

Chapter Four: Data analysis

Introduction

The previous chapter described the research methods and methodologies that have been used for this research project. This chapter's aim is to examine and analyse the various causes or hurdles that keep Police officers engaged with Mental Health related calls when their role should be that of a supporting one to the National Health Service, rather than taking primacy. Research undertaken in the literature review highlighted that there is a lack of academic papers with regards to Mental Health and the demands it places on frontline Policing in Wales. This was one of the reasons why the author decided to undertake this for their research project. By conducting this type of research, it will hopefully assist in filling the gap in the current literature field whilst also giving the author a better insight into the views and opinions of Police officers in relation to this chosen research field. In order to obtain the views of other Police officers, primary research has been undertaken in the form of an online survey that has been tailored around the research topic.

Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of collecting and going through information from a quantity of data in order to comprehend patterns and to identify common themes (Hardy & Bryman, 2009). In order to achieve this aim, the author has chosen to use Google Docs survey tool due to its ease of use, compatibility with most devices to enable respondents to not have any issues whilst submitting their questions. Google docs is also very user friendly for the author and creates visual representations automatically as questions are answered in real time. Due to the ease of use for both parties, the author chose not to use any other data analysis tool or survey website. Utilising Google Documents survey tool to collect data from Serving Police officers had many benefits, the main benefit was that it allowed for a quick response time from participants as its online based, and the survey only took a short time to complete. It also allows for the participants to remain anonymous when giving their answers which would encourage people to be more honest with their answers, especially relating to their own personal mental health. Google docs also create

visual representations of the answers which allow the author to easily identify common themes and answers without having to input the raw data into another program. Participants were categorised by age and gender to see if there were any significant differences in the respondents' questions. The survey was shared internally on South Wales Police 'Bob' Portal as well as within the response teams within the authors Police Station. Initially, the author planned to post the survey to other social media platforms such as Reddit and Facebook. However, after reflection it was decided that as the main objective of this chapter is to gain insight and the opinions of serving Police officers within Wales only, it may lead to officers from different parts of the United Kingdom replying to the survey. Due to the anonymous nature of Google Docs, the author decided to keep the survey in house to platforms that only serving Police officers would have access to.

Questionnaire Findings

Mental health and the impacts it has on Frontline Policing in Wales?

When analysing the 24 responses, it became very clear that Police officers in Wales are dealing with a lot of mental health calls on an average basis. The first question put to respondents after the characteristic's questions were to ask 'On average, how many hours during a shift would you spend at a mental health related call' with all respondents stating that they have at least spent 2 hours hour dealing with such incidents on an average basis per shift. 10 respondents replied with 3hours, 8 replied with four hours and 4 responded with more than 5 hours. This appears to be the same for all Forces within the United Kingdom and isn't a local problem that Wales is facing. Since the pandemic, 999 callouts to people suffering mental health crises has soared (Guardian, 2021). Wiltshire Police in particular saw a 248% jump in the number of calls they were attending in relation to mental health.

In addition, respondents were asked what their role was within South Wales Police. 75% responded that they were Police officers, 12.5% Special Constables and the same for Police community support officer. When the respondents were asked if they felt they have received the relevant mental health training in order to effectively deal

with a mental health incident, 54.2% replied yes, 12.5% stated no and 33.3% stated somewhat. The author recognises that in South Wales Police there has been an increased amount of training packages around mental health with useful aid memoirs created in order to assist officers. However, a theme the author noticed when doing wider reading from other forces, is that officers don't feel they have had enough training and shouldn't be responding to mental health calls (Holloway, 2018). 66.7% of respondents also stated that they have been assaulted whilst dealing with a mental health call with 33.3% stating that they have not.

When analysing the data further, respondents were asked if they had ever used Section 136 of the Mental Health Act, 95% responded with yes and 4% responded with no. From the literature review, these findings are consistent with the data gathered that year on year 136 use and detentions were on the rise. South Wales Police and the Local authorities that we operate within have a shared policy that Police officers should not be at the mental health suite longer than 30 minutes if the patient is deemed to be compliant and not aggressive. Respondents were asked if they have had to remain longer with all respondents stating that they have, they were also asked the reason why. 41% stated due to a violent patient, 37.5% stated that due to lack of NHS staff to sit with the patient and 16% unaware of the Policy. Respondents were also asked if they have had to take the detained person to an accident and emergency unit due to injuries prior to going to the mental health unit, 87% responded with yes and 12% responded with no.

Finally, respondents were asked if being a Police officer has affected their mental health. 50% responded with yes, 29% responded with prefer not to say and 20% responded with no.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the project research has identified that there is an increasing pressure being placed upon Police forces within Wales and the United Kingdom in relation to mental health year upon year and that a lot more can be done by the NHS in order to support the Police and people suffering with mental health. Tackling these changes in Wales however is no quick fix, as the NHS is a devolved matter and Policing is controlled by the Government of the United Kingdom.

Bibliography

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