

Question One

In this essay I will be discussing the professionalisation of the police service by evaluating the role of police constables and the impact of the College of Policing on professionalising the police service, specifically the policing principles that they have put in place and how these contribute to professional standards and the public confidence in police.

The professionalisation of the police has been developed over the years as the UK police have moved on from being a “force” to a “service” with the aim of being more suitable and appealing to the general public (Martin 1999). In 2011 the then-home secretary Theresa May announced the creation of the College of Policing, stating that although crime rates had dropped and public confidence had increased during her time as Home Secretary she felt that there would be increasing challenges for the police due to changes in modern society.

Due to this fear the College of Policing was designed by representatives from several organisations such as ACPO, the Police Federation and the Home Office in the hopes that this collaboration would allow them to include the wants and needs of all the forty-three police forces of England and Wales (Home Office 2012). The development of the College of Policing has allowed for them to in turn create the Code of Ethics in 2014. This consists of nine principles which sets the exemplary standard for police personnel in their everyday role, allowing for every force to follow a set expectations across the board so that members of the public always receive a service that is up to standard (College of Policing, 2014).

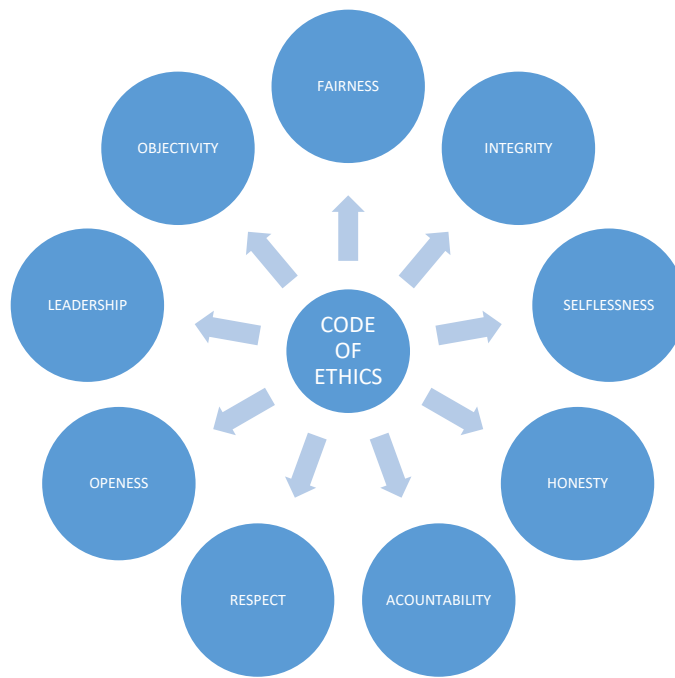


Figure 1. Code of Ethics (Bryant and Bryant, 2019)

The professionalism of the police service is particularly important when considering public opinions and confidence in the police. This has been affected over the year by a number of significant incidents where members of the public feel that they have been let down by the police or police officers have been subjected to misconduct hearing following these incidents. Examples of these go back as far as the Hillsborough disaster in 1989 (BBC 2022) which resulted in 1,444 names of former and serving police officers being passed to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (UK Government 2015) and a huge public enquiry being carried out drawing a lot of attention to the police service at the time.

These examples can also be dated up to as recently as 2021 with the murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer Wayne Couzens, and the following enquiry into the Metropolitan Police Service which led to three more police officers being charged for sharing racist and misogynistic messages with Couzens (Home Office 2021). The following backlash and public outcry about the police following these enquiries only further highlights

the importance of professionalising the police service and holding them accountable to maintaining the professional standards that are expected of them.

This being said, the fact that these kinds of events and scandals are still happening may indicate that the efforts to maintain professional standards need to be improved and that lessons are not being learned from past mistakes that should be.

A “professional” job can be defined as any person who earns their living from performing an activity that requires a certain level of education, skill or training (Cambridge Dictionary 2022). There are professional standards such as the above Code of Ethics that are in place for any professional job, however policing has a longer list than other occupations such as medics, solicitors and social workers. This could be seen as a positive for the police service, however it is only any good for us if the standards are actually being maintained and upheld by the officers.

When considering more specifically what contributes to maintaining professionalism, being ethical and inclusive is a topic which is widely considered important. The London Policing Ethics Panel (2014) highlight that there are now extra pressures on police officers as the public hold them highly accountable for their actions and their job, which is not easy when they often have to make hard decisions with little-to-know time to think and will be heavily scrutinised for these decisions. Although this panel focusses primarily on policing in London which is sometimes considered more intense than policing other force areas, the principle can apply to policing in any areas of England and Wales.

As well as it being important that officers are actively maintaining professional standards during their day to day duties, we also need to take into consideration how these standards are passed on to new officers and whether as police officers we hold each other accountable for our actions if we note that someone is not upholding these standards.

Coaching others is particularly beneficial to professionalism as it allows individuals to become aware of their own behaviour and strengths and weaknesses and allows them to actively conduct themselves in a way which upholds the professional standards expected of them (Taylor, 2020).

In conclusion, the professionalism of the police force appears to have improved over recent years however has also held up to increased scrutiny from the public including many high profile misconduct hearings. Having professional standards and ethical codes put in place has improved the opportunity for police officers to be held accountable for their actions by giving them an expectation to uphold. The increase in scrutiny may appear to some to be a negative outcome however this appears to be more fitting with the development of society and things like social media making it a lot more accessible for members of the public to “police the police” and allow us to continue to develop a professionalised police service.

Word Count: 938

Question Two

In this essay I will be discussing how response police respond to major and critical incidents, how these incidents can affect the wellbeing of both the public and response officers and also the effects of trauma and how this is managed by police forces through various ways of supporting response officers when they deal with major incidents. It is extremely important to ensure that response officers are managing trauma and looking after their mental health effectively as the role of response policing can often encounter difficult situations which may have a lasting mental effect if not properly processed, which will negatively impact both that officer's personal and working life.

Over the years there has been an increase in awareness of trauma risk and managing mental wellbeing particularly in front line roles such as response policing (Winwood, Tuckey, Peters & Dollard 2009). Whereas the consensus years ago may have been that people who willingly commit to these roles should have a certain level of resilience and be able to cope with the incidents that they attend it is now more widely acknowledged that the experiences can cause lasting trauma and problems for attending officers, and in some cases where not addressed and managed can lead to mental illness, PTSD and even suicide (McCafferty 1992).

A critical incident is described by College of Policing (2022) 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." This is a broad definition and does mean that there are many types of incidents which could fall under this definition, to mention a few for example violent domestic incidents, deaths, anti-social behaviour or hate crimes. There is not a more specific rule as to what kind of situation may become a critical

incident as there have been examples of incidents which have resulted in a much larger impact on families and communities than may have been expected. An example of this can be seen in the enquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence (MacPherson 1999) where the Metropolitan Police have acknowledged that the nature of some incidents is able to have a more detrimental impact on the community and victim/family than predicted and therefore each case needs to be assessed on its individual points in order to deem what is a critical incident. This investigation is what kick-started the guidelines that are now in place to help police officers deal with critical incidents.

The role of a response police officer in terms of dealing with critical incidents is balancing the needs of the victim, family and community with the need to provide an appropriate and effective policing response and outcome of an incident (College of Policing 2022). This can usually be broken down into three stages:

Stage one – Preparing for critical incidents

This comes down to the root preparation and quality of officers who are in roles where they will respond to critical incidents. This could include the level of training given to officers so that they are prepared to make dynamic decisions and are also able to quickly identify potential for critical incidents when responding to all incidents. This is generally the responsibility of the chief officers and the higher management of the force to ensure that the correct training has been carried out and there are enough resources available if a critical incident was to be declared.

Stage two – Managing critical incidents

This stage again relies heavily on the ability to identify critical incidents in the early stages so that they can be managed effectively from the off. This includes making sure that the right people are made aware of incidents, such as line managers and higher officers

depending on the circumstances. This can sometimes be managed by the public service centre (PSC) depending on how much information is made available early on or may need to be done by response officers attending incidents.

Stage three – Restoring public confidence

This refers to after a critical incident has occurred where maybe the correct response was not facilitated at the time and it has negatively impacted the public confidence in police. This can sometimes be rectified by ways of community engagement or may sometimes require a more official response such as independent public inquiries (Institute for Government 2018).

It is extremely important when thinking about police response to critical incidents that whilst we are managing the impact on the families and communities, we also acknowledge that these kinds of incidents can also have a negative impact on the mental wellbeing of the police officers who respond to them. There are many factors that can contribute to poor mental wellbeing in officers including workplace discrimination, work stress and issues amongst co-workers to name a few, when these are also combined with exposure to critical incidents then this has the potential to lead to poor mental wellbeing in police officers (Gershon et al. 2008).

It is important to identify poor mental wellbeing and manage it early on so that we can avoid worse consequences for the officer in the future. Not managing stress and poor mental wellbeing leaves officers more vulnerable to develop serious mental illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder (Violanti et al. 2007) depression and anxiety. In some cases where these conditions are not treated it can even lead to suicide, and Loo (2003) illustrates how this is more common than we might think with rates of suicide in police rising over the years.

Mental wellbeing is being managed within police forces who have their own methods, the main one being a form of therapy called trauma risk management, or TRIM (March on Stress 2012) which is offered to police officers after every critical incident they attend and is focussed on managing the effects of those incidents before they become a larger issue.

In conclusion, the role of a response officer is integral to dealing with critical incidents on the front line and first hand. Response officers have a responsibility to the public to manage expectations and to reduce the impact on victims and communities as best they can by effectively identifying critical incidents and ensuring that the correct people are informed and are managing the incidents and risk. Whilst they are focussing on the victims and communities it is also important that these officers consider their own mental wellbeing and the effects that critical incidents may have on them and take the necessary steps to manage their own trauma early on through the support available to them.

Word Count: 1068

Question 3

In this essay I will be discussing the National Intelligence Model (NIM) and how it is used for gathering information and intelligence in policing, specifically in structuring how police can process and develop bits of information and turn it into actionable intelligence during the course of an investigation.

Innes and Sheptycki (2004) provide a distinction between information and intelligence stating that “information consists of bits of data that, when combined and viewed together with relevant background knowledge, may be used to produce intelligence, which informs the actions and decisions of policing organisations”. This means that a bit of information on its own cannot be counted as intelligence unless the context and background of the information is fully reviewed and deemed to be accurate or trustworthy. This is a useful tool for police to determine what information may be viable, actionable intelligence and what may just be hearsay or not reliable enough to be used (College of Policing 2022). The NIM is used across three levels of policing:

Level one

Basic Command Unit (BCU) and local intelligence. This could be used by response police officers or often neighbourhood police officers when they are passed information by members of the public. This could also include low level offences, thefts and reports of local level drug dealing and other similar instances. This is a good method to use for local intelligence because it allows officers to quickly determine the validity and usefulness of information as it is passed to them and allows for this to then be recognised and shared in a timely matter which will often benefit other investigations or departments.

Level two

This is where the NIM is used at a force or region-wide level ranging over more than one BCU and can also be used to share information between bordering forces. This is particularly useful when considering larger scale crimes and especially county lines drug dealing (Williams and Finlay 2019) as this is often seen to be happening across borders and force areas. The downfall of this is that it is only useful if the information is properly recorded and shared with the right agencies, therefore it is important for each police force to be ensuring that officers do know and understand how to submit this intelligence properly and effectively share it on this level.

Level three

This stage is used primarily where serious and organised crime intelligence needs to be shared on a national and international scale. This kind of intelligence will be shared with larger scale agencies such as INTERPOL and is often in connection with larger ongoing investigations as they develop. This kind of intelligence is much less likely to be stumbled upon on the street or during a routine conversation and often comes from more in-depth and complex investigations that police carry out into organised crime groups and other similar persons. This is a useful tool for tackling serious organised crime and being able to share the information with ease across international bodies, however this scale of information is not usually shared with local officers when it is deemed important or confidential and therefore can be missed if the persons involved are likely to be caught up in day-to-day smaller scale incidents. (Lander, 2010)

The NIM grades intelligence by using a system called “3x5x2”. This is a useful system to have because it allows all pieces of intelligence to be graded in the same way and allows any person who has use for the intelligence to judge the information based off the system

and understand how to use it accordingly. Each stage of the system refers to a different aspect of the intelligence (NAFN Gov 2022).

Source

This is the “3” of the system. This refers to where the information has come from and whether it is:

1. Reliable, meaning that the information has come from a person or place that is completely trusted and believable and there is no reason to doubt the validity of the information.
2. Untested, meaning that the source of information may be new to us and we cannot know whether they are reliable unless this information can be otherwise tested.
3. Not Reliable, for example the source has given information in the past which has proven to be false or they are of a bad character.

This is a vital aspect to intelligence gathering because it allows us to understand how valid the information is and how quickly we should trust the source, or whether further work is needed to develop and test the information. By knowing that the source of intelligence may not be reliable allows officers to be more wary of how they use intelligence and avoid any mistakes or breaches (Cope, 2004).

Intelligence

The “5” aspect of the system is in reference to the reliability of the information itself rather than the source. The source of the intelligence may be extremely reliable, however may they have only received the information from a third party rather than knowing it themselves. This then comes down to analysing the trust in the information and again is a useful tool in allowing us to understand where intelligence is strong or where it may need development and investigation. The 5 aspects of this stage are whether the intelligence is:

- A. Known directly. For example, the source has witnessed something with their own eyes and know it to be true.
- B. Known indirectly but corroborated. So the source may not have seen something directly, but they have been told by several separate people/sources the same information.
- C. Known indirectly. In this case this can be more of hearsay or a third party report. This type of intelligence and the next 2 options are where it less likely to be acted on without further investigation.
- D. Not known.
- E. Suspected to be false. The final two options are very similar and allow officers to know that information may not be strong enough to be acted on as intelligence.

Handling

The final stage of the system is in reference to the sharing of information. This is either P. Lawful sharing permitted or C. lawful sharing permitted with conditions. This is a useful stage in managing how and when information is shared, it is particularly good for when intelligence is sensitive or there is a large ongoing investigation which needs to be kept confidential to certain people.

In conclusion, there are several methods for gathering intelligence in policing. Information that is given has to be thoroughly vetted and understood before it can be considered actionable intelligence and sometimes information will lead or contribute to larger scale investigations. The methods used specifically by the NIM allows us to gather and share information on a number of scales and also provides us with a method for understanding and grading intelligence to allow officers to fully understand what is reliable and what needs development when gathering information and intelligence.

Word Count: 1100.

Question Five

In this essay I will be discussing the concept of evidence-based policing and how it informs crime prevention theories and strategies and aim to reduce re-offending. I will be specifically looking at knife crime in order to illustrate these points, as there has been an increase in reported knife crime over recent years. I will be discussing how evidence-based policing and research into this type of crime has informed strategies for tackling re-offending and evaluating how successful these have been.

Evidence-based policing (EBP) works on the theory that decisions about policing policies and decisions should be based on/influenced by scientific evidence as this is the best available information. It is based off the ideas of Sherman (1998) who describes it as “the use of the best available research on the outcomes of police work to implement guidelines and evaluate.” This is an extremely useful tool to use when trying to tackle crime prevention and reducing re-offending because it allows us to look at the facts and what has previously worked and build upon a working theory to continuously improve approaches to crime prevention. It allows for both the positive and negative outcomes to be routinely assessed and prevents the risk of being stuck with rigid procedures that may need to update and adapt with societal and situational changes.

One of the theories of crime prevention which stems from EBP is Routine Activity Theory and more specifically the Problem Analysis Triangle (College of Policing 2022). This is the theory that has been developed based off of research and states that in order for a

crime to take place there must be three factors: a willing offender, a suitable location and a suitable target. Therefore if we remove one of these factors the theory states that we should be able to improve crime prevention.

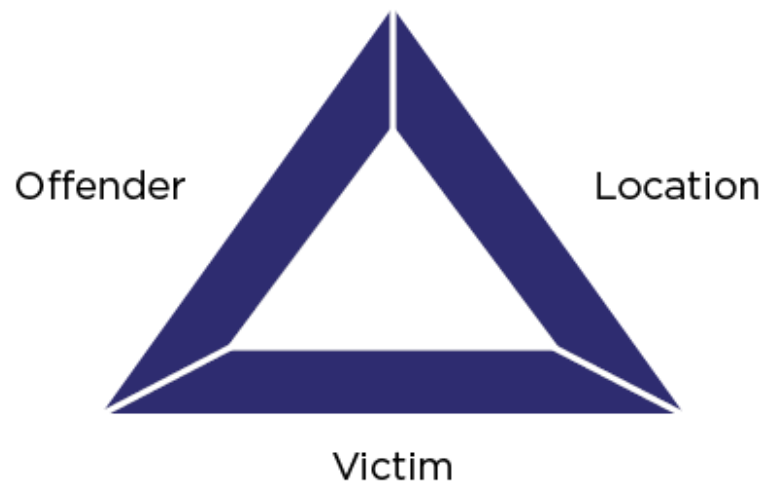


Fig 2. Problem Analysis Triangle (College of Policing 2022)

With this theory in mind when considering strategies for preventing crime and reducing re-offending, one of the options available is that we should be able to focus on the offender and rehabilitate them which will in turn prevent them from committing any crimes (Bastow 2014). This can be done by ways of enforcing curfews, rehabilitative practices, or even sometimes custodial sentences.

When looking at knife crime specifically this has been a major talking point over recent years with the public and media having a major focus on increasing levels of knife crime particularly in younger people. One method that has been brought in by the UK Government and more specifically the Offensive Weapons Act (2019) is Knife Crime Prevention Orders which can last between six months to two years and will result in a conviction or fine if breached. These were brought into place to give police in England and Wales an “additional preventative tool” (Home Office 2019) in tackling knife crime.

This order was brought into place in the hopes of stopping those who are regularly carrying knives in public places from doing so without entirely criminalising young people, and whilst they do prove to be an effective tool in preventing re-offending in terms of knife crime there has also been a negative response from the public who argue that Knife Crime Prevention Orders are the new “knife ASBOs” and are ostracising and generalising persons to be “the usual suspects” (Hendry, 2021). This is the biggest issue with the prevention theories for knife crime is finding the balance between reducing offending and criminalising and putting young people into the system.

Since the increase in knife crime over recent years the media in particular has had a vested interest in this narrative particularly in capital cities like London, however the increase has happened over other forces in England and Wales too. As a result of this the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) have been cracking down on sentencing knife crimes, however this has not been well received. This combined with the controversial introduction of Knife Crime Prevention Orders appears to have had an adverse effect on knife crime/young people carrying knives as many people feel that we are now criminalising a group of youngsters unnecessarily (Roberts 2019).

In conclusion, when it comes to evidence based policing it is a good tool for analysing the facts and previous incidents and taking the best information to create theories and strategies for preventing crime and repeat offending. Knife crime is a very topical crime to use as an example for this, with recent years there being an increase in focus by both the public and media and also the CPS and police forces. The strategies brought into place have been based off of an evidence based policing standpoint however have not been as well received as governing bodies may have expected and also the statistics for knife crime do not seem to be dropping, arguing that these policies are not doing the job they wanted. It

appears that the government and maybe even police forces individually need to re-evaluate the information available from the last year in terms of knife crime and use this to create new evidence-based policies that will work to prevent offending.

Word Count: 900

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