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LEVEL 6 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:	GEORGIA WALTON	Student ID number:	2222330
Programme:	Graduate Diploma in Policing (GDIP)		
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Lecturer:	Dr Rhiannon Sandy	Internal Verifier:	
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Each essay 1000 words

Essay 1 –

Response policing – Assess the extent of response officers’ role in dealing with critical and major incidents.

Response policing is phrased by College of Policing (u.d.) as ‘the heart of uniformed policing and will often be the first police officer many members of the public come into contact with’ and further describes that ‘responding to incidents is their primary role, in doing this they will also: protect the public, proactively patrol their communities, manage critical incidents’. Officers on response are considered to be the frontline of policing and play an integral role in the policing framework within the UK, especially when considering the management of critical and major incidents. When referring to terms such as critical and major incidents we are referring to a particular incident that emergency service attend. A critical incident is defined as ‘any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community’ (College of Policing, 2018). Whereas a major incident is defined as ‘an event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agency’ (JESIP, 2023). When response officers attended these incidents, they are usually first on scene and tasked with the responsibility to initially assess the incident, communicate effectively, coordinate others at scene and other agencies, and create a level of stabilisation at scene. The role of response at scene is crucial in mitigating the immediate threat, risk and harm, and setting the stage for a working strategy in response to the incident. This essay will assess the role that response officers face when it comes to dealing with critical and major incidents.

Name – GEORGIA WALTON

Student no. 2222330

Word Count – 4,004

When attending a critical or major incident, response officers must effectively be able to communicate and coordinate with other emergency services, such as ambulance and fire, in a multi-agency approach. This is to ensure a cohesive response at the scene. The use of multi-agency collaboration is imperative for the successful resolution of major and critical incidents, this is highlighted by Wankhade and Patnaik (2019). Response officers are often the first on scene and are faced with being the initial point of contact, coordinating and facilitating the various services. Through the use of effective communication response officers at scene are able to manage the flow of information to the public. This is crucial as it avoids issues surrounding public panic and assists with ensuring public safety. An example of such effective communication is that of The Metropolitan Police's response to the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017. This incident shows as a demonstration to other forces the importance of clear and timely communication. Effective communication is essential in being able to manage the complexities of a major or critical incident, and such failures have repeatedly been identified in the public enquires following such events including, Kings Cross and Clapham Junction incidents (Greaves and Hunt, 2017).

When responding to an incident as a response officer, their immediate objective is to stabilise the situation. This is no different when attending a major or critical incident, as it is essential that the response officers first on scene are able to assess the situation and produce a working strategy in line with the National Decision-Making Model (College of Policing, 2013).

Response officer's ability to provide first aid, cordon off and secure the area to prevent further harm, and their ability to assess the potential threats and risks faced at scene make them imperative in maintaining control over such incidents. It is stated by Newburn (2008) that through the prompt and effective actions taken by officers at such incidents, that this can have a significant effective in the incident's outcome. With this often preventing any further escalation at scene and reducing the number of casualties. When considering such prompt actions by police, the London Bridge attack in 2017 was able to show the critical role that response officers play at scene. With the public and media praising the response of police to this incident and their ability to stabilise the situation swiftly (Dodd, 2017). Further to this it is noted by the Chief Coroner of England and Wales (2019) the noted that the officer's response and bravery at this incident where instrumental in the preservation of public safety, restoring order and the minimization of casualties.

As previously stated, response officers are required to make time critical decisions in significant situations when under high levels of stress. When considering the stress at a major or critical incident alongside the complexity and unpredictability of such incidents, it is argued by Boin and 't Hart (2003) that those attending require a high level of judgement and adaptability. Across the UK officers are taught the importance of the National Decision-Making model. This framework is able to give officers a structured approach in line with ethical standards, to be able to make effective decisions in dynamic situations (Avon and Somerset, u.d). This skill is able to be applied throughout officers careers, however it is evidently clear how this skill is imperative when officers respond to incidents of a major or critical nature.

Name – GEORGIA WALTON

Student no. 2222330

Word Count – 4,004

In conclusion, the role in which response officers play is crucial in being able to manage critical and major incidents. When attending scene officers hold a number of responsibilities that are not limited to, coordination and communication, stabilisation of the incident, immediate response and decision-making under pressure. Whilst considering the way in which response officers deal with a major or critical incident, it is evident that police are significantly impactful to the outcome at scene. Whilst being able to coordinate other agencies in a multi-agency approach, officers are able to provide stabilisation to what can be a chaotic incident. Through continued investment in training for officers coming into the force, the standard of response officers can remain at a level in which they continue to effectively be able to manage the complex and dynamic nature that incidents such as these poses.

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Name – GEORGIA WALTON

Student no. 2222330

Word Count – 4,004

Essay 2 –

How effective are cognitive interviews as a means of obtaining initial accounts from victims and witnesses? Your answer must be based on academic research.

Developed in the 1980s, cognitive interviews are a method of interviewing witness and victims that are designed to enhance memory retrieval, and improve the amount of information obtained and its accuracy (Geiselman and Fisher, 1992). Cognitive interviewing is considered a form of questioning technique used by the police, in order to enhance the retrieval of information from an eyewitness and/or victims memory (McLeod, 2023).

Gieselman et al, (1985) saw the development of cognitive interviews as an alternative to standard interviews. It was able to take it consideration psychological findings about cue-dependent forgetting. The four stages are designed to stimulate as many cues as possible in order to be able to maximize different retrieval routes; stage 1 is reinstating the context, stage 2 is recall events in reverse order, stage three report everything they can remember and lastly stage 4 which is describe events from someone else's point of view (Gieselman et al., 1985). It is formulated in this manner out in order access memories, as memories are made up of a network of associations instead of discrete and unconnected events (McLeod, 2023). This essay will seek to examine the effectiveness of cognitive interviews in their ability to obtain initial accounts from both witnesses and victims, whilst drawing from academic research and studies.

Research has been able to show consistently that cognitive interviews are able to have a significant capability to enhance the amount of information, and accuracy of that information by a witness/victim. Geiselman et al, (1985) was able to demonstrate that participants who underwent a cognitive interview where able to recall 30-45% more information, than those within the controlled group. When considering the real-life implications of this method, Fisher et al. (1990) was able to show compared to the standard procedure used, the cognitive interview was able to produce 46% increase in recall and 90% accuracy. Findings such as this place a strong emphasises on cognitive interviews being far more effective than standard interviews, and therefore produce a higher level of recall and are able to reduce errors.

Further research shows that cognitive interviews are far more useful when interviewing elderly witnesses. Research from Wright and Holliday (2007) saw that the older the participant was the less complete and accurate the recall their accounts were. However, when using cognitive interview techniques such participants were able to recall significantly greater detail without providing false information. In addition to this Fisher et al. (1987) also saw the real-world implications to cognitive interviews. The study showed that trained detectives were able to obtain 63% more information from witnesses, in comparison to those who were interviewed using traditional methods. This increase in information was not to the expense of accuracy, as the additional information provide was found to be highly reliable.

As previously mentioned, cognitive interviews have the ability to reduce memory contamination and errors, this is considered to be one of their key strengths. The use of traditional interviewing techniques, in the form of leading questions or repetitive questioning, can lead to introducing false memories and/or distort a victim/witness's account provide. However, through the use of cognitive interviews, the contrast emphasises on the use of

Name – GEORGIA WALTON

Student no. 2222330

Word Count – 4,004

open-ended questions, and therefore allowing victims and witnesses to recall the events in their own words. This in turn can avoid the risk of suggestibility. When considering the analysis of such data, Memon, Meissner and Fraser (2010) conducted a review of several studies on cognitive interviews. Their meta-analysis found that through the use of cognitive interviews, that there was a consistent ability to produce accurate and more detailed recall than other standard interviewing methods. Memon, Meissner and Fraser (2010) also noted that the use of cognitive interviews was able to reduce the incidence of inaccuracies and confabulation, therefore making them more reliable as an interviewing tool for be able to obtain witness/victims accounts.

In discussing the effectiveness of cognitive interviews, it is also important to consider that this tool also comes with challenges and limitations. One issue surrounding this is the time-consuming nature of the technique. Kebbell et al., (1999) found that many police officers were unable to apply cognitive interview techniques to less serious crime, due to limitations with time. Further to this where positives were seen in high amounts of information retrieved from victims, it was found in this study that the vast amount of information was not always helpful in terms of effectively investigating the incident. As well as requiring more time, cognitive interviews also require more resources than standard interviews. This can lead to issues surrounding high pressure or resource-limited situations. In addition, the skill required to perform a cognitive interview also places issues on the effectiveness of the interview. Fisher, Geiselman and Amador (1989) emphasised that in order to be effective, correct training is essential for interviewers to be able to apply the techniques in the correct manner and avoid unnecessary issues.

A previous effective use of cognitive interviews was mentioned when referring to the elderly, this limitation considers that not all vulnerabilities are solved in the same way. Cognitive interviews may not always be considered equally effective on all types of witnesses/victims or incidents. It is suggested in research that when considering individuals with psychological conditions, such as those with severe trauma or dissociative disorders, that the use of cognitive interviewing techniques may not provide the same results as when applied to those without such conditions (Lindsay et al., 2014). Individuals such as these should be considered for more specialised interviewing approaches, that will allow for the interviewer to tailor the interview to the specific need of the victim/witness.

In conclusion, it is clear from academic research that cognitive interviews are considered to be highly effective when obtaining accounts from victims and witnesses. The technique is able to focus and emphasis on the retrieval of memory, a reduction in suggestibility, and is able to be a valuable tool in an investigative setting. Yet it should still be considered that this tool is not without issues and can place high amounts of stress and time constraints on those conducting the interview. Further to this, the requirement for specialised training adds to the limited reach that this interview technique can have over large police forces. However, the benefits that this tool is able to provide in terms of enhanced accuracy and completeness of witness accounts, mean that it outweighs those of its limitations. With further research and

Name – GEORGIA WALTON

Student no. 2222330

Word Count – 4,004

adaption of this technique, it is likely that further improvements will be seen in the effectiveness of cognitive interviews in a diverse range of incidents.

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Name – GEORGIA WALTON

Student no. 2222330

Word Count – 4,004

Essay 3 –

Examine the various socio-economic and psychological characteristics which can make people vulnerable to exploitation by criminal gangs. Your answer must be based on academic research rather than personal experience.

Criminal gangs are able to exploit individuals from various socio-economic and psychological backgrounds in order to be able to sustain and expand their activities. This criminal exploitation is considered when ‘someone is forced, coerced, deceived, or manipulated (groomed) by someone else into committing crime’ (The Centre for Social Justice, 2024). By understanding these vulnerabilities then we are able to develop effective prevention and intervention strategies to address such issues. This essay will set to examine the various socio-economic and psychological characteristics that make people vulnerable to susception and exploitation by criminal gangs. This topic will be addressed by drawing from academic research and relevant studies in order to provide an accurate examination of these various factors.

When considering socio-economic characteristics, the role of poverty and economic deprivation plays a significant role. Poverty is considered a significant factor that increase the vulnerability of a person to the potential of gang exploitation. Muller (2013) identifies that poverty is one of several risk factors identified in the increased likelihood that a teen will join a gang. Research from Decker and Van Winkle (1996) highlighted the fact that economic needs where the primary motivator for those joining gangs. It was considered by those as a sense of financial security and access to resources that they would not otherwise have access too.

Further to this the issues surrounding unemployment and underemployment contribute to the issues surrounding poverty, and additionally create a sense of hopelessness and frustration for those living in this manner. Thornberry et al., (2003) saw strong correlations between unemployment and gang membership, which suggested that due to a lack of economic opportunities that this begun to drive individuals towards gang and criminal networks. Young people, in particular, are considered at risk at turning to gangs as an alternative means of achieving social status and being able to hold economic stability (Safeguarding Network, 2024).

An important factor to also consider is that of marginalised communities, in particular those experiencing ethnic, racial or social discrimination. As they are considered more vulnerable to exploitation from gangs. The relationship between race, ethnicity and gang related crime is one that is discussed often when considering factors effecting those targeted by gang related crime. Much research, both present and past, centralises on the association between ethnicity, race and the impacts of social discrimination (Freng, 2019). Gangs often provide a sense of belonging and identity to those who feel marginalised by mainstream society. Vigil (1988) describes how youths who feel marginalised in an urban environment become drawn to gangs. This is as a means of finding social acceptance and support in a community.

Name – GEORGIA WALTON

Student no. 2222330

Word Count – 4,004

Alongside socio-economic issues, psychological factors need to be considered when discussing vulnerabilities that make people vulnerable to exploitation by gangs. Mental health is considered to be a significant factor when discussing vulnerabilities and gang crime. Mental health problems can include substance abuse, depression, anxiety disorder, etc., all such problems can make an individual more vulnerable to exploitation by gangs. As a means of control, gangs will often prey on those with mental health issues surrounding substance issues, as they have a means of control and manipulation over the person, this is often present in the form of cuckooing, (Dyfed Powys Police, 2021). Those within gangs also saw a significant more likelihood of early alcohol usage, than those who were non-gang members (Swahn et al., 2010). A study from Craig et al., (2002) also showed that mental health issues were considered prevalent among gang members, with many joining as a means coping with their own psychological distress.

Encompassing the above-mentioned factor, the consideration of exposure to trauma and violence should be considered when discussing this topic. The way in which a person can be exposed to trauma and/or violence can occur in a several ways, whether this is at home, through the community or via personal experiences. This exposure to trauma can lead to an increased vulnerability to gang exploitation (Quinn et al., 2017). Trauma can lead to significant psychological issues such as depression, PTSD and anxiety. Alongside further exposure to violence whilst within the gang dynamic, these already vulnerable people are further exposed to violence, leaving them in a vicious circle (Wood and Dennard, 2017). Research has found that individuals with a history of childhood abuse and neglect are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour, which includes gang related involvement (Widom, 1989).

The socio-economic and psychological characteristics that make an individual more susceptible to exploitation by criminal gangs is multifaceted and interrelated. Such issues as poverty, unemployment and marginalisation assist in creating an environment whereby gangs are able to thrive off the unfortunate of others. Gangs are able to offer financial incentives and a sense of belonging to those who need it. These factors create an environment in which gangs can thrive and continue to select those who they require in their disruption of criminal activities. Alongside this are the psychological factors that assist in making a person vulnerable to gang related exploitation. These factors can consist of but not limited too mental health, and exposure to trauma and violence. These factors can exacerbate vulnerabilities suffered by an individual, as they seek support and protection from the gangs. Such psychological factors are repeatedly exploited by gangs and additional trauma experienced by those in this situation. By understanding these vulnerabilities then we are able to develop targeted interventions and support systems that have a lasting effect, and in turn disrupt such gangs.

910 words

Name – GEORGIA WALTON

Student no. 2222330

Word Count – 4,004

Essay 4 –

Critically assess the effectiveness of 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, but you may make reference to relevant case studies.

In the year ending March 2023, there were around 50,00 offences that involved a sharp instrument within England and Wales. This was considered 4.7% higher than crime recorded in 2021/22, however was shown to be 7% lower than 2019/20 (Zayed et al., 2023). Knife crime has emerged as a critical public safety issue and is a persistent problem within the United Kingdom. The number of incidents involving knives or sharp objects has rose year-on-year, with 2019/20 showing the largest number of police-recorded knife offences in the past decade (Allen and Harding, 2021). Drawing on academic research and its evaluations of interventions such as, punitive measures, and community-based initiatives, this essay will seek to critically assess the effectiveness of such options when it comes to the reduction of re-offending in relation to knife crime.

When considering knife crime, the main aim of legislation makers and police is to create a deterrent. The way in which this has been chosen to be done is through the use of punitive measures, including longer prison sentences and mandatory minimum sentences. The rationale of those creating such systems is the thought that through harsher penalties, that this will in turn discourage individuals from re-offending. Proposed measures from the government would see longer prison sentences, expanded powers for law enforcement to seize blades from suspects homes (Sprinks, 2024). However, the effectiveness of such measures in reducing re-offending is debated. It is believed that such measures do not seek to address the underlying cause of knife crime, and research shows that countries with less punitive measures often have similar or lower crime rather than those who impose harsher policies (Coughlan, 2023). Further research from Durlauf and Nagin (2011) highlights that while severe punishment may have some deterrent effect, the reality of being caught and punished is more crucial than the sentence itself. Studies further show that longer sentences do not also correlate with lower rates of re-offending. The UK's sentencing Council (2017) found that individuals who were serving extended sentences for knife related crime, did not exhibit any significant lowering in rates of re-offending in comparison to those who had served a shorter sentence.

Community based initiatives are able to focus on preventing re-offending by allowing a supportive environment and assisting with positive relationships for ex-offenders. Programs like mentorship, restorative justice have been effective in regard to this. An community-led campaign called NotTheOne is currently being supported by Police. It involves the creation and distribution of materials to members of the community, alongside professionals working with children (College of Policing, 2024). The scheme sets to have honest conversations and examples of real-life experiences, whilst working with young people within South Wales and educate them on the dangers and consequences of carrying a knife (NotTheOne, u.d). This campaign seeks to challenge the narrative that knife crime in South Wales is akin to the much-publicised narrative in the media regarding the sale and severity of crime reported in

Name – GEORGIA WALTON

Student no. 2222330

Word Count – 4,004

London. Their objectives set out to ‘promote the rarity of knife crime in South Wales to the wider public’ and ‘to engage directly with a child to emphasise that they are probably the odd one out in carrying a knife, despite perceptions to the contrary (College of Policing, 2024).

Mentorship programmes are another example in which community-based initiatives seek to connect those who are ex-offenders with a positive role model, that will be able to provide support and guidance to those who require it. The Youth Advocate Program (YAP) (u.d) in the US, is a scheme that pairs up at-risk youth with an advocate. Through this scheme a correlation has been seen in the reduction of re-offending rates in the youths in the programme. According to Cullen et al., (2017), the use of mentoring can have a significant impact on ex-offenders when it comes to the required social support necessary to navigate life post release, which see’s many offenders return back to a life of crime usually.

The use of forms of restorative justice programmes, sees the involvement of bringing together offenders, victims and community members, in order to discuss the impact that crime had, and the amends required following that. These programmes seek to emphasises the accountability that offenders need to take, and work on building a level of empathy about the crime, which in turn would assist in the prevention of further crime by the individual. Evidence suggest that these approaches have a particularly significant effect on violence crimes, and in turn make it less likely to seek revenge against the offender (Strang et al., 2013). A study by Sherman and Strang (2007) found that through the use of restorative justice that a lower rate of re-offending was occurring in comparison to traditional criminal justice proceedings, and more specifically this related to violent crime.

In conclusion, reducing re-offending when it comes to knife crime requires a number of different approaches and must be multifaceted. During the course of this essay the matters of punitive measures and community-based initiatives have been considered as to their effectiveness to tactical the issue of re-offending when it comes to knife crime. It was clear from the research shown in regard to punitive measures that the longer the sentence handed to an individual, does not always correlate with this having a positive impact on their re-offending. The relevant point was raised that although this action can act as a deterrent for the individual, it does not seek to address any of the systemic socio-economic factors and critical challenges faced by those exiting the prison system. The use of community support has shown to have a positive impact on the way in which offenders re-adjust back into society. Programmes such as this seek to provide ex-offenders the support they require post prison, and further seeks to build their empathy for the crime they committed. Such programmes attempt to come from a psychological and emotional angle in order to have the greatest impact on the offender, to therefore attempt the decrease in further offences. The research shows that the need for continued evidence-based strategies that seek to keep long-term solutions over that of short-term punitive response to knife crime.

1023 words

Name – GEORGIA WALTON

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