

Cohort 01/23 DHEP Assignment

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Essay one:

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

Your answer must be based on academic research.

Word limit: 1000 words.

In this essay I will discuss how effectively the police service has adapted to accommodate diversity within the United Kingdom. I will do this by concentrating on the police forces themselves and how they have adapted within the organisation and what effect this has on their communities and the way they work.

In 1999 the Macpherson Inquiry (1999) concluded that the Metropolitan Police was 'institutionally racist' following an inquiry that looked into the police practices relating to how the Stephen Lawrence murder investigation was handled. This had a significant impact on policing as a whole in the United Kingdom and made police culture and organisational change a focus point (Morant and Edwards, 2010).

Van Ewijk (2015) states that police forces have historically predominantly been unrepresentative of their communities when it comes to diversity. She states that the percentage of women, homosexuals and persons with a migrant background is lower among police officers than it is in society. Due to this, police recruitment has been under scrutiny over recent years to increase its representation and legitimacy. As a result, forces in England and Wales have adapted and implemented a process called 'positive action'. This is to assist under-represented candidates in the joining process and aims to enable those under-represented to have the same level of success as white candidates and to assist becoming a profession that is more representative of its community (Hesketh and Stubbs, 2023). Hesketh and Stubbs (2024) state that the assumption is that with a greater and more representative number of police officers that are from under-represented groups, this will subsequently have a positive impact on policing and the perception of policing in the community. However, it is difficult to determine whether this adaption of 'positive action' has worked or not as there are not yet any national statistics readily available.

Policing has also changed in the 21st century, with policing attempting to become more inclusive and aiming to re-build communities' trust. Police forces have used an array of different methods in attempting to reach out to communities of ethnic minorities such as holding formal community meetings, undertaking social research, informal networking and social media (Bullock and Johnson, 2018).

Bullock and Johnson (2018) state that one of the greatest barriers that officers face when dealing and communicating with communities such as the Muslim community is a lack of understanding and education about the community. Bullock and Johnson also recommend that to better relationships with communities, a constabulary should encourage opportunities for its officers to learn and gain a better understanding of the communities it polices and not to shy away from their lack of understanding but being honest and open to learn. In recent years, forces across the United Kingdom have adapted to introduce new courses such as 'diversity training' which aims to better equip police officers with knowledge regarding the diverse communities they police in order for police officers to be able to police their communities more effectively and fairly (McFadyen and Prideaux, 2012).

Police forces continue to attempt to adapt and to build the trust of and confidence of all members of the public, however the Crime Survey for England and Wales states that in 2020, only 64% of black people had confidence in their local Police compared to 74% of white people and 77% of Asian people (Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2021). As a result of this, Police forces in the United Kingdom are reported to make greater use of their Neighbourhood Policing teams to build better rapport with communities of ethnic minorities. Police Community Support Officers, along with Neighbourhood Beat managers, regularly attend buildings of worship such as Mosques, Churches and Gurdwaras' and this is shown to be received well by the communities as they are able to have an informal chat or feel as if the police are accountable (McFadyen and Prideaux, 2011).

Bowling, Parmer and Phillips (2003) state that although policing has adapted in recent years and continues to adapt, there is still an element of discrimination that persists in British Policing against communities of ethnic backgrounds. It is argued that there should be drastic reform in the accountability and the responsiveness of forces to deal with any such discrimination. A study by Stevens and Willis (1981) found that, historically, in the 1970's and 1980's, minority ethnic groups were more likely to file complaints against police officers. However, these complaints of misconduct that were made by ethnic minority groups were highly more likely not to be substantiated compared to a complaint made by a white person. Due to the poor management of complaints and the low level of accountability that police officers were held to in April of 2004, the Independent Police Complaints Commission was established. The aim of the Independent Police Complaints Commission was to deal with complaints fairly from a totally independent position and to eliminate any discrimination (May, Wrburton and Hearnden, 2008). This was also in an attempt to increase police accountability and to increase the confidence of the communities in the police.

To conclude, I believe that there is a wealth of research available that confirms that there are effective adaptations taking place by the police service in the United Kingdom to accommodate diversity such as the work to try and make police forces more representative of their communities. However, although the 'positive action' in recruitment is progressive, further barriers within the police force remain evident with the retention of police officers from ethnic minority communities, due to possible issues they face following recruitment (Rigaux and Cunningham, 2021). It goes without saying that although a lot of good work has been carried out to make the police force more inclusive to all, discrimination is still evident in police forces and has not been totally squashed (Hasan, 2021).

Essay two:

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

Your answer must be based on academic research rather than personal experience.

Word limit: 1000 words.

In this essay I will discuss why it is important to manage mental wellbeing in policing and I will discuss the potential consequences if mental wellbeing is not managed appropriately.

Work associated with the criminal justice system, especially response policing, is reported to be associated with an increase in stress, this including psychological, physical and anticipatory stress. Due the nature of a police officer's role, they are exposed to traumatic incidents often on a daily basis, such as fatal road traffic collisions, child abuse and domestic abuse cases. It is believed that a constant exposure to incidents of a serious nature is associated with depression and anxiety, somatisation and posttraumatic stress disorder (Jetelina, 2020).

Policing is an occupation similar to other first response emergency occupations such as paramedics, which is a profession that places its workers at high risk of being exposed to human suffering and tragedy (Regehr, 2019). However, it is important to recognise that it is not only due to the incidents and scenes that police officers are exposed to that they are at an increased risk of exposing themselves to stress and mental health issues. The heavy workload and demanding deadlines can also impact officers' mental wellbeing. Howard (2008) states that a lengthy period of exposure to high levels of demand can be stressful and can cause emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduce personal accomplishment.

With policing being an active and physical occupation, it is important that officers are able to maintain their physical health. However, if an officer is suffering with a mental illness, this can also have a detrimental impact on their physical health. Owens et al., (2010) states that individuals with a mental illness are at a higher risk of having significant health problems.

Research carried out by Cartwright and Roach (2020) found that between the years of 2010 to 2020, the individuals within United Kingdom's police forces taking absent leave due to psychological ill health had almost doubled. Research found that a rate of 8% of UK police employees had taken leave for psychological and emotional illness. However, this data does not necessarily represent the amount of police officers that have suffered with their mental well-being as up to 12% of officers struggling with their mental health are believed to be just working on and battling through day-to-day work rather than seeking much needed help and support and taking a leave of absence.

The consequences of poor or declining mental wellbeing can go further than just affecting the officer themselves. It can also have an impact on their families and relationships. This is why it is important for officers to manage their mental wellbeing, as the role of being a police officer presents certain pressures that can have a knock on effect and cause their families and loved ones to struggle with their own mental wellbeing or grow apart from them (Bullock and Garland, 2020).

There is widespread criticism with how the police service deals with mental health. Police forces deal with a large number of individuals within the community that are vulnerable due to their mental health and are often in crisis. The police are often criticised for having a lack of understanding and knowledge and there are calls for further support and training to be provided in the field. Although I am concentrating in my essay on the police and their employees' mental wellbeing, it is important to

touch on the way that the police deal with mental health in the community. Officers are described as having a 'warrior' like mind-set rather than one of 'guardianship' (Barker and Pillinger, 2020). It can be argued that this is reflected in the way that police officers subsequently deal with their own mental wellbeing, which have consequences both on their own mental wellbeing and the level of service they are able to provide.

There is an argument that in an occupation such as policing, there is no way of making the incidents you are going to deal with go away as it is the nature of the role. However, there is a need to look after your mental wellbeing to find a balance between being able to deal with the stresses that come with the job and still being able to function well and recognise when support is needed (Kalra, 2012).

Stigma is a major barrier when it comes to mental health within the police force with officers not wanting to be perceived as if they are 'weak' or unable to do their job without support. However, it is vitally important for officers to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental health and to manage their mental wellbeing. This can often be done by early recognition and early intervention. Police services now offer all their staff counselling sessions free of charge in an attempt to promote mental wellbeing. A review suggests that individuals receiving counselling will receive a better service compared to what one would expect to receive through seeking support from their general practitioner, and subsequently more improved mental health (Bower et al., 1996).

To conclude, the job of a response officer within the police is one that will always bring its own challenges and will expose its officers to traumatic incidents. However, it is vitally important that officers recognise and understand their own limits and acknowledge when their mental wellbeing may be struggling. An individual's mental well-being does not only affect the individual themselves but also has a clear and profound impact on the persons around them too. Not only this, but an individual's mental wellbeing, if not managed appropriately, can consequently impact on their ability to work and perform to their usual standards (Kumar et al., 2023). Managing mental wellbeing in policing, on the part of individual employees and members of the public, is therefore vital to ensure the avoidance of wider consequences and the deterioration of individual and public health.

Essay four:

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

Your answer must be based on academic research.

Word limit: 1000 words.

In this essay, I will outline potential links between serious and organised crime and public protection issues. I will also discuss characteristic that make some people more vulnerable to exploitation by serious organised crime gangs. I will do this by concentrating on the phenomenon of county lines and the effect this is having on vulnerable individuals of all ages within society.

County lines is run by serious organised crime gangs and is the distribution and transportation of illegal drugs often across police and local authorities' borders. County lines phenomenon is the mobile phone lines used in the ordering and selling of illicit drugs. These gangs are known to exploit and coerce children and vulnerable adults through intimidation, violence of physical and or sexual nature to transport the money and drugs from one place to another (National Crime Agency, 2024).

County lines has been identified as a serious threat to public health and wellbeing here in the United Kingdom with all police forces in the United Kingdom reporting that there is county lines activity in their areas. Vulnerable children that are living chaotic lives, that are at points of crisis, who have experienced adverse childhood experiences, have parents or guardians with alcohol or drugs dependencies themselves or poor mental health are some of the characteristics that are reported to be more likely to be exploited by gangs into county lines. The vulnerable children are thought to be targeted by these serious and organised crime gangs due to the fact that there is a lack of a capable guardian, whether that be the parent or carer, being absent or less engaged in what their child is doing and is subsequently unable to fully protect them. However, this is not always true and some children that do not fall into the usual definition of vulnerable do also sometimes get exploited by these gangs (Dando et al., 2022).

The National Crime Agency (2019) report that most juveniles that are recruited by county lines gangs are recruited to be runners. This is the role that carries the most risk within the model. Runners are individuals that transport the drugs, money and weapons from one area to another. These vulnerable children have to learn new techniques such as concealing the drugs internally in their body to minimise the risk of getting caught. This technique is referred to as 'plugging'. Organised and serious crime gangs have varied methods of recruiting vulnerable children, whether face to face or via social media. One of their main recruitment technique is to attend foster homes, homeless shelters, pupil referral units and special educational needs schools in order to recruit and prey on the most vulnerable in society whom they know will be easier to recruit with less chances of repercussions.

County lines brings its own risks and dangers, with a link to increase in homicides and general knife related crime where drug distributors and users are competing in a competitive market where their grievances cannot be settled through the means of legal channels. County lines is thought to have made drug dealing much more dangerous than the traditional career drug dealer who previously had control of the market (Robinson et al., 2018).

However, it is not just the younger generation of vulnerable individuals that are getting caught up and exploited by these serious and organised crime groups. There is also a public protection issue

when it comes to vulnerable adults within our communities. County lines also has an impact on vulnerable tenants and owners of houses and flats. The term 'cuckooing' is used in reference to a nest of birds being taken over by a cuckoo bird and this is similar to what happens to vulnerable individuals when they are befriended by a gang member who then takes over their home to conduct illegal drug activity. This forms a complex situation both morally and legally, and forms a public protection concern. The characteristics of these tenants are that they are often drug users themselves who may suffer with mental health issues and have previously been homeless, with these characteristics making the individuals vulnerable to exploitation (Butera, 2013). It is also noted that those within society that suffer with learning difficulties are significantly more likely to have their home cuckooed than a person without (Spicer et al., 2019).

Organised and serious crime groups are targeting adult tenants with particular vulnerabilities in order to optimise their profits as it allows them to operate a 24-hour service in the county lines business model. Victims of cuckooing can experience a variety of types of abuse, from violent and sexual abuse to psychological abuse and intimidation. Although in some cases, it is reported that the victims find that they have mutual benefits where the tenant is given drugs for free to feed their addiction whilst the gang operate from their home (Coomber and Moyle, 2018).

To conclude, I believe that it is important to remember that it is not only the individuals at the bottom of the county lines chain that are highly vulnerable. The exploiters are also vulnerable and they have likely also been exploited themselves through poverty and other vulnerabilities to the positions in which they exploit vulnerable new recruits (Wroe, 2021). The effects that county lines is having on our society is highly detrimental as it is having a substantial negative impact on the most vulnerable individuals within our society and is putting these individuals at high risk of drug abuse, physical, psychological and sexual abuse along with criminal convictions, all due to the greed of the individuals that sit higher up the criminal gang chain (O'Hagan and Edmundson, 2021). It is also argued that not only do these serious and organised crime gangs have a negative impact on the individuals that it directly affects, but it also makes the community as a whole increasingly vulnerable by its indirect effects. It is noted in research by Jaensch and South (2018), that some residents were worried about gang conflict as so called 'postcode wars' that is causing an increase in serious disorder and violence within their communities.

Essay five: How effective is early intervention an effective means of preventing young people from offending or re-offending? Your answer must be based on academic research, but you may make reference to relevant case studies. Word limit: 1000 words.

In this essay I will discuss how effective early intervention is as a means of preventing young people from offending and re-offending. I will discuss different strategies used to try and prevent young people from entering the criminal justice system and used to try and educate young people from offending and/or re-offending.

One method that police use as a method of early intervention in an attempt to prevent young people from offending and/or re-offending is by educating young people in schools and other places of education such as colleges about the risks and dangers of being involved in criminal activity (Hopkins, Hewstone and Hantzi, 1992). Police forces are able to implement this strategy through their School Liaison Officers. It was noted by the Department of Education (1983) that a School Liaison Officer's main objectives are; to assist in educating young persons of social responsibilities and the principles of good citizenship, to educate young persons about the police and the role that police and the criminal justice service plays in society, to promote and educate young persons about prime prevention and to safeguard young persons and educate them of how they can protect themselves. School Liaison Officers, along with their associated Neighbourhood Policing teams, are said to be able to work alongside multi agencies and bridge issues that young persons face in their communities beyond the confines of the school (Trotman and Thomas, 2016).

Research carried out by Lamont et al (2011) has identified many benefits of police working within and alongside schools. These include improved relationships between young persons and the police, making the police more accessible for younger individuals, increasing the sense of safety and improving young people's behaviours.

One of the instrumental topics that School Liaison Officers concentrate on when educating youths in schools and other educational settings are concerns around illicit drugs. This is due to the growing amount of illicit drugs in circulation in Britain and the concern regarding the impact that this has on youths (Cole, 2000). In the year ending March 2023, 6.4% of people aged 16 to 24 living in England and Wales had taken Class A drugs, which is approximately 380,000 people. This is a 1.7% increase compared to a decade ago (year ending March, 2013), which is an increase of approximately 86,000 people aged between 16 and 24 (Office of National Statistics, 2023). The increase in consumption of illicit drugs among the younger generation is blamed by some for the ease of accessibility for these products. Tofighi et al. (2017) state that with the use of networking, especially mobile phones and the ease of changing and making mobiles hard to track, the simplicity of getting hold of dealers of illicit drugs has become so very accessible.

Redgate et al. (2022) state that research shows that up to 90% of young individuals that offend and that come to the attention of the criminal justice system are young people who suffer with speech, language and or communication needs. It is argued that the criminal justice system presents these young individuals with barriers as they may not fully be able to comprehend what the consequences of their actions are, especially with the criminal justice system being reliant on language skills for interviews, court proceedings and so forth. This poses an argument that the criminal justice system may not be suitable in this day and age to effectively manage and deter individuals from re-offending.

The Youth Offending Service runs in England and Wales and is a means of supervising individuals that are in the age bracket of 10 to 18 years old who have come committed a crime and have been sentenced in court. Offending individuals within this age bracket are dealt with by means of an out of court disposal rather than being charged (Redgate et al., 2022). Research into whether the Youth Offending Service was effective or not in Suffolk, England, found that in a one year period, they received 468 referrals by their police force or through the courts and from this, only 12% went on to commit another offence, thus proving that the model is somewhat effective in reducing young offenders' re-offending rate (Tyrrell et al., 2017). This provides justification for the effectiveness of early intervention being a means of preventing young people from re-offending.

Blakeman (2011), states that the issues that may lead to a young individual to offend are attributes such as a past history of offending in their family, a lack of education, poor family relationships, misuse of illicit drugs, along with array of other factors. However, it is argued that young persons are easily judged and looked at in a bad light, and as Longstaff et al. (2015) states, young persons are perceived as being suspects that are in need of being controlled rather than potentially vulnerable individuals and potential victims in need of protecting. Therefore, it is important to not only think of the individuals themselves when thinking of youth offending, but also to think of why they are offending. Parenting or the lack of parenting and poor role models are often an attribute to youths offending. This is why there are parenting programmes readily available in these circumstances. These programmes provide vital skills in how to better deal with behaviours that contribute to youth offending and advice on how to reduce and manage these behaviours. When a young person first becomes involved with the criminal justice system, the parents will be offered the opportunity to voluntarily attend a parenting program. However, a parenting order can be served if it is deemed that the child is at a certain risk (Blakeman, 2011).

To conclude, I strongly believe that early intervention is an effective method of preventing young people from offending and re-offending. Educating individuals on the consequences of offending is a positive measure in the prevention of crime amongst young people. The use of out of court disposals are also a positive method of preventing re-offending, however it is important that the treatment of offenders are balanced against the demands of accountability for the offence committed (Greenwood, 2008).

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