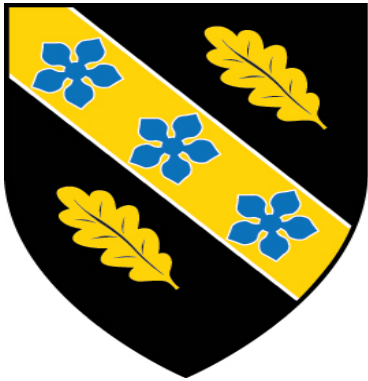




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SWANSEA - ABERTAWE

**An investigation into the prominence of  
neurodiversity within right-wing extremism:  
Are people with neurodiverse characteristics  
more vulnerable to radicalisation?**

James Balchin

2031212

BSc (Hons) Professional Policing Practice

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### Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed: J.Balchin

Date: 04/04/2024

### Statement 1

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BSc.

Signed: J.Balchin

Date: 04/04/2024

### Statement 2

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Date: 04/04/2024

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## Abstract

This dissertation investigates the prominence of neurodiversity within right-wing extremism and answers the specific question of whether those with neurodiverse characteristics are more vulnerable to right-wing radicalisation. Based on a detailed review of the existing literature towards both right-wing extremism and neurodiversity, a research gap was identified in the form of primary research from those who criminally investigate people with neurodiverse characteristics.

To address this academic gap, the research project was designed to include a survey across numerous policing units within the South Wales area, including Response, Neighbourhood, Criminal Investigation, and Public Protection teams, to gain insight from different perspectives. Furthermore, interviews were completed with policing professionals within Response and Criminal Investigation teams to provide a balance of quantitative and qualitative results and draw fuller conclusions.

The findings from this research provided a balance of literature review confirmation and new learning. Within this, it was found that a variety of right-wing extremist factors can create an appeal for those with neurodiverse characteristics, but the study concludes that although attractions exist, they are not exclusive to right-wing ideology and do not mean that all those with neurodiverse characteristics are vulnerable to radicalisation. The findings also highlight several future opportunities, where practical and academic recommendations are provided which include additional police training, multi-agency support strategies, and the direction for further studies.

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## Chapter 1 - Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

This dissertation provides an investigation into the prominence of neurodiversity within right-wing extremism and focuses on the specific question of whether those with neurodiverse characteristics are more vulnerable to right-wing radicalisation.

This chapter details an introduction to the research, to include the significance of the study. Additionally, this chapter provides the aims and objectives for the research project and explains the structure of the dissertation.

### 1.2 Background

The threat from extremism within the United Kingdom (UK) has gradually increased across recent years, where the risk level contributed towards the announcement of a new extremism definition in March 2024, which moves focus from action to ideology (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, 2024). This change follows a review of the UK's counter terrorism Prevent programme, which recommended a greater focus on ideology due to its radicalisation potential (Home Office, 2023).

Radicalisation, which is described as the transition process a person follows in the direction of support for, or involvement with, terrorist activity, forms a focus within this study (Home Office, 2024).

Whilst the literature review chapter provides the landscape for a thorough investigation of both right-wing extremism and neurodiversity, ranging from general to specific analysis, research shows that both areas are within an early research period (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021; Bell, 2023). Despite this, studies on terrorist

offenders with neurodiverse characteristics have recently developed, most significantly to include direct input from convicted terrorists, but not specifically within a right-wing setting (Al-Attar, 2020). A research gap therefore exists from the perspective of those who criminally investigate people with neurodiverse characteristics and those with a right-wing mindset. Consequently, this dissertation provides direct research from policing professionals within numerous police departments to address the research gap and enrich the wider academic understanding.

### 1.3 Aims and Objectives

The aims of this dissertation are to investigate the prominence of neurodiversity within right-wing extremism and to answer the question of whether people with neurodiverse characteristics are more vulnerable to radicalisation.

These aims will be achieved through the completion of the following objectives, which are designed to support a strategic investigation:

1. To analyse the existing literature surrounding the radicalisation of those with neurodiverse characteristics into right-wing extremism, to include any additional contributing factors.
2. To investigate and compare the understanding of neurodiversity within criminal investigations and right-wing extremism amongst numerous policing units in South Wales.
3. To assess any implications these findings present towards the investigation of those with neurodiverse characteristics, and the safeguarding of those at risk.

#### 1.4 Structure

To deliver a strong academic contribution within the scope of the project, the dissertation follows a coherent structure to explore the research aims and support the completion of the research objectives. The following chapter commences this investigation through a literature review, which completes the first objective. The dissertation then leads into separate chapters of a research methodology and an analysis of the results, which present the research design and findings and collectively achieve the second objective. Next, the dissertation leads into separate findings and recommendations chapters, which complete the third objective and provide direct conclusions to address the overall research aims.

#### 1.5 Conclusion

This completes the introduction of the dissertation, where the following chapter commences the research journey through a literature review that will critically analyse the existing research.

## Chapter 2 - Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

The impact of terrorism can lead to national fear, alter public behaviour, and influence economies, in a powerful reaction which can pass through generations (Van Der Does *et al.* 2021). In illustration of how history influences perception, despite what would be the impression of many, there were no fatalities within the UK because of terrorism within 2022 (Counter Terrorism Policing, 2023). A consideration therefore forms towards how history, stereotypes, and fear compare with reality, and how well the risks are truly understood. Despite the 2022 statistic, deeper analysis of recent terrorist movement within the UK identifies the growth of right-wing extremism, where activity has been particularly prominent within post-industrial communities (Knight, 2019). This chapter will evaluate the existing literature surrounding right-wing extremism and focus upon the prominence of neurodiversity within radicalisation. The current level of research towards right-wing extremism is disproportionately low, however, where between the timeframe of 2001 and 2018, only 6 out of 1846 terrorism articles within the most prominent terrorism journals used primary data to support their research (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021).

Consequently, research of those vulnerable to radicalisation by right-wing extremist groups holds opportunity and forms the landscape this research project will explore. This chapter will be separated into four specific areas of research, followed by a summary of the key learning and areas of opportunity. The four specific areas of research will include an introduction into right-wing extremism, the recruitment strategies of right-wing extremist groups, the growth of neurodiversity awareness, and how neurodiverse characteristics relate to right-wing extremism factors. The

chapter will critically evaluate the work of prominent researchers in these fields and aims to achieve objective one of the dissertation, which for reference is: To analyse the existing literature surrounding the radicalisation of those with neurodiverse characteristics into right-wing extremism, to include any additional contributing factors. The following subchapter begins this journey, where an introduction to right-wing extremism will be presented to form a foundation which will be built upon as the chapter progresses.

## 2.2 Introduction into Right-Wing Extremism

Despite the disproportionately low volume of research completed within right-wing extremism, studies specifically focussed on this area mostly began in 2013 (Schuurman, 2020). This has allowed for the complexity and range of right-wing extremism to be understood to some extent, but despite this, the UK's definition of terrorism has remained unchanged since 2000 (Glover, 2023). A prominent researcher to explore right-wing extremism on a global scale is Professor Cas Mudde, who acknowledged the academic debate to define the area, and concluded the far-right to be an umbrella term for the idolisation of nationalism and order (Mudde, 2014). This ranges from those who commit acts of physical violence to those who support or distribute the ideology, and whilst the area has been difficult to define, it has been described to be easily recognisable (Mudde, 2017). Further studies show that common areas right-wing extremist groups target include minority groups, immigration, and national strategies that promote diversity (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021). These factors are frequently impacted by current news and societal movements, but research also finds that famous moments in history, such as the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States (US), create regular focus for right-wing

groups (Wright, 2009). These references also date deeper into history, with common idolisation drawn towards the Nazi movement against the Jewish population for example (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021). Furthermore, from a UK perspective, extreme right-wing roots trace back to a similar timeframe, with the proscription of the British Union of Fascists in 1939, a right-wing political party (Jupp, 2022). With UK terrorism legislation relatively static across recent decades, despite the growing knowledge of right-wing extremist risks, this research project intends to explore whether awareness gaps exist within different policing units and any implications that may result.

In addition to historical motivations, right-wing activity across more recent years shows an evolution in extremist networks and their global reach. Two prominent worldwide attacks in 2019 for example include shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand and El Paso, Texas, where 51 and 22 people were killed respectively, in attacks committed by individuals described to have been lone parties, self-radicalised by right-wing ideology (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021). This is in contrast with stereotypes of extremist activity requiring large, organised networks and highlights the risk of self-radicalised individuals. From a UK perspective, the threat level of right-wing extremism is described to have drastically increased since 2014 (Jupp, 2022). A contributing factor towards this is the emergence of highly active and visible UK groups, illustrated through the first UK proscription of an extreme right-wing organisation in December 2016, where support or association with the group National Action was formally banned (Home Office, 2019). Further statistics show that although right-wing terrorism currently occupies only 20% of UK counter terrorism investigations, 37.5% of prevented attacks between March 2017 and

December 2021 were of late-stage right-wing terrorist plans (Counter Terrorism Policing, 2021). These findings have led some researchers to question the contribution the COVID-19 pandemic provided towards the current risk, where a combination of fear, loss, restriction, and an enhanced online presence may have laid foundations for the growth of right-wing ideology now and into the future (Khan-Ruf, 2021). With this learning considered, the next phase of the literature review moves into the recruitment strategies of right-wing extremist organisations, to evaluate the level of existing research and build upon current understanding.

### 2.3 Recruitment Strategies of Right-Wing Extremist Groups

To better understand the recruitment strategies of right-wing extremist groups, the common presence of frustration, injustice, and affinity is important to consider (Collins, 2023). In contrast with earlier indications that the online world forms a landscape where modern radicalisation largely occurs, thought is drawn towards the words of Walter Laqueur, a pioneering terrorism theorist, who famously claimed in 1999 that no volume of worldwide emails held the power or potential to make any future political impact (Laqueur, 1999). The speed of change, however, is clear, where as early as 2002 theories such as David Rapoport's wave theory, which separated terrorism into phases dating back to the 1880s, assessed the utilisation of technology and communication to be a continual priority for terrorist organisations (Rapoport, 2002). Also in reflection of earlier discussion, although right-wing extremist acts are prone to singular attackers, intentions do not develop without influence, where physical isolation may be relieved with online inspiration and relationships (Pajunen, 2015). This view is supported by a study conducted in 2013 which found the internet played a prominent role in the communication and

education of extremist content within all fifteen sampled instances of UK radicalisation (Behr *et al.* 2013). Limitations included a relatively small sample size; however, the unanimous factor adds legitimacy to the study. From this point to the current day, technology and social media use has accelerated, where online hate and counter speech have simultaneously grown, and conditions are set for further right-wing growth (Roach, 2021; Velásquez *et al.* 2021).

The growth of right-wing ideology online mainly spreads between the use of websites to display content, and social media platforms to network and engage (Odag, Leiser and Boehnke, 2019). Professor Jessie Daniels (2008; 2009a; 2009b), a sociologist at Hunter College, City University of New York, led early studies into the online spread of hate speech and right-wing concepts, which found that extremist groups created and used websites discretely to promote their ideology, where content was displayed subtly, without direct reference to right-wing extremist networks, and avoided censorship. Within her studies, Daniels presented an example where a Google search of Martin Luther King provided a website within the first page of results which was linked to a white supremacist group and displayed extreme messages of hate, religion, and race (Daniels, 2009b). In addition to those actively seeking this content, examples such as this demonstrate the risk of people locating right-wing extremist content unintentionally. Separate from websites alone, social media holds an added opportunity for right-wing groups to promote messages and communicate quickly. Whilst the perception of social media draws images of large platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, lesser-known platforms such as 8chan and Gab developed a large extremist presence (Scrivens and Conway, 2019). This does not exclude the large social media networks, however, where studies of X (formally known as

Twitter) found right-wing groups used extremist hashtags alongside trending topics for mass exposure and posted a large volume of less extreme, however suggestive content, to utilise volume to portray a lawful perception (Nouri, Lorenzo-Dus and Watkin, 2021). Strategies such as these illustrate how accessible right-wing extremist media has become and draws theorist attention towards the vulnerability of children and those with neurodiverse conditions to view this content (Glover, 2023).

From a different perspective, a study in 2017 across 223 convicted terrorists within the UK concluded that whilst the online world was an enabler, it was not a requirement within the radicalisation process, and that additional research towards those radicalised was required to include their motivation and ability (Gill *et al.* 2017). More recent literature has added strength to this argument, where an online resilience study promoted factors such as cultural acceptance, trust in community and leadership, and a natural resistance to violence to be barriers to extremism (Gerrand, 2022). This provokes thought towards why some people withdraw from extremist media if it becomes visible, and why others may be drawn deeper into the content. The next subchapter will therefore explore the available research towards neurodiversity, to provide context for additional investigation later within the literature review.

## 2.4 The Growth of Neurodiversity Awareness

Neurodiversity is a growing area of medical research, where the term is used to describe a difference in how the human brain processes information and includes several conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and a number more (Bell, 2023). Accordingly, medical studies estimate that approximately one fifth of the UK

population live with a neurodiverse condition (Doyle, 2020). Some of the physical characteristics these conditions tend to present will be explored later within this literature review, however, some of the emotional factors that studies highlight will be discussed now. Firstly, a significant book edited by psychologist Steven Kapp in 2020, with chapter authors praised to be on the forefront of the neurodiverse movement, consistently detailed the diagnosis phase to be an enlightening journey, where people with neurodiverse conditions quickly felt a sense of belonging and an explanation for potential difficulties within their lives (Kapp, 2020). In contrast, some describe the National Health Service (NHS) neurodiversity services to be under high stress, with long diagnosis waiting lists, which can add additional mental health strain, and a sense of helplessness for those in need of support (Mandy, 2022). From a different perspective, even once a diagnosis has been made, scholars raise a common sense of them-and-us amongst those with neurodiverse characteristics, which can create a divided sense of society, and lead to a perception of unfairness (Runswick-Cole, 2014).

Within the large range of neurodiverse conditions, most of the current research has been focussed on ADHD and autism, where conditions may coexist, and characteristics can overlap (Craig *et al.* 2015). From an offending perspective, a study in 2010 found that the diagnosis of ADHD was significantly more common in children who offend compared with diagnosis rates across children generally (Colins *et al.* 2010). This shows an increased likelihood for children with ADHD to have interaction with police, where concerns are enhanced by more recent studies which found children with ADHD had a younger first arrest age on average and had an increased likelihood to re-offend (Rutten *et al.* 2022). There has, however, been

limited statistical research completed towards the presence of neurodiversity within terrorist offenders. Despite this, the research which does exist shows people with neurodiverse conditions to be more prone to individual based attacks as opposed to group actors (Corner, Gill and Mason, 2016). Additionally, attention is drawn towards the increased rate of people with neurodiverse characteristics experiencing mental health concerns, to include for example suicidal thoughts, depression, and anxiety, where far more detailed analysis is required of neurodivergent terrorist offenders to better understand the factors (Curnow *et al.* 2023). The next and final area of the literature review therefore intends to draw the prior learning within this chapter together, to evaluate any potential links between right-wing extremism and neurodiverse characteristics.

## 2.5 Neurodiverse Characteristics in Relation to Right-Wing Extremist Factors

A leading researcher towards the analysis of autism characteristics within terrorism is Dr Zainab Al-Attar, a forensic psychologist whose work will be largely referenced within this subchapter. Al-Attar, who has spent numerous years within the field, to include direct interaction with convicted terrorists, is consistently of the opinion that no evidence exists to prove people with autism are vulnerable to terrorist radicalisation (Al-Attar, 2020). Instead, her view is supported by separate research which details that the characteristics of neurodiverse conditions may provide factors which direct those affected towards extremist content, but this does not mean that all neurodiverse people are vulnerable to radicalisation (Altier *et al.* 2017). The first area presented here is the difficulty some people with neurodiverse conditions may have with social interactions, where if experiences such as the difficulty forming relationships and bullying occur for example, this may lead to feelings of frustration,

injustice, a desire for retaliation, and promote online dependency (Al-Attar, 2020). Secondly, separate research towards the characteristics of autism shows that those affected frequently rely on thought processes driven by rules and facts (Baron-Cohen, 2002). This can form a reference to the traits of dictatorships, powerful leaders, and order which right-wing groups are known to promote (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021). This characteristic also poses thought towards historical moments such as the Nazi movement, as previously discussed (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021). In further exploration of history, Al-Attar finds within her research that autistic traits lead to a desire to understand topics in great depth, a factor which often leads to prolonged research, where war, history, conspiracy theories, and generally shocking content can provide stimulation (Al-Attar, 2020). Finally, separate research also found those with autism are often attracted to visual content, with stronger learning through the use of imagery, which may enhance reliance on this sense (Samson *et al.* 2012). This further supports the potential attraction towards military and extremist topics through the frequency of bold, striking content, which includes graphic images, weapons, flags, and uniforms often used by right-wing groups (Scrivens *et al.* 2021).

In addition to content consumption, the risk of radicalisation for people with neurodiverse characteristics is viewed to peak if online research leads to direct communication with extremists. Should this occur, validation and encouragement towards extremist ideology can provide reassurance and form a personal connection, which may bond the person towards the extremist group (Al-Attar, 2020). Furthermore, as connection and commitment become stronger, additional studies highlight the risk of fantasy, which becomes more prevalent during periods of tension (Palermo and Bogaerts, 2017). Al-Attar supports this factor, where her studies

suggest that discontent with reality can lead to a fixation on fantasy thoughts, where times of depression link with fantasies of death, and feelings of unfairness lead into the imagination of revengeful acts (Al-Attar, 2020). This brings reflection to earlier findings of those with neurodiverse characteristics being more susceptible to mental health concerns (Curnow *et al.* 2023).

## 2.6 Conclusion

This literature review has now completed objective one within the research project: To analyse the existing literature surrounding the radicalisation of those with neurodiverse characteristics into right-wing extremism, to include any additional contributing factors. To conclude, the review has transitioned through four distinct areas of research to finish in a position where direct comparisons between right-wing extremist factors and neurodiverse characteristics have been reviewed, predominantly through the research of Al-Attar (2020). As a result, the research has found that characteristic similarities can be drawn, but theorists do not support that actual evidence exists of those with neurodiverse characteristics being more vulnerable to right-wing radicalisation. Most of the research reviewed is relatively new, however, and a consistent factor throughout the chapter is that research of both right-wing extremism and neurodiversity is within a growth phase. Similarly, the research available at present does not include direct views from those who have criminally investigated people with neurodiverse characteristics. The exploration of police perceptions towards these factors, to include different policing units, is therefore where this research project fits within the broader selection of existing literature and research. The next chapter of the dissertation will therefore move into

a methodology phase to design a research strategy to best address the research gap.

## Chapter 3 - Research Methodology and Planning

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter achieved the first dissertation objective through the analysis of existing literature towards the radicalisation of those with neurodiverse characteristics into right-wing extremism. Within this, prominent researchers such as Dr Zainab Al-Attar provided insight into how the features of both areas interact, and the attraction this can create towards right-wing extremist content for those with neurodiverse characteristics (Al-Attar, 2020). Despite this, a conclusion was drawn that research is within an early growth phase, and theorists do not believe sufficient evidence exists to understand whether those with neurodiverse characteristics are vulnerable to radicalisation (Altier *et al.* 2017). Specifically, input from those who criminally investigate people with neurodiverse characteristics creates a gap within current research. This chapter therefore details the research methodology used to explore this opportunity, to support objective two of the dissertation, which for reference is: To investigate and compare the understanding of neurodiversity within criminal investigations and right-wing extremism amongst numerous policing units in South Wales.

### 3.2 Research Strategy

Research, importantly, is viewed as more than the simple collection and presentation of information, where purpose, direction, and the ability to interpret findings are salient (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). With the purpose of this research developed within the literature review, this paragraph focusses on the direction of the study. Firstly, where research is typically split into two different approaches, to

include the collection of new information or the further development of existing data, the research gap highlighted within the literature review means primary research (the collection of new information) is required to meet the dissertation objective (Hox and Boeije, 2005). Next, it is important to understand the type of information most beneficial towards the research goal. This again draws thought towards two paths, in the form of quantitative and qualitative methods, where quantitative approaches focus towards numeric, statistical outcomes, and qualitative approaches seek more word based, descriptive insight (Meyer and Avery, 2008). Within this dissertation, elements of both are utilised, where the research gap is closed by a mostly quantitative survey, however, also includes a small number of open questions to encourage qualitative views. In addition, interviews have been included from a solely qualitative approach. Consequently, this research approach aims to balance the qualities of quantitative and qualitative methods, for the outcomes to complement each other and to gain a fuller, more meaningful understanding. Whilst it is acknowledged that some researchers avoid this merge with concerns that the approaches may compete against each other, confidence in this strategy is built from studies which conclude that combined methods can produce comprehensive findings (Gelo, Braakmann and Benetka, 2008).

### 3.3 Data Collection

With the overall strategy better understood, this paragraph explores the data collection practices utilised to best support the dissertation objective. Firstly, the timeframe for the collection of information needs to be appropriately balanced against the timeline of the research project overall, where data collection across a short period is referred to as cross-sectional, and collection across a more sustained

duration is referred to as longitudinal (Rindfleisch *et al.* 2008). Whilst both hold strengths and weaknesses, the relatively short timeframe of this research project means a cross-sectional strategy has been selected, which will allow information and interpretation to be gained efficiently, and at an achievable cost (Setia, 2016). Here, surveys have been completed electronically across several different policing units to allow for expert insight consistent with the dissertation objective and a large volume of participants to support informative and credible quantitative analysis. Interviews within the qualitative approach have then been completed in a smaller volume, which has allowed information to be gained within the scope of the research project. These interviews involve participants from Response and Criminal Investigation policing units to balance quality with quantity, and to gain expert insight from different perspectives. Finally, the questions presented within both the survey and interview approaches are designed in response to the learning and opportunity highlighted within the literature review, to ensure the research is strategic and directed.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

After the data collection process, consideration of analysis techniques drew thought back towards quantitative and qualitative approaches. Accordingly, Microsoft Forms was predominantly used to collate and display statistical quantitative findings, where learning has been presented in the form of percentages and averages. Consistent with expectation, however, qualitative results from the open styled survey questions and interviews presented word-based insight, which largely included feelings, opinions, and descriptive experiences (Greetham, 2019). The successful development of this information therefore led to the utilisation of thematic analysis, a respected method to recognise key and recurring patterns within qualitative

information (Patton, 2015). Consequently, this highlighted common themes which were considered alongside quantitative survey findings to draw fuller conclusions. The analysis of this data, to include statistical information and the recognition of emergent themes, will inform critical discussions and reflection within later dissertation chapters.

### 3.5 Limitations and Potential Problems

Consistent with theorist views, however, no research approach is perfect, and researchers need to consider the strengths, weaknesses, and potential risks of their chosen paths (Choy, 2014). Firstly, from an ethical perspective, all stages of the dissertation received approval through an early review. Additionally, prior to any participation in surveys or interviews, all participants were briefed on the nature of the dissertation, informed that their participation was voluntary with the entitlement to withdraw their contribution, and advised that their participation would remain anonymous throughout. Consequently, due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, requests were made for interviews to be recorded through manual notes as opposed to audio recordings. To maintain accuracy and security, notes of the completed interviews were therefore created electronically and held on password protected systems. Secondly, this study utilised access to policing professionals which not all researchers possess. Whilst this means the findings are difficult to reinforce with other studies, the expert position of the sampled audience, combined with questions being designed strategically after a detailed literature review, adds a level of validity to the research and attends to the targeted nature of the project (Drost, 2011). Finally, a limitation is present within the relatively short size of the

dissertation, where focus was required to ensure the scope of the project remained within practical limits.

### 3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the methodology and planning considered within this research project. Within this, the strengths, weaknesses, and potential risks of each element have been detailed, and the utilised methods have been chosen because they provide a strong balance to achieve the research objectives. The next chapter of the dissertation will now move into the research findings these methods have produced.

## Chapter 4 - Analysis of Results

### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the methodology considered within this dissertation, where primary data collection was selected to close the 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 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, reference will be drawn to the survey and interview responses held within the dissertation appendix (see Appendix E and Appendix F respectively), 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 criminal investigations and right-wing extremism amongst numerous policing units 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 those with neurodiverse characteristics, and the safeguarding of those at risk.

## 4.2 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 contributions from different perspectives, their composition forms a notable feature within the research. 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 relevance to their contribution. Conversely, 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 understudied, and questions whether the indications did not exist, or whether a lack of awareness reduced recognition (Knight, 2019; Ahmed and Lynch, 2021).

## 4.3 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 create frustration and hatred in compliment of the literature review (Al-Attar, 2020;

Collins, 2023). This is further supported by question 10 of the survey, where approximately 81% of participants selected social interaction as 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 within their recruitment. This discussion is new compared with literature review findings and opens the potential for additional future research.

#### 4.4 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, including interest in topics such as history and war draw attraction towards a wealth of online content, which directly supports the literature findings (Al-Attar, 2020; Ahmed and Lynch, 2021). Question 10 of the survey strengthens this area, where curiosity and fascination were 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 promoted online dependency, and increased content exposure. This data supports the literature review, which highlighted that COVID-19 increased online presence and the accessibility of extremist content (Behr *et al.* 2013; Pajunen, 2015; Khan-Ruf, 2021). 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. Views were also raised that news and media outlets focus disproportionately on 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).

#### 4.5 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 significant 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 viewed unfavourably, with commentary of high re-offending rates consistent with the literature review (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.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the data provides 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 addresses the research gap. Consequently, this chapter completes the second dissertation objective. The next dissertation chapter therefore seeks to draw additional conclusions and implications to further explore the third dissertation objective.

## Chapter 5 - Findings and Conclusion

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focussed on the research findings, to include statistics, themes, and literature review comparisons. This chapter builds upon these foundations, where broader conclusions will be presented to address the overall dissertation question. Additionally, this chapter will critically reflect upon the research project overall, to include observed limitations and a consideration towards where the findings sit within the broader research picture. First, the following subchapter begins the discussion with a review of the dissertation objectives.

### 5.2 Dissertation Objectives

To support a strategic investigation, the dissertation set three specific objectives, which were:

1. To analyse the existing literature surrounding the radicalisation of those with neurodiverse characteristics into right-wing extremism, to include any additional contributing factors.
2. To investigate and compare the understanding of neurodiversity within criminal investigations and right-wing extremism amongst numerous policing units in South Wales.
3. To assess any implications these findings present towards the investigation of those with neurodiverse characteristics, and the safeguarding of those at risk.

These areas have been addressed in order, where the first objective was achieved within the literature review and has formed a frequent reference point throughout. Next, objective two was completed within the analysis of results chapter, where research findings were presented to include three prominent observed themes. Finally, the research findings also raised academic and practical implications, which will be further explored within this chapter to complete the third objective.

### 5.3 Main Findings

In addition to the research objectives, this subchapter addresses the dissertation question, which for reference is to investigate the prominence of neurodiversity within right-wing extremism, and to understand whether people with neurodiverse characteristics are more vulnerable to radicalisation. To begin this discussion, the primary research confirmed and strengthened the literature review, which presented theoretical relationships between neurodiverse characteristics and factors of criminal behaviour. Here, the survey and interview feedback consistently raised observed links to include social interaction, theoretical stimulation, and visual appeal, which shows the connections have been observed within policing in compliment of wider literature, but from a different viewpoint (Baron-Cohen, 2002; Samson *et al.* 2012; Al-Attar, 2020; Ahmed and Lynch, 2021). In combination of the literature review and primary research, the study has shown that a variety of right-wing extremist factors can create an appeal for those with neurodiverse characteristics, to include rule and order, politics, history, and a form of social belonging.

In contrast, the study demonstrates that although neurodiverse draws exist, these are not exclusive to right-wing ideology, and links occur towards criminal involvement

more generally. Notably, survey responses showed that participants perceived neurodiverse vulnerability to be present across criminal involvement more broadly, on a comparable if not marginally increased level than towards the development of a right-wing extremist mindset. This led to specific feedback detailed within the previous chapter of organised crime leaders targeting those with neurodiverse characteristics within their recruitment. Additionally, earlier consideration of why some people are attracted deeper into right-wing extremist content whilst others withdraw could be argued to a wider audience than neurodiversity alone, and forms a larger opportunity for study. Furthermore, the literature review presented that senses of injustice and frustration are emotions actively sought by terrorist recruiters (Collins, 2023). Whilst these feelings create an attraction towards the idolisation of retaliation, revenge, and the hate messages associated with right-wing extremism, the emotions are not unique to those with neurodiverse characteristics. Instead, society more broadly has the potential to develop these feelings, particularly during times of hardship. These points considered in combination therefore strengthen the previously highlighted argument of others, where although neurodiverse characteristics and right-wing factors relate to some extent, it does not mean all neurodiverse people are vulnerable to right-wing extremist radicalisation (Altier *et al.* 2017; Al-Attar, 2020). Consequently, this highlights the opportunity for further research, to better understand the optimal conditions for right-wing radicalisation to occur.

Finally and most unexpectedly, the research highlighted a severe support and training gap regarding neurodiversity, both to safeguard those with neurodiverse characteristics from criminal involvement, and from an investigative perspective

should criminal engagement occur. Within the primary research, low levels of neurodiversity training and awareness created a strong theme across the numerous and varied police departments. Despite this, the research continually provided insight regarding neurodiverse characteristics which was consistent with wider research. When combined with research feedback of participants feeling poorly equipped despite having a high level of experience investigating those with neurodiverse characteristics, the findings highlight that police training gaps focus towards how to support neurodiverse people as opposed to how to recognise the indications. This conclusion links with additional research findings which promote that a solely policing approach is inadequate to protect those with neurodiverse characteristics from criminal engagement. Whilst this argument is biased through the contribution of policing professionals only, views were presented that punitive police action leads to a frequently visible reoffending picture, which directly compliments the literature review findings (Rutten *et al.* 2022). To strengthen this argument, further contribution was also provided that wider multi-agency strategies are beneficial, to include education, healthcare, and social services for example. These conclusions are not without opportunity for further study, however, where the next subchapter will provide a reflection on the research project overall to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the findings.

#### 5.4 Research Reflection

The ability to reflect and present limitations within academic study has been described as a responsibility for researchers, where honesty and openness is respected and supports future learning (Smithies, 2016; Ross and Zaidi, 2019). Within this research project, input from policing professionals was chosen to address

the literature review highlighted research gap, which has been successful to an extent but has highlighted several additional opportunities. These opportunities will be further explored in the following recommendations chapter; however, a limitation of the research has been present within the relatively short timescale and overall size of the project. Specifically, direct input from Counter Terrorism Policing units was not possible due to additional vetting and timescale requirements. Whilst this has been beyond the scope of this study, future research with direct input from Counter Terrorism Policing professionals would provide additional knowledge towards right-wing extremism.

### 5.5 Conclusion

In summary, the dissertation aims and objectives have been addressed, and the study has provided valuable research towards the wider academic position. Notably, the research gap has been narrowed through the direct contribution of policing professionals, where the project has provided a balance of literature review confirmation, new learning and has also highlighted future opportunities. Having discussed the overall dissertation conclusions, the next chapter will provide practical and academic recommendations for how the additional opportunities can be approached.

## Chapter 6 - Recommendations

### 6.1 Introduction

The provision of recommendations within academic research has been described as a strength to support future progress across the broader academic picture, as opposed to highlighting weaknesses within the current study (Greetham, 2019). The aim of this chapter is therefore to further explore the opportunities highlighted within the dissertation, where a balance of academic and practical recommendations will be detailed. These recommendations will begin with practical suggestions, through areas of police training and multi-agency strategies, and then lead into more academic opportunities to include further studies within specialist police departments and the right-wing radicalisation process.

### 6.2 Recommendation One: Additional Police Training Towards Neurodiversity

Firstly, a strong theme within the research is that policing professionals require additional training for how to best support people with neurodiverse characteristics within an investigation process. A suggestion here is that neurodiversity training packages should be developed for policing professionals, with regular refresher sessions to build knowledge and skills. This would enable the acquisition of fundamental knowledge in what is known to be a developing area of academic study and allow for best practices to evolve in response to research advances.

### 6.3 Recommendation Two: Multi-Agency Strategies Towards Neurodiversity Support

The second practical recommendation focusses wider than policing alone, with the suggestion of improved multi-agency strategies to support those with neurodiverse

characteristics. Within the study, policing in isolation is shown to be insufficient to protect those with neurodiverse characteristics from criminal involvement. Instead, a suggestion is for wider government initiatives to prioritise the area through the collaboration of education, health, and social care in the direction of prevention-based support. A specific priority is recommended to be towards online safety for the individual and their family or support network.

#### 6.4 Recommendation Three: Further Research Within Counter Terrorism Policing Teams

Direct input from Counter Terrorism Policing units was beyond the scope of this dissertation; however, the first academic recommendation suggests exactly this within a larger research format. Whilst this study has presented significant findings, conclusions, and opportunities from a previously absent policing perspective, future studies with direct input from Counter Terrorism Policing professionals would enrich the wider academic picture and provide additional knowledge towards right-wing extremism.

#### 6.5 Recommendation Four: Further Research Towards Those Radicalised into Right-Wing Extremism

This study has concluded that not all neurodiverse people are vulnerable to right-wing radicalisation, where contributing emotions of injustice, the desire for retaliation, and an attraction towards right-wing ideology are relevant to society more broadly. The final recommendation is therefore to further explore the optimal factors for right-wing radicalisation to occur through additional studies that directly involve those who have been radicalised. Whilst ethical considerations would be required, the literature

review has highlighted that research with convicted terrorists is achievable under the correct conditions (Al-Attar, 2020). It is therefore suggested that research involving those radicalised specifically into right-wing extremism may develop the conclusions of this dissertation, to further understand the optimal factors that make a person vulnerable to right-wing radicalisation.

## 6.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided both practical and academic recommendations to enhance the value and contribution this dissertation provides to the broader research picture. Whilst this confirms the importance of the study overall, it also brings the research project to a close, with guidance and motivation for future opportunities.

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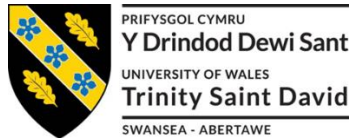
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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Research Proposal



#### **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:   Tick**

**OR**

**~~4,000 word project and presentation:~~**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>NAME: James Balchin</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>STUDENT ID No:<br/>2031212</b> |
| <p><b>DRAFT RESEARCH TITLE QUESTION:</b></p> <p>An investigation into the prominence of neurodiversity within right-wing extremism:<br/>Are people with neurodiverse characteristics more vulnerable to radicalisation?</p> <p><b>INTRODUCTION:</b></p> <p>The impact of terrorism can lead to national fear, alter public behaviour, and influence economies, in a powerful reaction which can pass through generations (Van Der Does <i>et al.</i> 2021). In illustration, despite the perception of many, there were no fatalities within the United Kingdom (UK) because of terrorism during 2022</p> |                                   |

(Counter Terrorism Policing, 2023). A consideration therefore forms towards how history, stereotypes and fear compare with reality, and how well the risks are truly understood. Despite the 2022 statistic, deeper analysis of recent terrorist movement within the UK identifies the growth of right-wing extremist activity, where referrals in this area to the UK's counter-terrorism program grew by 36% in 2018 alone, and activity has been particularly prominent within post-industrial communities (Knight, 2019).

The current level of research towards right-wing extremism is disproportionately low, however, where between the timeframe of 2001 and 2018, only 6 out of 1846 terrorism articles within the most prominent terrorism journals used primary data to support their research (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021). Consequently, as the impact of right-wing extremism grows in media attention, study and understanding of the contributing factors, particularly of those radicalised by right-wing extremist groups is lacking and forms the landscape this research project intends to explore.

This research project therefore proposes to investigate the background and recruitment strategies of right-wing extremist groups, to highlight the prominent factors. Furthermore, this project intends to investigate behaviours associated with neurodiverse characteristics, to analyse whether links exist towards criminal involvement and right-wing radicalisation. Finally, this project intends to explore current policing awareness of the research findings, to observe any implications this has towards the investigation of those with neurodiverse characteristics, and to consider future safeguarding options.

#### **SUMMARY OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:**

The aim of this project is to investigate whether people with neurodiverse characteristics are vulnerable to right-wing extremist radicalisation. Additionally, the project aims to understand the policing awareness of the research findings, and to consider future safeguarding options.

These aims will be achieved by focussing on the following objectives:

1. To analyse the existing literature surrounding the radicalisation of those with neurodiverse characteristics into right-wing extremism, to include any additional contributing factors.
2. To investigate and compare the understanding of neurodiversity within criminal investigations and right-wing extremism amongst numerous policing units in South Wales.
3. To assess any implications these findings present towards the investigation of those with neurodiverse characteristics, and the safeguarding of those at risk.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

Whilst a research gap exists within right-wing extremism, in comparison with other forms of terrorist activity, this research project intends to explore the existing literature in close detail, and potentially branch into areas such as age demographic, technology impact, incel culture and schooling to analyse the presence of neurodiversity within criminal involvement and those who are radicalised, should the avenues be appropriate upon further research.

Since 2001, studies show that approximately 80% of terrorism related studies have focussed on Jihadi movement, where events such as 9/11 have influenced societal perception across decades (Silke, 2006). Despite this, deeper exploration has found that studies specifically focussed on right-wing forms of extremism began in approximately 2013 which will form the starting point for research within this project (Schoorman, 2020). From this starting point, it is understood this study will require extensive reading, with right-wing extremism noted to be complex, challenged by individual based perpetrators and reduced societal exposure through bias and stereotypes (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021). Examples of prominent individual based attacks worldwide exist, however, such as the 2019 attacks in El Paso, Texas and Christchurch, New Zealand which demonstrate the opportunity to research recent

self-radicalised right-wing attacks (Gruenewald, Chermak and Freilich, 2013). Additionally, despite diversity links appearing sparse on first impression, the UK's 2023 counter terrorism strategy specifically notes neurodiversity and the enabler of the internet which opens a starting point for neurodiverse specific research (Glover, 2023).

#### **SUMMARY OF RESEARCH – SURVEY METHOD:**

According to the introduction and literature review sections within this proposal, there is a research gap surrounding the presence of neurodiverse characteristics within right-wing extremist groups across the UK. This research project therefore proposes to investigate this area through a detailed literature review, and primary source qualitative interviews and surveys.

Whilst it is understood that primary quantitative results would provide measurable and specific statistics, the nature of terrorist activity means ethical concerns may arise from interaction with offenders, victims, or witnesses. This approach is therefore not proposed within this research project.

This project instead proposes to complete a detailed analysis of existing literature to investigate the existence of neurodiversity links. Furthermore, this project proposes to complete surveys and interviews with numerous policing units in South Wales to gain insight from the different viewpoints.

The questions within both the interviews and surveys will be written based on the findings of the literature review, however, it is intended that the questions will focus on the policing awareness of neurodiverse characteristics, the presence these form within general criminal involvement, and whether vulnerability is perceived towards right-wing radicalisation. Consequently, it is predicted that interviews and surveys across numerous police units will allow for insight to be drawn from different

perspectives, and further discussion will be available regarding the finding implications.

#### **SUMMARY OF SAMPLING FRAMEWORK:**

This research project intends to sample police officers across numerous police units within South Wales. Here, it is predicted the range will allow for views to be gained from different perspectives, which is intended to support fuller and more meaningful research conclusions.

#### **ETHICAL ISSUES**

The researcher has considered the ethical implications of the proposed research, however, there are no anticipated concerns at present. Notably, this project intends to complete a detailed analysis of current literature from trusted sources, and to survey police professionals which means there will be no direct interaction of public suspects, victims, or witnesses. Furthermore, interviews and surveys will be completed voluntarily and anonymously, where participants will be briefed on the nature of the research project prior to their involvement.

#### **TIME SCALE:**

This research has a clear and defined timeline, where the project is scheduled to be completed in full by the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2024. During this time, the research project is separated into six modules and submission deadlines to support the researcher, and the quality of the work competed. Due to the relatively short time scale, thought has been drawn towards the interview and survey aspects of the project, however, this is dependent on the findings from the literature review which is due to be completed by the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2023.

Word Count - 1081

## Appendix B: Ethics Form



PG2 / E1 FORM

### APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

#### RESEARCH STUDENTS

This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

This document is also available in Welsh.

#### RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to [pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk), with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

**STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES** should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

**In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.**

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

**Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.**

**This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity.** Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

#### SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

|                      |                                       |                                      |                             |                           |                               |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1                    | Full Name:                            | James Balchin                        |                             |                           |                               |
| 2                    | Tick all boxes that apply:            | Member of staff:                     | <input type="checkbox"/>    | Honorary research fellow: | <input type="checkbox"/>      |
|                      | Undergraduate Student                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  | Taught Postgraduate Student | <input type="checkbox"/>  | Postgraduate Research Student |
| 3                    | Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre: | University of Wales Trinity St David |                             |                           |                               |
| 4                    | Campus:                               | Swansea                              |                             |                           |                               |
| 5                    | E-mail address:                       | 2031212@student.uwtsd.ac.uk          |                             |                           |                               |
| 6                    | Contact Telephone Number:             | NA                                   |                             |                           |                               |
| <b>For students:</b> |                                       |                                      |                             |                           |                               |

|   |                                 |                  |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 7 | Student Number:                 | 2031212          |
| 8 | Programme of Study:             | Policing Science |
| 9 | Director of Studies/Supervisor: | Jane Davies      |

#### SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                              |                                     |            |                          |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Has the research activity received approval in principle?<br>(please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual) | YES                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | NO         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                              |                                     |            | Date                     |
| 2 | If <u>Yes</u> , please indicate source of approval (and date where known):<br><i>Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval</i>                       | Research Degrees Committee   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                          |
|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Institute Research Committee | <input type="checkbox"/>            |            |                          |
|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Other (write in)             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Supervisor |                          |

#### SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                     |  |  |  |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|
|   | Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed. |                                     |  |  |  |
| 1 | UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  |  |  |
| 2 | UWTSD Research Data Management Policy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  |  |  |
| 3 | [List any other relevant documents here]                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            |  |  |  |

#### SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

|   |                                                                                                                        |                                                                                |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Institution                                                                                                            |                                                                                |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 2 | Contact person name                                                                                                    |                                                                                |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 3 | Contact person e-mail <u>address</u>                                                                                   |                                                                                |                          |                          |                          |                          |
| 4 | Is your research externally funded?                                                                                    | YES                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |                          |
| 5 | Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?                                                                              | YES                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |                          |
| 6 | Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?                       | Voluntary                                                                      | YES                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 |                                                                                                                        | Employed                                                                       | YES                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD <del>Athlote</del> Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)? | If <u>YES</u> then the permission question below does not need to be answered. | YES                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|   |                                                                                         |                                                               |     |                          |    |                          |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 9 | Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation? | (If YES attach copy)<br>If NO the application cannot continue | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

|    |                                                                                                                                                         |     |                          |    |                          |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 10 | Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?                                                                                             | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|    | If <u>Yes</u> , please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate). |     |                          |    |                          |

#### SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                     |                    |            |  |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|--|
| 1 | Indicative title:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | An investigation into the prominence of neurodiversity within right-wing extremism: Are people with neurodiverse characteristics more vulnerable to radicalisation? |                    |            |  |
| 2 | Proposed start date:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 03/07/2023                                                                                                                                                          | Proposed end date: | 08/04/2024 |  |
|   | <b>Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section)</b><br>Ensure that you write for a <b>Non-Specialist Audience</b> when outlining your response to the points below:<br><i>Purpose of Research Activity</i><br><i>Proposed Research Question</i><br><i>Aims of Research Activity</i><br><i>Objectives of Research Activity</i><br>Demonstrate, briefly, how <b>Existing Research</b> has informed the proposed activity and <b>explain</b><br><i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i><br><i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i> |                                                                                                                                                                     |                    |            |  |
| 3 | <b>Purpose of Research Activity</b><br>The purpose of this research project is to investigate the prominence of neurodiversity within right-wing extremism and focuses on the specific question of whether those with neurodiverse characteristics are more vulnerable to right-wing radicalisation. This topic has been chosen to close an identified research gap and support the wider academic picture.<br>(this box should expand as you type)                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                     |                    |            |  |
| 4 | <b>Research Question</b><br>An investigation into the prominence of neurodiversity within right-wing extremism: Are people with neurodiverse characteristics more vulnerable to radicalisation?<br>(this box should expand as you type)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                     |                    |            |  |
| 5 | <b>Aims of Research Activity</b><br>The aims of this dissertation are to investigate the prominence of neurodiversity within right-wing extremism and to answer the specific question of whether those with neurodiverse characteristics are more vulnerable to right-wing radicalisation.<br>(this box should expand as you type)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                     |                    |            |  |

|                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                 |                                     |                                     |     |                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|
| 6                                                                                               | <p><b>Objectives of Research Activity</b></p> <p>These aims will be achieved by focussing on the following objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To analyse the existing literature surrounding the radicalisation of those with neurodiverse characteristics into right-wing extremism, to include any additional contributing factors.</li> <li>2. To investigate and compare the understanding of neurodiversity within criminal investigations and right-wing extremism amongst numerous policing units in South Wales.</li> <li>3. To assess any implications these findings present towards the investigation of those with neurodiverse characteristics, and the safeguarding of those at risk.</li> </ol> <p>(this box should expand as you type)</p>                                                                      |                                                                                                 |                                     |                                     |     |                          |
|                                                                                                 | <p><b>Proposed methods (maximum 600 words)</b></p> <p>Provide a <u>brief summary</u> of all the methods that <u>may</u> be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods <u>here, but</u> should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                 |                                     |                                     |     |                          |
| 7                                                                                               | <p>This project proposes to complete a detailed analysis of existing literature to investigate the current research towards both right-wing extremism and neurodiversity. Furthermore, this project proposes to complete surveys and interviews with numerous policing units in South Wales to gain insight from the different viewpoints.</p> <p>This will provide primary research and will include both quantitative and qualitative data which can be compared with the literature review findings.</p> <p>(this box should expand as you type)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                 |                                     |                                     |     |                          |
|                                                                                                 | <p><b>Location of research activity</b></p> <p>Identify all locations where research activity will take place.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                 |                                     |                                     |     |                          |
| 8                                                                                               | <p>Surveys will be distributed online to several policing units where participants will be able to complete the survey remotely. Interviews will also be completed across several policing units however these are expected to be completed in person, in private locations.</p> <p>(this box should expand as you type)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                 |                                     |                                     |     |                          |
|                                                                                                 | <p><b>Research activity outside of the <u>UK</u></b></p> <p>If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, <u>particular cultural</u> and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the <u>research</u> then please state this.</p> |                                                                                                 |                                     |                                     |     |                          |
| 9                                                                                               | <p>N/A</p> <p>(this box should expand as you type)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                 |                                     |                                     |     |                          |
| 10                                                                                              | <table border="1"> <tr> <td rowspan="2">           Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents <b>NOT</b> publicly available?         </td> <td>NO</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>YES</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents <b>NOT</b> publicly available? | NO                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents <b>NOT</b> publicly available? | NO                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                     |     |                          |
|                                                                                                 | YES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                                                                        |                                     |                                     |     |                          |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11 | If <u>Yes</u> , please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales.<br><br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i> |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? |                                                        | YES                      | NO                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 12                                                                                                                   | A prosperous Wales                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 13                                                                                                                   | A resilient Wales                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 14                                                                                                                   | A healthier Wales                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 15                                                                                                                   | A more equal Wales                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 16                                                                                                                   | A Wales of cohesive communities                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 17                                                                                                                   | A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 18                                                                                                                   | A globally responsible Wales                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 19                                                                                                                   | If YES to any of the above, please give details:       |                          |                                     |
| N/A<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                   |                                                        |                          |                                     |

#### SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

| Will the research activity include: |                                                                                                                                                        | YES                                 | NO                                  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1                                   | Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?                                                                                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 2                                   | Use of interviews?                                                                                                                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 3                                   | Use of focus groups?                                                                                                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4                                   | Use of participant diaries?                                                                                                                            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5                                   | Use of video or audio recording?                                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6                                   | Use of computer-generated log files?                                                                                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7                                   | Participant observation with their knowledge?                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 8                                   | Participant observation without their knowledge?                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9                                   | Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 10                                  | Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, <u>mentally</u> or emotionally harmful / offensive? | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 11                                  | Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 12                                  | Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 13                                  | Use of procedures that involve deception?                                                                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 14                                  | Administration of any substance, <u>agent</u> or placebo?                                                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 15                                  | Working with live vertebrate animals?                                                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

|    |                                                                                                     |                          |                                     |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 16 | Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 17 | Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|    | Details of any other primary data collection method:<br><br>(this box should expand as you type)    |                          |                                     |

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

### SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

| Who are the intended participants: |                                                                                                                    | YES                                 | NO                                  |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1                                  | Students or staff at the University?                                                                               | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2                                  | Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?                                                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 3                                  | Vulnerable adults?                                                                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4                                  | Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)           | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5                                  | Prisoners?                                                                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6                                  | Young offenders?                                                                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7                                  | Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper? | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 8                                  | People engaged in illegal activities?                                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9                                  | Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|                                    | Details of any other participant groups:<br><br>(this box should expand as you type)                               |                                     |                                     |

| Participant numbers and source<br>Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited? |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10                                                                                                                                                               | How many participants are expected? | The anticipated volume of participants is fifty, however no research activity has commenced at present, in line with the guidance within this form.<br><br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                           |
| 11                                                                                                                                                               | Who will the participants be?       | This research project intends to send a survey to several police units within South Wales, to include Response, Criminal Investigation and Neighbourhood teams to gain insight from different perspectives. The research project also intends to |

|    |                                         |                                                                                                                                                              |
|----|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |                                         | complete interviews within the same teams to draw fuller conclusions.<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                         |
| 12 | How will you identify the participants? | Participation will be voluntary and anonymous, from policing professionals within the previously noted units.<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i> |

|    | Information for participants:                                                                                                                       | YES                                 | NO                       | N/A                                 |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 13 | Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 14 | Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?                                                                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 15 | Will you obtain written consent for participation?                                                                                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 16 | Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 17 | If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 18 | Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?                                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 19 | With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?                                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 20 | Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 21 | Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 22 | If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation                                                                                         |                                     |                          |                                     |
|    | N/A<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                  |                                     |                          |                                     |

|    | Information for participants:                                                                                                                      | YES                      | NO                                  | N/A                      |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 24 | Will participants be paid?                                                                                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25 | Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26 | Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27 | Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28 | If YES to any question, please provide full details                                                                                                |                          |                                     |                          |
|    | N/A<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                 |                          |                                     |                          |

#### SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.</b><br><br>If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Full risk assessment completed and appended?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/><br>No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Risks to participants</b><br>For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Risk to participants:<br><br>Given the potential emotional topic of radicalisation, extremism and terrorism, there is a potential emotional impact however questions posed will only be towards police constables.<br><br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | How you will mitigate the risk to participants:<br><br>This research project will only interview and survey policing professionals where there are no anticipated health and safety, financial disclosure, physical harm, personal data, or confidential information impacts. The nature of the research project will be fully explained prior to participants involvement, and all elements within section G of this form will be complied with.<br><br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i> |
| 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | This research project does not anticipate <u>to explore</u> any sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics towards the participant. Similarly, this research project does not anticipate <u>to gain</u> disclosures of activity which would require any further action.<br><br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Risks to the investigator</b><br>For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Risk to the investigator:<br><br>Similar to the risk of emotional impact towards the research participants, the investigator is also at risk of emotional distress due to the nature of radicalisation, extremism and terrorism.<br><br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:<br><br>The researcher has already completed a welcome session with their research supervisor, where support will be discussed if relevant at any time during the project.<br><br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>University/institutional risks</b><br>For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Risk to the University:<br><br>The requirement to uphold the expected standards and reputation of the university.<br><br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | How you will mitigate the risk to the University:<br><br>The researcher will ensure they maintain professional standards, comply with the context of this form, and seek guidance from their supervisor regarding any queries to ensure the standards and reputation of the university.<br><br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                                                                           |
| 6                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Environmental risks</b><br>For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Risk to the environment:</b></p> <p>There are no anticipated physical environmental risks within this research project, with the project being based on literature reviews, and collecting the views of policing professionals.</p> <p><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i></p> | <p><b>How you will mitigate the risk to environment:</b></p> <p>The guidance and context of this form will be maintained throughout.</p> <p><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i></p> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| Disclosure and Barring Service |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                          |                                     |                          |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                | If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.                                   | YES                      | NO                                  | N/A                      |
| 7                              | Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?                                                                                                                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8                              | If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number. |                          |                                     |                          |

#### SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <p><b>Feedback</b></p> <p>What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?</p> <p>Prior to any person's decision of whether they wish to participate they will be provided an explanation of the research project. Additionally, following all participant completions a de-brief will be provided and my details provided should they have any future concerns.</p> <p><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2 | <p><b>Informed consent</b></p> <p>Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.</p> <p>The researcher will discuss and review with their supervisor the participation consent form prior to commencing any research activity, to ensure the required expectations are captured, and that the participants are well informed. This will include the provisions of sufficient information to allow for all participants to make a true and informed decision on their consent to be involved within the research project. Consent will be recorded via the consent form which will be signed either in person or electronically. Additionally, all participants will be informed of their right to withdraw their contribution.</p> <p><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i></p> |
| 3 | <p><b>Confidentiality / Anonymity</b></p> <p>Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.</p> <p>All interviews and questionnaires will be recorded anonymously, whereby no personal details or identifiers will be gained during the process.</p> <p><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

#### SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                          |                                     |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|   | Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | YES                      | NO                                  |
| 1 | <b>"Personal data"</b> means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ("data subject"). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, <u>in particular by</u> reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants <u>is considered to be</u> personal data. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|   | If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                          |                                     |
| 2 | N/A<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                          |                                     |
|   | Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | YES                      | NO                                  |
| 3 | <b>"Special category data"</b> means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' –<br>(a) racial or ethnic origin,<br>(b) political opinions,<br>(c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature,<br>(d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992),<br>(e) physical or mental health or condition,<br>(f) sexual life,<br>(g) genetics,<br>(h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),                                                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|   | If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                          |                                     |
| 4 | N/A<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                          |                                     |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                     |                                     |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|    | Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?                                                                                                      | YES                                 | NO                                  |
| 5  | Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6  | University computers?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 7  | Private company computers?                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 8  | Home or other personal computers?                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9  | Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?                                                                                                                                                                                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 10 | "Cloud" storage or websites?                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | Other – specify:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:                    |                                     |                                     |
|    | All gained data throughout this research project will be saved on secure password and virus protected computer systems. Backup systems will be via policing systems due to the researcher's profession.<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i> |                                     |                                     |

| Data Protection |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                          |                                     |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                 | Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | YES                      | NO                                  |
| 13              | Electronic transfer of data in any form?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 14              | Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 15              | Sharing of data with other organisations?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 16              | Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 17              | Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, <u>emails</u> or telephone numbers?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 18              | Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 19              | Use of data management system?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 20              | Data archiving?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 21              | If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):                                                                                                                                            |                          |                                     |
|                 | N/A<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                          |                                     |
| 22              | List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                          |                                     |
|                 | Only the researcher.<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                          |                                     |
| 23              | List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                          |                                     |
|                 | Only the researcher.<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                          |                                     |
| 24              | Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not <u>why-not</u> .                                                                                                                            |                          |                                     |
|                 | All data will be stored on a <u>police</u> issued laptop, which is password protected and includes anti-virus software. The data gained will only be held during the timeframe of the research project and will be destroyed immediately upon completion due to there being no requirement for retention.<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i> |                          |                                     |
| 25              | Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSd Research Data Repository (see <a href="https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/">https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/</a> ). If <u>so</u> please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>                                                                                                        |                          |                                     |
|                 | N/A<br><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                          |                                     |
| 26              | Confirm that you have read the UWTSd guidance on data management (see <a href="https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/">https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/</a> )                                                                                                                                                | YES                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 27              | Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | YES                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**SECTION K: Declaration**

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
|   | The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.<br><br>In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: <a href="https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/">https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/</a> |                |
| 1 | Signature of applicant:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Date: 27/08/23 |

**For STUDENT Submissions:**

|   |                                 |       |
|---|---------------------------------|-------|
| 2 | Director of Studies/Supervisor: | Date: |
| 3 | Signature:                      |       |

**For STAFF Submissions:**

|   |                                    |       |
|---|------------------------------------|-------|
| 4 | Academic Director/ Assistant Dean: | Date: |
| 5 | Signature:                         |       |

**Checklist:** Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

|                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | I have completed <b>ALL RELEVANT</b> sections of the form in full.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation ( <b>where appropriate</b> )                                                                                                                                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) <b>ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT</b>                                                                                                                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the <u>above named</u> research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.                                                                               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director. |

**RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY**

Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

**RESEARCH STAFF ONLY**

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to [pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk](mailto:pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk), with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

**STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES** should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

## Appendix C: Survey Design

| <u>Survey Question</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <u>Relation to Literature Review</u>                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1. What policing unit do you currently work within?</p> <p>a. Response</p> <p>b. Neighbourhood Policing</p> <p>c. CID</p> <p>d. Public Protection Unit</p> <p>e. Other</p>                                                                                            | To support the understanding of views from different perspectives                                               |
| <p>2. What is your current policing rank/role?</p> <p>a. Police Staff</p> <p>b. Constable</p> <p>c. Sergeant</p> <p>d. Inspector</p> <p>e. Other</p>                                                                                                                     | To support the understanding of views from different perspectives                                               |
| <p>3. Using the below scale, please indicate the level of neurodiversity related training you feel you have received within your policing career.</p> <p>a. None</p> <p>b. A low level</p> <p>c. A moderate level</p> <p>d. A high level</p> <p>e. A very high level</p> | Comparison with literature which finds neurodiversity to be a growing area of research (Bell, 2023).            |
| <p>4. What do you think the current level of understanding is within policing towards those with neurodiverse characteristics?</p> <p>a. A very low level</p> <p>b. A low level</p> <p>c. A moderate level</p> <p>d. A high level</p> <p>e. A very high level</p>        | Comparison with literature which finds neurodiversity to be a growing area of research (Ahmed and Lynch, 2021). |
| <p>5. To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statement – ‘Police officers and staff are</p>                                                                                                                                                          | Comparison with literature which finds neurodiversity to                                                        |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>well equipped to support those with neurodiverse characteristics who are involved within investigations'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Strongly disagree</li> <li>b. Disagree</li> <li>c. Neither agree nor disagree</li> <li>d. Agree</li> <li>e. Strongly agree</li> </ul>                  | <p>be a growing area of research (Bell, 2023).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p>6. Within your job role, what level of experience do you have of investigating a person with neurodiverse characteristics?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. None</li> <li>b. A low level</li> <li>c. A moderate level</li> <li>d. A high level</li> </ul>                                        | <p>Comparison with literature which finds 15-20% of the UK population live with a neurodiverse condition (Doyle, 2020).</p>                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p>7. Within your job role and experience, what percentage of subjects/suspects do you believe demonstrate neurodiverse characteristics?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 0%-20%</li> <li>b. 21%-40%</li> <li>c. 41%-60%</li> <li>d. 61%-80%</li> <li>e. 81%-100%</li> </ul>                        | <p>Comparison with literature which finds 15-20% of the UK population live with a neurodiverse condition (Doyle, 2020).</p>                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p>8. Do you feel people with neurodiverse characteristics have any level of vulnerability to criminal behaviour?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. None</li> <li>b. A low level of vulnerability</li> <li>c. A moderate level of vulnerability</li> <li>d. A high level of vulnerability</li> </ul> | <p>Comparison with literature which finds children diagnosed with ADHD have a higher likelihood to offend (Colins et al. 2010). Additionally, children with ADHD are found to have a lower first arrest age, and an increased likelihood to re-offend (Rutten et al. 2022).</p> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>9. Can you please provide any context regarding your previous response?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>Comparison with literature which finds children diagnosed with ADHD have a higher likelihood to offend (Colins et al. 2010).<br/>Additionally, children with ADHD are found to have a lower first arrest age, and an increased likelihood to re-offend (Rutten et al. 2022).</p> |
| <p>10. Do you feel any of the below factors may form an attraction between neurodiverse characteristics and criminal activity? Please select all which apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Social interaction</li> <li>b. Visual stimulation</li> <li>c. Theoretical stimulation (politics, world events etc)</li> <li>d. Curiosity and fascination</li> <li>e. Mental health</li> <li>f. Other</li> <li>g. None</li> </ul> | <p>Comparison with literature in the form of push and pull factors (Al-Attar, 2020).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>11. Can you please provide any context regarding your previous response?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>Comparison with literature in the form of push and pull factors (Al-Attar, 2020).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>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?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. None</li> <li>b. A low level</li> <li>c. A moderate level</li> <li>d. A high level</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                     | <p>To support the understanding of views from different perspectives</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>13. How prevalent/common do you think neurodiverse characteristics are within those who develop a right-wing mindset?</p> <p>a. Not present at all</p> <p>b. Very rare</p> <p>c. Rare</p> <p>d. Moderately present</p> <p>e. Common</p> <p>f. Very common</p>                   | <p>Comparison with literature which finds 15-20% of the UK population live with a neurodiverse condition (Doyle, 2020).</p>                                               |
| <p>14. Do you feel people with neurodiverse characteristics have any level of vulnerability towards developing a right-wing mindset?</p> <p>a. None</p> <p>b. A low level of vulnerability</p> <p>c. A moderate level of vulnerability</p> <p>d. A high level of vulnerability</p> | <p>Comparison with literature which promotes that despite common factors, vulnerability to radicalisation is not proven (Altier et al. 2017).</p>                         |
| <p>15. Can you please provide any context regarding your previous response?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>Comparison with literature which promotes that although characteristic similarities may exist, vulnerability to radicalisation is not proven (Altier et al. 2017).</p> |
| <p>16. Can you suggest any improvements which you feel may safeguard those with neurodiverse characteristics from criminal involvement?</p>                                                                                                                                        | <p>To explore implications which may currently exist, in support of objective three for the dissertation.</p>                                                             |

## Appendix D: Interview Design

| <u>Interview Question</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <u>Relation to Literature Review</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What policing unit and rank do you currently work within?                                                                                                                                                                                          | To support the understanding of views from different perspectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| What are your views towards the level of training you have received regarding neurodiversity?                                                                                                                                                      | Comparison with literature which finds neurodiversity to be a growing area of research (Bell, 2023).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Within your job role and experience, what percentage of subjects/suspects do you believe demonstrate neurodiverse characteristics, and do you feel this creates any level of vulnerability to criminal behaviour?                                  | <p>Comparison with literature which finds 15-20% of the UK population live with a neurodiverse condition (Doyle, 2020).</p> <p>Comparison with literature which finds children diagnosed with ADHD have a higher likelihood to offend (Colins et al. 2010).</p> <p>Additionally, children with ADHD are found to have a lower first arrest age, and an increased likelihood to re-offend (Rutten et al. 2022).</p> |
| Do you feel any particular factors may form an attraction between neurodiverse characteristics and criminal activity? (For example social interaction, visual stimulation, theoretical stimulation, curiosity and fascination, mental health etc). | Comparison with literature in the form of push and pull factors (Al-Attar, 2020).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

|                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How prevalent/common do you think neurodiverse characteristics are within those who develop a right-wing mindset?                | Comparison with literature which finds 15-20% of the UK population live with a neurodiverse condition (Doyle, 2020). |
| Can you suggest any improvements which you feel may safeguard those with neurodiverse characteristics from right-wing extremism? | To explore implications which may currently exist, in support of objective three for the dissertation.               |

## Appendix E: Survey Results

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 |



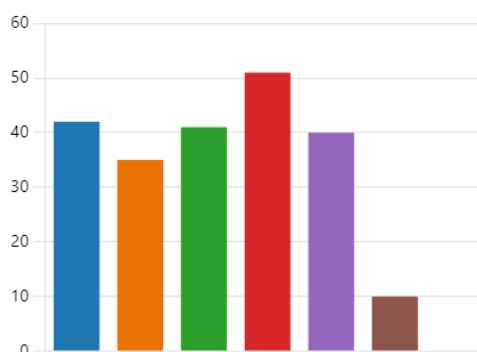
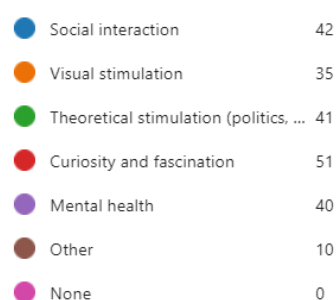
9. Can you please provide any context regarding your previous response?

#### ID Responses

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | I believe neurodiverse persons are vulnerable to be influenced and exploited by others.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 2 | Neurodiversity can increase feelings of loneliness, feeling excluded, marginalised and disenfranchised                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 3 | I think social exclusion, and a struggle to form relationships can lead to neurodiverse people being influenced by others, and drawn into criminal activity on the influence of others                                                                                                                               |
| 4 | It is becoming more visible that persons with neurodiverse characteristics are re-offending, and it seems punitive measures are not a deterrent against future offending                                                                                                                                             |
| 5 | Neurodiverse traits are becoming more visible and common within offenders                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 6 | The news, and constant negative messaging can have an additional impact on those who are neurodiverse. Here, it is plausible that continual news, and messages of war, conflict, and crime, can lead to an increasing unhappiness in the world for neurodiverse people should they become fixated on these messages. |
| 7 | Lack of support and opportunity can lead to underachievement, and a sense of unfairness, which can add a level of vulnerability to turning towards crime                                                                                                                                                             |
| 8 | Neurodiverse children for example are proven to be more at risk of offending, and at a younger age. This is becoming a more visible factor within my line of work.                                                                                                                                                   |
| 9 | I believe that people who have neurodiverse characteristics indicate certain vulnerabilities which can be exploited by perpetrators more easily than those who do not                                                                                                                                                |

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](#)



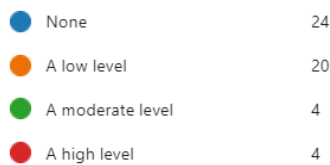
11. Can you please provide any context regarding your previous response?

| ID | Name      | Responses                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | anonymous | Neurodiverse people can hyper focus on areas, and learn about them to a great extend. This can be triggered by curiosity, history, visual interest, and a desire to fit in socially  |
| 2  | anonymous | I feel negative messaging and continual conflicts in society have been more visible and sustained since covid. There appears to be less balance, and good views to outweigh the bad. |
| 3  | anonymous | A feeling of injustice, and dissatisfaction with life can impact mental health                                                                                                       |
| 4  | anonymous | Neurodiverse persons can often be infatuated with content and visual stimulation, eras, etc..                                                                                        |

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](#)

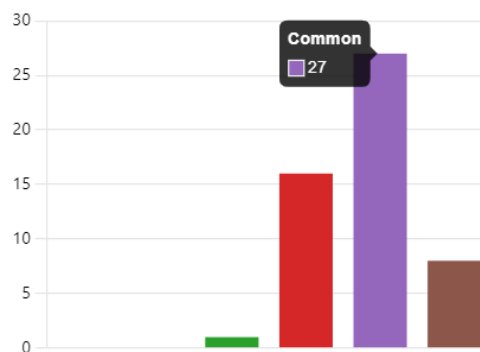
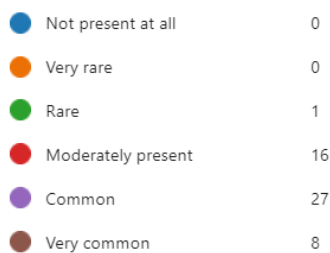
[Insights](#)



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

[More Details](#)

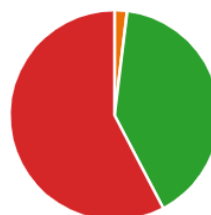
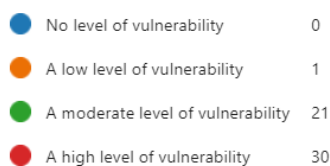
[Insights](#)



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

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)



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

| ID | Name      | Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | anonymous | Neurodiversity can make a person vulnerable. Vulnerability increases exposure and likelihood of radicalisation - thereby being fertile targets for extreme right-wing political ideology, rhetoric and propaganda, resulting in the possibility of involvement in terrorism-related activities.                                                                                                         |
| 2  | anonymous | I do not think a neurodiverse person is more vulnerable to right-wing related crime or thoughts than any other forms of crime. I think however that should a neurodiverse person come across right-wing extremist content, they are vulnerable to falling deeper into the content.                                                                                                                      |
| 3  | anonymous | In my experience, a neurodiverse person can become infatuated with topics which interest them. I can see how this could form an attraction to far-right messages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 4  | anonymous | I think struggles to socialise and find a supportive group may lead to neurodiverse people to find their meaning online more, and leave them increasingly exposed to negative messages, which I feel could lead to hatred.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 5  | anonymous | Again, since covid, online dependance has increased, which is a large and common source of negativity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 6  | anonymous | The feeling of isolation and being neglected by society could lead someone to rebel against normal ways of life.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 7  | anonymous | When socialising and networking, a neurodiverse person may be less aware of the intention of others. Neurodivers persons can also be attracted towards, and fixated on topics of crime, war, history, and violence, which can lead them into criminal groups.                                                                                                                                           |
| 8  | anonymous | Neurodiversity can make a person vulnerable. Vulnerability increases exposure and likelihood of radicalisation. Neurodiversity can increase feelings of loneliness, feeling excluded, marginalised and disenfranchised - thereby being fertile targets for extreme right-wing political ideology, rhetoric and propaganda, resulting in the possibility of involvement in terrorism-related activities. |

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

| ID | Name      | Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | anonymous | Better education regarding online safety as I feel a lot of the messages may be available via the internet                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2  | anonymous | Improvements in mental health support services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 3  | anonymous | A Stalin-esque re-education programme to indoctrinate vulnerable people into left-wing democratic liberal ideology. Alternatively, the media (including television, films and written material) are undergoing a social justice campaign which focuses on advancing the interests and rights of groups who are not white, male or Christian/non-religious. This, it could be argued, results in the marginalisation of young white men. Political ideology such as white privilege and critical race theory, increases the sense of isolation and exclusion, especially when said privilege is not apparent in a person's life. A neurodiverse individual may seek out a sense of belonging as a result, and find it amongst extreme right-wing groups. This is a noticeable change of social and media narrative and can be directly correlated with extreme right-wing acts, many of the persons involved being young white men. A change in this narrative to one of universal inclusion may have a noticeable impact on the radicalisation of marginalised groups, particularly those with neurodiversity-related vulnerabilities. |
| 4  | anonymous | I think schooling and education has a large part to play. As previously stated punishment may not be the most effective approach and therefore I believe in early intervention and education.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 5  | anonymous | I think a joint approach is needed where education for both children and their parents is needed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 6  | anonymous | More education for parents in both online security, and how to support balanced views through childhood.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 7  | anonymous | Early education, early recognition of neurodiverse conditions, and better support to follow                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 8  | anonymous | The only way I see neurodiverse offenders dealt with at present is via the criminal justice system, which arguably is not the best level of support. I am not aware of many neurodiverse specific support networks and it feels there is a big opportunity within supporting agencies.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 9  | anonymous | Further support and safeguarding online content with persons who suffer with neurodiverse tendencies.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 10 | anonymous | Early intervention from mental health service and prevention services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## Appendix F: Interview Responses

### Q1 - What policing unit and rank do you currently work within?

P1 – Constable, Response

P2 – Sergeant, Response

P3 – Sergeant, Response

P4 – Sergeant, Criminal Investigation

P5 – Constable, Criminal Investigation

P6 – Sergeant, Criminal Investigation

### Q2 - What are your views towards the level of training you have received regarding neurodiversity?

P1 – I do not remember receiving any training that has been about neurodiversity. The only training I have had similar was about mental health, but I know the two are very different.

P2 – Throughout my experience, neurodiversity has only been talked about in recent years. This has been more professional discussions amongst colleagues, or how to support neurodivergent employees though, and not so much about members of the public.

P3 – I think this is an area which needs a lot more focus for frontline policing. The amount of people we deal with who display neurodiverse traits I would say is high and we have little training on how to best support them.

P4 – I think it has been poor compared with the amount of neurodivergent people we interact with.

P5 – I do not think I have had any training that has been specifically about neurodiversity. Within custody there are some processes such as appropriate adults to help with the interview for example, but I think more specialised training would be really helpful.

P6 – I think extra training is needed both within frontline policing and more specialist departments.

### Q3 - Within your job role and experience, what percentage of subjects/suspects do you believe demonstrate neurodiverse characteristics, and do you feel this creates any level of vulnerability to criminal behaviour?

P1 – I don't know what percentage of the population in general are diagnosed with a neurodiverse condition but it seems like my interaction with offenders who show signs of being neurodiverse is on a very regular, possibly daily, basis.

P2 – I can see patterns within our response workload with a noticeable amount of suspects who are neurodivergent. It is also very noticeable how a lot of repeat offenders show signs of neurodiverse conditions, such as autism and ADHD.

P3 – I would say there is a high level of vulnerability to criminal activity. I would say about half of the suspects I have dealt with recently demonstrate some kind of neurodiverse behaviour.

P4 – To place a percentage would be difficult for me to guess, I imagine custody records would be the most accurate way of finding that out. I would however say that vulnerability to being involved in crime is clear.

P5 – About one in three people would be my estimation. From my point of view, I would also say that a lot of the repeat offenders show signs they are neurodivergent, and it seems like they struggle to receive the support they need to break their cycle.

P6 – I think there is a high level of vulnerability. Historically we have seen other vulnerabilities within society exploited to commit crime, and I think we will or have seen the same for some people who are neurodivergent.

Q4 - Do you feel any particular factors may form an attraction between neurodiverse characteristics and criminal activity? (For example social interaction, visual stimulation, theoretical stimulation, curiosity and fascination, mental health etc).

P1 – All of the above to be honest. I am not an expert with neurodiversity but I can see how all can be a factor.

P2 – I feel like a difficulty fitting in and forming relationships is the root for some people. If that happens it seems like neurodiverse people start falling in with the wrong crowd and they struggle to break away from it.

P3 – I think all of those factors link in with each other, combined with social media and the internet in general. The online world I think has a large part to play particularly with the curiosity element. It is easy to envisage that someone can become obsessed with online content, which can easily link into criminal type content, and how the nature of search engines can just keep someone spiralling further and further. The same could be said for the continual promotion of negative news and media.

P4 – A difficulty with social interaction I think is a large factor. We see many instances where someone has a very limited support group, sometimes no one at all.

P5 – All of those areas are relevant. I think each of those factors have the ability to link with each other and ultimately guide someone down the crime route.

P6 – The social and mental health side is a big factor for me. I have seen instances where neurodivergent people have been quite isolated from friendship groups and exploited by crime groups. I would say this is increasingly visible and it seems crime groups are preying on neurodiverse people more and more.

Q5 - How prevalent/common do you think neurodiverse characteristics are within those who develop a right-wing mindset?

P1 – I don't really have a lot of experience dealing with someone who blatantly displayed a right-wing mindset. From my knowledge of the area though I can see how some right-wing messages may attract people who are neurodiverse.

P2 – The right-wing topic is a very interesting one. On response we don't tend to see this too much however with my knowledge of the area, from news and reading, I imagine it would be quite common for people with neurodiverse conditions to be interested with researching the topics, such as history and war.

P3 – I can see how right-wing messages could attract people who are neurodiverse. As I mentioned earlier regarding the internet, I can easily see how right-wing messages and content could be interesting for someone who is neurodiverse, and I think the development of right-wing support could be common.

P4 – This is a difficult one to answer without knowing the exact statistics. I can understand why right-wing messages could be appealing to neurodiverse people, but I think other criminal content could be also.

P5 – I think this would be common. I have not had any direct experience investigating right-wing based crimes, but what I do know of the area is it is very direct and rule driven. I think topics of war and history could also be an attraction.

P6 – With the right-wing, I think it could be appealing to someone with neurodiverse conditions yes, but I also think this is the same for other wrong paths that someone could fall down.

Q6 - Can you suggest any improvements which you feel may safeguard those with neurodiverse characteristics from right-wing extremism?

P1 – A lot more training for police officers who deal with neurodiverse conditions. On response for example we regularly have interactions with those who are neurodiverse, and we might be able to support them better to stop any escalation.

P2 – I certainly don't think policing on its own is the answer. I mentioned earlier about repeat offenders and it is clear that the criminal justice system is not the best means. There needs to be a better multi-agency support approach to stop offending early on.

P3 – The online world I think needs a lot more attention. People are able to delve deeper and deeper into which ever topics they wish, which search engines continue to feed. This is less of a problem when healthy material is the content, but

it is easy to see how some people may become trapped in an unhealthy spiral, especially with right-wing topics like war, militaries, violence and hatred.

P4 – Where I have been aware of neurodiverse offenders the most so far is within the youth, specifically the teenage age range. I think education and family support is where investment should be given to support and steer them away from a criminal adulthood.

P5 – I think a lot more training is required, so we can support and deal with people who are neurodiverse more fairly, and to their needs.

P6 – The wider support structure outside of policing needs addressing. By this I mean everything from schooling, social services, family support, and healthcare needs a joined up approach to support people who are neurodiverse better.