

LEVEL 6 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

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Essay one question:

How effectively has the police service adapted to accommodate diversity within the UK? Consider the police force itself and/or the way police engage with diverse communities.

Diversity is defined as many different types of things or people being included in something (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). Stergioulis (2017) draws on the same notion as the above definition; it is a concept of the 'complete understanding and acceptance' of various human characteristics. Stergioulis goes on to specify the characteristics of gender, race, ethnicity, age, social and economic status, physical and mental abilities, disability, sexual orientation, religious and other beliefs (2017, p.265). Herrington and Abby (2017) argue diversity is pivotal to ensure different ways of thinking within an organisation, as a result of the varied life-experiences of those with diverse characteristics. Diversity is particularly important to policing, as its foundations are built on Sir Robert Peel's belief that, 'the police are the public, and the public are the police' (Police Federation, 2023). If the police aren't a reflection of the public, and portray a complete understanding and acceptance of various human characteristics, then are they truly upholding the Peelian principles on which their foundation is built?

McLeod and Herrington reiterate the Peelian principle, stating an ideal police service should be representative of society, in order for it to 'cultivate neutrality' which will allow for fair engagement within communities (2017, p.177). Stergioulis (2017, p.272) reinforces this, stating it is essential for the efficiency and effectiveness of the police to have society 'well mirrored' by their staff. Carruthers highlights although UK police forces do show 'encouraging' steps forward in relation to diversity within their workforces, there is still work to be completed to ensure people are well represented by the police force (Carruthers, 2023). The Home Office's figures reflect Carruthers' argument that there have been tangible steps to diversify the workforce, with figures highlighting police officers from each ethnic minority group increased from 2007 - 2022 (UK Government, 2023). Additionally, as of March 2024, 8% of officers identified as being from a minority ethnic background; a figure which has consistently been increasing, year on year (Allen and Wong, 2024). Statistics also show that 35% of officers in England and Wales are female, the highest figure since 2010 (Parliament, 2024). As Carruthers argues, although these figures show UK police forces are stepping in the right direction, the percentage of officers who identify themselves as being from an ethnic minority background is yet to reflect 18.3% of England and Wales' ethnic minority population (Parliament, 2024). The figures are also not reflective of the 51% of females within the population of England and Wales (UK Government, 2023).

Several police forces, including South Wales, Kent, and Nottinghamshire Police, to new a few, have implemented a range of measures and initiatives to ensure unrepresented individuals are actively encouraged and supported throughout their application (South Wales Police, 2024)(Kent Police, 2024)(Nottinghamshire Police, 2024). These measures and initiatives, referred to as Positive Action, include up-skilling sessions, tailored support and one-to-one sessions during the application process with those who have a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (South Wales Police, 2024). Positive Action therefore encourages and supports those under-represented within the police force to apply, therefore ultimately leading to a police service which is more representative of society as a whole. It is clear that UK police forces are more committed to employing a representative workforce, and are implementing inclusive employment practices which are perceived as more inclusive (Durham University, 2019).

Gaining employees from diverse backgrounds to ensure a reflective and Peelian police force across the UK is one thing, but retaining those employees is another. It is argued that recruiting with a focus on diversity alone does not result in the achievement of diversifying the organisation.(McLeod and Herrington, 2017) If new and diverse people are recruitment, but organisational culture is not inclusive, those recruited will not be retained as their experiences

of encountering unacceptable behaviour in the workplace will continue (Durham University, 2019). Detective Sergeant Hills, from the Metropolitan Black Police Association, recognised the efforts made to recruit a more representative workforce to accommodate diversity, however described the police as having to 'pedal really hard' against culture which does not embrace diversity (House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2021). Stergioulis (2017) argues that including common curricula on diversity may address this issue, and goes on to argue that adopting an accepted concept of diversity is strongly related to a positive police culture. The UK police force currently include equality, diversity and inclusion training to student officers, with UK police forces now recognising and valuing the importance for officers to 'overcome their lack of knowledge and confidence' within this area (HMICFRS, 2023). A culture of embracing, learning and understanding diversity will encourage a psychologically secure workforce, allowing for police officers with protected characteristics to voice their opinions and woes. McLeod and Herrington (2017, pp. 182-185) argue that this cultural change within the police force is necessary, and that expecting a simple shift in recruit numbers alone, to do 'the hard work' is unfair. Therefore additional training to adopt an embracing culture towards diversity, as well as representative recruitment and Positive Action is needed.

The Metropolitan Police have also made attempts to foster a more inclusive culture, and as a result accommodate diversity, through their implementation of Community Reference Groups and Forums (Metropolitan Police, 2022). These groups hold thematic meetings where discussions are held between those with protected characteristics and the police force regarding specific experiences. These discussions are held to better understand their opinions and experiences; with the end goal to better serve underrepresented and marginalised members of the community (Metropolitan Police, 2022). The implementation of the Community Reference Group by the Metropolitan Police encourages a more inclusive culture, allowing a safe space for those with protected characteristics to share their voice and experiences, which in turn accommodates diversity within the UK's police force. A study conducted by Durham University (2019) states that inclusive organisations adopt the belief that people's diverse backgrounds act as a source of learning, which should be harnessed to improve organisational function. It is clear, from the implementation of the above group, that the Metropolitan Police are accommodating diversity and fostering an inclusive organisation through listening and learning from the experiences of those from diverse backgrounds.

To summarise, UK police forces have adapted to accommodate diversity through employing staff who are more representative of the UK population; with statistics demonstrating the gap between police officers' representation and the populations' closing. However, statistics highlight that there is still a way to go until forces in the UK truly reflect the Peelian mantra. UK police forces are also employing Positive Action to further encourage and support applicants with protected characteristics into the police force. Although, scholars highlight although focusing on representation and diversifying is crucial, without an embracing culture, those with protected characteristics will not be retained. Police forces within the UK attempt to tackle this issue by including diversity training, to bridge the gap between the current police culture and future embracing culture. The Metropolitan Police have also implemented their Community Reference Groups, allowing for those with protected characteristics to share their experiences, in order to facilitate conversations and accommodate diversity.

Word Count: 1,094

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Essay question two:

Why is it important to manage mental wellbeing in policing? What can be the consequences if mental wellbeing is not managed appropriately?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) (2022) defines mental wellbeing as a state of mind, which enables people to manage the stresses of life, learn and work well, and contribute to their community. The WHO go on to argue mental wellbeing as an integral component of health and well-being, underpinning our ability to make decisions, build relationship and shape the world we live in. The ability to learn and work well, make decisions and contribute to community are aspects on which response policing are build, therefore managing and maintaining mental wellbeing is paramount to ensuring effective response policing.

McDaniel et al. (2020, pp. 223-241) argue that policing is recognised as one of the most stressful occupations, which can lead to those within this realm of work having above-average levels of negative mental health; highlighting the importance of managing mental wellbeing. McDaniel et al. note that response officers, in particular, offer an 'individual sacrifice' to preserve the life of others, inevitably exposing them to trauma. As a result of this sacrifice, officers often face devastating affects on their mental well-being. Waters and Ussery (2007) reiterate this, highlighting that response officers are exposed to more acute and chronic life stressors, making them more vulnerable to develop a plethora of stress symptoms. Schaible and Six (2015) highlight how there are well documented consequences due to these life stressors, drawing attention to mental ill-health amongst officers increasing in recent years. Thus, it is evident response policing is recognised as an extremely stressful occupation by many academics, with officers making the individual sacrifice of their own mental wellbeing, in order to preserve the lives of others.

Given the well-documented stressful nature of response policing, coupled with response officers' duties of decision-making, building relationships and contributing to communities, it is imperative to manage wellbeing within policing. Charman (2018, p.2) describes the role of a police officer as reactive, responding to something currently happening, thus highlighting the dynamic decision-making required by police officers. Having considered the WHO's concept that mental wellbeing lies at the core of effective decision-making, alongside decision-making being a key element of response policing, the importance of managing mental wellbeing within response policing is exemplified. Arguably, if a response officers' mental wellbeing is not managed appropriately, it may bleed into their ability to make effective decisions; thus impacting their key duties as a response officer. Roycroft and Roach (2019) echo this argument, stating police officers are frequently faced with complex decisions on a daily basis. Roycroft and Roach state some decisions may be routine and inconsequential, with others being life-saving or life-changing. Thus, it is imperative police officers' wellbeing is managed appropriately to ensure they are equipped with the ability and capacity to manage, not only the routine, but also life-altering decisions within their daily tour of duty; as the impact of a bad decision may have life or death consequences. The inability to manage officers' wellbeing could lead to an integral component of decision-making being lost, and possibly an adverse impact on the communities served.

Policing is infamous for its lack of resources, time pressures and organisational structure; all of which causing police officers' mental wellbeing to suffer (McDaniel et al., 2020). The exposure to critical incidents is also driving force behind stress, affecting mental wellbeing, which manifests itself in behavioural, psychological and physical problems (McDaniel et al., 2020, p.246). Moreover, it is apparent that mental wellbeing within policing must be managed appropriately to target these issues. Waters and Ussery (2007, p.176) re-emphasise the importance of mental wellbeing managed effectively, labelling the daily tensions within policing as 'corrosive', wearing away at the officers' resiliency and hardiness. Schaible and Six (2015, p.3) mirror this, stating that the nature of policing demands officers to be 'nicer than nice' whilst simultaneously being 'tougher than tough'; these conflicting roles causing psychological implications for officers. The consequences of the corrosive nature of policing are profound, with multiple scholars highlighting the toll on officers' physical and mental health. McDaniel et al., (2020) state that the consequences to not managing mental wellbeing effectively within policing may be psychological as well as physical. McDaniel et al., (2020, p.246) specify stress is often a driving force behind Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which may manifest itself in behavioural problems such as substance or alcohol abuse. Water and Ussery echo this, stating without effective management of wellbeing or intervention, the stressors involved in response policing can develop into more sinister symptoms. Water and Ussery state

that some officers may lean into coping mechanisms which are unsustainable, including heavy alcohol consumption and substance abuse (Water and Ussery, 2007, p.176). Irizar et al exemplify how mismanagement of mental wellbeing, specifically within policing, often results in alcohol dependence to relieve negative mental health (Irizar et al., 2022, p.2). Ineffective management of mental wellbeing within policing may also manifest itself in physical symptoms such as heart disease, diabetes and digestive disorders (McDaniel et al., 2020). Scholars have also drawn attention to the fact officers begin their career in excellent health, but often retire early, or perhaps die, from job related stress disorders (Waters and Ussery, 2007, P.172)(McDaniel et al, 2020, P.247). Therefore, it is imperative to effectively manage mental wellbeing, not only to protect officers from developing psychological ill-health, but also physical.

To conclude, it is evident that effectively management of mental wellbeing is crucial, given the stressors, such as shift work, exposure to critical incidents and lack of resources, officers are exposed to within response policing (Stinchcomb, 2004)(Waters and Ussery, 2007)(MacDaniel et al., 2020). Decision-making is entrenched in response policing, and managing mental wellbeing appropriately is pivotal in making effective decisions, particularly in situations where the aftermath may be life or death. The consequences and stakes for mismanagement of mental wellbeing within response policing are monumental, leading to not only psychological symptoms, such as depression, anxiety and stress, but the unsustainable coping mechanisms, such as substance and alcohol abuse (MacDaniel et al., 2020, P.245). These consequences also extend to physical symptoms, such as heart disease, diabetes and digestive disorders. With ineffective mental wellbeing management, there is not only a risk to the wellbeing's public, in relation to poor decision-making, but also a risk to the officers themselves, both psychologically and physically. Management of mental wellbeing is paramount, as the lack thereof could truly lead to the ultimate 'individual sacrifice' of officers' lives.

Word Count: 983

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Essay question four:

What are the potential links between serious and organised crime and public protection issues? What characteristics make some people more vulnerable to exploitation by serious and organised crime gangs?

Serious and organised crime is defined by both the National Crime Agency (2024) and the Home Office (2023) as: “individuals planning, coordinating, and committing serious offences, whether individually, in groups and/or as part of transnational networks.” It is evident that serious and organised crime poses immense risks to public protection, with the Home Office labelling it as being on a scale which has the ability to threaten the national security of the United Kingdom, exemplifying the risk posed to the public and public protection issues (Home Office, 2023). It is stated that serious and organised crime continues to kill more people than any other national threat to the United Kingdom, the NCA emphasises this by describing its consequences as ‘corrosive’ (NCA, 2018, p.1). The Home Office also reiterates this, saying that it “costs lives, blights communities” and causes individuals, businesses and the United Kingdom ‘financial loss’, hampering economic growth and is estimated to cost to the UK as at least £47 billion per year (Home Office, 2023, Chapter 2), (Home Office, 2023, Chapter 1). The corrosive consequences of serious and organised crime being the domination of communities, done by means of wholesale drug supply networks, modern slavery, human trafficking, people smuggling, child sexual abuse and many other forms of criminal offences (NCA, 2018, p.1).

It is difficult to truly measure the impact that serious and organised crime has on the UK, as a high percentage of it goes undetected however the effects filter down into communities, and are felt heavily by the public, particularly with the supply of illicit substances. Residents recalled blatant drug dealing in public spaces, discarded needles, and antisocial behaviour. Some residents also experienced the overt impacts of serious and organised crime such as arson, the occasional drive-by shooting, or even discharge of a firearm. The fallout from serious and organised crime is truly felt by local communities, with some describing a “pervasive atmosphere of fear and menace” (Police Foundation, 2017, p.29).

The perpetrators of serious organised crime prey on the most vulnerable in society, whether as a victim, customer, or coerced participant; where violence will often be used to fulfil their aims (Home Office, 2023). It raises concerns in relation to public protection as the perpetrators often exploit children and vulnerable young people, specifically within county lines. The NCA (2018, p.1) describe county lines as a “criminal business model” that continues to rely on targeting vulnerable individuals. Andell (2019, p.48) also describes the impact of county lines as “pernicious and harmful” for vulnerable communities. Children and young persons, all on average below 18 years old, being coerced into being ‘runners’ to transport drugs, money and weapons both locally and around the UK (Boulton et al., 2019)(Home Office, 2023) (National Crime Agency, 2020, p.10). Williams and Blockley (2023, p.93) argue that perpetrators of serious organised crime approach vulnerable individuals, who are more likely to become victims due to personal, environmental or situational factors. Perpetrators of serious crime such as county lines will not only prey on the ‘intrinsic factor’ of age, but may also target those with ‘extrinsic factors’ such as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) (Williams and Blockley, 2023, p.50). These ACEs may include vulnerable persons who have experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse, living with someone who abuses alcohol or substances, or exposure to domestic violence or losing a parent (Williams and Blockley, 2023). Adverse environmental factors, such as poverty or lack of opportunity may also cause these, already intrinsically vulnerable persons to be at a greater risk of exploitation. Offenders will target victims with limited economic opportunities, offering material possessions and payment, otherwise unattainable to them by legitimate means (NCA, 2018, p.6). The perpetrators of serious and organised crime prey on the multitude of vulnerabilities, with the knowledge it heightens the probability of membership within their illegitimate business model (Boulton et al, 2019, p.888). Thus, it is evident that the serious organised crime, specifically county lines, is undeniably linked to public protection, given the emphasised risk on those who are vulnerable within the community.

The perpetrators of human trafficking, similar to that of county lines, also prey on people's vulnerabilities; specifically those who are poor, isolated and weak (United Nations, 2008, p.3). The UK Government defines human trafficking as, the "recruitment or movement of people for exploitation by the use of threat, force, fraud, or the abuse of vulnerability" (UK Government, 2022). The United Nations (2008, p.9) describes Human Trafficking as a "global phenomenon" that is known internationally and its' pervasive consequences felt. The NCA state that the gangs behind human trafficking are driven by the continuous profits, and will prey on those most vulnerable to achieve this. The NCA go on to list homelessness, isolation, and substance abuse as key vulnerabilities exploited by perpetrators (NCA, 2018, p.22). Intrinsic factors such as gender, class, ethnicity also play a key role, exemplifying 'power hierarchies' between victims and serious and organised crime gangs, which perpetrators exploit for their benefit (Viuhko, 2019, p.196). Shwarz et al., (2019), refer to a "chain-of-risks model", explaining how one exposure to vulnerability may lead to another and then another; ultimately exposing them to the exploitation of human trafficking. The NCA also highlight how non-UK victims are at the "greatest risk of exploitation" (NCA, 2018, p.22). Viukho (2019, p.204) reiterates this, referencing a case where intrinsic factors, such as her gender, intertwined with extrinsic factors such as lack of opportunity and language skills, made this victim 'susceptible' and 'prone' to exploitation (Williams and Blockley, 2023, p.50). Therefore, it is evident that in the 'chain of risks', non-UK victims may be at greater risk due to the lack of language skills, exacerbating their vulnerability further, which criminals will exploit unashamedly.

To conclude, it is evident that serious and organised crime is a public protection issue, which is exemplified when discussing specific matters such as County Lines and Human Trafficking, where those most vulnerable in society are targeted and exploited. Characteristics deemed as intrinsic such as gender, ethnicity, or age may all be targeted as vulnerabilities in their relentless pursuit of profit. However, it is crucial to note that extrinsic factors such as ACEs, poverty, and lack of opportunity also play a key role in the exploitation of vulnerable persons by serious and organised crime gangs. It is a multifaceted issue, with a mix of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors creating the perfect storm for serious organised crime gangs, allowing them to identify and exploit those most vulnerable in society.

Word Count: 979

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Essay question five:

How effective is early intervention as an effective means of preventing young people from offending or re-offending?

Early intervention includes programmes geared towards participants in early life to reduce the likelihood of future involvement in crime, as well as those first involved in crime (Boyd and Bermingham, 2019). Hancock (2023) labels these interventions as preventative, helping to stop children and young people even becoming involved in crime, and diverting, to help them make positive choices to avoid further involvement in crime. Boyd and Bermingham (2019) go on to state that early interventions can be complex, and often difficult to evaluate, due to the ranging types and lack of evaluation measures. One of the key aims of early intervention is to support offenders, or potential offenders, allowing them to see themselves in a “new and more positive light” and with hope for their future, away from a life of criminality (United Nations, 2018, p.8).

However, implementing early intervention to successfully prevent offending, or re-offending, requires an understanding of the factors that place offenders, or potential offenders, at risk (United Nations, 2018, p.9). Olver outlines these risks as being: criminal history, antisocial peers, familial issues, employment or education and substance abuse, to name a few (2011, p.689). The United Nations categorise these into two types of factors. One being static, including gender, criminal history, age, and the other being dynamic, which includes unemployment, low educational skill level, and social environment (2018, p.9). The United Nations advises that each child or young person should be assessed, with interventions tailored to their individual needs and circumstances, with consideration to these static and dynamic factors (2018, p.81). Whilst some interventions are successful, reoffending data shows that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach, with some young offenders experiencing specific issues not targeted by standard interventions (Hubble et al., 2015, p.2).

Early interventions which are critiqued by many include ‘coercive’ and ‘punitive sanctions’, with Hobson et al., (2018, p.326) arguing them to be ineffective. The College of Policing (2022) also acknowledge this, stating that interventions involving scare tactics and images, and knowledge only approaches, proved ineffective as a means of preventing people from offending or re-offending in the long-term. Although these approaches may be seen as ‘common sense’, conversely they are associated with a small increase in recidivism; thus proving as an ineffective intervention as a means to prevent young people from offending or re-offending (Olver, 2011, p.690). The Youth Endowment Fund (2024) illustrate the potential harmful impacts of these coercive and punitive interventions, referencing both ‘Prison Awareness Programmes’ and ‘Boot Camps’. Prison Awareness Programmes are centred around current or former prisoners meeting children or young persons and describing what prison is like, with some focusing on intimidation and fear. Although the aim of this early intervention is to deter those at risk of offending or re-offending by highlighting the realities of incarceration, those who participated in this programme actually saw a 68% increase in re-offending, compared to those who did not participate (College of Policing, 2015)(Youth Endowment Fund, 2024).

The second ‘coercive’ sanction listed was the Boot Camp intervention, one which the Youth Endowment Fund (2024) labelled as ‘harmful’ when tackling offending or repeat offending. The Boot Camp intervention replicates a military-style environment and lasts between 90 and 180 days. Wilson et al., (2005, p.19) argue that this early intervention is no more effective in targeting offending or recidivism than prison sentences, furthermore raising questions over whether this is an effective means of preventing people from offending or re-offending, particularly in relation to young people, where consideration of detention should only be used as a last resort (United Nations, 2018, p.81).

Instead, Hobson et al., suggest early interventions employing greater resources and directed towards providing a targeted approach, with a focus on underlying static and dynamic issues should be implemented; as these factors so often predict future criminal behaviour (2018, p.326). The United Nations outlines the early intervention work implemented by the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) in Glasgow, Scotland (United Nations, 2018, p.93). This intervention adopting a holistic approach, aimed at addressing underlying causes of offenders, or potential offenders', behaviour; rather than a coercive or punitive approach (College of Policing, 2021, pp.8-9). The CIRV intervention implements a 'bespoke' and tailored multi-agency approach to address the individual risk factors underpinning the young persons behaviour, as an effective means to prevent offending or further offending (College of Policing, 2021, p.16). CIRV is encompassed by various aspects, from the support of multiple agencies, such as police, social services, health and education, to community engagement, which includes discussions with victims' families around the devastation and loss caused by gang-related crime (Youth Endowment Fund, 2024). The intervention also includes a 'Disruption Strategy', where those who are at risk, but unwilling to engage, may encounter disruptive strategies such as continuous stops by police that will not cease until engagement occurs (College of Policing, 2021, p.16). The Youth Endowment Fund (2024) label this intervention as effective, with the College of Policing (2021, p.103) highlighting the following positive impacts: (1) Reduced violence and gang membership, (2) Chance to change direction of lives, (3) Improved relationships, health and outlook, and (4) Changing perceptions of police and other support services. Ultimately, this intervention effectively targets and prevents young persons at risk of offending or re-offending, as demonstrated by a specific case study in Glasgow in 2010, with statistics showing a 46% decrease in violent offending by gang members who participated in the intervention of CIRV (Violence Reduction Unit, 2020). The West Midlands Violence and Reduction Strategy 2023-2026 replicates the CIRV intervention, thus data to prove or disprove the effectiveness of this model of early intervention to prevent young persons from offending or re-offending is on the horizon (West Midlands Violence Reduction Strategy, 2023).

To conclude, it is evident that coercive and punitive measures are not effective interventions when addressing and tackling offending, or repeat offending, in young people. These harsh interventions often leading to an increase in offending, with participants involved in scare tactics interventions actually seeing a 68% increase in re-offending, compared those who did not participate. Additionally, the boot camp style interventions showed to have no greater impact than that of prison sentences; thus demonstrating the lack of effectiveness of this intervention. However, the holistic and multi-agency orientated intervention, such as the CIRV, has shown to be effective; with a 46% decrease in violent offending by gang members in Glasgow. This intervention aims to tackle both dynamic and static risk factors, which may be the underlying causes of offending or re-offending in young people. This intervention may be proven as effective, as it strikes a balance between providing support, whilst emphasising there are consequences for continued participation in criminality.

Word count: 998

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