

Analysis of Results

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the methodology considered within this dissertation, where primary data collection was selected to close the literature review highlighted research gap, specifically to build research from those who criminally investigate people with neurodiverse characteristics (Hox and Boeije, 2005). Furthermore, analysis of data collection methods created a research design to include the utilisation of Microsoft Office Forms within a predominantly quantitative survey, and to combine this with a thematic analysis of qualitative interviews to draw fuller conclusions (Gelo, Braakmann and Benetka, 2008; Patton, 2015). This chapter seeks to analyse the research findings, through the responses of 52 survey completions and 6 interviews. Accordingly, this analysis will explore three observed themes, to include social isolation, online impact, and the support available for both those with neurodiverse characteristics, and for policing professionals. Due to size limitations within this chapter, reference will be drawn towards survey and interview questions held within the dissertation appendix, and further conclusions will be drawn within the next chapter. This chapter aims to achieve objective two of the dissertation, which for reference is: To investigate and compare the understanding of neurodiversity within right-wing extremism amongst numerous policing teams in South Wales. Additionally, this chapter aims to present learning which contributes towards objective three of the dissertation, which for reference is: To assess any implications these findings present towards the investigation of right-wing extremism, and the safeguarding of those at risk.

Participants

Within the research, a survey was distributed to South Wales Police Response, Neighbourhood, Criminal Investigation, and Public Protection teams, where 52 responses were received, comprising of 21, 12, 11 and 8 completions respectively. Participants also ranged across roles of staff members, constables, and sergeants, where approximately 71% of participants were of constable rank. Additionally, across six completed interviews, 2 sergeants and 1 constable contributed from both Response and Criminal Investigation teams. Whilst these factors allowed contribution from different perspectives, their composition forms a notable feature within the meaning of the data. Furthermore, question 6 of the survey showed that 26 and 22 respondents respectively had a moderate or high level of experience investigating people with neurodiverse conditions, which adds validity to their contribution. Conversely however, specific to right-wing extremism, question 12 showed approximately 85% of the participants had either no or a low level of experience investigating a person who displayed indications of a right-wing mindset. Whilst the specialised nature of the criminality is considered, the data is comparable with literature review findings that right-wing extremism is disproportionately under researched, and questions whether the indications did not exist, or whether a lack of awareness reduced recognition (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021; Knight, 2019).

Theme One: Social Isolation

Within the research, a theme developed of those with neurodiverse characteristics experiencing difficulty maintaining social groups and finding belonging. Furthermore, the research promoted this can build a sense of loneliness and exclusion, which can lead to frustration and hatred in compliment of the literature review findings (Al-Attar,

2020; Collins, 2023). This is further supported by question 10 of the survey, where approximately 81% of participants selected social interaction to be a neurodiverse factor which may form an attraction towards criminal activity. To draw a more complete view, interviews also detailed a growing presence of neurodiversity within organised crime groups, and highlighted that criminal leaders are aware of neurodiverse vulnerability from a social perspective, which they increasingly target to support their recruitment. This discussion is new compared with literature review findings and opens the potential for additional future research.

Theme Two: Online Impact

A second research theme is that the internet provides a pathway for people with neurodiverse characteristics towards criminal engagement. This supports the literature of technology and communication forming a prolonged focus for terrorist organisations (Rapoport, 2002). The interviews also discussed how neurodiverse behaviours, to include interest for topics such history and war draw attraction towards a wealth of online content, which directly supports literature findings (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021; Al-Attar, 2020). Question 10 of the survey strengthens this area, where curiosity and fascination was selected by approximately 98% of participants to provide an attraction between neurodiverse factors and criminal content.

Furthermore, qualitative responses within survey question 15 provided views that COVID-19 restrictions promoted an online dependency, and increased expose to this content. This data supports the literature review, which highlighted COVID-19 to have increased online presence, and the accessibility of extremist content (Behr *et al.* 2013; Khan-Ruf, 2021; Pajunen, 2015). Survey questions 9 and 11 enhance this theme, where online search engines were highlighted to provide reinforcement of

related content, with little balance or opposition. Links were also drawn to a perception that news and media outlets focus disproportionately towards negative and striking media, which inspire those with neurodiverse characteristics towards crime. Whilst the feedback of online search engines and media provide new learning, when combined with COVID-19 and technology factors, the research compliments literature views that conditions exist for right-wing extremist growth (Velásquez *et al.* 2021).

Theme Three: Support and Training

Thirdly, the data frequently highlights the level of neurodiversity training received within policing, and the support available for those with neurodiverse characteristics. Here, survey questions 3 and 4 showed approximately 88% of respondents felt they had received either no or a low level of neurodiversity training, in addition to approximately 90% feeling there was either a low or very low level of neurodiversity awareness within policing. This is of significance considering question 6 of the survey which found 92% of participants had a moderate or high level of experience investigating people with neurodiverse conditions. This data provides new learning and highlights a requirement for additional training across police departments.

Secondly, these findings link with survey question 5 which found approximately 87% of respondents feel they are not well equipped to support those with neurodiverse characteristics within investigation processes. This theme expands when considered against the qualitative data. Here, feedback was received that punitive police action was not viewed favourably, and feedback was presented of high re-offending rates consistent with research findings (Colins *et al.* 2010). Furthermore, continual views showed multi-agency neurodiversity support is required from a wider perspective, to

include education and support services for both those at risk of criminal involvement, and those around them such as family and carers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the data analysis has provided a balance of literature review confirmation, largely within the social isolation and online impact themes, and relatively new insight, predominantly within the support and training theme which contributes towards closing the research gap previously highlighted. Consequently, this chapter has achieved objective two of the dissertation, and has provided data towards the exploration of objective three. The next chapter of the dissertation will therefore seek to draw additional conclusions from the research project, and further explore the third dissertation objective, to include any implications these findings present, and provide future recommendations.

Word Count – 1138 (1100 limit – I am 38 words over sorry however I will shorten this to below the word count limit prior to the final submission)

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Appendix

1. What policing unit do you currently work within?

[More Details](#)

Response	21
Neighbourhood Policing	12
CID	11
Public Protection Unit	8
Other	0



2. What is your current policing rank/role?

[More Details](#)

Police Staff	6
Constable	37
Sergeant	9
Inspector	0
Other	0



3. Using the below scale, please indicate the level of neurodiversity related training you feel you have received within your policing career.

[More Details](#)

None	21
A low level	25
A moderate level	6
A high level	0
A very high level	0



4. What do you think the current level of understanding is within policing towards those with neurodiverse characteristics?

[More Details](#)

A very low level	21
A low level	26
A moderate level	5
A high level	0
A very high level	0



5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement – ‘Police officers and staff are well equipped to support those with neurodiverse characteristics who are involved within investigations’

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Strongly disagree	20
Disagree	25
Neither agree nor disagree	7
Agree	0
Strongly agree	0



6. Within your job role, what level of experience do you have of investigating a person with neurodiverse characteristics?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

None	1
A low level	3
A moderate level	26
A high level	22



7. Within your job role and experience, what percentage of subjects/suspects do you believe demonstrate neurodiverse characteristics?

[More Details](#)

0%-20%	1
21%-40%	20
41%-60%	26
61%-80%	5
81%-100%	0



8. Do you feel people with neurodiverse characteristics have any level of vulnerability to criminal involvement?

[More Details](#)

None	0
A low level of vulnerability	1
A moderate level of vulnerability	15
A high level of vulnerability	35



9. Can you please provide any context regarding your previous response?

[More Details](#) [Insights](#)

9
Responses

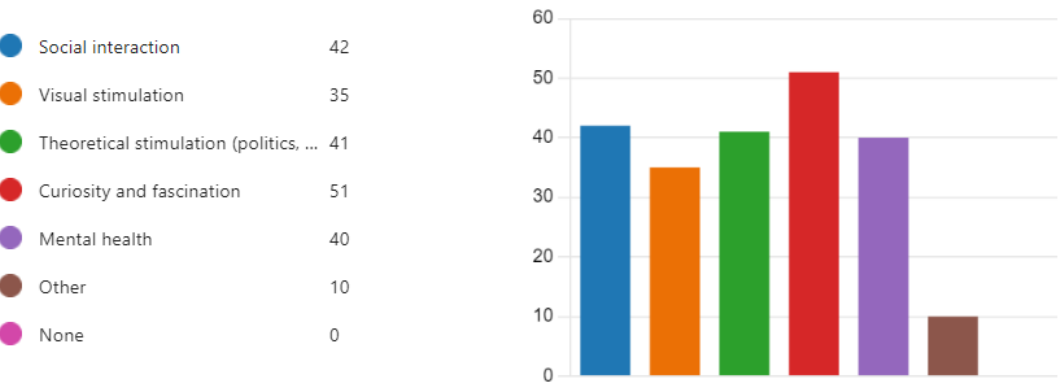
Latest Responses

7 respondents (78%) answered **neurodiverse** for this question. ...



10. Do you feel any of the below factors may form an attraction between neurodiverse characteristics and criminal activity? Please select all which apply.

[More Details](#)



11. Can you please provide any context regarding your previous response?

[More Details](#)

4
Responses

Latest Responses

12. Within your job role, do you have any level of experience investigating a person (for any offence) who displayed indications of a right-wing mindset?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

None	24
A low level	20
A moderate level	4
A high level	4

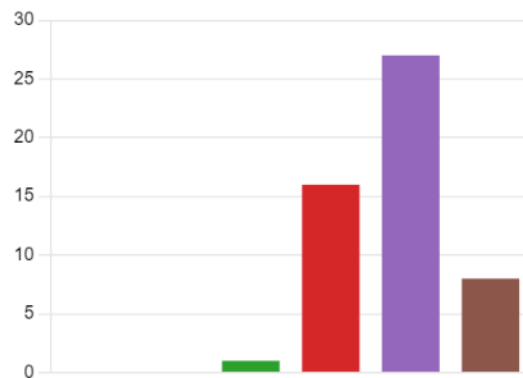


13. How prevalent/common do you think neurodiverse characteristics are within those who develop a right-wing mindset?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

Not present at all	0
Very rare	0
Rare	1
Moderately present	16
Common	27
Very common	8



14. Do you feel people with neurodiverse characteristics have any level of vulnerability towards developing a right-wing mindset?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

No level of vulnerability	0
A low level of vulnerability	1
A moderate level of vulnerability	21
A high level of vulnerability	30



15. Can you please provide any context regarding your previous response?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

8

Responses

Latest Responses

3 respondents (38%) answered **neurodiverse person** for this question.

possibility of involvement crime right messages feeling
Neurodiversity likelihood of radicalisation exposure and likelihood
political ideology **neurodiverse person** fertile targets online
rhetoric and propaganda **right-wing person vulnerable** neurodiverse person
Vulnerability extreme Neurodivers persons person may be less aware

16. Can you suggest any improvements which you feel may safeguard those with neurodiverse characteristics from criminal involvement?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

10

Responses

Latest Responses

6 respondents (60%) answered **education** for this question.

education support
early intervention neurodiverse