

Cohort 01/23 DHEP Assignment

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Essay one:

How effectively has the police service adapted to accommodate diversity within the UK? Consider the police force itself and/or the way police engage with diverse communities.

Your answer must be based on academic research.

Word limit: 1000 words.

This essay will discuss how effectively the police service have adapted to accommodate diversity within the United Kingdom. The essay will concentrate on the police forces themselves, how they have adapted within the organisation, what effect this has on their communities and the way they work.

Van Ewijk (2015) argues that police forces have historically predominantly been unrepresentative of their communities when it comes to diversity. The author states that the percentage of women, homosexuals and persons with a migrant background is lower among police officers than it is in society. The 2021 Census reported that out of all the police officer's ethnicities that were known in forces across England and Wales, 91.9 % were white and only 8.1 % were from black, Asian, mixed and or other ethnic minority backgrounds (Home Office, 2023).

As a result, Hesketh and Stubbs (2023), state that forces in England and Wales have adapted and implemented a process called 'positive action'. The authors argue that this is to assist under-represented candidates in the joining process and aims to enable those under-represented to have the same level of success as white candidates and to assist in becoming a profession that is more representative of its community. Nevertheless, research carried out by Stubbs (2023) shows that on the other hand, some individuals find this process unfair and ineffective as they state that it subsequently disadvantages white candidates, and argue that positive action in recruitment may not theoretically be recruiting the best candidates for the roles. However, Hesketh and Stubbs (2024) argue that the assumption is that with a greater and more representative number of police officers that are from under-represented groups, this will subsequently have a positive impact on policing and the perception of policing in the community.

According to statistics from the Home Office (2023), there has been a representation increase of 4.7 % of police officers in forces in England and Wales from ethnic minority backgrounds between the years of 2007 and 2022. However, it is difficult to determine whether this adaption of 'positive action' has a direct link to this increase as there are not any statistics readily available to prove or disprove this. Nevertheless, it is difficult to argue the effectiveness of the recruitment model, as Davies et al. (2021) state that police services in England and Wales will not be fully representative of today's communities until 2052, and the demographic of the community is constantly changing.

Bullock and Johnson (2018) argue that the greatest barrier police officers face is the lack of understanding and education about communities such as the Muslim community, which makes it hard for them to communicate effectively, subsequently affecting how police forces are able to accommodate diversity. Bullock and Johnson suggest that police services are yet to effectively adapt to accommodate diversity and they recommend that, to better relationships and confidence within the police and with communities of different faiths and ethnic minorities, a constabulary should encourage opportunities for its officers to learn and gain a better understanding of the communities it polices and not to shy away from their lack of understanding but being honest and open to learn. Moreover, Miles-Johnson and Pickering (2018) state that the demands placed on police by society are no longer straightforward and there is an expectation that police are able to involve and deal with complex diverse scenarios and incidents.

It could also be argued that figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales 2020 suggest that the police services are failing to adequately adapt and accommodate diversity within the United Kingdom, with only 64% of black people stating that they had confidence in their local Police compared to 74% of white people and 77% of Asian people (Crime Survey for England and Wales, 2021).

Although the above figures of trust and confidence in the police are pretty damning, as stated by Bullock and Johnson (2018) that Neighbourhood Policing Teams within England and Wales are trying to effectively adapt to accommodate diversity. In particular the authors note that neighbourhood policing officers are building relationships with the gatekeepers of different faith communities and are attending buildings of worship such as Synagogues, Mosques, Churches and Gurdwaras' to reach a wider diverse population that would otherwise find police difficult to access.

McGinley et al. (2020) found that police forces have adapted and are now emphasising on including more 'diversity training' in officers' curriculum in an attempt to develop police officers understanding of equality and diversity and to better equip police officers and have a positive impact on their knowledge of the communities they police. However, by contrast, Bezrukova et al. (2024) state that diversity training initiatives can also have a limited positive impact on a workplace's demographic as the initiatives can cause a resistance and backlash. Furthermore, research carried out by Todak et al. (2018) found that there is a want by society for police officers to be comprehensively trained in cultural awareness to be better equipped and able to deal with individuals from all backgrounds and communities fairly.

However, on the other hand, research carried out by Cox and Kirby (2018) found that a large majority find that police forces were becoming too 'politically correct' and have become too concerned and focused on what people could possibly, or could not say and they believe that this was having an impact on how police officers policed as they were concerned about how their policing could be negatively perceived.

To conclude, I believe that there is a wealth of research available that confirms that there are effective adaptations taking place by the police service in the United Kingdom to accommodate diversity such as the work to try and make police forces more representative of their communities. However, although the 'positive action' in recruitment is progressive, further barriers within the police force remain evident with the retention of police officers from ethnic minority communities, due to possible issues they face following recruitment (Rigaux and Cunningham, 2021). It goes without saying that although a lot of good work has been carried out to make the police force more inclusive to all, discrimination is still evident in police forces and has not been totally squashed (Hasan, 2021).

Essay two:

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

Your answer must be based on academic research rather than personal experience.

Word limit: 1000 words.

This essay will discuss why it is important to manage mental wellbeing in policing and the potential consequences if mental wellbeing is not managed appropriately.

Jetelina et al. (2020) state that work associated with the criminal justice system, especially response policing, is reported to be associated with an increase in stress, including psychological, physical and anticipatory stress if not managed correctly. The author argues that due to the nature of a police officer's role, they are exposed to traumatic incidents often on a daily basis, such as fatal road traffic collisions, child abuse and domestic abuse cases. Jetelina et al. argues that when mental wellbeing is not managed appropriately a correlation can be seen between the constant exposure to incidents of a serious nature, and depression & anxiety, somatisation and posttraumatic stress disorder.

Furthermore, policing is recognised by Regehr et al. (2019) as an occupation similar to other first response emergency occupations such as paramedics, which is a profession that places its workers at high risk of being exposed to human suffering and tragedy. However, the authors emphasises that it is important to recognise that it is not only due to the incidents and scenes that police officers are exposed to that they are at an increased risk of exposing themselves to stress and mental health issues; the heavy workload and demanding deadlines can also impact officers' mental wellbeing.

In contrast, research carried out by Bell et al. (2022) found that many supervisors within the police service were not taking their staff's mental wellbeing seriously and not managing it well. The author found that some supervisors were dismissive of their colleagues' illnesses and that supervisors were more concerned about the resourcing levels than the wellbeing of their officers. The research found that some supervisors viewed giving appropriate support as a 'tick box' and a 'back covering exercise'. The author states that this can have profound consequences with regards to individuals not being open with their mental health and subsequently just suffering in silence.

Moreover, if mental wellbeing is not managed appropriately within policing it can have severe consequences. The Office for National Statistics (2019) found that there are approximately 21 serving police officers within England and Wales who commit suicide each year. However, Krishnan et al. (2022) states that data around police officers and suicide is difficult to evaluate as the authors state that there are often more than one attributing factor that leads up to suicide and it is often an amalgamation of personal life stresses rather than just work related.

Research carried out by Cartwright and Roach (2020) found that between the years of 2010 to 2020, the individuals within United Kingdom's police forces taking absent leave due to psychological ill health had almost doubled. Research found that a rate of 8% of UK police employees had taken leave for psychological and emotional illness. However, it is important when evaluating this data to remember that this figure does not necessarily represent the amount of police officers that have suffered with their mental well-being, as up to 12% of officers struggling with their mental health are believed to be just working on and battling through day-to-day work rather than seeking much needed help and support and taking a leave of absence.

Bullock and Garland (2020) claim that the consequences of poor or declining mental wellbeing can go further than just affecting the officer themselves. The authors put forward that it can also have an impact on the individuals' families and relationships. This being why it is important for officers to manage their mental wellbeing, as the role of being a police officer presents certain pressures that can have a knock-on effect and cause their families and loved ones to struggle with their own mental wellbeing or grow apart from them.

There is widespread criticism with how the police service deals with mental health. Lane (2019) claims in her research that police officers deal with a large amount of mental health related incidents. However, the author states that the police officers often feel ill-equipped to deal with mental health related calls and do not feel as if they have received adequate training to deal with the incidents effectively. Although I am concentrating in my essay on the police and their employees' mental wellbeing, it is important to touch on the way that the police deal with mental health in the community. Baker and Pillinger (2020) state that police officers are described as having a 'warrior' like mind-set rather than one of 'guardianship', and this can consequently be reflected in the way that police officers subsequently deal with their own mental wellbeing, which have consequences both on their own mental wellbeing and the level of service they are able to provide.

Furthermore, Edwards and Kotera (2021) outline how important the support of colleagues and supervisors is in recognising when another is struggling with their mental wellbeing as individuals often do not openly recognise the signs and symptoms of mental ill health. Kumar et al. (2023) similarly claim that when mental wellbeing is not managed appropriately, this can then consequently have an impact on the individual's ability to work and perform to their usual standards.

To conclude, the job of a response officer within the police is one that will always bring its own challenges and will expose its officers to traumatic incidents. As explored above, the consequences of not managing mental wellbeing appropriately can have detrimental effects on physical and psychological health, relationships and performance at work. Therefore, it is vitally important to manage police officers' mental wellbeing to safeguard the officers as well as subsequently ensuring that their mental wellbeing does not have an impact on the consistency of the service provided to the public.

Essay four:

Outline potential links between serious and organised crime and public protection issues. What characteristics make some people more vulnerable to exploitation by serious and organised crime gangs?

Your answer must be based on academic research.

Word limit: 1000 words.

This essay will outline potential links between serious and organised crime and public protection issues. The essay will discuss characteristics that make some people more vulnerable to exploitation by serious organised crime gangs. The essay will do this by concentrating on the phenomenon of county lines and the effect this is having on vulnerable individuals of all ages within society.

The National Crime Agency (2024) claims that county lines are run by serious organised crime gangs and is the distribution and transportation of illegal drugs often across police and local authorities' borders. County lines phenomenon is the mobile phone lines used in the ordering and selling of illicit drugs. The National Crime Agency argue that there is a strong link between the serious and organised crime groups and their prolific for their manner of exploiting and coercing children and vulnerable adults through intimidation, violence of physical and or sexual nature to transport the money and drugs from one place to another.

Moreover, Windle et al. (2020), argue that the characteristics that make children and young people more vulnerable to exploitation by serious and organised crime gangs are due to them being cheap to recruit as well as being easy to recruit. In addition to this, the author states that they are considered as being disposable. A study carried out by Olver and Cockbain (2021) state that children that are exploited by these crime groups do not see themselves as victims, nor in fact as being exploited. The authors state that they feel part of the group's family and feel as if they are entrusted by the family, thus making the children easier are more vulnerable to exploit. Furthermore, research carried out by Havard et al. (2021) makes the link that children that have previously lived through a history of trauma, abuse and neglect from their parents at a young age are especially vulnerable to gang involvement. The authors add that these children and young people that have been through a difficult upbringing, often enter into local authority care, resulting in them feeling isolated, lost and alone. These are the characteristics that the authors claim that gang members will prey on and try and exploit the children by befriending them. However, in contrast, Dando et al. (2022) argue that children that do not fall under the umbrella of being labelled as 'vulnerable' can also sometimes be exploited by these serious and organised crime groups and it is not exclusive to vulnerable children.

The government notes that there is a clear link between serious and organised crime and public protection issues. In the government's Education Committee in 2023, it was stated that through county lines, the organised and serious crime groups exploit children to store and transport drugs throughout the country, often by using violence, intimidation and coercion. The Children's commissioner for England believes that in England alone there are at least 27,000 children who are members of a county lines gang (UK Parliament, 2023).

Furthermore, the serious and organised crime groups running the county lines are reported to prey on vulnerable youngsters and place them in a position that exposes them to further vulnerabilities and public protection concerns. The National Crime Agency (2019) claims that most juveniles that are recruited by county lines gangs are recruited into the positions that carry most risk, the 'runners'. 'Runners' are individuals that are recruited to carry and transport the drugs and money across the country. However, Robinson et al. (2018) state that the biggest concern and public

protection worry about being a gang member or being associated with the gangs is the increased risk to being exposed to serious violence due to the competitive nature of the illicit drugs market.

Nevertheless, Macdonald et al. (2024) argue that it is not only the characteristics of being a vulnerable youngster that make people vulnerable to exploitation by serious and organised crime gangs. The author argues that there are also strong links between serious and organised crime and public protection issues when it comes to adults that suffer from disabilities, mental health and have a substance misuse problem. It is argued within Macdonald et al.'s research that individuals with disabilities are more likely to be at home alone during the day and cannot identify risks themselves, creating space where predatory friendships can happen and develop into exploitation. Furthermore, research carried out by Spicer et al. (2019) also claims that those within society that suffer with learning difficulties are significantly more vulnerable to having their homes cuckooed by a county lines group.

However, in contrast, Coomber and Moyle (2018) state that the victims within the cuckooing model sometimes find that they have mutual benefits where the tenant is given drugs for free to feed their addiction whilst the gang operate from their home. However, on the other hand, as Ioannou et al. (2023) state, cuckooing usually comes with a form of abuse such as physical, emotional or sexual abuse. As O'Hagan and Edmundson (2021) argue, it is putting these vulnerable individuals in our society at high risk of drug abuse, physical, psychological and sexual abuse along with criminal convictions, all due to the greed of the individuals that sit higher up the criminal gang chain. Nonetheless, it is argued by Jaensch and South (2018) that it is not only individuals of certain characteristics that are affected by these serious and organised crime groups but it creates a whole community vulnerable with increase in gang conflict and so called 'postcode wars' that is causing an increase in serious disorder and violence within the communities.

To conclude, there are clear links between serious and organised crime and public protection issues as outlined in the research above. However, as Wroe (2021) notes, it is important to recognise that this is often a vicious circle where not only are the individuals that are currently being exploited vulnerable, but the exploiters themselves are more often than not also vulnerable and have themselves been exploited. It is evident that the detrimental link between serious and organised crime and public protection issues is having a negative impact on the most vulnerable individuals within our society, with those possessing certain characteristics such as children from difficult upbringings and individuals with disabilities and substance misuse problems being more vulnerable to exploitation.

Essay five: How effective is early intervention an effective means of preventing young people from offending or re-offending? Your answer must be based on academic research, but you may make reference to relevant case studies. Word limit: 1000 words.

This essay will discuss how effective early intervention is as a means of preventing young people from offending and re-offending. The essay will discuss different strategies used to try and prevent young people from entering the criminal justice system and to try and educate young people from offending or re-offending.

One method that police use as a method of early intervention in an attempt to prevent young people from offending and/or re-offending is by educating young people in schools and other places of education such as colleges about the risks and dangers of being involved in criminal activity. Research carried out by Halford and Davies (2021) showed a positive correlation between police school liaison officers providing presentations and talks on matters such as cyber crime and children, and young persons stating that they would change their online behaviour following the presentation. Interestingly, the research carried out by Halford and Davies found that the younger the children were, the more likely they would change their online behaviour, which would demonstrate that the earlier the intervention, the more effective it is. However, in contrast, Nijjar (2021), argues strongly that schools' sole aim should be focused on providing education, promoting critical thinking, confidence and curiosity and not a place to be subsumed by police so they can use it for surveillance, profiling and social control. However, Trotman and Thomas (2016) state that the implementation of School Liaison Officers, along with their associated Neighbourhood Policing teams, are said to be able to work alongside multi agencies and bridge issues that young people face in their communities beyond the confines of the school.

Perera (2020) states that the school liaison officer's role is to promote citizenship, prevent crime and to protect the pupils. This initiative of police officers working within the schools according to Bradford and Yesberg (2020) is an effective means of early intervention and a means of preventing young people from offending or re-offending. They found that not only did having a police liaison officer help with pupils behaviours in school, but it also reduced the levels of offending.

It is stated by NAHT (2024) that officers work effectively in giving crime prevention talks within schools. The authors state that due to the growing amount of illicit drug use and drug dealing amongst young persons, a programme is ran by police officers in educational settings to educate youngsters about the harms and risks associated with drugs. The paper finds that these programmes however have a 'very weak' impact on the pupils and is an ineffective means of preventing the young persons from offending or re-offending. Furthermore, the ineffectiveness of these programmes are backed up by statistics from the Office for National Statistics (2023), where in the year ending March 2023, 6.4% of people aged 16 to 24 living in England and Wales had taken Class A drugs, which is approximately 380,000 people. This is a 1.7% increase compared to a decade ago (year ending March, 2013), which is an increase of approximately 86,000 people aged between 16 and 24. It is argued by Tofighi et al. (2017) that the consumption of illicit drugs amongst younger generations is blamed by the ease of accessibility with the use of networking, especially with mobile phones and the ease of changing and making mobiles hard to track, making it harder to prevent offending.

Redgate et al. (2022) state that research shows that up to 90% of young individuals that offend and that come to the attention of the criminal justice system are young people who suffer with speech, language and or communication needs. It is argued that the criminal justice system presents these young individuals with barriers as they may not fully be able to comprehend what the consequences of their actions are, especially with the criminal justice system being reliant on language skills for interviews, court proceedings and so forth. This poses an argument that the criminal justice system may not be suitable in this day and age to effectively manage younger persons and deter individuals from re-offending.

Another means of early intervention is the Youth Offending Service which runs in England and Wales, which is a means of supervising individuals that are in the age bracket of 10 to 18 years old who have committed a crime and have been sentenced in court. Offending individuals within this age bracket are dealt with by means of an out of court disposal rather than being charged (Redgate et al., 2022). Research into whether the Youth Offending Service was effective or not in Suffolk, England, found that in a one year period, they received 468 referrals by their police force or through the courts and from this, only 12% went on to commit another offence, thus proving that the model is somewhat effective in reducing young offenders' re-offending rate (Tyrell et al., 2017). This provides justification for the effectiveness of early intervention being a means of preventing young people from re-offending.

Weber and Lynch (2021) claim that there is a correlation between adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and reoffending withing young persons. However, Barra et al. (2022) state that this link is still very unclear. Therefore, it is argued that young persons are easily judged and looked at in a bad light, and as Longstaff et al. (2015) state, young persons are perceived as being suspects that are in need of being controlled rather than potentially vulnerable individuals and potential victims in need of protecting. Therefore, it is important to not only think of the individuals themselves when thinking of youth offending, but also to think of why they are offending. Parenting, or the lack of parenting and poor role models, are often an attribute to youths offending. Case and Bateman (2020) claim that an effective early intervention means is parenting programmes. These are designed for parents who's children are offending or engaging in anti-social behaviour in an attempt to prevent re-offending.

To conclude, the evidence suggests that certain early intervention programmes are an effective method of preventing young people from offending and re-offending. As explored above, educating individuals on the consequences of offending is a positive measure in the prevention of crime amongst young people. However, we must also be guided by certain research which suggests that early intervention programmes such as crime prevention talks in schools are an ineffective means of preventing offending or re-offending, especially when it comes to illicit drug use due to ease of accessibility. Certain methods of early intervention may not therefore be best suited to address and prevent certain types of offending or re-offending, which should be borne in mind by the police when compiling these programmes.

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(Assignment – 4136 words)

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