

ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENTS - 2319917 – RACHAEL TRAVERS

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

Mental wellbeing has traditionally been categorised into two branches: eudaimonic wellbeing and hedonic wellbeing. Whilst eudaimonic wellbeing focuses on long term achievement of optimal psychological functioning, hedonic tendencies are the search for immediate happiness and pleasure (Van Agteren et al., 2021). However, it is a combination of both categories that can influence wellbeing as a whole. Research has recently indicated that having high mental wellbeing contributes to improvements in development, longevity, and long-term health (Diener, 2017). Ergo, it is crucial that mental wellbeing is prioritised for survival. Within Policing, there are numerous persons whose mental wellbeing need to be considered in equal stead. Not only is the wellbeing of Police Officers to be considered, but also the wellbeing of both victims and defendants. Failure to ensure that wellbeing of these individuals is upheld can have catastrophic impacts on investigations.

In a study conducted by the Police Federation, results concluded that over the financial year of 2023 to 2024, more than 14,500 Police Officers were signed off work due to either depression, stress, or post-traumatic stress disorder (2024). This figure is concerning an increase of 130% since the first study was conducted in 2013. Additionally, a study conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Survey in 2023 indicated that Police Officers were suffering with incredibly high levels of fatigue, with 69.6% stating that their fatigue levels were high, and 28.9% of participants stating it was very high (Oscar Kilo, 2023). UK Police Forces are already operationally understaffed with statistics indicating that England and Wales are at least 30,000 officers short of the figures needed to maintain public safety (Sheldrick, 2023). Ergo, Police understaffing is creating incredibly demanding workloads for serving Officers, leading to increased levels of stress and depression. This in turn creates a vicious cycle where more Police Officers are being signed off from work, creating even higher unmanageable workloads for existing Officers (HMICFRS, 2025). Unmanageable workloads can also impact public trust and relationships as Officers are not having time to investigate cases on their workload, leading to poor results, and even the potential loss of statutory time limitations.

Furthermore, the academic model Betari's Box can be applied to emotional wellbeing. This cyclical model suggests that one's personal attitude and emotions can impact on their own behaviour. This behaviour can then be witnessed by others and affect their attitude and behaviour – leading to a continuous cycle (Tavabie, Bass and Minton, 2020). This model would suggest that if serving Police Officers are struggling with their mental health, and are struggling with fatigue but are still working, that potentially their lowered moods could influence their colleagues leading to a greater number of Officers experiencing mental health problems. Similarly, if these Officers are also having contact with victims of crime, then not only could their fatigue and exhaustion suggest to the victim a lack of care and concern for their report but could also negatively impact the victim's mental wellbeing.

Victim mental wellbeing is crucial to consider within Policing. Research conducted by the Home Office indicates that between 2015 to 2020, almost half of all victims withdrew from supporting an investigation in cases regarding rape offences and violence against the person. Additionally, one in three victims withdrew from sexual offence investigations (Gov.uk, 2021). Research indicates that these victim withdrawals are inextricably linked with suffering from a traumatic event, lack of support from agencies within the Criminal Justice System, and extensive delays in delivering justice (Victims Commissioner, 2020). Therefore, it can be inferred that negative victim emotional wellbeing can contribute towards lack of support and involvement within an investigation, potentially leading to a lack of conviction for an offence and consequently a lack of closure for the victim.

Suspect and defendant mental wellbeing is also a factor that needs to be considered within investigations. Under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE, 1984) Code of Practice C, Police and Custody Staff have a duty of care towards detainees and maintaining their wellbeing. Failure to comply with PACE can have detrimental impacts on investigations including the exclusion of evidence from Court, civil claims against the Police, and the potential loss of job for those breaching the Act. Breaching PACE can also undermine public trust in the Police and question their ability to do their job to the required standard (Broadbent, 2003).

Further research into the benefits of developing and maintaining positive mental wellbeing has concluded that the continued improvement of mental wellbeing over a ten-year period can reduce the risk of developing a mental health condition by up to 8.2 times (Keyes, Dhingra and Simoes, 2010). Therefore, increased mental wellbeing of both Police Officers and victims could both reduce understaffing within UK Police Forces and

also assist victims recovering from traumatic life events. Additionally, increased mental wellbeing has been deemed to increase the recovery time from physical injuries and illness (Sin, 2016). In 2023 alone 50,259 Police Officers were assaulted whilst on duty across the entire UK. Improved mental wellbeing could therefore aide the recovery time for these potential injuries, leading to decreased time signed off from work and ultimately improve staffing resources, reducing pressure on existing serving Police Officers (Police Federation Dorset, 2024).

It is evident therefore that upholding the mental wellbeing of Police Officers, victims, and detainees is critical to ensure that the entire investigative process is not negatively impacted from start to finish. Mental wellbeing is required by Police Officers to firstly remain in the job to investigate the offence itself, but positive attitudes by Police Officers are also crucial as to not negatively impact the victim. Furthermore, victim mental wellbeing is required to increase the likelihood that they continue to support the investigation until it's conclusion, leading to a higher likelihood of conviction. Finally, detainee wellbeing is critical to ensure that a breach of PACE is not committed which could jeopardise the investigation as a whole.

Word Count - 973

How might personal attitudes, values and bias impact upon the effective investigation of volume crime?

Your answer must be based on academic research, but you may refer to relevant, recent examples.

Whilst volume crime does not have a set definition, it is typically defined as the offences that account for the largest proportion of crime reported to the Police (Brown and Smith, 2018). Furthermore, volume crimes are offences which through their frequent nature create a large impact on the community and create a strain on the local Police force to combat. These offences include but are not limited to burglary, theft, robbery, criminal damage, and assault (Hibbitt and Shaw, 2023). However, some academics will argue that the above definitions of volume crime neglect to encompass and recognise newer offences that are less traceable such as cyber-enabled crime (Cartwright and Bones 2017).

A fundamental responsibility within Policing is to conduct investigations. Whilst the Code of Practice to the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 defines a criminal investigation as,

“An investigation conducted by police officers with a view to it being ascertained whether a person should be charged with an offence, or whether a person charged with an offence is guilty of it”,

there are multiple factors that make an investigation effective.

Firstly, it is imperative that Police Constables remain impartial throughout an investigation. It is not for a Constable to decide who is innocent or guilty of an offence, but rather to collect evidence related to the offence. When collecting evidence, golden hour enquiries are essential to prioritise as positive action taken immediately after an offence can allow for crucial evidence and lines of enquiry to be identified (Rose, 2021). However, research suggests that personal attitudes, values, and bias can impact upon the effective investigation of volume crimes.

In current society, an offence that has recently proliferated, to the extent that some academics are referring to it as an “epidemic”, is shoplifting (Taylor, Taylor, and Unsworth, 2024, p.507). A crime survey completed by the British Retail Consortium (BRC) (2024) identified that shoplifting within England and Wales increased from eight million offences in 2023, to a damning 16.7 million incidents within 2024. Ergo, the

offence of theft can clearly be distinguished to be a volume crime effecting the UK. A recent study comparing the statistics of shoplifting from the BRC to the Police statistics for shoplifting suggested that only approximately 2.4% of shoplifting incidents known to retailers were reported to Police in 2023 (Taylor, Taylor, and Unsworth, 2024). Of the reports made to Police regarding shoplifting, the Home Office has concluded that 58.4% of these reports were finalised by the Police with no suspect identified, suggesting a complete failure by Police to conduct the necessary effective investigation in some situations (Home Office, 2023).

Research suggests that the attitude, values and bias of both the public, and Police Officers can impact investigations regarding volume crimes. In relation to shoplifting, academics have suggested that a lack of reporting this offence by the public, to Police can result in a vicious cycle where Police are not aware of the extent of the issue, leading to it becoming deprioritised within the Crime Plan and underfunded. Due to a lack of recognition by the Police of the issue, the public become disheartened that no action has been taken as the offence remains a prominent problem, and this further discourages the public reporting future shoplifting offences to Police (Taylor, Taylor, and Unsworth, 2024).

However, the onus cannot be placed purely onto the Public as the Police are also accountable for letting bias and personal attitudes impact effective investigations. Within the scope of completing an investigation, a considerable amount of work goes into building a casefile to present the evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service. Building this casefile and compiling the evidence can take a considerable amount of time. However, it can be argued that at present there is some discord between Police Forces and other agencies that comprise the Criminal Justice System due to sentencing lengths for offences.

The Justice Secretary Shabana Mahmood has recently revealed that as of May 2025, the UK prison overcrowding crisis has now reached a figure where prisons are operating dangerously close to the operational capacity, with male UK prisons currently at 99% capacity (ITV, 2025). Mahmood furthered that unless urgent action is taken, the UK will run out of space in prisons by November 2025. Suggestions to alleviate this pressure on the prison system include removing prison time for any sentences under twelve months and instead increase the use of community sentences (Seddon, 2025). However, it can be argued that the removal of prison also removes the deterrent from re-offending. It can be further suggested that short sentences given to offenders after committing crime disheartens Police Officers from initially trying to secure a conviction for a suspect as the sentence does not feel as though it reflects the amount of work that has gone into

the investigation. As such, it could be suggested that some Police Officers would feel less inclined to investigate volume crimes such as shoplifting as they do not believe that a suitable conviction would be received, and as such their time would be better spent dealing with crimes that secure a longer sentence.

Additionally, a harrowing report released by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has stated that the police system with the UK is “broken” and that understaffing levels are leaving Officers to try and carry “unmanageable workloads” (2025, p. 2). Due to the amount of pressure that Police Officers are currently under to try and balance large workloads, it can be suggested that there comes a point where Officers are having to use judgement to prioritise cases. It can be further suggested that regarding a shoplift offence against a large corporation versus a domestic violence investigation, a Police Officer’s unconscious bias may prioritise the domestic violence case as they would deem it to be a more serious offence, leaving the shoplift investigation neglected. However, both investigations should be held in equal stead as both are a crime, but understaffing levels do not allow this to happen.

To conclude, personal attitudes, values, and bias can impact upon the effective investigation of volume crime. With 70% of UK Police Forces at breaking point and operating at minimum staffing levels, workloads are becoming unmanageable leaving Officers to use personal bias to choose which investigations to prioritise (Police Federation, 2025). When therefore an investigation into a volume crime is unsuccessful, public trust is lost leading to less reported crime although statistics indicate that the offences are still occurring. With the current impending prison crisis continuing to cause uncertainty and rash sentences being proposed to urgently alleviate pressure, personal bias will continue to neglect volume crime investigations.

WORD COUNT - 1100

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.

Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) remains as an extremely challenging issue for the UK Government to combat, costing the UK upwards of forty-seven billion pounds a year and with an estimated fifty-nine thousand people involved (Home Office, 2023). SOC itself is defined as either individuals, groups, or transnational networks committing offences including, but not limited to, modern day slavery, illegal firearms, money laundering and fraud, illegal drug offences, and child sexual exploitation (Enfield, 2024). Whilst the UK Government has previously implemented strategies in an attempt to mitigate the risks and harm caused by SOC, it continues to be a prominent problem in contemporary society. In 2013, the UK Government introduced a strategy that was centralised around four objectives: 'Pursue, Prevent, Protect, Prepare' (2015). This approach not only focused on disrupting individuals already involved within SOC but recognised that in order to fully tackle the issue, emphasis was needed on preventing people from becoming involved initially. However, with research indicating that the statistics for SOC are continuing to increase and that none of the top ten SOC threats within the UK are new, but rather the same existing threats continuing to evolve, one can suggest that the current prevention strategy is not effective (Haenlein, 2023).

Research indicates that there is a correlation between SOC and public protection issues. Within this context, protection issues relate to the measures taken to safeguard the public from harm, particularly those considered to be the most vulnerable. Additionally, vulnerability will be considered as the likelihood of victimisation (Winkel et al., 2003).

An example of a public protection issue that is both a public protection issue, and can be utilised as a platform to exploit vulnerable individuals would be internet facilitated crime and the use of the Dark Web as an environment and catalyst for crime to occur within an anonymous setting (Finklea, 2017). Contextually, the Internet consists of three layers: the Surface Web, the Deep Web, and the Dark Web (Moggridge and Montasari, 2022). Whilst the Surface Web is the most easily accessible layer of the internet, an estimated ninety percent of internet traffic actually occurs within the Deep Web (Bertram, 2015; Chertoff, 2017). The Dark Web is a segment of the Deep Web and consists of "cryptographic protocols" allowing for user anonymity and prevents monitoring by law enforcement agencies (LEA) (Davies, 2020, p.407). This anonymity is achieved by allowing users to relay their searches through three other users' devices before reaching their own, creating an untraceable encryption. This creates extreme

challenges for combatting SOC as often LEAs are not able to trace cybercriminals, creating an issue regarding safeguarding vulnerable people and slowing the trade of illegal items online.

Whilst the Dark Web can be used for both licit and illicit affairs, an example of successfully apprehended SOC within this medium would be the apprehension and destruction of the site Playpen. This site was a child abuse content page. When the site was destroyed it allegedly had “215,000 users and hosted upwards of 117,000 posts involving the sexual abuse of children” (Chertoff and Jardine, 2021, p.1). It is therefore evident that the internet can facilitate and accelerate SOC, leading to public protection issues.

Alternatively, should a LEA manage to successfully identify a prolific cybercriminal involved within the proceeds of SOC, a harrowing report published by the Criminal Law Reform Now Network (CLRNN) has suggested that the current laws including the Computer Misuse Act 1990 are in need of a complete reform as they are “inadequate” to deal with modern day online offences (2020, pp.117). Ergo, not only are improved cybersecurity measures required to Police the Dark Web to apprehend and prevent SOC, but a complete reform is needed of existing UK laws to modernise them and make them applicable to the advancement in technology.

A further public protection issue that is arguably inextricably linked to SOC are ongoing socio-economic issues. Between March 2023 and March 2024, 59,899 children were arrested across ENGLAND and WALES (Youth Justice Board, 2025). Children are already classed as vulnerable individuals, due to their age. Previous research has indicated that the likelihood of child delinquency can be increased due to the presence of certain criminogenic risk factors. These risk factors include poverty, maltreatment, and less engagement with positive social opportunities (Youth.Gov, 2023). It can be suggested that the Cost-of-Living Crisis (COLC) which has resulted in the price increases of everyday essentials has resulted in more than one in four children within the UK living in poverty, and that one in five adults are struggling to provide sufficient food for their children (Barnado's, 2022). As a result, charities have observed gangs bribing children with coats and food in order to lure them into criminality (Fazackerly, 2022).

Whilst research is scarce due to the new challenge that the COLC has created, initial findings suggest that since the COLC, an increase in adults have also become involved within crime. This is both for the financial aspect, but also to regain a sense of

“prosocial identity” that is found through employment or affiliation with a group (Oswald, 2022, p.221). As unemployment within the UK is at its highest rate for the last four years at 4.5%, it can be inferred that in order to maintain this sense of identity, adults are finding comfort from this involvement in a group (ONS, 2025).

To conclude, research indicates that there is a positive correlation between public protection issues and SOC. Whilst the Dark Web remains an extreme challenge for LAE to Police due to its untraceable relays, SOC can continue to operate via this platform. Not only does this mean that contraband can continue to be sold anonymously online, but that vulnerable individuals are also at great risk of being exploited on sites found within the Dark Web including those relating to child abuse, sexual abuse, and human trafficking. Furthermore, socio-economic issues can also be accounted to the increase of individuals becoming involved within SOC. As employment levels continue to decrease and the basic cost for essential commodities increases, both adults and children are becoming involved with crime as a means of survival, or to receive basic human requirements such as food and warmth.

WORD COUNT: 1025

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.

Broadly defined, diversity can relate to any perceived similarity or difference between people, both observable and otherwise (Gross-Golacka, Kupczyk and Wiktorowicz, 2022). Within a Policing context, diversity tends to mostly focus on the nine protected characteristics found within the Equality Act 2010. These characteristics are as follows: race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, disability, marriage and civil partnership, and gender reassignment. UK Police Forces have previously been subject to extreme scrutiny regarding concerns and reports concluding that they are both institutionally racist and sexist. The question remains as to whether changes have been implemented to adapt the UK Police Service to accommodate diversity, and whether any changes made have been successful. Ergo, this essay will focus on examining how effectively UK Police Forces have changed to become more inclusive. However, it is important to note that as diversity, management, and inclusion are not directly observable constructs, that they can be difficult to measure (Booyesen, Bendl and Pringle, 2018).

Historically, the UK Police Service was repeatedly found to be failing Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. In April 1981, three days of violent riots occurred across Brixton, London, following extreme unrest and tensions between the Metropolitan Police and the community. This was due to community perceptions of unprovoked and provocative targeting of black individuals by the Met Police. Shortly after these riots, the UK Government commissioned Lord Scarman to inquire into the riots to identify the cause. Lord Scarman's report concluded that whilst the UK Police were not institutionally racist, that both racial disadvantage and racial discrimination were possible contributors towards the rioting (Taylor, 1984). However, eighteen years later following the extreme miscarriage of justice involving the failed investigation into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, a young black man murdered by a number of white racists in London, a further inquiry was carried out. This enquiry later became a crucial part of the Macpherson Report (1999). The Macpherson Report concluded that the UK Police Service was in fact institutionally racist (Lea, 2002). The events leading up to the Brixton Riots, the damning Macpherson Report, and numerous other miscarriages of justice by the UK Police Service left extremely fractured relationships between the Police and BAME communities.

Additionally, more recent events have also had a catastrophic impact on the UK Police Forces relationship with certain members of the community who fit within the diversity quota. In 2021 Wayne Couzens was charged with the kidnap, murder, and rape of Sarah Everard. At the time of these offences, Couzens was a serving Police Officer within the Metropolitan Police. In a study conducted by the End Violence Against Women Coalition in 2021 involving 1700 UK women, 47% stated that since Couzens was charged with the offences against Everard, that they now have less trust in the Police (Brown and Hobbs, 2023). Following Everard's murder, Baroness Louise Casey was tasked with investigating the Metropolitan Police. Her findings evidenced racist attitudes, extreme bullying, and "deep-seated homophobia" (Casey, 2023, p.16). Her report suggested a "complete overhaul" is needed to "restore public trust and confidence and earn back consent from women, Black communities and the rest of London" (Casey, 2023, p.19).

Casey's report would suggest that there are still detrimental failures by UK Police Forces to accommodate diversity within the UK. Whilst her report focuses primarily on the Metropolitan Police, it can be suggested that as discriminatory attitudes are so prominent within one UK Police Force, that they must also be shared by other UK Police Forces. Even if these racist and homophobic tendencies are not shared by other Police Forces, the public have access to Casey's report and could assume these beliefs are shared by all Police Officers and Policing Institutions, further damaging relationships between the public and the Police. Casey's report compared with both the Scarman and Macpherson report clearly share similar findings of racist attitudes within the UK Police. This devastatingly suggests that even though there are forty-two years between the publications of the Scarman report and Casey's report, that derogative and discriminatory attitudes are still incorporated within UK Police Forces.

However, UK Police Forces have attempted to make changes in order to make their own workforce more diverse. Recently Positive Action employment approaches have been incorporated by Police Forces, such as South Wales, to encourage the employment of individuals with underrepresented characteristics (South Wales Police, 2025). Not only does this encourage diversity within the workplace, but research suggests that improved demographic representation within Police Forces can encourage engagement and cooperation from the public who feel represented (Muibu and Olawole, 2022). Statistics also reveal that the employment of individuals from BAME communities within the UK Police Service are increasing. As of March 2025, 6.5% of senior officers were from BAME communities, compared with just 2.8% in 2007 (Gov.ukb, 2025). Additionally, women made up 35.4% of police officers across England and Wales. This being the highest proportion of female officers since records began in 2003 (Gov.ukb, 2025). However, whilst it is positive that diversity is increasing within UK Police Forces,

91.6% of the workforce remain as white officers with only 1.3% of the workforce represented by Black employees (Gov.ukb, 2025). This suggests that more needs to be done to ensure greater representation and as a result, better relationship with the public.

To conclude, whilst UK Police Forces are making changes and utilising Positive Action techniques to encourage individuals with underrepresented characteristics to join the Police, there still remains extreme disproportion between white officers, male officers, and their female and BAME counterparts. This underrepresentation of individuals with protected characteristics can lead to a lack of representation within Police Forces, resulting in distrust and fractured relationships with the community. Furthermore, recent horrific and tragic events such as Sarah Everard's murder by a serving police officer has had detrimental impacts on community relationships. These failing community relationships have only been exacerbated by the findings from Casey's report that suggest a complete breakdown of Policing is needed and that discrimination is a common theme amongst Police Officers. Ergo, whilst UK Police Forces have taken some action to try and accommodate diversity, there remains extreme disparity and as such it can be concluded that the Police Service has not adapted effectively to accommodate diversity from the perspective of the public.

Word Count: 1043

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