarding physical health, psychological wellbeing, and job satisfaction. This was attributed to the high emotional labour output that was associated with high stress jobs (Johnson et al, 2005). Consequently, it has also been evidenced that high levels of wellbeing at work is good for the employee and the organisation with lower absence levels and better retention (Johnson, Robertson, 2016).

Police officers are subjected to a variety of work-related stressors and as a result, are more susceptible to experience diminished psychological wellbeing (Jackman et al, 2020). Mental health has become an area of significant concern in the workplace due to the costs of depression, anxiety and suicide which is high amongst police officers (Quiros et al, 2020). The correlation between poor mental and physical health and the everyday, chronic stress that is associated with the demands of being an operational police officer is a melting pot that inevitably leads to poor outcomes on a personal and organisational level. There is growing evidence to suggest that an employee's wellbeing has a direct impact on organisational performance (Albrecht, 2012). There has been an increasing focus on how work-based teams perceive and manage stress due to an ever-increasing reliance on teamwork in the modern work environment (Liu, 2018). Although most of the research literature on stress has focused solely on individuals, it is not inconceivable that the shared conditions of workload and conflict may impact the experience of stress within a team environment (Savelbergh et al, 2015).

The correlation between individual wellbeing and team cohesion is evident with research suggesting that there is a multidirectional benefit to an individual's wellbeing when they are part of a highly cohesive team and vice versa (Vanhove, Herian, 2015). With work conditions having such a profound impact on an individual's wellbeing and the quality of their output, it is imperative that organizations implement interventions that ensure that work conditions compliment wellness initiatives (Fox et al, 2022). Police officers occupy a unique role that holds a tremendous amount of personal and professional accountability. The profession of policing is associated with psychological hazards that can have a direct negative impact on the functioning of the organization and public safety (Ivie, Garland, 2011). Work life and satisfaction plays a significant role in an individual's wellbeing. This is particularly pertinent in policing with organizational culture and high workloads being identified as key contributors to officer's stress (Collins, Gibbs, 2003).

These findings indicate that although work must be done on a personal level to ensure that an individual is able to cope with the stressors and demands that accompanies a career in policing, organisations would benefit from assisting and supporting officers with their mental wellbeing as there is a direct correlation between employee wellbeing and job satisfaction and organisational benefits.

Another facet of everyday life which is impacted by an individual's wellbeing is the health and wellbeing of the individual's family and support network. Work life and family life are the two most important areas of an adult's life (Zhang, Liu, 2011) and employees are finding it increasingly difficult to juggle the demands of work and family life which are often competing, resulting in Work-family conflict. Work-family conflict is a conflict that occurs when the demands of family roles and work role collide (Byron, 2005). Research suggests that work-family conflict is positively associated with emotional exhaustion and family-work conflict was negatively associated with life satisfaction (Zhang, Griffith, 2012). The research into this phenomenon also highlights that an individual's incapability of balancing the demands of work and family life, impacts an individual's behaviour at an organizational level and brings negative psychological consequences (Mihelic, Tekavic, 2014).

In conclusion, research has identified that there are several negative outcomes associated with poor individual wellbeing which can also negatively impact group wellbeing. An individual's failure to adequately manage their mental wellbeing can lead to poor physiological, psychological, organizational, and familial outcomes for themselves and those who support them which can in time, have devastating long term consequences. It is fundamental for officers to take steps to manage their wellbeing to negate the impact of the negative outcomes associated with the role. The research also suggests that there is a requirement for organisations to assist in the management of officer's wellbeing, as many of the significant factors that contribute to poor individual wellbeing are a consequence of organisational culture and overly high workloads. Research into this area also supports the suggestion that organisations would benefit from helping to manage officers' wellbeing as it would result in increased productivity and improved team cohesion.

Word Count – 1928

What lessons have been learned from recent high-profile critical and major incidents, and how have these translated into best practice for policing?
Your answer must be based on academic research rather than personal experience, but you may refer to recent examples of high-profile critical and major incidents.

Since the formation of the first professional police service; the Metropolitan police in 1829 by Sir Robert Peel; the landscape of modern policing has been ever evolving. The evolution of new technologies and phenomenon's such as globalisation has led to police forces, emergency services and partner agencies having to adapt and learn quickly to be able to keep the public safe in times of uncertainty. The police service is a naturally critically reflective entity (Christopher, 2015) and reflective learning is fundamental to improving the efficacy of the response in subsequent incidents. Learning valuable lessons from major and critical incidents and using those lessons to inform the response to future tragedies is one of the few positives that can emerge from critical and major incidents. This essay will evaluate recent major and critical incidents and assess what lessons have been learnt as a result, and how these lessons have been translated to best practice.

A major incident is defined as an incident with serious consequences which requires the implementation of special arrangements by one or more emergency services (JESIP, 2024). A critical incident is defined as "any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community" (College of Policing, 2018). It is important to recognise the difference between major and critical incidents as a major incident will not always be a critical incident and vice versa. The police's duties when encountering a major incident include restoring order to chaos, managing the communication between multiple agencies and treating the disaster site as the scene of a crime (Punch, Markham, 2000).

An example of a critical incident which has revealed areas of learning and reflection for the police, was the tragic deaths of Fiona Pilkington and her daughter Francesca Hardwick which took place in 2007. Fiona and Francesca were victims of Anti-social behaviour and Harassment over the course of a ten-year period. Anti-social behaviour is defined as criminal and non-criminal behaviour which could be threatening and cause harassment, alarm, and distress (GOV.UK, 2023). Harassment is an offence which is outlined in the Protection from Harassment act 1977. The offence of harassment is made out when a person pursues a course of conduct which amounts to harassment of another (Legislation.gov). The nature of the offences that Fiona and Francesca were being subjected to lead to Fiona taking the life of Francesca, before taking her own life after police repeatedly failed to deal with the issues effectively.

This incident was a critical incident as its occurrence led to an independent review of Fiona and Francesca's deaths and highlighted significant failings from police, thus shaking public confidence and trust. The subsequent inquest into the deaths of Fiona and Francesca caused a national scandal with the jury deciding that the police's actions contributed to their deaths (Wallis, 2010).

In 2011 the Independent Police complaints commission published a review of the Fiona Pilkington case and concluded that there were repeated failings from police such as a failure to share information between officers, failure to identify Fiona and her family as vulnerable, and repeated incidents of harassment being treated as isolated incidents of ASB by several different officers (IPCC, 2011). The IPCC found that in the time between the incident in 2007 and the review in 2011, Leicestershire constabulary had made significant changes in how they dealt with ASB and vulnerable people with Improved management policies. Following the report, a spokesperson for Leicestershire police stated that the forces approach to hate crime and ASB had changed “beyond all recognition”, and the force had implemented an adult referral and co-ordination team which is a specialised unit tasked with ensuring that vulnerable people such as Fiona and Francesca were not able to slip through the net (Leicestermercury.co.uk). Hate crime is defined by the CPS as “any crime or incident where the offender has either demonstrated hostility based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity or the offender has been motivated by hostility based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity” (CPS, 2024), And is often dismissed until there are serious consequences (Capewell, et al, 2015).

At the time of the incident, many police forces in the country did not categorize disability as one of its strands of hate crime. A month after the deaths of Fiona and Francesca, the Associated of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) agreed upon a common definition for hate crime which included disability (Policy IUHC, 2015).

This incident was significant as it highlighted a specific concern with the way in which police were dealing with vulnerable and disabled victims of ASB. During the time of the Fiona Pilkington case, there were fundamental issues with how crimes of harassment and ASB against vulnerable and disabled people were viewed, with the conduct often being described as bullying which was viewed as less serious by criminal justice (Nixon, et al, 2007).

The deaths of Fiona and Francesca resulted in significant learning for police which has translated to forces across the country and acted as a stark reminder of the risks attached to repeated harassment of particularly vulnerable victims. This case helped to inform the standard of best practice for dealing with ASB and hate crime and the implementation of best practice and procedures in safeguarding vulnerable victims.

One factor of major incidents is the risk that that they can also become critical incidents, as the consequences of serious injury or death, shake the publics’ confidence in policing and their trust in their ability to prevent such catastrophes from occurring.

There have been several high-profile major incidents of this nature in modern times, such as the 2005 London bombings also referred to as the 7/7 bombings, and the 2017 Manchester arena bombings. Each of these incidents required a joint response from emergency services which in turn led to subsequent inquests and reviews of the response.

A significant area of learning that has emerged from recent high profile major incidents has been the concept of interoperability between the emergency services. Interoperability is defined as a shared system of technology and teamwork which is built upon a common goal

and an understanding of the independent components' organisational practices (Power, et al, 2024).

Effective communication is an essential component of providing an efficient coordinated response during a major incident, especially between the blue-light sector (Tovey, et al, 2018) However repeated failures and inadequacies of the communication and interoperability between the emergency services has long been a topic of academic discussion and criticism from public enquiries. The public has a high expectation of the emergency services and the level of scrutiny is equally high (Flanagan, 2014).

On 7th July 2005, London's transport system was the target of a planned terrorist attack, where three bombs exploded on the underground network and a fourth on a bus, killing 52 commuters and leaving over 700 people injured. In the aftermath of the incident the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) completed a report in to the attacks and concluded that despite the fact that the counter-terrorism police and MI5 do a good job at preventing the vast majority of potential terror incidents, it is accepted that it isn't possible to prevent them all, and although collaboration between police and partner agencies has developed, continuing its development and improvement must be a core focus of future efforts. However, the report stated that that the ISC were confident that lessons had been learnt (GOV.UK, 2013). Interoperability between the police and other emergency services and agencies is an area of continual learning for all associated, but this comes with its own issues. Although the emergency services have worked together for many years, they have settled back in to siloed working at multiple major incidents (Stephenson, 2015). Individual teams have a tendency to focus on their own agency specific behaviours instead of coordinated multi-team collaboration which leads to collective interoperability not being achieved (Power, et al, 2024). Interoperability continues to be an area of increasing concern and intense investment (Allen, et al, 2014).

In the wake of the 7/7 attacks, the Chief Constable of British Transport Police (BTP) stated that the force now has a "comprehensive communications system which allows us to link in with Transport for London and other agencies much more efficiently" as well as implementing "regular training exercises" to test their response to threats (BTP, 2024).

The 7/7 bombings and the need for more efficient interoperability were also major catalysts for the formation of The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP). JESIP was formed in 2012 after reviews of several high-profile major incidents identified gaps and failures in the joint response from the emergency services (justiceinspectrates.gov.uk). The aim of JESIP sets a standard approach to multi agency working and provides training and awareness for emergency services to train their staff (JESIP, 2024).

Although JESIP creates a best practice for the police and the other emergency services and was created because of the lessons learned from major incidents, it hasn't been without its criticisms (Power, et al, 2023) and the group responsible for JESIP has received criticism for not achieving what it was set out to achieve (Power et al, 2023). A review into JESIP's effectiveness found that there is a still a lack of strategic buy in from the involved organisations, and evidence from the review has highlighted that there is still difficulty in

learning from incidents, with similar issues being identified in debriefs year on year at a similar ratio (Pollock, 2017). (Warring, et al 2020) also surmised that there are persistent difficulties coordinating decisions and information in a multiteam system during an extreme incident. An example of lessons being identified rather than learned is that during the 7/7 bombings, there was a failure of communication between above ground responders and those working underground. This issue was also a failure which was highlighted during the Kings Cross Fire of 1987, 17 years previous (Coles, 2014).

The introduction of JESIP whilst, not perfect in its execution was a significant step towards implementing recommendations from learning opportunities for police and the rest of the blue light services.

On 22 May 2017, the Manchester arena was the target of the first suicide bombing in the UK since the 7/7 bombings in 2005. Following an Ariana Grande concert, terrorist extremist Salman Abedi detonated a bomb which destroyed the arena's foyer, killing 22 people and injuring 1017. On 27th March 2018, the Kerslake report, which was a commissioned review of the emergency response to the Manchester Arena bombing was published and identified several areas of learning for Greater Manchester Police (Kerslake, 2018). The Kerslake report found inadequacies in the way that Greater Manchester Police (GMP) notified and activated partner agencies, especially the other blue light responders. The report also identified issues regarding single officers having to manage multiple strategic roles during a major incident and inefficiencies with GMP's Force Duty Officer's role and their location of operation when dealing with a major incident.

On April 18th, 2019, the Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham released a report which was a progress update on the recommendations of the Kerslake report (Burnham, 2019). The mayor noted that GMP had acted on the recommendations of the Kerslake report and had made "significant progress" with the development of a notification process which enables the force to notify partner agencies efficiently, and work had been done to strengthen the link between the emergency services control rooms. The review also highlighted that GMP had since created a new Force Critical Incident manager role, the aim of which was to ensure there was a dedicated officer at Chief Inspector level in charge of critical incidents that would operate 24/7. The force implemented this with the intention of preventing single officers from managing multiple roles during a major incident. The force also agreed and implemented the recommendation of situating the Force Duty Officer in the force's headquarters.

Research has identified that multi-agency emergency responses encounter a range of challenges (Davidson, et al, 2023) and not all major incidents can be avoided. However, despite justified criticism, the evidence suggests that there is at least an appetite from the police to learn from major and critical incidents and implement change even if it is not always successful in its endeavour.

Word Count - 2046

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