

Essay one:

Critically evaluate the concept of 'the professionalisation of the police service', and consider the extent to which 'maintaining professional standards', 'ethical and inclusive' and 'coaching and mentoring' approaches contribute to professionalisation.

Word limit: 1000 words.

In order to evaluate the concept of 'the professionalisation of the police service', we must first determine what that phrase actually means. Britannica.com defines 'to professionalise' as "to make (an activity) into a job that requires special education, training, or skill" (2022), whilst Dr. Jenny King, writing for Edgecumbe, defines professionalism as acting with "respect; competence; responsibility and integrity" (n.d.).

Based on these definitions, the professionalisation of the Police could be seen to be the increasing trend towards Police officers completing higher education based work alongside their job as officers; more easily defined as making Policing a 'graduate job' which in turn establishes a standard of behaviour in the workplace that is common across all UK forces.

If we again consider the definitions outlined above, it is also important to note the 'special education, training, or skill' aspect which ties into the topics of professional standards, inclusivity and mentoring outlined in the question. These topics are of particular importance as they have relevance when considering one of the prime reasons cited for the need to professionalise the Police; that being public perception.

As per an article from Rusi.org, "public confidence in the police has been on a downward trend...from 62% in 2017 to 55% in 2020" (Ditcham & Mynenko, 2022). It would be easy to blame a statistic such as this on a few high-profile incidents of Police failings, were it not for the fact that the article goes on to detail several concerns which link back to the topics outlined above. Firstly, the article refers to public trust in the Police being damaged by failings in tackling violence against women, with statistics showing a decline on prosecutions of sexual assault of 4%. Not only is this decline significant, but so to is the issue that police are

being “criticised for a lack of care and sensitivity towards victims, possibly explained in part by a lack of training”.

It is apparent then, that in the field of public perception, officers were, over the period outlined above, not receiving adequate training; something that forces UK-wide are looking to address with the introduction of ongoing higher-education based work.

In addition to the introduction of higher-education based training for officers, Policing has also seen an increase in the use of workplace based mentors and on-the-job training through the College of Policing. Whilst mentoring has its values, especially in providing new officers a single point of contact during the early days of their career, it is not without problems. Of particular note is the tendency to recruit officers as tutors, not because they have the skills to teach others but rather because they are looking to advance in their career and it is seen as a admirable trait in order to do this. The result, is that new officers are being paired with tutors who have no long-term aspirations to train others and are not well placed to encourage the development of their students.

Later in the same Rusi.org article, we also find reference to the Stephen Port murder case, the failings in which, the article suggests, are an indicator of “institutional homophobia within the police service”, something which has long been a concern amongst the LGBTQIA+ community. This intolerance is perhaps best summed up by Dean Blackburn, writing in Criminal Justice Matters magazine, who notes that: “In the 1990's most rank and file police officers viewed being gay as akin to paedophilia...and believed that being lesbian or gay, and also a police officer, presented a 'conflict of interest'” (2008).

Whilst times have changed a great deal since the 1990's, with Police forces across the UK proudly participating in Pride marches and events, some Police officers of this era still remain in active duty and it is hard to believe that time alone can alter the opinions of such people. It is for reasons such as this that the professionalisation of the police service puts such emphasis on being ethical and inclusive.

What is apparent based on the information outlined above, is that police forces across the UK are taking considerable steps to try and professionalise the job. Whether that is for the reasons of diversity, equality or public perception, credit must be given where it is due to the attempts that are being made. The task is not without criticism however, as elements of it can be seen to be detrimental to the work of rank and file officers. Perhaps the most obvious example of this is the decision to re-interpret Policing as a graduate job, requiring that new officers dedicate considerable time to academic studies, possibly to the detriment of their workload and ultimately to their health and well-being. An article from birminghammail.co.uk provides the statistic that in West Midlands Police “anxiety-related absences have risen year on year since 2018, more than doubling over the last four years” and that this is largely as result of “workload, demands of the role [and] impact on personal life” (Guttridge, 2022). Also of concern if considering the negative connotations of the professionalisation of the police service is that whilst, as outlined earlier, there is a need to modernise the opinions and beliefs of individual officers, particularly those of an older generation; doing so also risks alienating successful and high achieving officers because of personal opinions they hold that do not necessarily fit within the accepted norms of the force.

Ultimately, maintaining a high standard of work and achievement amongst officers can be seen to be the most important factor in working to professionalise the police; with other factors falling under this umbrella. It is no doubt the wish of all forces across the UK, that their officers are perceived as compassionate and effective and to the vast majority of the Public, the professionalisation of the Police is in itself irrelevant so long as they feel officers are doing their job. The general public simply want to see crime figures going down and engagement with Police going up and have little concern over how this is addressed. It is those in charge of turning this public wish into a reality, who see professionalisation as the appropriate step and have made the decisions outlined above in order to achieve this. That is not to say that professionalisation is without merit, as it has proven to be effective in many regards, but there nevertheless appears to be a lack of flexibility in this regard, which risks putting academic

success – higher qualifications for officers – above statistic success – an improvement in crime figures.

Word Count - 1086

Essay two:

Response policing – critically evaluate the role of response police in dealing with critical/major incidents, and explain the importance of managing trauma and mental well-being.

Word limit: 1000 words.

Response Police officers are often referred to as the 'front line' of a Police force by those of rank. Perhaps more realistically, what this equates to is an expectation that Response Officers will and most often do attend many calls in the first instance. Whilst this is true of low-level situations such as anti-social behaviour and low value theft, it is also true of the vast majority of critical incidents. Whilst such incidents often require specialist knowledge in terms of dealing with them long-term, there are a great many aspects of the investigation that are expected to be filled by Response Officers.

To some extent, there is a perception amongst members of the public that uniformed or response officers deal with low level crime and that 'detectives' are called in when a situation is deemed to be serious. This is a stereotype that has been perpetuated through years of fictional Police programming on television and cannot be further from the truth. In reality, Response Officers are often the first at a scene, regardless of the seriousness of the incident and take the initial steps which determine the direction of the investigation. Unfortunately, this perception of response officers as being below that of CID, is sometimes reinforced by the attitudes of the latter and an expectation from them that uniformed officers are at their beck and call.

However, whilst detectives are often the responsible officers for major incidents, they nevertheless require a great deal of work be complete by response teams. To deconstruct this, we should consider an example of an incident and the duties of those involved.

Take for example a suicidal individual threatening to jump from a bridge into traffic. In the first instance, Response Officers would likely attend and complete the initial actions required. It is response officers that would arrange to close junctions of the road, stopping traffic from passing the area and they would also likely attend and try to speak with the suicidal individual. Let us then assume that the individual jumps and succeeds in their suicide attempt. Typically, responsibility for the investigation would then pass to CID, but their role is in regard to the long-term investigation. Urgent actions would remain with response officers, who would be responsible for securing the scene, collecting available evidence, writing statements, and liaising with CSI and medical crews. As is often the case in critical incidents, there are members of the public who are adversely affected by the outcome. In the above example, consideration would have to be given to witnesses or other involved parties who were privy to what took place. The emotional and mental impact of situations such as these on the public, who often-times have never experienced something of this nature before can be profound. As detailed by this statistic from The National Library of Medicine: "Witnessing a traumatic event but not directly experiencing it can be psychologically quite damaging. In North America alone, ~30% of individuals who witness a traumatic event develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)" (Patki et al., 2014)

It is important then that Police Officers consider these impacts and help to address them to support members of the public, and typically this too is the remit of Response Officers. It is the job of those officers, during their initial attendance, to identify witnesses and provide means of support to them. This can take many forms, such as referring them to partner agencies such as mental help teams and victim support services, through to submitting Public Protection Notifications, which help us liaise with the relevant authorities to provide ongoing support. We might also take actions such as arranging ongoing visitations from neighbourhood officers to support the recovery process.

Taking on responsibilities such as this and placing public well-being at the forefront of an officer's role often overtakes the importance of self-preservation amongst officers and it can take some time before the impact of attending critical incidents begins to show in the officers involved. Mental health issues amongst Police Officers are on the rise and nowhere is this more apparent than amongst Response Officers who are most often the most public facing of Police employees. The University of Cambridge explains that "RESEARCH REVEALS RATES OF PTSD IN UK POLICE SERVICE TO BE ALMOST FIVE TIMES HIGHER THAN IN UK POPULATION" (n.d.) and this shows the extent to which mental health is impacting upon officers and their ability to perform their duties effectively.

Managing the mental well-being of officers then, is of paramount importance to their respective Police Forces and it is certainly true that steps are being taken to address this. Following on from attendance at any major incident, Officers are offered the opportunity to participate in a TRIM or Trauma Risk Management meeting which aims to support officers after such incidents. Additionally, support exists from groups such as Oscar Kilo which works to support Police Officer suffering from ongoing mental health issues.

Unfortunately, however, the trend of struggling response police officers is not shifting, and this can in no small part be linked to the expectation upon response officers to perform as the 'front line' of policing. Increasingly, Response officers are faced with excessive workloads and attending increasingly grief inducing calls without being given the post-attendance care they require.

There is a distinct double standard present between the support response officers are expected to give to members of the public who face a critical incident and the degree of support provided to that officer by his superiors and his force. Often, there is an expectation that officers should cope better than the general public because of some sense of duty or because of the 'this is what you signed up for' attitude.

Overall, one could say that it is the responsibility of Response Officers to dictate the initial reaction to critical incidents and often, to provide the relevant information to determine whether an incident is considered Critical or Major in the first place. It is also the duty of those same officers to ensure public safety, both in the immediate aftermath and in the longer term through referrals and support for mental well-being. Unfortunately, carrying this burden can impact on the officers themselves and it is vital therefore that support is put in place to give those officers the best chance to manage their own well-being in order for them to be able to continue to do their job effectively and successfully.

Word Count - 1069

Essay three:

Critically evaluate police methods of gathering information and intelligence. You may choose a specific method of intelligence-gathering for this answer.

Word limit: 1000 words.

The success or failure of a Police investigation rests, often precariously, on the involved officers ability to gather information and intelligence. For that reason, Police forces have a wealth of methods at their disposal to collate & access information for the purposes of advancing an investigation. For the purposes of this evaluation, we will be focussing on the human resources available to an investigator; that being the victims, witnesses and suspects with whom we speak.

Looking first at the victims of crime, information is most often obtained through victim statements and the initial contact will Police, be that via 999, 101 or online contact. Given the workload on call-handlers and the limitations of what can be obtained via brief telephone contact, the initial information provided to Police is limited. Typically there is only the briefest

overview of the situation, enough to determine the appropriate degree of response from units, but little more than that. For that reason, it is typically the victim statement that provides Police with the most valuable intelligence.

Following Police attendance and the possible arrest of a suspect, victims are approached to provide a statement, outlining their version of events, most often at the incident or immediately following it. The benefit of this approach is that the incident is fresh in the victims mind and therefore they are able to recount it well when putting pen to paper. The statement giving process also provides a lot of flexibility in terms of supporting the victim, meaning the gathering of information can be as low-pressure as possible. Often, this means that the victim can have someone else present for support and it can be completed in an environment in which they feel safe and comfortable. Through this assistance, the victim can be supported to give the most accurate and well considered statement, which best represents what the victim wishes to convey.

Whilst victim statements are an invaluable source of intelligence and are often considered the most important part of the early investigative process, there are issues that require consideration.

One frequent issue when depending on the victim statement to provide information and intelligence, is the opportunity for the victim to withdraw or alter their initial account. Whilst victims are reminded that doing so might devalue their reliability in court, there is still nothing to prevent the victim from withdrawing their statement and ceasing support for an investigation. As a victim-led organisation, it becomes increasingly difficult to provide valuable information without the support of the victim. One statistic from [victimscommissioner.org.uk](https://www.victimscommissioner.org.uk) explains that: “almost half of all victims withdraw in violence against the person offences and rape offences investigations, and one in three victims withdraw from sexual offences investigations” (2020). Under these circumstances it becomes increasingly difficult to obtain sufficient intelligence to proceed with a prosecution, especially when crimes such as those outlined above, often have no other witnesses beyond the victim themselves.

Turning our attention to the collection of information from witnesses, we find that many of the same benefits and negatives of victims are also true of witnesses. Witness information is typically gathered in a low pressure environment by way of first accounts and statements and as a result, what information we can obtain is likely to be well considered. Additionally, many witnesses have the potential to be less biased than victims or suspects in their account of events as there is often little benefit to them one way or another to get a particular outcome to the investigation.

One ever present negative to the information obtainable by witnesses however, is that there is very little control over whether they provide any form of written statement at all. There is no requirement for witnesses to provide information to Police and very often, witnesses decline for fear that they may face repercussions. This could be considered more of an issue for witnesses than victims, as a reference from victimsupport.org.uk makes clear. They explain that "Unlike the Victims Code, there is no legal requirement to meet the standards for witness care set out in the Witness Charter" (n.d.) and ultimately this means that witnesses receive less protections.

Looking finally at the gathering of information from suspects, we can see a distinct difference to the methods used in the cases of victims and witnesses. The most clear difference is that suspect information is typically gathered in a formal interview setting rather than via a statement. The obvious benefit of this method is that by gathering information via an interview format, the opportunity exists to collate a more concise and structured set of information. Interviews typically take a question and answer format as opposed to the free-flowing narrative of a statement. By utilising this method it is possible to focus on the details of the investigation and gather only the information that is vital.

One obvious negative to gathering information from suspect interviews is that the high pressure environment of custody and the interview room can put suspects in a mental state

that is not conducive with providing best evidence. A researchgate.net article explains that: police suspect interviews are stressful, and the stakes are often high on both sides. Individuals with a PV [Psychological Vulnerability] may not cope well with this stress ... and [this may] contribute further to an inability to cope effectively with the interview” (Herrington & Roberts, 2012).

Under these circumstances it is understandable why information collected from suspects may not be as coherent or thorough as is hoped and this could lead to less than satisfactory outcomes from a suspect interview.

What is apparent from the details laid out above is that whilst intelligence gathering from human sources has its benefits and is, in fact, the most turned to resource for collating information, it is not without its negatives. Victim, witness and suspect intelligence are all affected by said persons free will to withhold or deceive Police and this can have a profound impact on investigative opportunities and the methods required to form valuable information.

Word Count - 996

Essay four:

Critically evaluate police strategies for dealing with public protection incidents. Your answer should consider the impact of abuse on victims, the potential impact of bias on the investigative process, and the links between Serious and Organised Crime Groups and public protection issues.

Word limit: 1000 words.

In order to best critically evaluate police strategies for dealing with public protection incidents, we will consider a type of incident which can be deemed to have multiple potential victims and suspects; that being drug based offences, with particular attention being paid to

youth involvement and organised crime elements within these offences. We will begin by considering the strategies taken by Police in dealing with drug offences and what positives and negatives there are to police methods of investigation. When considering this, particular attention will be paid to serious drug offences as opposed to low level crime.

Police action against serious drug offences have been at the forefront of public policing for some time. This is largely driven by the increase in recorded offences, with a statistic from [drugwise.org.uk](https://www.drugwise.org.uk) explaining that: "In 2019/20, there were around 175,000 drug offences recorded by the police in England and Wales. This is 13% higher than 2018/19" (2020). With an increase of this magnitude, it is clear why police strategies to address drug offences are so important. To that end, steps are being taken throughout the spectrum of Policing to help control these numbers.

If we look, for example, at neighbourhood policing teams, we can see action being taken by PCSO's and neighbourhood officers to try and identify individuals and areas of concern within the community. Neighbourhood policing teams gather vital intelligence in this regard and provide insight that can help address the hierarchies present within drug crime rings.

Beyond neighbourhood policing, the majority of Police forces have specialist teams whose role is to target higher level dealers and criminals based upon the information and intel outlined earlier. These teams conduct protracted investigations in order to break down organised crime groups involved in the production and sale of banned substances.

The next step in the Police strategy to address drug offences is to consider a country-wide response to the issue. Large scale drug offences are typically operated beyond the boundaries of a single Police force and for this reason, the term 'county lines' has come to prominence. Investigation into 'county lines' offences is conducted by both Police forces and the National Crime Agency and aims to target drug trafficking. The level of negotiation

between these organisations to establish a single strategy for fighting drug trafficking is impressive, but is not without its negatives.

Perhaps the largest issue with regards to the 'county lines' initiative is that due to the scope of the investigation, there is a tendency to overlook the smaller, low-level impact on the wider public. Combatting drug-trafficking is admirable and has a positive impact on the entire UK population, but in the process, the community of particular areas are overlooked. This is why it is vital that individual police forces maintain an awareness of how the bigger picture impacts on its population and works to address that. One such example of this is the 18-25 Diversion Scheme operated by South Wales Police. Justiceinnovation.org explains that: "This age group accounts for approximately 12% of the total population, but ... are committing 33% of all recorded crime in South Wales" (2018). The strategy here is to direct people within this age bracket away from the more traditional outcomes involved in the commission of crime and instead try to address issues and reduce offending.

When considering the victims of drug offences, it is important to consider the statistic above. Whilst youths are disproportionately involved in crime, those committing it could also be considered victims.

It is common for organised crime groups to use youths to benefit their operations, with an article from the Independent highlighting that: "Youngsters across England and Wales have been cautioned or convicted over drugs nearly 48,000 times since records began in 2013-14" (2022). Youths are most typically involved in low level offences that feed into a system of crime organised and operated by organised Crime Groups. The reason youths are used in these situations is typically for the very reason that Police forces look to avoid criminalising children and it works to the OCG's advantage to misuse youths in this way in order to avoid an investigation that will eventually lead back to the high value targets of said groups.

What we see also, is that low-level drug offences typically lead on to violent crime as the youths involved become more entangled in the lifestyle promoted by Organised Crime

Groups. Youth-on-youth violence could be considered to create two victims, one a victim of crime and another, a victim of a system that does not offer adequate protection to avoid becoming involved in such crimes. A statistic from the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee highlights that “knife crime increased 71% between 2014 and 2018, and the number of murder victims aged 16 to 24 rose by 45%” (2019).

An unfortunate side effect of the extensive involvement of children in drug offences, is that there becomes a bias towards youths by Police and the public. Whilst not always the case, there is a habit amongst officers of assuming that these youths and dealers, rather than being victims of coercion or violence in order to peddle substances, are instead nothing more than criminals in their own right and the inevitable outcome of that is that adequate steps are not taken to protect them from becoming more involved and ultimately more at risk. There also exists an imbalance in how youths involved in crime are dealt with. We both prematurely criminalise and at the same time do little to address the commission of crime by youths. Rather than address the issue by creating more strategies like the 18-25 diversion Scheme, Police instead arrest, interview, release and repeat the process of dealing with youth criminals which neither promotes a strategy of controlling crime statistics nor directing youths towards support to exit a life of crime.

It is the responsibility of individual Police forces to protect the public within their boundaries and unfortunately, in the pursuit of intelligence and prosecution for high level offences, protections for members of the public like youths, coerced into a life of crime, are overlooked. The disruption of organised crime groups and their profits is an admirable goal but without putting the appropriate protections and strategies in place, the problem will persist; fed from the bottom up by a continues stream of vulnerable people who are disposable to the high value targets of operations such as County Lines.

Word Count - 1067

Essay five:

Critically analyse the concept of evidence-based policing and 'what works' in policing by evaluating crime prevention theories and strategies and considering the 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, not personal experience.

Word limit: 1000 words.

In order to analyse the concept of evidence-based policing, we must first establish what is meant by the term. The College of Policing explains that "Evidence-based policing (EBP) means that the best available evidence is used to inform and challenge policing policies, practices and decisions" (n.d). What that means is that gathered evidence is used to develop advances in policing methods and establish what does and does not work. For this essay, we will consider the question of what does and does not work through the lens of domestic violence offences. We will begin by considering prevention strategies for domestic violence before moving on to re-offending reduction measures.

There are a great many factors involved in dealing with domestic violence as a Police officer; from the steps taken upon attending a scene to the long-term requirements. Initial attendance is often focused on gathering evidence to determine a victim & suspect and safeguarding said victim. UK policing observes a standard of positive action and in simple terms what this means is that if a domestic report is made to Police, there is a minimum level of response expected. Typically, the lowest appropriate level of response is to separate the parties involved if an aggressor and victim cannot be determined.

Beyond positive action, it is the responsibility of officers to provide protections on the occasion that a victim is identified. This usually takes the form of completion of a Public Protection Notification,

which allows the Police to take the evidence gathered during an investigation and provide it to other partner agencies who may use said information to support the victim. This is often organisations such as social services and mental health services; though it can also be used as for a referral to Women's Aid or other relevant charitable organisations. Beyond referrals such as these, further action can be taken by officers to protect victims of domestic violence. By gathering evidence from the victim and developing a structured history of the relationship between the aggressor and victim, Police can make a case for serving a suspect with a Domestic Violence Protection Notice. The DVPN allows Police to enforce restrictions on the freedoms of the suspect to contact the victim and provides the victim with time to consider what next steps they would like to take.

Domestic Violence is increasing in the UK with one statistic from the ONS stating: "The number of police recorded domestic abuse-related crimes in England and Wales rose 6% in the year ending March 2021 to 845,734" (2021). To put that statistic into context, that is approximately one recorded DV incident for every 80 people in the UK. In order to address this, more strategies are being offered to the public to prevent them becoming victims. The most notable of these prevention measures is the introduction of Clare's Law. Clare's Law is a disclosure scheme open to the public which allows them to request information from Police with regards to whether their partner has a history of domestic abuse aggression. The aim of Clare's Law is to prevent domestic violence before it happens. Unfortunately, however, the majority of steps taken by Police with regards to Domestic Violence are reactive rather than proactive; the result being that steps are often not taken to prevent offences in the first instance but rather to safeguard and prevent domestic violence from occurring again. The difficulty here is that Domestic Violence often has few witnesses and whilst Officers are trained to look out for indicators of ongoing domestic violence, perpetrators often take considerable steps to prevent any evidence being observed. This leads to an interesting connection to Rational Choice Theory. RCT is best explained as: "potential offenders rationally choose[ing] to commit crime, and also the methods used in order to do so" (College of Policing, 2022). What is interesting about RCT in relation to domestic violence situations is it goes

some way to challenging the 'crime of passion' type defence of Domestic Violence by determining that crimes are committed after making a conscious or subconscious decision to do so, based upon the potential for success. What this suggests therefore is that Domestic Abuse is more carefully thought out than many suspects would have us believe when they justify their actions as being an uncontrollable reaction following an argument or disagreement. The reason this is important is because Rational Choice Theory compliments the aforementioned actions of perpetrators to cover-up evidence of their crime. Without clear evidence, it is unfortunately incredibly difficult for Police Officers to address issues, even those as serious as Domestic Violence and we are left only with the ability to try and prevent further offending in future.

Prevention of re-offending is becoming increasingly important and there have been a number of successful methods with regards to domestic violence situations. The most obvious opportunity to prevent re-offending is to separate the victim and aggressor permanently in order to avoid a repeat of the same situations. This is obviously achieved through methods such as arrest and prosecution or the enforcement of restraining orders and non-molestation orders which prevent suspects from contacting victims and being able to harass or coerce them in any way. The issue with all of these methods is that they do little to prevent the suspect from being able to carry on a similar course of conduct with other vulnerable people and this is frequently seen. Domestic abuse aggressors are not typically only involved in a single abusive relationship in their lifetime, but rather repeat the pattern with multiple people. For this reason, steps are being taken to try and address re-offending amongst aggressors. One such initiative is Project CARA, which provides offenders with "sessions [that] are carefully constructed to enable participants to identify as being abusive and to explore what constitutes healthy, positive relationships" (Centre for Justice Innovation, 2021). Project CARA has proven to be a success, with a "35% reduction in re-offending" in a Hampshire trial (Thames Valley Partnership, 2021).

What is apparent then is that whilst DV offences are in the forefront of policing, there are still considerable steps that need to be taken. Evidence-based policing can only go so far in preventing

Domestic violence, especially as much of the Police response to such incidents takes the form of safeguarding rather than addressing the root cause of incidents. What is also apparent however, is that strategies to address re-offending are proving successful in limited trials and the roll out of such methods could prove vital to find a method that works to address incidents.

Word Count – 1087

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