

ESSAY 1:

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

Historically, the public and local communities have played an integral part of the modern policing, however, there is no denying that there is a more antagonistic relationship brewing between the public and the police in recent times (Nagel & Nivette, 2023). In England and Wales, there have been a number of incidents which have identified failures and flaws in policing procedures by forces across England and Wales which have resulted in almost irreconcilable differences between the police and the public, like the *Brixton Riots of 1981* (Scarman, 1981) and the *murder of Stephen Lawrence* (Macpherson, 1999). Police integrity has been challenged in recent times in addition to how the police treat the public fairly and with respect. There are multiple measures in place to uphold policing principles from the initial stages of recruitment to technology which this essay will explore their effectiveness.

The starting measure to ensure that officers act with integrity and treat the public fairly and with respect starts by actually assessing whether someone has integrity and is able to treat others fairly and with respect. The recruitment process of the police should be robust, however, in recent years the recruitment and vetting process has come under intense scrutiny. The glaring examples of failures are individuals like Wayne Couzens (Angiolini, 2024) and David Carrick (Angiolini, 2024) are put in positions of trust due to failings of proper vetting and failures of the parent force to appropriately investigate allegations made against them. It is suggested by Hesketh and Stubbs that candidates utilise social connections to develop competencies from others (Hesketh & Stubbs, 2023) suggesting that individuals' characteristics and views are not shared and instead replaced with a learned behaviour or speech that allows them to traverse through the recruitment process. Statistically, when the vetting procedure was reviewed by HMICFRS in 2021, of the 725 vetting files they reviewed, 131 contained flawed decisions by the recruiting constabulary (Cubitt, 2023). There clearly needs to be an overhaul in the vetting and recruitment process to enable the police to effectively ensure that officers act with integrity.

Integrity, respect and treating the public fairly are a few standards embedded in the guidance on standard of professional behaviour in England and Wales (Leicestershire Police and Crime Commissioner, n.d.). Officers should hold these principles dear and should not have to rely on others to ensure they are acting in accordance with these principles. However, as aforementioned at the start of this essay, there are a number of 'bad apples that spoil the barrel'. Internally, police conduct is regulated by the Professional Standards Department (PSD) and handle complaints against all officers. PSD are then bound to investigate police misconduct and public complaints (HMICFRS, 2023). Independently from the police are the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). The IOPC are an oversight mechanism separate from the police that investigate the most serious matters of police conduct and offer learning and recommendations to improve police practice (IOPC, 2023). The overriding principle of both entities are to hold police officers accountable and maintain public confidence. If found guilty of gross misconduct by either entity, officers are removed from the

constabulary and can face criminal prosecution whereby only officers that act with integrity and treat the public fairly and with respect remain in positions of trust. However, like all investigations both PSD and the IOPC's effectiveness are restricted by time and funding (Fairfield, 2023). Without the time and resources to appropriately rid the police force of the offending police officers, it raises the question on how effective is PSD and the IOPC if officers have opportunity to remain in their role and leave without any punitive measures before the investigation is complete?

Beyond independent entities and departments, police officers and staff also have a duty to ensure that their colleagues act with integrity and treat the public fairly and with respect. Officers are duty bound to challenge and report misconduct or ill-treatment of others in line with professional behaviour (College of Policing, 2024). Officers should ask themselves how they can act with integrity if they cannot challenge others for their lack of. Police are at risk of failing to report misdemeanour or improper conduct out of a feeling of solidarity with others or not wanting to be a 'snitch' (Westmarland & Rowe, 2018). There are a number of factors effecting whether an individual is willing to report such behaviour which include, victimisation, rank, gender and the feeling that the misconduct is a 'one-off' (Taylor, et al., 2024).

A measure that can be reviewed to ensure police integrity and that the public are being treated fairly and with respect is the body worn video (BWV). BWV was introduced into all police forces within England and Wales to provide objective documentation of officer's interactions with the public and to review matters when a police officer's conduct is challenged, and a complaint is made. Research suggests that BWV assist the resolution of public complaints against officers (White, 2014). BWV enables entities like PSD and the IOPC to identify misconduct and monitor officers' behaviours. BWV also preserves evidential integrity as well as promote integrity and confidence in policing by recording any controversial events and interactions (NPCC, 2022). This serves as a deterrent to any officers acting outside of their jurisdiction and in line with the policing code of ethics and guidelines. However, BWV is only as effective as the user and how to user then manages, stores and records the footage.

After reviewing several measures in place to ensure the police act with integrity and treat the public fairly and with respect, it is difficult at present to say that the majority are effective. Although each measure is in place to ensure and encourage integrity, arguably enough is not being done with positive outcomes. With recent cases of integrity placing the entire police forces around England and Wales in a very dark hole, they must band together and prioritise transparency, accountability, conduct amongst other systematic issues to effectively ensure that their officer act with integrity and treat the public with respect.

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ESSAY 3:

How effective are cognitive interviews as a means of obtaining initial accounts from victims and witnesses?

Police investigations are only as effective as the evidence and information gathered by the investigators. So how do investigators get their information and open new lines of enquiries for evidence gathering? Simply by speaking to members of the community that include complainant and witnesses. Complainants and witnesses are the one's who have seen the events of the offence unfold and it is down to investigators to find out what they know and transfer it onto paper or video. However, normal interview techniques may cause some issue as witness accounts can and will almost certainly be challenged within the courts of England and Wales. The arguments span all the way back to Plato as accounts from witnesses and complainants may be perceived as unreliable, misleading, and subjective (Walton, 2007). Cognitive interviewing techniques are used to avoid these perceptions and for investigators to obtain true and accurate accounts. This essay will explore witness and its development into cognitive interviewing and its effectiveness in obtaining initial accounts from a policing perspective.

Previous studies have shown that witness accounts can be unreliable. This does not necessarily mean they are lying but it is what they believe is the truth (Shoesmith, 2015). Studies have also found that a number of factors affect how a witness reliability and ability to recall an event. The studies are extensive, however, this essay will outline the most common.

The first factor is language; In 1974, Loftus and Palmer conducted an experiment to test whether a witnesses account can be manipulated by the wordings of a question, the conclusion? Yes, it does in fact affect a witness account (Loftus & Palmer, 1974).

The second factor is stressors, such as weapons. Loftus found that witness accounts can be affected when presented with a situation that increases fear or perception of fear (Loftus, 1979). This may cause the witness to only concentrate on the specific danger and neglect what is going on around them.

A third factor is misinformation and the creation of false or tampered memories. In short, memories can be influenced post-incident and new and old memories can merge as one. The newer, stronger memory perse will override the actual event the witness has seen (Loftus, et al., 1978). Equally, it can be said that witness reports are malleable during questioning and unreliable (Clifford & Hollins, 1983).

Clearly, standard interviewing techniques were subpar, and police needed to develop to avoid all the factors that affect the credibility and reliability of witnesses and complainants. Born from this was the cognitive interview, which was proven to be reliable and a legal investigative tool when it comes to witness and complainant interviews (Geiselman, et al., 1986).

As previously mentioned, the cognitive interview was borne from the mind of Geiselman. The cognitive interview is a memory retrieval and was designed to improve accuracy of witness accounts and testimonies (Geiselman, et al., 1984).

The cognitive interview framework consists of two key components that are vital of police interviewing:

- 1) Mental reinstating the context; the interviewee is asked to mentally recreate the environment whereby the individual is made to relive the experience and in theory, access more information stored in their memory. Interviewees are also encouraged to use all of their senses to recall information.
- 2) Reporting everything, even partial information; this is also known as free recall. Instead of prompting with specific questions, the free narrative encourages open-ended questions so that witnesses and complainants can freely recall information without the interviewer leading them. It also allows the interviewee to discuss what they want to.
- 3) Recounting the event in a different order; this is to ensure that the key areas are explored first before moving on to less evidential areas. It is understandable that interviews can be long, and tiredness can play a part in a witness or complainants' recall through mental fatigue and heightened emotion.

(Geiselman, et al., 1986)

Geiselman does have an additional component which is: 4) reporting events from a variety of perspectives. However, these are not embellished in the College of Policing's model as police only want the perspective of the witness or complainant being interviewed. How can someone recall what someone else has seen?

The College of Policing identifies that Cognitive Interviewing as the most effective technique of gathering as much information as possible from victims and witnesses. Unlike normal police interviews that merely cover the surface of information, cognitive interview techniques aim to assist and increase witness or victims' ability to recall more information about an event (College of Policing, 2020). The College of Policing has built upon the foundation of Geiselman and earlier studies and added different techniques to increase the effectiveness of cognitive interviewing. These techniques include building rapport with the interviewee, encourage eye closure, and allowing uncertainty to name a few (College of Policing, 2024).

The effectiveness of cognitive interviewing in police investigation can be measured by the benefits that arise from the techniques developed. Building rapport has an increased impact on the ability of the witness and complainant the accuracy of the information provided (Kieckhafer, et al., 2014) whilst also increasing witness confidence. Cognitive interviews also reduced misinformation by removing leading questions in the free recall phase. Through utilising techniques developed within cognitive interviewing, it enhances recall that can lead to the retrieval of further information normally overlooked in normal interviewing (Sharman & Powell, 2012).

Additional research conducted by Fisher proved that when investigators utilised cognitive interviews, the recall increased 46% and accuracy was even higher at 90% (Fisher, et al., 1990). However, cognitive interviewing is often ignored and not utilised in lesser offences due to the length of times it takes to conduct an effective interview. There is no dispute that cognitive interviews increase the quality and quantity of information, it may not be efficient when allocating resources (Kebbel, et al., 1999).

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ESSAY 4:

Examine the various socio-economic and psychological characteristics which can make people vulnerable to exploitation by criminal gangs.

The dawn of the 21st century has seen an increase in youth and gang related crime (House of Lords, 2022). The term criminal gang merely refers to the process whereby individuals combine resources, skills, finances with others like-minded people in order to carry out illegal activity as part of a wider group objective (McLean, 2019). Despite a broad definition, criminal gangs are often distinguished into three distinguishable groups: Peer, Street and Organised Crime Gang (NSPCC, 2024). However, different categorisations do not deter from a criminal gang's exploitation of vulnerable individuals. Criminal gangs exploit vulnerabilities identified within communities and individuals to facilitate their operation and illegal activities (HM Government, 2018). This essay will explore both psychological and socio-economic characteristics which make people more vulnerable to exploitation by criminal gangs.

AGE: Statistically, there are around 60,000 children are directly involved in a gang or have a sibling that is in a gang (House of Lords, 2022). Whilst all children are can be manipulated into gangs and exploitation, the criminal gangs specifically target children with multiple interlinked vulnerabilities such as mental health or social impairments, abuse or neglect or low self-esteem (Children's Commissioner, 2019).

GENDER: Young women and girls are heavily exploited due to the perception of their 'invisibility' when conducting gang related activities. Young women and girls are victims of debt-bondage and are subject to threats and actions of sexual violence (Densley, et al., 2021). County line operators target young women and girls by implementing tactics of initial affection and gifts which then turn into coercive control (Dutton & Goodman, 2005), isolation, intimidation and other consequences should they fail to adhere to a gangs demands or requests (Densley, et al., 2021).

UNEMPLOYMENT: The lack of stable employment and employment opportunities is an assumed trigger for participation in insurgencies and gangs (Cramer, 2015). Seals suggests that there is a statistical positive relationship between gang membership and unemployment (Seals, 2009). Without unemployment or availability of legitimate forms of income, individuals will always look for money or income. There is an overarching perception that gangs make money and gangs will flash they 'accumulated wealth' of expensive material items on social media (O'Leary, 2019) which in the end attracts those without a means of income (Mandalu, 2023).

POVERTY: Hand in hand with unemployment comes poverty. Unfortunately, economic deprivation often leads to offending behaviour (Shaw, 1929) which may make individuals vulnerable and susceptible to offers and recruitment from criminal gangs (Fazackerley, 2022).

LIMITED EDUCATION: This has long been ignored as a contributing factor to an individual's vulnerability to being exploited by gangs. Factors such as relationships with teachers and discipline procedures can impact on the engagement and characteristics of a student (Sharkey, et al., 2011). Troublemakers or lower achievers that cause issues in school can be dealt with poorly. They may be quietly excluded to avoid bringing school results down (Tapper, 2018). They are almost being characterised as a delinquent and rejection may cause the criminal gang to become attractive.

LACK OF SOCIAL SUPPORT: This has also been defined as 'network poverty'. Network poverty is explained by Van Eijk as a "*...personal network including merely or mostly resource-poor people and, thus, lacking ties to resources such as knowledge, wealth, skills, power and information*" (van Eijk, 2010). Isolated individuals lacking any strong or meaningful networks or support are more vulnerable to stressors (Thoits, 1995). These individuals have no role models or anyone to turn to in need which makes them more open to coercion and exploitation by criminal gangs. Hesketh found that adolescents and young adults between 18-25 were recruited for gangs as a result of a restricted social network (Hesketh, 2018). Individuals are offered a sense of belonging by these gangs, a sense of camaraderie almost. The gangs offer an olive branch or a bridge to a world where the vulnerable individuals are falsely lured in by the prospect of belonging and support (Hesketh & Box, 2020).

LOW SELF-ESTEEM: Whilst suffering from network poverty and lack of social support, individuals' self-esteem can be impacted. Self-esteem is an individual's self-worth, image and a sense of purpose moulded by education, community, and familial relationships (Rosenberg, 1965). With these factors absent, individuals have no confidence, and their self-esteem is shattered. Again, these individuals are vulnerable to exploitation by criminal gangs. These gangs offer an increase of self-esteem and offer a prospect of identity (Sharkey, et al., 2011). From an outside perspective, the gangs have a positive impact on the individual's self-esteem. In essence, the criminal gangs are offering something that society and the community has failed to provide to these individuals thus making them vulnerable.

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs) AND TRAUMA: Adverse childhood experiences have commonly been linked to physical and socio-economic problems; however, modern research has identified a link with criminal activity (Matei, 2023). A child's earliest experience sets the stage for how a child develops through education, social relationships, and mental and physical health to name a few contributing factors (Wolff, et al., 2020). ACEs are childhood events which are traumatic to the individual whether directly or indirectly involved in the event; these events include domestic violence, experiencing violent or sexual abuse, prison sentences and bereavement to name a few (Anda, et al., 2010). Research and reviews conducted by Weitzel *et al* strongly suggests that individuals that experiences ACEs are vulnerable and more susceptible to being recruited by a criminal gangs because of the adverse experiences and trauma which opens the door to delinquency where a gang would look to capitalise on the willingness to engage (Weitzel, et al., 2021).

To conclude, there are a significant number of socio-economic and psychological characteristics that make people vulnerable to exploitation from criminal gangs. It is impossible to identify a primary contributor to the vulnerabilities. It appears that the characteristics are intertwined and cannot co-

exist without the other. These vulnerabilities can and must be targeted at a government level to eradicate the negative characteristics and empowering the individual and communities. However, with the current cost of living crisis, the glamorous gang lifestyle often promoted in the media and the lasting effects of COVID-19, eradication of vulnerabilities are unlikely anytime soon.

WORD COUNT - 1019

ESSAY 5:

Critically assess the effectiveness of options available to reduce re-offending. You must choose a specific type of offence for this answer e.g. domestic violence, anti-social behaviour, knife crime.

Tackling anti-social behaviour requires a multifaceted approach and an understanding that a 'one size fits all' view will not work. This essay will explore the offence of anti-social behaviour (as defined by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014) and the options available to the police to effectively reduce re-offending.

Firstly, it is important to understand what anti-social behaviour means. It is defined as '*behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to persons not of the same household as the person*' (Metropolitan Police, 2024). The actions must be committed by an individual or group in a public setting and can be divided into three categories; 1) Personal; 2) Nuisance; and 3) Environmental.

The war on anti-social behaviour in the UK was declared by the Labour Government in 1997 and was made a political priority by re-elected Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2005 (Millie, 2009). In 1998, Labour introduced a hybrid civil injunction known as the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) to combat anti-social behaviour. ASBOs were awarded for a minimum of 2 years and contained prohibition orders or conditions and despite being a civil order a breach would result in criminal proceedings and police intervention (Berman, 2009). ASBO's were a fixture of UK legislation and policing until 2014, however, ASBOs were arguably ineffective and given out far too easily in a feeble attempt to reduce re-offending. Between 1999 and 2013, a total of 24,427 ASBOs were issued and of the 24,427, 58% were breached at least once (Home Office, 2014). Overall, a single ASBO was breached 5 times.

Following the failings of the ASBO, the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act introduced the Community Behaviour Order (CBO) the new way of dealing with anti-social behaviours. ASBO's were abolished in 2014 and CBOs are only available on conviction for a relevant offence. Therefore, CBOs are viewed as a punitive measure to reduce re-offending.

Nagin believes that the most effective way to reduce re-offending is to not only punish, but to punish severely. Not only does the perpetrator feel the effect of the punishment but others can also see which may act as a deterrent (Nagin, 2013). There is custodial for an anti-social behaviour perse; however, CBO's are issued as aforementioned and a breach of a CBO then results in a maximum custodial sentence of 5 years (GOV.UK, n.d.). It can be argued that the penalty for breaching a CBO is not a severe one, given that an individual must first have to be issued a CBO in the first place on the prerogative of the Crown Prosecution Service. Despite Nagin's thesis, there is little evidence to suggest that imprisonment has any greater effect on deterrent than non-custodial penalties (Nagin, et al., 2009).

Away from custodial punitive measures, the police have community-based approaches when attempting to reduce re-offending in anti-social behaviour. One community-based approach is

Restorative Justice which is the process of repairing the harm caused by criminal behaviour by involving the perpetrator and the victim (College of Policing, 2024). The purpose of restorative justice is to hand an element of control over the outcome of proceedings to the victim as opposed to state punishment (Sherman & Strang, 2012). It also aims to make perpetrators accountable and accept responsibility for their actions. In theory, this should make perpetrators understand the impact of their offending behaviour on a victim, almost forcing a level of empathy which leads to a reduction of re-offending (Braithwaite, 2016). There are several options available to police under the umbrella of restorative justice but all focus on repairing harm through communication, mediation, and community service. There is no requirement for perpetrators to demonstrate any remorse for their actions which begs the questions, do community-based interventions actually work? According to the College of Policing, perpetrators who engaged in restorative justice demonstrated a significantly lower behaviour of re-offending (College of Policing, 2022). From a cost perspective, restorative justice is cheaper than using other methods available to the police (Strang, et al., 2013). However, the overall success wholly depends on the perpetrators willingness to engage and the financial budget and resources to effectively offer restorative justice.

Another option available is the use of diversionary programmes, which addresses offending in the context of anti-social behaviour. The use of diversionary programmes is to divert anti-social behaviour before it happens thus reducing re-offending. Police have the tools of 'hot spot policing' and 'problem solving policing'. 'Hot spot policing' aims to visibly police a geographical area which in turn deters a possible perpetrator from offending. Braga suggests that by increasing the chance of being caught and reducing the opportunity to offend, perpetrators will desist (Braga, et al., 2019). Whilst 'problem solving policing' introduce strategies to reduce crime by utilising a collaborative community approach (College of Policing, 2023). The issues with these options are that they are simply is not used widely nor consistently. Both diversionary tactics are regulated by the resources and funding available to local police forces. To effectively implement these options to reduce re-offending, both require to work in tandem (College of Policing, 2022). Whilst pro-active policing reduces re-offending in the short-term, there is no evidence to suggest that yields a result of recidivism. However, diversionary options have been shown to yield increased arrests and stop searches between January and July 2023 (Home Office, 2024) thus demonstrating policing intervention of anti-social behaviour which in turn deters re-offending.

In conclusion, there are a number of tools available to the police to reduce re-offending in the context of anti-social behaviour. It undoubtedly requires a multifaceted approach that combines punitive measures, community-based interventions and intervention programmes. As a standalone option, none seem extrinsically better than the next as all have strengths and weaknesses. Each case must be assessed from one individual to the next with consideration of a collaborative and holistic approach to effectively reduce re-offending.

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