

UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORM

Please complete the following research proposal and submit it to Turnitin.

Which project option are you taking? Please tick:

8,000 word project: ✓

OR

4,000 word project and presentation:

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DRAFT RESEARCH TITLE QUESTION: The Criminal Use of E-Bikes in Gwent and the Efficacy of Strategies in Tackling Them. INTRODUCTION: E-bikes have become a growing challenge for UK police forces. The issue does not appear to be going away and therefore police forces are grappling with strategies to combat such a multi-faceted issue. One of the major aspects of this phenomenon has been the use of e-bikes in crime such as drug dealing (especially county lines) and snatch theft crimes in more built-up urban areas. They are a useful piece of equipment to criminals due to them enabling quick and quiet travel. E-bikes also come with significant enforcement difficulties as the risks of pursuit to the riders and the officers, particularly as such riders often ignore traffic laws. Pledges have been made in recent times, such as PCC Dunbobbin of North Wales, to act on the issue of e-bikes in light of the rising danger to other road users (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner North Wales, 2024). They have had initiatives in the past such as Operation Blue to tackle illegal use of e-bikes and seize many of them. It remains to be seen if progress is being made following PCC Dunbobbin's pledge back in October 2024. PCC Jones of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight recently issued a warning that e-bikes are used 'almost exclusively' for crime (Parashar, 2025). My experience as a police officer in Gwent echoes that. They have been such a prevalent and difficult issue that we regularly face that I decided to research this topic with the hope and aim of identifying a way forward.	

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

I intend to collect information on the following subtopics of my research title:

1. An examination of the extent and nature of the use of e-bikes in criminal activity within Gwent and more widely and generally around the UK.
2. An evaluation of the effectiveness of Gwent's current strategies and enforcement policies.
3. An examination of the strategies adopted by other police forces and their efficacy.
4. An exploration of potential improvements that could be made by Gwent or wider authorities to mitigate the issue of e-bikes.

There will naturally be some overlap between objectives. The overarching process to put it simply will be to determine:

- a. What is the issue?
- b. What is being done about it?
- c. What could be being done about it?

LITERATURE REVIEW:

As far as I can tell at this stage, from preliminary research there is no existing research on the specific topic I aim to address. There are some research papers on issues adjacent to mine, but none that address it in its entirety.

There are various websites and news articles that do address the topic of criminal use of e-bikes and the strategies being adopted. There is a particular nexus of research on the "pandemic" facing London from e-bike related crime (France and Kanengoni, 2023).

A vast percentage of peer-reviewed articles on e-bikes are focussed on the issues around safety and risk in their use, particularly in China (Ma et al., 2019). While it may be relevant to consider as a sidenote the road safety implications and risks to individual riders of using e-bikes, it will not form a significant portion of the research that is necessary to approach the criminal element which is the crux of my research title.

Naturally, I will need to try to obtain as much official data as possible, whether from government reports or more local data specific to Gwent or surrounding areas. These are not immediately available from my preliminary research.

It would also be beneficial to obtain copies of Gwent Police's strategic plans in relation to e-bikes if this exists, and / or policies of other police forces to gather as much information about potential strategies and the logistics of their implementation.

I anticipate finding some difficulty in how to measure efficacy. There is likely to be limited data available.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH –SURVEY METHOD:

Due to limitations I expect in respect of obtaining quantitative data, a mixed method approach will be necessary to fill in information where there are gaps in data or such data is not accessible to me.

I will consider the usefulness of interviews, case studies, and surveys to fill in these gaps of data as well as secondary sources such as journalistic publications.

SUMMARY OF SAMPLING FRAMEWORK:

My research proposal is to focus mostly on how to tackle the issue of e-bikes, rather than the effect e-bikes have on the community. I do not feel that general questionnaires would be particularly useful as I am not looking to establish negative effects of e-bike use as this has already been established.

My target for researching sampling would be better served taking a more refined and targeted approach, such as conducting interviews with policy makers and implementers to gauge understanding of the issues Gwent Police as an entity is facing, how it is being faced, and whether there are any logistical inhibitors to any policy recommendations made as a result of my research.

The focus will be on institutional strategies rather than public perception or community challenges.

ETHICAL ISSUES:

I need to ensure informed consent when conducting any interviews. I will need to give participants information about the nature of the research and how their data will be used under GDPR.

I also need to ensure confidentiality of participants, and that they are informed of their rights to withdraw.

I will have to check my bias when it comes to my own perceptions of the issue I am researching, and ensure there is a balanced perspective.

TIME SCALE:

I anticipate separating my time into the following stages, although there will be overlap and need to revisit earlier stages:

- 1. Planning and literature review** - *June to July 2025*
- 2. Data collection and analysis** (with ongoing ethical considerations) - *July to October 2025*
- 3. Findings and development of recommendations** - *October to December 2025*
- 4. Final review, editing and submission preparation** - *December 2025 to February 2026*

REFERENCE LIST:

France, A. and Kanengoni, J. (2023). *Inside the capital's terrifying e-bike crime epidemic*. Evening Standard. Available at: <https://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/london-e-bike-crime-epidemic-b1064229.html> (Accessed: 18 May 2025).

Good Morning Britain (2024). *Dave Fishwick Investigates Modified E-Bikes Criminals Use to Snatch Phones*. YouTube. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ol5uwLBfCKs> (Accessed: 17 May 2025).

Ma, C., Yang, D., Zhou, J., Feng, Z. and Yuan, Q. (2019). Risk Riding Behaviors of Urban E-Bikes: A Literature Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(13). doi: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16132308> (Accessed: 17 May 2025).

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner North Wales (2024). *PCC pledges to act on the issue of e-bikes causing danger on the streets of North Wales*. Available at: <https://www.northwales-pcc.gov.uk/pcc-pledges-act-issue-e-bikes-causing-danger-streets-north-wales> (Accessed: 17 May 2025).

Parashar, A. (2025). *The £5,000 e-bikes used 'almost exclusively' for crime: Most riders on motorbike-style electric bicycles are 'doing something wrong', police boss warns amid two-wheeled crimewave gripping Britain*. Available at: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14506947/ebikes-exclusively-crime-police-warns.html> (Accessed: 17 May 2025).
