



Home Office

Research and analysis

Public perceptions of policing: A review of research and literature

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Applies to England and Wales

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Executive summary

Policing in the UK is rooted in the concept of policing by consent. This relates to methods of policing designed to maintain the approval, respect and affection of the public. Police officers are an essential part of the social fabric of communities they serve, but without the trust and confidence of the public, the police will be seriously limited in their ability to do their job (Rosenbaum et al., 2005). This review aimed to understand the importance of public perceptions of policing and considered what confidence and trust mean. It also reviews factors that can influence public perceptions and interventions that may improve public perceptions of policing.

Introduction

In 2008, the Home Office adopted the Government's Public Service Agreement (PSA) as a measure of public confidence performance target for the police service (Home Office, 2008). In 2010, it was abolished along with other performance measures in policing. However, public confidence remains a basic imperative and concern in every force across England and Wales and, to some extent at least, continues to be measured (Javid and Morrell, 2019).

Legitimacy and procedural justice are important concepts when measuring public perceptions of policing. Procedural justice, defined as treating people

with respect and dignity, making decisions in fair, transparent and accountable ways, and allowing people a voice, can impact public cooperation with the police (Jackson and Bradford, 2019).

Tyler (2006) defines legitimacy as the belief that authorities, institutions and social arrangements are appropriate, proper and just. It is vital for the effective function of the police service as a social institution and is driven by public perceptions in relation to the policing organisation and the individual police officer (Peyton et al., 2019). People will generally defer to the decisions of authorities and follow the rules created by institutions, if they deem them legitimate.

Methodology

This literature review summarises the available research. Although not a systematic review, it outlines some of the most relevant and high-quality evidence on public perceptions of policing.

The search for literature identified 162 papers relevant to the topic. We reviewed each paper for evidence to answer the research questions. We did not conduct any secondary data analyses or meta-analysis during this review. Data on public perceptions of the police are collected by various policing bodies and police forces in the UK, but we did not evaluate these for this literature review.

Key findings

Definitions and importance

The research identified confidence and trust as distinct concepts and define them in different ways, but with an overlap. An understanding of the differences and factors that contribute separately to confidence and trust will provide greater insight into public perceptions of policing (Jackson and Bradford, 2010).

Confidence is described as representing a generalised support for the police as an institution (Cao, 2015), including the views of the whole population, and not just those who come into direct contact with the police (Hohl et al., 2010).

Trust is related to police integrity and compliance with ethical standards (Albrecht, 2019). Expectations of future police encounters are recognised as important when measuring trust (Jackson et al., 2011). Trust in the police is more likely if people feel they will be treated with procedural justice and crime is tackled effectively (Sargeant et al., 2017). A lack of trust and confidence can undermine perceived legitimacy of the police (Hohl et al., 2013).

Trust includes evaluations and expectations of personal experiences with the local police or individual officers. It has been viewed as being a generator of confidence in future police behaviour. For example, if police behaviour does not meet public expectations, then strong underlying public trust can help sustain public support in their future actions (Skogan, 2009).

Contextual factors influencing trust and confidence

Public perceptions of policing can be enhanced or undermined by different levels of police visibility, perceived declines in availability and readiness to attend incidents, and shifts in perception of fair treatment of different groups (Jackson et al., 2011; Merry et al., 2012).

Relationships between the community and their local police are likely to affect levels of confidence. Those knowing police personnel by name or sight are likely to rate their confidence positively, as well as those who believe they could influence policing decisions in their area (Merry et al., 2012).

Positive and negative contact with the police impacts public perceptions. Negatively experienced contact with the police by members of the public, including victims of crime, showed negative associations with public opinions and were found to be more influential than positive encounters. However, a positive experience can increase people's trust and confidence and influence their willingness to cooperate (Miller and D'Souza, 2016; Wedlock and Tapley, 2016).

Socio-demographic and other factors influencing public perceptions of policing

Variables, including sex, age, immigration status and ethnicity, can influence public attitudes towards the police (satisfaction, trust and confidence; Hu et al., 2020). For example, Bradford et al. (2017) found that trust in the British police is often higher for immigrants than non-immigrants; people recently

arriving to the UK may have positive views of the British police that are used as a base for their trust judgements.

Collective efficacy (a term referring to social ties among neighbours, combined with a willingness to intervene to solve local problems) and community demographics add complexity when considering public perceptions of the police. For example, feelings of community cohesion and engagement with community groups can influence trust in the police (Yesberg and Bradford, 2021).

Different groups and communities are often defined by their socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts, meaning factors that facilitate or are barriers to successful collaboration with the police differ from group to group (Brewster et al., 2018).

Perceptions of crime and the influence of media

Jackson et al. (2009) found that perceptions of anti-social behaviour and community cohesion can be more important predictors of confidence than public concern about crime; people who saw their neighbourhood as “disorderly” showed fewer positive attitudes to the police than those seeing their neighbourhood as socially cohesive and “orderly”. Confidence in the police can reduce concerns about crime (Skogan, 2009).

There were no recent research studies identified during the review that considered the influence of news and media (including social media) reports on public perceptions of policing. However, an earlier study by Jackson et al. (2012a) found that reporting on police-community engagement and procedural fairness in newspapers can influence public confidence.

Police and Crime Commissioners: awareness and the influence on perceptions of policing

Several papers explored Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) roles. However, none of the studies explored public perceptions of PCCs, nor the factors that may impact the influence of PCCs on public confidence and trust in policing.

PCCs are responsible for how areas are policed, including the handling of complaints. Smith (2009) suggested that fair and effective complaints systems depend on independent and impartial decision-making, which is essential for improving confidence in the police. This study did not explore

complaint handling by PCCs but was relevant to highlight how PCCs may contribute to procedural justice and legitimacy in policing.

Interventions that may improve public perceptions of policing

The review identified communication, engagement, collective efficacy and working with the community as influencing factors of public perceptions of policing. For example, the 'Mini Police' initiative was found to enhance young people's perspectives of the police (Callendar et al., 2019).

Gibbs et al. (2021) highlighted several studies that showed how training that targets the development of procedural justice skills, such as active listening and perspective taking techniques, can result in positive effects for policing, including lower levels of use of force and a reduction in complaints.

1. Introduction

Public perceptions of the police, including citizens' confidence and trust in them, have been widely discussed, researched and debated for many years. Recent events have re-focused attention on the importance of citizens' views of policing. To increase understanding and recognise how to improve public perceptions of the police, the findings of this report will present research and provide definitions of key concepts relating to public perceptions. The report will also discuss factors that can influence public perceptions of policing.

The concept of 'policing by consent' relates to a specific philosophy. It translates to a method of policing, not from fear but almost exclusively from public cooperation with the police, that is recognised by the police and designed to maintain the approval, respect and affection of the public (Home Office, 2012). This method of policing is integral to how British police forces have operated since their foundation in 1829, with police officers being an essential part of the social fabric of communities they serve (Department for Levelling UP, Housing & Communities [DLUHC], 2022). Trust holds this social fabric together; without the trust and confidence of the public, the police will be seriously limited in their ability to do their job (Rosenbaum et al., 2005).

The police are a public body equipped and entitled to use force to secure and assure public order (Shane, 2010, cited in Mason et al., 2014). Officers are expected to deal effectively with crime, disorder and other forms of

emergency, and to be impartial and fair (Jackson et al., 2011). As such, the police-citizen connection is a complex relationship that requires benevolent and enforcement behaviours towards citizens (Mason et al., 2014).

By demonstrating effectiveness, fairness and alignment with local interests, trust and confidence in the police increases, which can make them more accountable and responsive. This is essential to secure public cooperation with the police and public compliance with the law (Jackson and Bradford, 2010). The concepts of legitimacy and procedural justice are linked to public perceptions of policing, so should be considered when measuring public perceptions, such as confidence and trust.

1.1 Legitimacy, procedural justice and public perceptions

Legitimacy can be viewed at the individual and organisational level, and has been defined as the belief that authorities, institutions and social arrangements are appropriate, proper and just (Tyler, 2006). It can result in public willingness to defer to the decisions of authorities and to obey the rules created and enforced by institutions. The key behaviour of authorities and institutions that shapes legitimacy is the fairness of the procedures through which they exercise their authority. This is referred to as the 'procedural justice effect on legitimacy', which is widespread, robust and occurs in legal, political and managerial settings (ibid). Legitimacy is vital for the effective function of police as a social institution and is driven by public perceptions of the police as an organisation and as an individual police officer (Peyton et al., 2019).

To assess police legitimacy, an examination of public attitudes, values, behaviours and beliefs is required (Hough, 2012). The theory of procedural justice argues that the police can enhance their perceived legitimacy and trustworthiness in the eyes of the public by exercising authority in a procedurally fair manner (Nix et al., 2015). Procedural justice theories are useful to make sense of issues around trust in the police, beliefs about police legitimacy, and public compliance and cooperation with the law (Hough, 2012). There are several explanations and definitions of procedural justice that researchers have explored over time.

Procedural justice is generally described in the literature as comprising 4 components: allowing citizens a voice; perceived neutrality in decision-making; demonstrating dignity and respect during interactions; and having trustworthy motives (Goodman-Delahunty, 2010; Tyler, 2008; Tyler and Huo, 2002; Tyler & Murphy, 2011, as cited in Mazerolle et al., 2013).

Goldsmith (2005) explains that procedural injustice, through police actions and failures to act, can impact public trust. These actions include:

- neglect (where there are inadequate resources, limited capacity or a failure to explain the police response to a public request for assistance)
- indifference (unresponsiveness or lack of dedication of the police, at the individual or organisational level)
- incompetence (referring to failing to prevent or investigate crime effectively)
- discrimination (due to race, religion, gender or other factors)
- inconsistency (does little to inspire confidence if you cannot be sure what the response for action will be)
- intimidation (lack of goodwill, kindness or compassion)
- excessive force (which contributes to the alienation of citizens)
- brutality (referring to the extreme cases involving death or violence while in police custody)
- venality (meaning bribery, petty corruption)
- extortion (more serious and systematic than petty corruption)

Jackson et al. (2012b) extended this previous work and developed a model of procedural justice. Their research found that procedural justice (defined as treating people with respect and dignity, making decisions in fair, transparent and accountable ways, and allowing people voice) and legitimacy (defined as the right to power and authority to govern) explained variations in people's willingness to cooperate with the police. A further study showed that acting in procedurally just ways helps to generate the legitimacy that sustains and strengthens the ability of legal authorities to elicit public compliance and cooperation (Jackson and Bradford, 2019). Engaging with citizens in a procedurally fair manner is important for all police staff across all types of public engagement, such as when responding to calls for service, taking calls over the phone, and community policing activities (Mazerolle et al., 2013).

While much of the procedural justice literature examines the 4 pillars (trust, respect, participation and fairness) of procedural justice theory as one concept, there are benefits to in-depth exploring of public perceptions of each of the 4 components (Novich and Hunt, 2018). This is especially important for the element of trust, as perceptions of this component are critical for establishing police legitimacy, enhancing police effectiveness, and it is also connected to the officers' ability to provide basic citizen protection (Goldsmith, 2005). Definitions of these key concepts vary across the research literature, which can cause misunderstanding and misinterpretation of research findings.

1.2 Measuring public perceptions of policing

Public confidence is a concern in the policing context because the public is a key source of help and information. Since the 1980s, how police performance is measured has changed. These changes have led to a fluctuating focus on trust and confidence as the measures used to assess how the public perceive police performance (Jackson and Bradford, 2010).

From 2008, the government set out a new Public Service Agreement (PSA) for cross-government priorities. These included targets concerned with tackling crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) and increasing public confidence in the police and their partners to 'make communities safer' (PSA 23 – priority action 3). At this time, the public's perceptions of how effectively the police and local council were tackling the crime and ASB issues was measured using the British Crime Survey (BCS), now known as the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). In July 2008, the Home Office set out plans to adopt the PSA as a measure of public confidence as a single top-down performance target for the police service (Home Office, 2008). In 2010, the public confidence measure of police performance, along with other performance measures, was abolished. However, it is recognised that public confidence is a basic imperative that remains a concern in every police force across England and Wales, and, to some extent at least, continues to be measured with efforts to improve trends (Javid and Morrell, 2019).

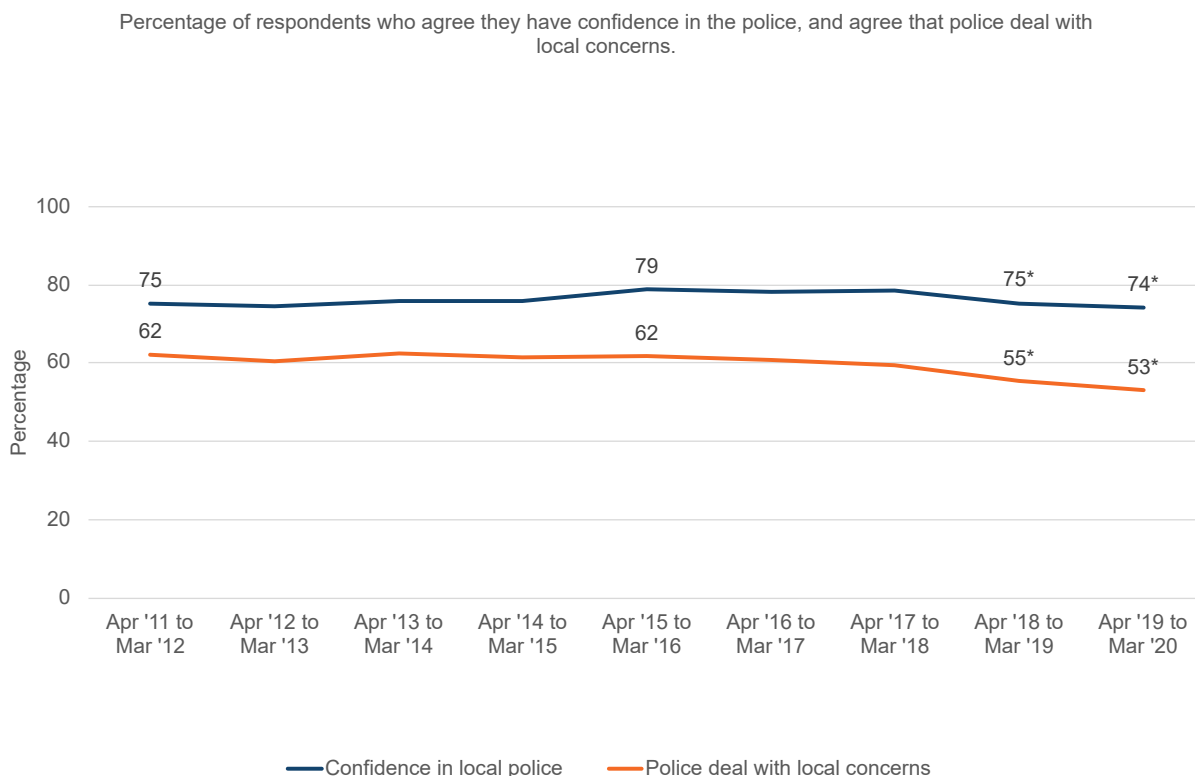
The Office of National Statistics (ONS) have collected data on public perceptions of policing (including 6 measures of trust and one of overall confidence) through the CSEW since the year ending 31 March 2006. Despite small changes to the CSEW methodology in the year ending March 2013^{[footnote 1](#)}, the survey data and analysis have been one of the most robust sources of information for assessing public perceptions of the police over time. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, questions around public perceptions of policing have not been asked since March 2020 so the picture is currently outdated. New CSEW data for public perceptions of policing are due to be published in summer 2023, for the year ending March 2023^{[footnote 2](#)}.

1.3 Current situation

While confidence in the police remains high for England and Wales, there has been an overall decline in recent years. Respondents to the CSEW reported their 'overall confidence in the local police' as 63% in the year

ending 31 March 2006 rising to 72% in the year ending March 2011. the following year the figure was 75% rising to 79% in year ending March 2016, before falling to 74% in year ending March 2020 (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: CSEW results from years ending 31 March 2012 to 2020 showing responses to questions about confidence in the local police and agreement that police deal with local concerns.



* Significant differences between rates for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Source: Home Office

Notes:

1. Significant differences between rates for years ending March 2019 and 2020.

Confidence was most notably reduced in respondents of black ethnicity between years ending March 2018 and 2020, when confidence fell from 76% to 64% (ONS, 2020). The 'Inclusive Britain' report outlining the government's response to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities suggested that reduced confidence stemmed from the types of experiences and intergenerational memories that exist among members of the black Caribbean ethnic group, including historical unfair and disproportionate policing (DLUHC, 2022).

There are several measures used to explore trust in the police; for example, one measure relates to how well the police deal with local concerns, such as ASB. CSEW data showed that, in year ending March 2006, 49% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement 'police

understand local concerns', increasing to 58% in year ending March 2011. The figure for positive responses to this statement was 62% in year ending March 2012. In year ending March 2017, the figure was stable at 62%, but this fell to 53% in year ending March 2020 (ONS, 2020; [see Figure 1](#)).

In recent times, there have been several high-profile events in the UK, and internationally, that may have impacted public perceptions of policing. For example, in March 2021, a serving police officer murdered Sarah Everard in London, which sparked protests and raised concerns around police conduct and public perceptions of policing. These events, and others, highlighted the need for an updated review of current research that has examined factors influencing public perceptions of the police in England and Wales.

1.4 Aims and research questions

The aim of this review is to provide insight and understanding of public perceptions, including confidence and trust in the police. The original aim of the review was to focus predominantly on confidence and trust. Upon reviewing the evidence, we identified satisfaction as an important measure often included in literature examining public perceptions of the police. Although not a focus within the research questions, feelings of satisfaction in the police and factors influencing those are featured throughout this review.

The paper draws on evidence to answer the following research questions:

- 1 What do we mean by confidence and trust and why is it important?
- 2 What factors influence public confidence and trust in policing?
- 3 What impact does an individual's characteristics (including protected characteristics) have on their confidence and trust in policing?
- 4 How do geographic factors (for example, across different regional areas of England and Wales or police force areas) affect public confidence and trust in policing?
- 5 How does the public's awareness and engagement with PCCs influence their perceptions of policing?

2. Methodology

This report aims to summarise the existing literature related to public perceptions of policing. Several previous literature reviews have been conducted using a rapid evidence assessment (REA) approach (such as Wedlock and Tapley, 2016) and systematic reviews (such as Mazerolle et al., 2013), which have provided useful summaries of previous research evidence. In this paper, we will provide an updated review of recent literature, with a focus on confidence and trust in policing. The review also considers feelings of satisfaction in the police and the factors that influence those.

Although not a systematic review, this report outlines some of the most relevant and high-quality evidence on these topics. We carefully followed standardised procedures of evidence reviewing and recording to maximise accuracy and transparency of findings. The methodology was used to navigate the literature in a quick, efficient but critical way to assess the evidence. We considered using an REA or systematic review methodology for this evidence review but did not due to time and resource limitations.

2.1 Data collection and extraction

We made searches of Google Scholar to collect published literature and data for this review as it contains a vast collection of accessible research. Search terms used were “Police” or “Policing” AND “Confidence” or “Trust”, and “Police and Crime Commissioner” or “PCC” AND “Confidence” or “Trust”. For each of these pairs of search terms, 10 results returned per page, and we screened the titles of results in the first 10 pages of Google Scholar for relevance to the research questions.

We reviewed the abstracts to assess papers for relevance, including primary and secondary data sources, literature or systematic reviews, and book chapters or doctoral theses. The inclusion criteria included recent studies (from 2011 to 2022) from the UK, but also included studies outside the date range if deemed relevant. We considered research conducted outside the UK, such as from the US, Canada, Australia and Europe, if deemed relevant for the UK policing context. For example, in the US, research relating to gun crime and confidence would likely not be relevant to the UK and was not included in the review. However, studies where confidence in police was relative to police performance in the US were included. Several academic experts in the field were also consulted and requested to put forward evidence that was included in the review.

In addition, we searched government websites for relevant literature, along with key national policing organisations including ONS, National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and the Independent Office for Police Complaints (IOPC). Also checked were references and forward citations from seminal articles for supporting evidence. Peer reviewers also suggested papers that may be relevant for inclusion.

In total, we identified and reviewed 162 sources for evidence to answer the research questions (see Table 1 for breakdown).

Table 1. Number of papers and reports identified from each of the search terms used and additional papers that were identified from other sources.

Police/Policing AND Confidence	Police/Policing AND Trust	Police and Crime Commissioner/PCC AND Confidence	Police a Commis AND Tru
15	55	6	11

2.2 Review process

Of the 162 identified and reviewed papers, we included 108 papers and reports in the literature review, comprising 54 from the UK, 49 from countries other than the UK and 5 international literature reviews. Eighty-seven of the papers were published from 2012 to 2022 and 21 were published before 2012. The 52 papers not included were found to be duplicates of included papers, irrelevant to the UK context (for example, a paper relating to neighbourhood policing in Ghana), less rigorous research (for example, a small sample size for quantitative research), or did not contribute to answering the research questions (for example, a paper that examined factors leading to the creation of PCC roles).

We read and reviewed the 108 included papers in detail. The methodologies reported in the papers ranged in quality and strength of evidence from high-quality randomised control trials (RCT), evaluations, and experimental studies to surveys and more qualitative focus groups and ethnographic studies. Data were extracted from the studies, and the analyses

synthesised around the research questions. Time constraints meant this was not a systematic review; however, the review considered the methodology, while focusing on identification of key themes around public perceptions of policing. Findings from the included studies were not evaluated using statistical methods, such as meta-analysis, as there were a wide range of topics covered, and different research methods and analyses were reported in the papers.

3. Findings

The following section summarises findings from the literature review. It outlines definitions of policing policies and practices throughout, as their links and relevance to measures of public perceptions are important to understand.

3.1 Public perceptions of the police: definitions and measures

From reviewing the literature, we found that differentiating between terms that relate to public perceptions of the police and understanding their contribution to developing policy to improve public perceptions was complex. Researchers, policy makers and the public use the terms confidence and trust interchangeably when discussing measures of public perceptions of the police. Moreover, the research literature on confidence and trust in policing often conflates both terms (Albrecht, 2019). There are several definitions but no widespread agreement, as authors generally find support for their meanings when using their own data to model confidence and trust (Kearns et al., 2020).

3.1.1 What is meant by confidence

The literature has described and conceptualised confidence in various ways. For example, Albrecht (2019) explained that confidence in public service agencies indicates the agency is viewed as performing effectively and aligned with perceived performance. Cao (2015) described confidence as representing a generalised support for the police as an institution, constituting a reservoir of goodwill (meaning a limited volume of positivity that can be eroded over time if expectations are not met), which is normally directed towards the institution rather than individuals working for the organisation.

In addition, Hohl et al. (2010) described perceived police performance as measured by the single overarching indicator of public confidence, which

include the views of the whole population and not just those who come into direct contact with the police. Morrell et al. (2020) stated that public confidence in the police is also a combination of trust, perceptions of procedural fairness and police presence. Analysing survey data from London, Jackson and Bradford (2010) found that overall public confidence condensed a range of complex and inter-related judgements concerning the trustworthiness of the police. Confidence is therefore multifaceted and single item survey measures of confidence will have limitations (Morrell et al., 2020).

Stanko and Bradford (2009) proposed that 4 key elements relate to 'what the police do' which have significant effects on overall public confidence. These elements are:

- perceptions of police effectiveness
- fairness of personal treatment
- the level of police engagement with the community
- people's concerns about local disorder

Public perceptions will differ when responding to confidence questions. For example, recent victims, and those worried about crime, placed less priority on police effectiveness compared to police fairness and community alignment. Jackson and Bradford (2010) also suggested that confidence summarises a motive-based trust that is rooted in procedural fairness and a social alignment between the police and community.

3.1.2 What is meant by trust

Albrecht (2019) suggested trust in the police is closely affiliated with the maintenance of proper ethical standards and is associated with police integrity. Tyler (2005) and Tyler et al. (2015) described institutional trust as the belief of communities about the degree to which the police are honest and care for them. It exists when the public view the police as honestly and competently exercising their institutional responsibilities. Whereas motive-based trust involves the motives and intentions of the police. Jackson et al. (2012b) defined trust in this context as the public belief that the police have the right intentions and are competent in their work, they understand the needs of the community, and treat members of the community fairly and with dignity. The police should also provide communities with information and the opportunity to voice the issues of their neighbourhood (Jackson et al., 2012a). Trust also includes a sense of how police treat people during face-to-face or hypothetical encounters (Jackson and Bradford, 2010).

Goldsmith (2005) suggested trust is rooted in experience, including individuals' interactions with other people and institutions (such as the police) and their past experiences, which creates expectations of how they will be treated in the future. Trust has also been described through 2 models. The instrumental model suggests that the public will have greater

confidence in the police when they feel safe. The expressive model proposes that trust in the police can be measured through community conditions, such as social cohesion, stability and disorder (Jackson and Bradford, 2009). Skogan (2017) viewed trust as an important quality of service that police deliver to individuals and is related to the reputation they develop in the community.

To understand how these different elements compose the construct of trust, researchers have proposed concepts of cognitive, affective and behavioural intention (Lewicki et al., 2006, cited in Mason et al., 2014). Most published research focuses on the cognitive element. Trust is described as referring to attitudes, opinions and beliefs, including the means that an individual's knowledge about the other party affects their trust (for example, 'I know my colleague will look after me'). The affective dimension includes dealing with the emotional context of trust (for example, 'I feel reassured that ...') and behavioural intention is a measure that relates to trust in terms of what the individual is prepared to do for another party (for example, 'I am willing to share information') (Mason et al., 2014).

3.1.3 Defining and measuring trust and confidence

It is apparent from reviewing the research that there are no clear definitions of trust or confidence, which led to difficulty assessing the research findings across studies. In general, confidence is shown to relate more to evaluations of the policing institution. Trust is shown to relate more to personal experiences, including evaluations and expectations of the local police or individual officers. Additionally, the research found the relationship to be reciprocal, with one influencing the other (Skogan, 2009). Cao (2015) noted, when reviewing the definitions of confidence and trust, the 2 words are used interchangeably within each definition. Thus, it is unsurprising to find overlap when defining and measuring these concepts. For example, Merry et al. (2012) reported that public 'confidence' was the key indicator of 'trust' and legitimacy in policing.

Some researchers agree that there are conceptual differences between confidence and trust, but nonetheless use the terms together, such as when referring to response variables as measures of 'trust and confidence' (Bradford and Myhill, 2015). Others have used multi-item scales that incorporate trust into a measure of citizen confidence in the police (Albrecht, 2019). While it is accepted there are areas of overlap between the 2 terms, Albrecht suggested consideration of fundamental differences between them. It is important to understand these differences and the factors that contribute separately to confidence and trust in the police, as this will provide greater insight into public perceptions (Jackson and Bradford, 2010). As Cao (2015) concluded, the use of the phrase "trust and confidence in the police" as one whole measurable concept is an imprecise use of the important and distinct perceptions that should be avoided.

3.1.4 Satisfaction

Although this review focused on confidence and trust in the police, we identified satisfaction as a measure often included in literature examining public perceptions of the police. Mazerolle et al. (2013) conducted a systematic literature review and meta-analysis of 28 studies around confidence and trust in the police. They found that the most used outcome measures were satisfaction, confidence, or perception of police effectiveness, but the measures were not standardised between studies. This can cause a lack of 'construct clarity' when examining public perceptions (Javid and Morrell, 2019).

Mazerolle et al. (2013) suggested that satisfaction with the police generally includes perceptions of:

- police effectiveness (how good a job are they doing, how satisfied are you with the way they solve problems)
- fairness of outcomes (how satisfied are you with the fairness of the outcomes people receive)
- fairness of procedures (how satisfied are you with the fairness of how people are treated)

It is generally accepted that satisfaction is distinct from trust and confidence (Cao, 2015). However, when the relationship between trust, confidence and satisfaction with the police was examined, positive correlations were found between all 3 constructs (Hu et al., 2020). We recognised that the concept of satisfaction relates to perceptions based on actual or vicarious personal experiences with the police, but it was not within the scope of this paper to examine satisfaction with the police in any further detail.

3.2 The importance of trust and confidence

Trust and confidence in the police is a complex area that can be impacted by, and can impact legitimacy, the willingness to obey the police, and procedural justice. Research conducted by Hohl et al. (2013) shows the interplay between these concepts. They examined trust and confidence in the UK Metropolitan Police pre- and post-disturbances in London following the death of Mark Duggan, shot by police in 2011.

Analysing public attitudes data, the researchers found that preceding the disorder, overall confidence in the police, trust in procedural fairness, and community engagement, were lower in the boroughs affected most by the disorder (meaning areas with lower confidence later saw more instances of disorder). The researchers found lack of trust and confidence undermined the perceived legitimacy of the police, in that the anti-police riots, disorder and looting were seen as extreme forms of a lack of willingness to cooperate with the police, and a readiness to break the law.

Public expectations about future encounters with the police are also an important component of trust (Jackson et al., 2011). Fair and respectful treatment and decision-making are key to public trust in the police (Jackson et al., 2012a). If the police treat people fairly and respectfully, and this treatment aligns with their perceptions of morality, people will regard the police as having legitimate authority, leading to public compliance and cooperation (Hough, 2012).

Academics identified procedural justice as being one of the most used methods for building legitimacy. It includes the use of dispute-settling procedures that are unbiased, give people a voice, and treat them with respect (O'Brien and Tyler, 2019). The procedural justice model suggests that fairness and community engagement are more important than police effectiveness for building trust. Specifically, people valued fairness over effectiveness in building confidence, which explained variations in intention to cooperate with the police (Jackson and Bradford, 2010).

Sargeant et al. (2014) conducted a study in Australia which supported prior research in the UK. They showed that police performance and procedural justice were positively associated with trust in the police. If people feel the police treat them justly and they tackle crime effectively, trust in the police is greater. Also consistent with prior research, the findings indicated that procedural justice was more important than police performance when predicting public trust in the police.

Yesberg et al. (2021a) suggested that to trust the police is to believe officers generally behave appropriately. In their research, they found the most important factor for accepting police use of force was trust. Respondents who believed the police generally act fair and just, and operate within appropriate boundaries, were significantly more likely to judge police use of force as acceptable. Jackson et al. (2012b) examined data from the European Social Survey for the UK. They found strong evidence for people basing their trust judgements, in part, on what the police do – making sense of and interpreting police actions. The researchers found people withdraw trust when they see the police behaving in what they think are unfair or morally unjustifiable ways.

Researchers also found evidence suggesting that, when interacting with the police, the public considers their approachability, helpfulness and fairness as crucial to building public confidence and legitimacy of the police (Bradford and Myhill, 2015). Trust is viewed as being a generator of confidence in future police behaviour. For example, if the public sees negative police behaviours that do not meet their expectations, then having strong feelings of trust in the police can help maintain their support of police actions in the future (Skogan, 2009). In Finland, the quality of police work was reflected in measures of trust, but an individual's experience of bad policing did not reduce their trust in the police (Kääriäinen, 2008).

3.3 Contextual factors influencing trust and confidence

Jackson et al. (2011) argue that trust is demonstrated, earned and justified. Police achieve it by acting effectively and fairly, by taking the interests of citizens into account, and by communicating and engaging with citizens (Bradford and Jackson, 2011; Hohl et al., 2010). Trust is dynamic and situational, which means it can be enhanced or undermined by events or long-term processes, or through single incidents involving accidents, incompetence, incivility or malpractice (Hohl et al., 2013). Public perceptions of policing can be enhanced or undermined in light of different levels of police visibility, perceived declines in availability, readiness to attend incidents, and shifts in perception of fair treatment of different groups (Jackson et al., 2011). The following section reviews the factors that can influence public confidence and trust in the police through approaches to policing and police contact.

3.3.1 Approaches to policing

Several factors contributing to the policing context may influence how the public perceive policing. Neighbourhood and proactive policing, police visibility, the employment and deployment of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), traffic police, and armed police, are established and coordinated by policing bodies, who will have some control over these factors. A review of existing research conducted by Mazerolle et al. (2013) found the police used a variety of police-led interventions (including conferencing, community policing, problem-oriented policing, reassurance policing, informal police contact and Neighbourhood Watch) to promote and enhance: i) public satisfaction with and confidence in the police; ii) public compliance and cooperation with the police; and iii) public perceptions of procedural justice. Skogan (2009) conducted a review of research that showed how respondents who recalled recently spotting police on patrol in their neighbourhood felt less worried about crime, and more recent police visibility led to increased confidence in the police. The following section reviews literature that is concerned with different approaches to policing.

3.3.1.1 Neighbourhood policing and police visibility

Neighbourhood policing places a clear emphasis on the foundations of crime prevention, the recognition that the police are part of the community and that their authority depends on public approval. There have been different approaches to neighbourhood policing, and occasionally different names, but the foundations have remained (Stephens, n.d.). Sindall and Sturgis (2013) examined data from the BCS [\[3\]](#) for years ending March 2007 and 2008 and found the public reported higher confidence in the police in areas with higher ratios of police officers to residents and increased police visibility. They measured police visibility as observations of

police and PCSOs on foot patrol, but excluded other aspects of neighbourhood policing or police patrols in cars.

Perceptions around police visibility and how informed people feel have also been linked to judgements of effectiveness, fairness and community engagement (Jackson et al., 2009). Research has found that individuals who have more frequent sightings of local police are more likely to rate their confidence in the police positively (Merry et al., 2012). They found that participants who believed they could influence policing decisions in their area had higher confidence levels. In line with studies focusing on adults, research by Sindall et al. (2017) demonstrated how young people's (aged 10 to 16 years) confidence in the police can, in part, be influenced by indirect exposure to the police.

To understand the effects of police visibility and community engagement on trust in police efficiency and fairness, Yesberg et al. (2021) examined the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) Public Attitude Survey (PAS) data for 2014 to 2017. They found that police visibility had a significant association with trust in police fairness and effectiveness. Police-community engagement (measured as how well informed respondents felt about what the police have been doing in their area) had an association with judgements of police effectiveness. Neither police visibility nor police-community engagement had direct associations with collective efficacy (a term referring to social ties among neighbours, combined with a willingness to intervene to solve local problems), but there was a small indirect effect of police visibility on collective efficacy through trust in police fairness. These findings suggest that, when police are more visible in neighbourhoods, there are more positive public perceptions around officer behaviour, which leads to more collective efficacy in communities.

Additionally, trust and confidence can help build community cohesion. Jackson and Bradford (2010) suggest that trust and confidence can encourage active citizen participation in setting local priorities for the police, and in the running of local services. This will then support trust and confidence. For example, Brewster et al. (2018) describe community (or neighbourhood) policing as social interactions with the police, and other statutory or non-statutory organisations, citizens, communities and interest groups, which aims to create social cohesion and collective efficacy (referring to common goals and unity among neighbours) within the community. These interactions rely on community participation that is built on trust and confidence, and the legitimacy of the organisations and individuals taking part. The effect that neighbourhood policing has on confidence and trust in the police has been seen; for example, Tuffin et al. (2006) found a link between public confidence and perceptions that local police understand and deal with local problems.

3.3.1.2 Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)

PCSOs are closely linked with neighbourhood policing, but their influence on trust and confidence in policing has received little research attention. However, researchers have suggested that PCSOs can influence policing in a way that may impact public perceptions of policing. In a study by O'Neill (2014), several PCSOs and police constables reported that the public seemed to trust PCSOs more than police officers when passing on information. Being a member of 'the police' gave PCSOs a degree of credibility, though they cannot arrest, rendering them as less threatening. This, combined with PCSOs having some social capital in the communities they police, generates a formal social control agent who can command a great deal of trust (Brewster et al., 2018). Merry et al. (2012) found that those who agreed that crime and ASB issues were being dealt with were significantly more likely to have met or spoken to a police officer or PCSO than those who did not agree.

3.3.1.3 Traffic policing

The policing of traffic incidents and laws has received little recent research attention, although some literature has proposed interventions that may influence confidence and trust (see [Section 3.7.1](#) below). Goldsmith (2005) found research indicating that the enforcement of traffic laws can challenge public trust in the police. This form of policing generates a high number of citizen contacts, including with citizens who are generally supportive of the police, in situations where strict enforcement could leave citizens disgruntled (Sherman, 1993; Sunshine and Tyler, 2002; Weitzer and Tuch, 2002 as cited in Goldman, 2005).

3.3.1.4 Proactive policing

Tyler et al. (2015) examined proactive policing (meaning police-initiated investigatory contacts with the public or preventive measures aimed at deterring future crimes) in the US and its impact on legitimacy, trust and confidence in policing. Based on empirical evidence, they argued that the experience of being policed in this way undermines police legitimacy, and the experience of mistrustful and unfair treatment by the police offset declines in crime. They suggested proactive policing and being a subject of suspicion can undermine the relationship between communities and the police. Those who view themselves as suspects feel less respected by the police and are more distrustful of police motives.

3.3.1.5 Armed police

British police officers do not routinely carry firearms, which differs from many other countries, such as the US and Germany. In the year ending March 2022, there were 18,259 firearm operations in England and Wales, with firearms discharged on only 4 occasions (0.02% of deployments; Home Office, 2022). Yesberg et al. (2021b) conducted an experimental manipulation study that examined public perceptions of armed police officers in Great Britain (not including Northern Ireland, where police are

routinely armed). They found people responded less favourably to police who were carrying firearms, across all outcomes measured, including trust and legitimacy. These findings suggest that providing officers with firearms could negatively influence the way people view the police. In England and Wales, people may find seeing armed officers alarming and difficult to relate to as the police do not routinely carry firearms. However, results also showed that seeing more armed police officers did not alter people's trust or views of police legitimacy and did not fundamentally affect the way the public thinks about police. Nevertheless, the authors argued that ensuring procedural justice might be particularly important for armed police to retain trust. They suggested decisions to deploy armed officers should be made on operational grounds, and not to enhance trust and legitimacy.

3.3.2 Contact with the police

Contact with the police occurs in various ways, such as being a victim of crime or through stop and search. These different types of contact can contribute to how the public perceives policing. Policy and policing authorities will have little control over these factors, though they could be affected indirectly, such as due to an officer's training or stop and search policies. National and international surveys frequently indicate that relationships between people's experiences of contact with the police and their opinions of the police depend on the quality of the encounter (Boda and Medve-Balint, 2017; Lai and Zhao, 2010; Pass et al., 2020; Skogan, 2009). The following sections review literature relating to the influence on public perceptions through different forms of police contact.

3.3.2.1 Contact as a victim of crime

In Canada, Jackson and Bradford (2019) assessed victim attitude predictors, which showed victims tended to have less trust in the police than non-victims (adjusting for other factors). If reporting a crime, research has found that a lack of information from the police about the crime can leave victims feeling uninformed, uncertain, isolated, neglected or not taken seriously, which can cause further harm and distress. In turn, this can lead to a lack of confidence in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and dissatisfaction with police performance (Merry et al., 2012; Wedlock and Tapley, 2016). Alternatively, a positive experience can increase people's trust and confidence in the police and influence their willingness to cooperate (Wedlock and Tapley, 2016). Over time, changes in perceptions of risk and recent victimisation were not associated with confidence, although earlier victimisation linked with later confidence (Bradford and Myhill, 2015).

Elliott et al. (2012) suggest that victims of crime place a significant value on procedural justice in their contact with the police. Perceptions of fair treatment and following up on the case showed that the police were doing their best to solve the crime. Treating the victim as a person and giving them options were also important, independent of the case outcome. Of particular importance to victims of historical crimes, such as sexual assault

or child sexual abuse, was the police's willingness to do their best to achieve a desired outcome. In the US, Moore and Baker (2018) found that trust in the police was positively and significantly associated with a greater likelihood for students to report sexual assault.

3.3.2.2 Positive and negative contact with the police

Research shows the quality of police-citizen contact is key for public confidence. For example, poorly received contact is consistently associated with lower opinions of the police (Myhill and Quinton, 2010; Miller and D'Souza, 2016). In the UK, data from the Metropolitan Police Public Attitudes Survey (METPAS) for April 2005 to September 2006 showed that negative contact with the police was associated with more negative attitudes towards effectiveness, fairness and level of community engagement. Conversely, METPAS found positive associations between positive contact and police fairness and the level of engagement with the community. Research also shows a larger magnitude of negative impact of contact on perceptions than for positive impacts (Jackson et al., 2009).

Myhill and Bradford (2012) suggest negative pre-existing views of the police were predictive of dissatisfaction with specific encounters, with positive pre-existing views not providing much insurance against poorly handled contact. This panel data from research showed around two-thirds of people with low general confidence in the police were less satisfied with the response they received as a victim. The data also suggested that perceived unsatisfactory police contact may not override other factors in determining a person's level of confidence. For instance, findings indicated the possibility for somebody to experience poorly handled contact and still report improved confidence in the police (Myhill and Bradford, 2010). This supports the idea that confidence relates to a broader view of the organisation, whereas trust may relate to more individual factors, such as police contact.

Further research conducted in Belgium confirmed previous findings from the UK. Van Damme (2017) examined the nature of contact with the police and the relationship with trust and procedural justice. The results showed unsatisfactory contact was associated with lower levels of trust in the police and perceived procedural justice. Conversely, satisfactory contacts were associated with higher scores on both trust components.

Hu et al. (2020) examined Canadian survey data with findings supporting previously identified negativity bias theories (meaning negative experiences with the police have a stronger influence than positive experiences). They found that models that predicted trust, confidence and satisfaction shared 3 of the same factors: dissatisfaction with prior police-citizen contacts (which was the most influential), victimisation and neighbourhood conditions. Findings demonstrated that a negative bias can also influence public confidence and trust in the police.

A recent study conducted in Australia showed how police-citizen encounters can influence attitudes towards the police (Oliveira et al., 2021). When citizens perceive an encounter to be procedurally fair, their levels of trust in police fairness increases, along with a more positive belief in their duty to obey. When they perceive an encounter to end favourably, their sense of duty to obey police (an indicator of legitimacy) increases, and there may be an increase in their level of trust in police effectiveness. However, this depends on the person trusting the police's ability to fight crime before the contact and their belief in duty to obey.

Research from the US (Rosenbaum et al., 2005) examined changes in residents' attitudes toward the police, before and after the police- or citizen-initiated contact. Police encounters, both positive and negative, were an important predictor of police-related attitudes, but the effects of positive and negative experiences were not symmetrical. Direct contact with the police, regardless of who initiated it, did not change attitudes about the police. This was consistent across racial and ethnic groups. However, the quality of the encounter did influence attitudes toward the police, but only for citizen-initiated contacts. When contact was initiated by the citizen, a negative experience produced a significant negative attitude change towards the police. When the contact was initiated by the police, a negative experience had no effect on attitudes.

3.3.2.3 Contact through stop and search

IOPC (2022) recognised that stop and search can be one of the most confrontational encounters an individual can have with the police. When a search is not carried out professionally and with sensitivity, complainants reported the lasting effects it can have, such as feeling victimised, humiliated and violated. When a young person is stopped repeatedly, the cumulative impact can be significant. This type of contact with the police may also impact perceptions of confidence, trust, and satisfaction.

Murray et al. (2021) conducted a study to explore the effects of stop and search on perceptions of procedural justice in young people in Scotland and England between September 2014 and December 2015. The analysis showed that in Scottish cities (Edinburgh and Glasgow), there was a substantially higher prevalence of stop and search of young people than in English cities (Birmingham and Sheffield). For the Scottish sample, experiences of stop and search and attitudes towards the police across a range of procedural justice measures were more likely to be negative when compared to those in the English cities. Findings also suggested that the experience of being searched is negatively associated with trust in police fairness and effectiveness, and in perceptions of police legitimacy. The association between being searched and offending was reduced based on the person's view of how they were treated by the police, which suggested that the relationship may be mediated by a young person's beliefs about the likelihood that the police will act in a procedurally just way.

Miller and D'Souza (2016) considered the perceptions of police effectiveness and fairness across 32 London boroughs from 2006 to 2013. Using multi-level models of longitudinal associations, their findings showed a negative effect of police-initiated contacts on an individuals' opinion of police effectiveness, respectfulness and responsiveness. This was true for stops alone, and searches and arrests combined. The authors noted that previous research suggested some people may value visible, aggressive and less procedurally just styles of policing as a sign of observable police action against crime and disorder. However, Innes (2014, cited in Miller and D'Souza, 2016) proposed that the negative impacts of stop and search may reach beyond just the person searched. It is possible that effects are transmitted through a person's social connections to a broader network of people (Miller and D'Souza, 2016).

Skogan (2017) examined research conducted in Chicago, which considered the impact of investigatory and enforcement stops on trust in the police. The review generally focused on US stop question and frisk powers – similar to stop and search powers in the UK – but also included evidence from UK contexts. Skogan suggested that when the police intervene in the lives of citizens through stopping people, merely to show their presence or exert their influence, they could undermine the belief that police motives are to be trusted. Stop and search encounters being initiated in response to suspicious behaviour may then lose credibility.

In a qualitative study, Novich and Hunt (2018) analysed 253 in-depth interviews conducted with drug-involved gang members in the US. The analysis showed that distrust of the police was evident when gang members were stopped for 'unjustifiable' reasons, including being stopped while standing on the street corner, walking down a road, sitting in a car and/or sitting at a bus stop. The members viewed these encounters negatively and considered the situations did not warrant police attention. Participants reported acting in a non-compliant manner because of the perceived lack of legitimacy for these interactions. When there was a 'justifiable' reason for the stop, such as possessing contraband at the time of the stop that resulted in their arrest, participants expressed trust in the police officer's motivation to conduct the stop and search.

3.4 Socio-demographic and other factors influencing public perceptions of policing

The social context in which the person is situated may regulate attitudes towards the police (Cao et al., 1996, cited in Javid and Morrell, 2019). Socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts often define different groups and communities. As these contexts differ across groups, to enable and remove barriers from successful collaboration with the police, there should

not be a one-size-fits-all approach when working with different communities (Brewster et al., 2018). This section reviews literature relating to individual and geographic factors that may influence public perceptions.

3.4.1 Individual factors

Most research relating to public attitudes towards the police (satisfaction, trust and confidence) has shown that individual variables including gender, age, race, educational attainment, and factors that may influence the individual's attitudes, such as positive/negative prior police-citizen contact and their neighbourhood conditions, can be significant co-variates of public attitudes towards the police (Hu et al., 2020).

3.4.1.1 Gender

Merry et al. (2012) examined socio-demographic factors that may impact public confidence in the police. They examined data from 3 public perceptions surveys (Victim Satisfaction Survey, N = 1,084; Anti-Social Behaviour Survey, N = 301; and Community Safety Survey, N = 4,499) conducted quarterly by an accredited service provider on behalf of local police forces in the south of England. They found gender differences in 2 of the 3 surveys (victim satisfaction and community safety), with females exhibiting higher confidence in policing. Research from Canada by Jackson and Bradford (2019) also found that females perceived the police as more legitimate, and they were more willing to cooperate with the police than males.

In the US, differences between perceptions of procedural-based trust (meaning fairness of the police decision-making process during an encounter) and outcome-based trust (that is, judgements about the fair distribution of the police across communities) was examined during police encounters with black men and women. The study by Chambers and colleagues found gender predicted outcome - and procedural-based trust in police, with females expressing more trust in police than males. The researchers suggested this may result from females experiencing fewer encounters with the police, and generally being treated more fairly when arrested (Chambers et al., 2020).

3.4.1.2 Ethnicity, race, religion and immigrant status

While the context is important when examining these factors, and we should take care when considering research conducted outside the UK, we have included research from other countries in this review. The research is helpful to understand how ethnicity, race, religion and immigration may influence the individual's trust and confidence in the police. For example, Bradford et al. (2017) found that trust in the British police is often higher for immigrants than non-immigrants; people recently arriving to the UK may have positive views of the British police that are used as a base for their trust judgements.

Ethnicity

Negative perceptions of the police from minority groups can be harmful to the overall view of police neutrality and can reduce public satisfaction and confidence in the police (Goodman-Delahunty, 2010, cited in Miles-Johnson, 2013). For example, minority ethnic groups viewed the police less positively and were less likely to have confidence in the police (Javid and Morrell, 2019). Bradford et al. (2017) found that trust was generally higher among most ethnic minority groups than the white majority, but that 2 important exceptions were the black Caribbean and mixed white and black groups.

In Australia, Murphy (2013) examined the influence of procedural justice on perceptions of policing. Procedural justice appeared to be important for shaping the trust of ethnic minority groups and for encouraging willingness to cooperate with the police. Those who were more likely to identify with Australian society were more trusting of the police and were also more willing to cooperate with them, which may influence how ethnic minority groups living in Western countries identify with the police in their adopted country. Using survey data from a randomised field trial (the Queensland Community Engagement Trial), Murphy found trust in the police, but not willingness to report crime to the police, to be higher among those exposed to a procedural justice condition compared to a control condition. Thus, procedural justice was viewed as central to improving public trust and confidence in the police.

Race

Research has identified race as a predictor of confidence in the police. Garduno and Keeling (2021) examined the respondent's 'race', as a characteristic that may impact the level of perceived police legitimacy, in a mid-size city in the North-West US. They found that African American respondents perceived the police as less legitimate than white respondents, with individuals of white ethnicity having more positive perceptions of police legitimacy.

Religion

Using survey data from a study on immigration in Australia, Pass et al. (2020) found procedural justice was positively correlated with trust, while preconceived police bias was negatively correlated with trust. Respondents who viewed the police as being procedurally just when dealing with citizens were more trusting of the police, while those who perceived police as more biased against Muslims were less trusting. This highlights the role that preconceived perceptions of police bias can have on citizen interpretations of police treatment. Madon and Murphy conducted a study in Australia to understand the relationship between Muslims' perceived police bias and trust, and how procedural justice may shape this relationship. They found that seeing the police as biased may lead to Muslims being less likely to

engage with police, report victimisation experiences or cooperate with criminal investigations (Madon and Murphy, 2021).

Immigration status

Bradford et al. (2017) showed that non-UK citizens appeared to trust the police more than UK citizens. Some of this difference was likely due to a lack of encounters with the police for those who had recently arrived. The authors examined CSEW data to assess the relationship between immigration and trust in the police in England and Wales.

Immigrant status criteria was 'born in the UK', 'arrived as children' (aged under 16), and 'arrived as adults' (on a scale from over 30 years to less than 5 years ago). The authors suggested that when faced with questions about the British police, respondents from an immigrant population seemed more inclined than others to indicate a belief that police do have the right intentions and are competent in their role. They also suggested that the British police have a 'strong brand image with a worldwide reach'. This may provide people who have recently moved to the UK with a view that they use as a base for their trust judgements. Once encounters were accounted for, the difference between immigrants and non-immigrants shrank, but there was a persistent association between immigrant status and trust among those who arrived in the UK as adults. The authors found that trust in the police tended to be higher among immigrants and for those living in areas with a higher immigrant population.

Pass et al. (2020) showed similar findings in a study of recent Arabic, Indian and Vietnamese arrivals to Australia (those who arrived 0 to 2 years, 3 to 5 years, and 6 to 9 years ago). These different groups had significantly higher levels of trust in the police than second-generation immigrants born in Australia. The findings suggest new immigrants were more likely to trust police in Australia, but their experiences then resulted in a reduction in their trust in police over time. This could be because Australian police were being favourably compared to police in the immigrants' country of origin, in this case non-western countries.

3.4.1.3 Age

In the UK, Sindall et al. (2017) explored attitudes towards the police in young people (aged 10 to 15 years) using CSEW data for years ending March 2010 and 2012. Older children tended to have lower levels of confidence, with confidence falling by approximately 20% for each annual age increment. There was a significantly higher chance of holding a favourable view of the police amongst those young people whose parents held more positive opinions. These results held when the authors accounted for background characteristics of young people, their parents and the broader environmental context. The association between child and parent confidence strengthened progressively with age. The views of the oldest children more closely mirrored the views of their parents. The attitudes of

parents and their children become more tightly aligned as children grow older, and more favourable parental attitudes limit the general decline in attitudes to the police as young people get older.

Merry et al. (2012) found a significant effect of age in the 3 surveys they examined in the south of England. They found that 18 to 29-year-olds had significantly lower confidence than all other age groups and, as age increased, so did the likelihood that respondents would be confident in policing. All age groups from 30 years and above, were more likely to be confident than those aged 18 to 29 years, which may in part be linked to the observation that older people are less likely to be a recent victim of crime.

Other studies have also found more positive attitudes toward the police among older people (Ren et al., 2005; Jackson and Bradford, 2019). They argued that aging was a process that promoted conservatism and integration into the institutional order, and younger individuals tended to perceive police as attempting to restrict their independence so evaluated them less favourably than older people (Cao et al., 1998, as cited in Ren et al., 2005). Older and higher-income individuals in the US had more positive perceptions of police legitimacy (Garduno and Keeling, 2021). Group effects may impact this relationship between age and public perceptions; for example, older people may carry over higher levels of trust. Perceptions of higher levels of trust when a group was younger may be reflected in their views when people become older.

Farren et al. (2018) examined data from the International Self Report Delinquency Survey (with 33 participating countries from Europe, North and South America, and Asia) relating to questions on trust and perceptions of police legitimacy. The results showed that the quality of teenagers' experience of the police is a clear determinant of their trust in the police. The authors argued that trust in procedural justice is a precondition for legitimacy and a reduced willingness to break the law.

The Family and Community Development Committee of Victoria, Australia carried out a review of child abuse and the impact on trust in organisations (FCDCV, 2013). The review highlighted that children's confidence in authority can be damaged if they feel that trusted people are not interested in their circumstances, or they do not appear capable of protecting a victim from harm. These authority figures included police officers, therapists, teachers and social workers.

3.4.1.4 Sexual orientation and gender identity

As indicated for other minority groups, there may be negative perceptions of policing within the LGBTQ+ community, but there has been little research conducted with these groups. Qualitative research conducted in North Yorkshire found that LGBT people expressed historical dissatisfaction with the police, with feelings of mistrust towards officers a result (Raine, 2015). Miles-Johnson (2013) conducted a study in Australia that examined

differences in perceptions of the police between the LGBTI and heterosexual communities. A survey examined trust in the police, procedural justice, treatment quality and respect from the police. Results showed that heterosexual males and females reported more positive perceptions of all these factors when compared with LBGTQI males and females. This indicates that differences in experiences of the police for people of different sexual or gender identities can impact their perceptions of police legitimacy and levels of trust in the police. When perceptions of police trust, procedural justice, treatment quality by police, and levels of respect from police were considered (while also controlling for gender, age and ethnicity of the respondents), the effect of an individual's sexual identity remained a significant predictor. The minority groups seem to differ in their perceived levels of police fairness, respect, treatment and decision-making from other members of mainstream society.

3.4.1.5 Mental and physical health

There is a small amount of research in the UK that has examined trust in police with people, for example, who have a mental illness, neurological condition, developmental disability and/or physical ill-health. One recent study conducted by Tyson (2019) explored the police response to hate crime against disabled people and how the experiences of individuals with disabilities can impact their confidence and trust in the police. In this qualitative research, a lack of understanding and recognition of disabilities by the police was perceived as the individual not receiving an appropriate policing response, which may affect their confidence and trust in the police. Research in the US (Thompson and Kahn, 2016) examined the connection between mental health conditions and perceptions of police legitimacy and trust. Results showed that people with a mental illness have less trust in the police than those without.

Gibbs et al. (2021) conducted research that examined the perceptions of procedural justice with a small sample of people in Australia. The experiences and perceptions of adults with autism and their parents/carers were explored in relation to: citizen participation; dignity, respect, and politeness; fairness and neutrality; and trustworthiness. The study found that the experiences of autistic adults were negative for all factors considered. In contrast, while parents were critical of the procedural justice delivered by the police when interacting with their autistic child, parents reported more instances of positive perceptions of procedural justice. Positive perceptions included where police demonstrated an understanding of autism and accommodated an autistic person's needs. Some participants reported feelings of anxiety and fear of the police that persisted long after the event. This could result in mistrust of the police and an unwillingness to contact them in the future. It was suggested the presence of a parent may help the police understand the autistic child's needs, and that parents can communicate these to the police.

3.4.1.6 Combination of factors

Researchers have also considered a combination of individual factors that may influence public confidence and trust. For example, in the US, Chambers et al. (2020) found that age and gender combined were significant predictors of trust in the police, with females and younger people expressing greater trust in the police than males and older people. They conducted this study with a sample of black American men and women from a small urban and predominantly black American city. Educational attainment and relationship status were not significantly associated with outcome-based trust in the police in this sample. The Queensland Community Engagement Trial study in Australia (Murphy, 2017) showed that a positive effect of procedural justice on trust and crime reporting was moderated by age and immigrant status, in that procedural justice had a more positive effect for immigrants, particularly those younger than 26 years of age.

3.4.2 Geographic factors, collective efficacy and community influences

The area where people live may influence their perceptions of the police, but the factors influencing confidence and trust are complex and findings can be contradictory. For example, Bradford and Mayhill (2015) found that people living in rural areas in England and Wales expressed less trust in the police than those living in towns and cities. However, this was only the case for the respondent's subjective measures of their environment. There were no significant differences when they examined objective measures of crime or disorder (for example, ASB) in their area. In Canada, people living in rural areas saw the police as slightly less effective compared to people living in urban areas (Jackson and Bradford, 2019). Other research conducted in the UK by Sindall et al. (2017) found no direct evidence that the classification of an area as rural or urban influenced levels of confidence in the police.

A rapid evidence review conducted by Yesberg and Bradford found that studies examining collective efficacy and policing used trust in the police as the most common measure. Studies that included a measure of trust (mostly police effectiveness and/or procedural justice) tended to find significant positive associations with collective efficacy. The findings also suggested that perceptions of collective efficacy are related to whether residents feel the police are a capable and effective resource, and whether they believe police exercise their authority in a fair and just manner. The various studies examining the relationship between collective efficacy and trust have measured trust as an outcome variable, but it is often also included as a predictor variable (Yesburg and Bradford, 2021).

Neighbourhood context plays an important role in shaping resident attitudes and perceptions, with negative attitudes being partly the result of objective and subjective indicators of structural disadvantages (for example, communities with increased disorder or threat of victimisation). Local collective efficacy within communities has been associated with increased confidence and trust in the police. If other people in their neighbourhood intervened when a fight was occurring, or when children sprayed graffiti, residents tended to report increased trust in the police. This suggests that

the public viewed their neighbours as helping to maintain social order (Bradford and Myhill, 2015).

However, Nix et al. (2015) found that, in the US, perceived collective efficacy only partially shaped levels of trust among citizens. When they considered perceptions of procedural justice, the effect of perceived collective efficacy diminished. The relationship between perceived collective efficacy and trust was largely explained by perceptions of procedural fairness. In Belgium, Van Craen (2013) examined factors that influence trust in the police for 'majority' and 'minority' groups (in local and immigrant samples). Van Craen found social disorder had a negative impact for both majority and minority group members. The more often respondents had been bothered by loitering youths and drug-related nuisance, the less trust they had in the police.

Collective efficacy and community demographics are complex when considering public perceptions of the police. Areas with more deprivation are thought to be more likely to have high social cohesion and informal social control. Yesberg et al. (2021a) examined links between trust in the police and community engagement, while controlling for crime rates and deprivation. In their questionnaire, they used terms that describe collective efficacy such as, people are 'more likely to know their neighbours' and they 'feel they can get help from other residents if they need it'. The authors found that feelings of community cohesion influenced confidence, respondents who engaged with Neighbourhood Watch or other residents' groups were likely to have higher confidence in the police than those who did not engage with community action. Their findings also showed a link between deprivation and higher collective efficacy, but this may, in part, be due to different population demographics in London. They suggest that residential mobility patterns influence collective efficacy; for example, unemployment and other markers of deprivation are generally associated with mobility, but those living in social housing tend to move less far.

In addition, the number of properties in areas of London bought by overseas investors and left empty could mean that many areas have relatively few permanent residents. These and other factors may combine to explain how people living in some of the more deprived parts of London have increased collective efficacy. In areas with lower rates of crime, people perceived the police to be more effective. On the other hand, the authors found deprivation has a significant positive association with trust in police effectiveness and collective efficacy. It is community understandings of police fairness, not effectiveness, that appear to be important in generating collective efficacy.

When examining trust as a predictor variable, Sargeant (2017) found that people's trust in police helped to inform their beliefs about collective efficacy in their neighbourhood. As the police are not always present in a community, they rely on citizens to report crime, supervise their neighbours' properties, participate in neighbourhood associations, and be involved in

community policing activities. Trust in police effectiveness was the strongest predictor of collective efficacy, followed by trust in procedural justice. However, obligation to obey the police did not explain collective efficacy, and there was no link between neighbourhood structural characteristics and perceptions of police. Sindall et al. (2017) found confidence present amongst young people (aged 10 to 15 years) who perceive the local area as a friendly place to live, but for the broader environment, found no direct evidence that the levels of disorder or whether the local area is rural or urban influenced confidence levels in young people.

3.5 Perceptions of crime and the influence of media

This section brings together research that examined public perceptions of crime, particularly crime occurring within a community setting, and how it may relate to trust and confidence in the police. Feelings of vulnerability were one of the strongest predictors of trust in the police for residents from high-crime and socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Payne and Gainey, 2007). Skogan (2009) identified a strong reassurance effect of policing, where increased confidence in the police led to a decline in concern about crime. The reporting of crime in the media, and police engagement with the media, were also identified as factors that may influence public perceptions of the police.

3.5.1 Fear of crime and perceptions of crime

Skogan (2009) used a 2-wave panel survey to assess whether the relationship between concerns about crime and confidence in the police was reciprocal (correlated with each other). Skogan examined 2 models relating to confidence in police and concern about crime. The 'reassurance model of policing' suggests that confidence in the police alleviates concern about crime, and the 'accountability model' argues that concern about crime undermines confidence in the police. Skogan measured 'concern about crime' as fears around burglary and robbery, and 'crime victimisation' involved measuring responses to being a victim of a broad mix of crimes, finding a strong reassurance effect of policing. Increased confidence in the police led to a decline in concern about crime, and police visibility had the largest positive impact on building confidence in the police. However, there was no evidence to support an accountability link; respondents did not hold the police to account for their neighbourhood conditions or concerns about crime.

Jackson et al. (2009) found perceptions of disorder, social cohesion and neighbourhood stability were stronger predictors of confidence in the police than worry about crime. Broader concerns about community cohesion and efficacy appeared to be as important as those about disorder; and community concerns appeared more important than worry about crime.

A more recent study in the US (Garduno and Keeling, 2021) examined perceptions of 4 types of neighbourhood crimes (broken windows offenses, property crimes, public order offenses and personal crimes) and perceptions of neighbourhood safety. They found that perceptions of property and personal crimes as neighbourhood problems, as well as a sense of safety in the neighbourhood, were associated with perceptions of police legitimacy. The less the respondent viewed personal and property crimes as a problem in their neighbourhood, and the safer they felt in their neighbourhood, the more the respondent viewed the police as legitimate. The study also found that once perceived police performance was accounted for, perceptions of crime did not affect people's perceptions of police legitimacy, indicating that the effect of crime on police legitimacy operates through police performance.

Nalla and Nam (2021) highlighted several studies that examined the relationships between fear of crime and trust in police. They suggest that citizens' trust in the police can be measured within the context of societal values. People who felt safe in their neighbourhood showed more positive attitudes around procedural justice and they had more trust in the police than people who did not feel safe (Jackson and Bradford, 2019). A feeling of vulnerability was one of the strongest predictors of trust in the police for residents from high-crime and socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Payne and Gainey, 2007).

To explore different models of trust that influence public evaluations of police, Chambers et al. (2020) examined 2 models of trust: i) instrumental (measures of perceived crime problem and actual victimisation); and ii) expressive (measures of neighbourhood physical condition and quality of life). Results showed that perceived crime problems were not predictive of procedural-based trust in the police, while victimisation was a significant predictor of procedural-based trust. For example, citizens with higher levels of victimisation tended to have lower procedural-based trust in police. They found a weak connection between expressive concerns and procedural-based trust in the police.

3.5.2 News and media

Javid and Morrell (2019) argue mass media and, more recently, social media may influence public perception of the police. They suggest that police engagement with the media can have a crucial role in their approach to boost public confidence and highlight that every police force in the UK has a form of communication or media department.

Jackson et al. (2012a) explored media reporting over a 3-year period (from April 2007 to March 2010). They conducted content analysis on the reporting of policing in 5 newspapers, combined with data from METPAS. In the newspapers, media coverage of policing varied, with periods of high and low-intensity press coverage. High-profile events, including the 'cash for honours' inquest, the misconduct trial for shooting Jean Charles de Menezes by police officers, and the contested policing of the G20 protests,

were reported during the research period. Confidence was on a continuous trajectory of a slight increase over the 3-year period, and the variance in media coverage did not reflect variance in public confidence. Differences in confidence levels between newspaper readerships remained small throughout the 3-year period. The findings suggest that, although it is a complex picture, media reporting on police effectiveness did not have a statistically significant effect on public confidence. However, reporting on police-community engagement and procedural fairness can have a statistically significant effect on public confidence. This research used data from London and the survey relied on public self-reporting of newspaper readership, which was not verifiable.

Hamilton and Black (2021) reviewed trust and confidence in the Republic of Ireland police, the Garda Síochána (Gardai). They noted the Gardai have close links with their community and often score highly on confidence and trust in the police (measured as satisfaction), when compared with other countries. In their review, they assessed how successive scandals impacted public confidence in the Gardai (for example, corruption and police investigative failures). During periods when these investigations were reported, misconduct satisfaction and the percentage of those having high levels of trust in the Gardai fell. In the period after these investigations (from 2016), data showed increased levels of confidence/trust, with trust levels increasing before stabilising. The review of the scandals and their association with public confidence indicated there were strong residual levels of confidence in the Gardai that recovered trust levels once a legislative or institutional solution to the policing 'crisis' was found. However, it is not easy to identify if it was the scandals or the media reporting of them that impacted public perceptions.

The current review found little research examining social media and public perceptions of the police. Nevertheless, McIntee (2016) indicated that, with increased social media interactions, the police now have a voice in the public sphere. The research highlighted that social media was used to broadcast information and engage with public networks in online forums, and that transparency, openness and dialogue were essential tools for policing. As a result, through the release of information, even if it was ignored by the majority, the police were presenting an open and approachable image, and created potential for contact with the wider community. The research showed that the type, extent and effectiveness of communication activities (that is, direct or digital communications) fluctuated significantly between different policing environments (McIntee, 2016).

A systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by Elphick et al. (2021) examined the use of digital applications and considered how their use may build trust with citizens. The analyses focused on comparing online applications hosted by police with those hosted by third parties. Police apps appeared to take a top-down rather than collaborative role. Additionally, they tended to focus on police-led engagement, top-down safeguarding and information sharing, rather than on reassuring or empowering applicants.

For example, users often could not co-create content, and information was filtered. In contrast, third-party apps generally focused on empowering applicants. The research suggested there may be public mistrust of police apps, as the methods of using and retaining data were not transparent.

3.6 Police and Crime Commissioners: awareness and the influence on perceptions of policing

Several papers explored PCC roles in relation to, for example, the accountability of policing and PCCs (Raine and Keasey, 2012); the governance model of PCCs (Watts, 2019); PCCs influence on policing decisions around stop and search policies (Derfoufi, 2016); and the administration of PCC elections (The Electoral Commission, 2016). However, these studies did not explore public perceptions of PCCs, nor the factors that may impact PCCs' influence on public trust and confidence in policing. Hence, there is a gap in the research evidence in this area. Nevertheless, some research addressed the PCC role in ensuring procedural justice and legitimacy for policing.

Introducing PCCs in 2012 suggested a return to community-oriented policing, where the public could ask the police to amend the conduct of its officers, the deployment of its resources and its strategic and tactical policies to address community needs, wants, concerns and complaints (McDaniel, 2018). Smith (2009) suggested that several factors influence complainant confidence in procedures that likely affect public confidence, including the absence of adequate support and assistance for complainants. Fair and effective complaints systems depend on independent and impartial decision-making, which is essential for improving public confidence in the police. These studies highlight the important role of the PCCs in ensuring the public has a voice in the policing of their community, and in the handling of complaints against the police, both of which are essential elements in public perceptions of the police.

Lister and Rowe (2015) explored the democratic governance and accountability of policing arising from PCC elections. Their review suggested that the remit of PCCs was to work with community safety partners to produce enhanced approaches to crime and disorder, while developing a key role in harnessing the efforts of policing. However, in a review of PCCs' crime plans, McDaniel (2018) found that many of their plans do not contain crime reports, crime maps or threat assessments of local crime, terrorism, organised crime or cybercrime. The review noted that the reported benchmarks for public confidence, satisfaction, reporting, recording, complaint and inter-agency collaboration around victims and mental health were also largely generic.

3.7 Interventions and approaches to policing that may improve public perceptions of policing

This section of the review reports on interventions and approaches to policing that we identified in the literature; we have not formally reviewed 'what works'. Rix et al. (2009) conducted an REA to explore how interventions could improve public confidence in the police. The research evidence supported 4 key interventions that demonstrated improvements in public confidence: community or neighbourhood policing, high-quality community engagement, local-level communications and restorative justice. The current literature review found evidence to support several of these interventions, including approaches to policing, community engagement and communication. No papers in this review included evidence relating to restorative justice. We reviewed studies examining the influence of officer training and officer numbers on public perceptions.

3.7.1 Approaches to policing

Research has indicated that police can actively work to improve citizens' trust and confidence through their approaches to policing. In Australia, Mazerolle et al. (2012) examined data from an RCT, the Queensland Community Engagement Trial (QCET), that tested the impact of police engagement with citizens using elements of procedural justice (neutrality, citizen participation, respect and trustworthy motives) in short police-citizen encounters. They found that when police demonstrated procedural justice at random breath test encounters with citizens, their trust and confidence in the police increased. When examining the data further, Murphy (2017) found that levels of obligation to obey were no higher in a procedural justice group than a control group. Moreover, for citizens who reported low levels of trust, the procedural justice intervention had a negative impact.

The Scottish Community Engagement Trial (ScotCET) was an RCT designed to test the effects of 'procedurally just' policing on public trust and police legitimacy in road policing in Scotland (MacQueen and Bradford, 2015). During the study, the police stopped drivers as part of Police Scotland's 'Festive Road Safety Campaign'. The intervention comprised a checklist of key messages to include in routine roadside vehicle stops, and a leaflet for officers to give to drivers. Analysis examined measures of trust, satisfaction and legitimacy. Contrary to previous research, the intervention had no significant effect on general trust in the police, nor on police legitimacy. In fact, trust in the officers who made the stop, and satisfaction with their conduct, fell after implementation of the intervention. The authors suggest results from this study demonstrate the difficulties police have in converting interventions to improvements across policing contexts, rather than showing procedural justice interventions are ineffective. They

challenge the idea that a simple additive approach to the delivery and communication of procedural justice may improve public perceptions.

In 2010, Myhill and Quinton conducted an evidence review and concluded that a service model of policing could increase confidence if concerns of local communities were dealt with and interaction with the police improved (Myhill and Quinton, 2010). Further research by Myhill and Bradford (2012) examined whether satisfaction of personal contact with the police can enhance trust and confidence. They conducted a thorough assessment and evaluation of the National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP), which was implemented in 16 neighbourhoods in England between years ending March 2004 and 2005. The NRPP involved community policing activity focused on visible, targeted foot patrol, community engagement and problem-solving. Satisfactory handling of citizen-initiated contacts contributed to improving wider confidence in the police. Negative pre-existing views of the police were predictive of dissatisfaction with specific encounters, but if there was a poor service, then positive pre-existing views did not appear to protect public perceptions.

Interventions, including changes in the method of communicating and engaging with the police, may be required to improve public perceptions. For example, the Netherlands have implemented a new 'service model' of policing to improve public satisfaction. Research findings showed that citizens who are satisfied with police services were also more likely to trust the police (Schapp, 2021). Schapp conducted this research through interviews with police officers of different ranks, scholars and civil servants involved in shaping policy and decisions related to trust and trust-building activities in England and Wales, Denmark and the Netherlands. Schapp suggested proximity-based policing was changing and there was now less requirement for police stations as the public reach out to the police using different methods of engagement (through online crime reporting or social media visibility). The research suggested crime was also changing and the option to report online was viewed in the Netherlands as a public preference. If this method of reporting was available nationally, it could improve satisfaction and public perceptions of police legitimacy.

3.7.1.1 Supporting victims

Britain Thinks (DLUHC, 2020) research examined satisfaction with the police in older victims of crime across England and Wales. Older people described how officers' manner and tone played an important role in their experiences and levels of satisfaction with the reporting process. They also reported a lack of communication from the police during the investigation process. Consistency in the police point of contact and the information provided by officers were crucial factors influencing overall satisfaction with the initial police response. Their level of satisfaction with the police response impacted how protected and supported participants felt and whether they would report future instances of crime. The formalities of

uniform, and the tone and language used by the police were critical in inspiring confidence and trust.

To improve the support provided to victims of domestic abuse (DA), Kent police introduced an alternative response to reports of DA. Rothwell et al. (2022) assessed the effectiveness of their Rapid Video Response (RVR), where callers reporting DA were spoken to via a video call, rather than business as usual (BAU) with an officer being deployed to speak with the victim face-to-face. This RCT examined the effects of RVR compared with BAU on public perceptions of Kent police. Victim satisfaction with the police was significantly higher in the RVR group (85%) compared with the BAU group (78%). For confidence in the police, 48% of participants reported no change in their level of confidence after dealing with the police. However, for those who reported a change, 75% in the RVR group said their confidence had increased, compared with 66% in the BAU group. These figures were broadly repeated for reports of trust in Kent police following contact.

McKee et al. (2022) conducted an RCT and found that reassurance 'call-backs' to victims of unsolved crimes can be used by the police to develop trust with the public. Research carried out with victims of vehicle crimes in the Metropolitan police area found statistically significant increases in satisfaction when victims received the follow-up reassurance calls (62% satisfaction), when compared with those receiving standard letters only (40% satisfaction). Through treating the victim with respect, the legitimacy of police actions can be increased, which will improve the victim's perceptions of trust.

In the Netherlands, Schapp (2021) found mandatory feedback to victims was viewed as important to increase trust. Citizens who do not receive a follow-up will think they are not being taken seriously and may lose trust in the police. Other research highlighted an obligation for police to provide feedback to citizens on the status of their case, 2 weeks after they filed the original report. Wedlock and Tapley (2016) conducted a rapid evidence review that examined 28 papers exploring 'what works' to increase trust and confidence in the CJS for victims of crime. The focus was on victims in the CJS, but the findings are also relevant for policing. The 4 themes identified were:

- providing accurate information in a timely manner and communicating with victims to deliver the information and listen to their needs
- ensuring procedural justice and quality of service from criminal justice professionals – this was often a more important factor in victim satisfaction than in the case outcome working with multi-agencies to provide effective support for victims in terms of information sharing
- the professionalisation of victims' services and ensuring a single point of contact or advocate to also improve victim satisfaction

The research recognised that victims will not all require the same levels of information and support, so early identification of a victim's needs means that the police can target services for those who want and need them most. Similarly, Elliott et al. (2012) interviewed victims of crime in Australia, who also suggested that procedural justice, including being treated fairly, was as important as the outcome of their case.

3.7.1.2 Stop and search

Research is limited on changes to stop and search, as an intervention, that may impact public perceptions of policing. Harris and Jones (2020) suggest that direct and vicarious encounters with police through stop and search can shape perceptions of, and attitudes toward, the police in both adolescence and adulthood. Scrase (2020) reported findings from one small qualitative study that explored the impact of stop and search for individuals in London. The findings highlighted the negative and personal nature of stop and search encounters. The researcher proposed that how police conduct stop and search can impact the individual, which can shape their perceptions of the police. Although not a simple causal effect, stop and search can contribute to perceptions that the police lack legitimacy, respect and fairness, which will impact trust and confidence. The researcher also suggests that negative experiences of stop and search can lead to the individual questioning the authority of the police and confrontation during the interaction. However, Harris and Jones (2020) found that stop and search can lead to positive perceptions of procedural justice, which would reduce the level of negative perceptions of the police. But this depends on the level of police intrusiveness during the encounter.

In their 'Inclusive Britain' report, DLUHC (2022) recognised these concerns about stop and search, and the negative impact it can have on individuals and their perception of the police. IOPC has made 18 recommendations to policing bodies in England and Wales, including the Home Office and NPCC to help increase public confidence in the police when considering stop and search powers. To support change and improvement in policing practice, the recommendations addressed some of the issues that can undermine trust and confidence in police use of stop and search. The focus was to ensure the police used stop and search powers legitimately, fairly and without discrimination (IOPC, 2022).

3.7.1.3 Body-worn cameras

Use of body-worn cameras (BWCs) has increased in recent years. BWCs are considered an important tool that may improve police-community relations and enhance police legitimacy through improved transparency and increased trust in the police. In the US, Sousa et al. (2018) examined public perceptions of BWC use and levels of trust in the police. They found that beliefs about the technology increasing transparency, improving police-citizen relations and increasing public trust had a significant effect on increasing public support for officers' use of BWCs. Younger respondents

demonstrated more confidence in BWCs' ability to improve police-citizen relations, increase trust in police and decrease racial tensions. Respondents from black ethnic groups indicated less optimism in terms of BWCs' ability to increase transparency, trust in police, or improve relationships between police and citizens. In contrast, public attitudes about the capacity of BWCs to decrease excessive force by police and reduce racial tension did not have a significant effect on public support for the technology. The authors suggested that their findings can be understood when considering the difference between transparency and trust. For example, if the police release BWC footage involving a controversial police incident, most would agree there was transparency. If that video clearly showed inappropriate, unjustified or unlawful actions by the officer, it is unlikely to improve the community's trust in police.

3.7.2 Community engagement

Javid and Morrell (2019) suggest there may be different 'publics' based on, for example, the age, socio-economic class and ethnicity of the communities they police. Therefore, the police should consider the social context and regard the public as distinct communities. Myhill (2006) suggested a definition of community engagement that includes the process of citizen participation in policing, from identifying and implementing solutions to local problems to influencing strategic priorities and decisions. The police, citizens and communities must be willing to participate, and policing organisations must engage and respond to the community.

Bradford and Myhill (2015) suggested that policing strategies that include community engagement are more likely to be regarded positively by local communities. Policies and practices that resonate with the association of the police with efforts to maintain community order and stability may be more acceptable to residents, could be seen as more legitimate, and will likely build public confidence and trust. In the US, Skogan (2009) reported that interventions including a 'community organising team' and opening a storefront office (a local police office in a shop or a shopping area) improved evaluations of the police, reduced perceived crime and disorder, and increased neighbourhood satisfaction. Analysis suggested that the positive benefits of community policing stemmed from increasing confidence in the police, as there was no direct link between the intervention and reduced worry about crime.

Posch and Jackson's RCT on education and building confidence highlighted one way to build positive relations between the police and young people. Research into legal socialisation shows that as young people grow, they learn about authority, rules, rights and responsibilities – first from their parents, second from their teachers, and third from legal officials (such as the police). Police officers engaging with schools may develop positive experiences that generate a mutual sense of trust and legitimacy. Interactions with police officers are 'teachable moments' through which people learn about the law, its enforcement, and their own role and position within society. Depending on the quantity and quality of people's direct and

indirect experiences with the law, teenagers and young adults can develop a healthy relationship with the law based on mutual understanding and respect, or an unhealthy relationship characterised by animosity and mistrust (Posch and Jackson, 2021).

One example of community engagement with young people is the 'Mini Police' initiative. This police engagement programme operates across the UK bringing together community volunteers, primary schools and police forces. In an evaluation of the programme, Callendar et al. (2019) found that it taught children about policing, personal safety and gave them the opportunity to take part in volunteering activities that were important to their local community. They also found that most children held positive views of the police, but participation in the 'Mini Police' initiative enhanced the effect on children's perspectives of trust in the police. This programme demonstrated that when building trust within communities, the police could engage with young people at an early age. Positive interactions between the police and young people help support local policing priorities and give young people a chance to be heard, be involved in their communities, and gain a practical understanding of policing (DLUHC, 2022).

Madon and Murphy (2021) outlined strategies that could inform police practice with 'harder to engage communities', suggesting that police agencies need to do more than consider how an individual officer treats people in one-off encounters. Other aspects of trust-building with citizens are required to minimise expectations of poor treatment before routine police-citizen encounters occur. Madon and Murphy proposed that a 'suite of activities' is required to build trust. This could involve officers interacting with citizens in informal contexts to foster greater trust over time, police organising outreach initiatives for disenfranchised groups and holding regular community forums where community members discuss issues related to crime and neighbourhood disorder. A recent US study evaluated a community-police engagement dialogue and found strong levels of trust, mutual respect and empathy between police officers and community members (Perez et al., 2021). Empathy was expressed through a mutual increase in awareness of the challenges faced by both community members and police officers and how they feel. Additionally, the dialogues were especially effective at humanising police officers for youth community participants and fostering feelings of voice, trust, respect and empathy, they experienced significantly larger improvements for all 4 of these dimensions.

In a review of international literature, O'Brien and Tyler (2019) focused on evidence for building trust through improving public perceptions of procedural justice. They concentrated on the fair and respectful exercise of authority during everyday interactions between individuals and the police, and suggested interventions that may help re-build lost trust. For example, reconciliation, which involves gestures carried out at the community level with the expressed intention of addressing past injustice, and that promised changes in an authority's future relations with a community may help to re-

build lost trust. However, there is limited research evidence on reconciliation gestures so these interventions should be viewed more cautiously.

3.7.3 Communication

In London, Hohl et al. (2010) examined the effects of local police communication with the public on perceptions of policing. The research examined confidence in the police, police fairness, effectiveness, feeling informed and police contact. Results showed that leaflet distribution outlining policing priorities was effective for communication and engagement with local concerns. There was a positive effect on perceptions of engagement and on respondents' belief in police effectiveness. In areas where leaflets were distributed, perceptions of community engagement improved substantively. However, the leaflets had no effect on perceptions of police fairness, decency, or helpfulness in personal encounters. However, in an RCT with intervention groups receiving different policing information (crime maps, policing information, and maps and information together), Quinton (2011) did not find an impact of policing information on levels of confidence in the police. Yet, the study did identify a significant impact of receiving information on the extent to which people thought the police listened to the community, understood their concerns and dealt with the issues that mattered.

Certain events, such as the murder of Sarah Everard and subsequent protests, and the media reporting of these events may have a damaging effect on public perceptions of the police. However, there is a challenge in knowing what type of media information impacts public confidence in the police (Javid and Morrell, 2019). Quinton (2011) found a small positive effect on public perceptions that they may be the victim of a crime (for example, of ASB or minor crimes such as criminal damage) when provided with policing information and crime maps. However, despite some forms of information elevating the perception of crime risk for victims, there was no corresponding increase in worry about crime, and victims of crime reported increased confidence in the police. The results also highlighted positive effects for female confidence in the local police and their perception of police effectiveness. Females, who were more exposed to crime, felt reassured by the information they received (Quinton, 2011).

In the US, Kochel and Skogan (2021) examined perceptions of transparency and legitimacy before and after the release of a video depicting the murder of a black American by a white police officer. The intervention included holding the police to account and increasing police transparency by releasing the video footage of the event. After the intervention, among black residents, trust in the Chicago Police and the neighbourhood police increased, when compared with measures taken before the intervention. In contrast, levels of trust in the Chicago Police, and the neighbourhood police, declined for white residents. Prior to the intervention, black residents were aware of negative encounters with police, so the content of the video was not surprising and they viewed its release as a positive step. For white residents, the visually documented evidence of

poor police behaviour may have brought patterns of discrimination, and concerns of the black community regarding their treatment by the police, to conscious awareness and undermined their trust in the police.

Research from Australia (Sargeant, 2017) found that police may be able to encourage collective efficacy and subsequently reduce crime in communities by improving trust in police effectiveness and procedural justice. While 'being effective' may be somewhat self-explanatory to the police, they can actively improve on communicating effective outcomes to citizens, such as through delivering a newsletter to households (Hohl et al. 2010). Such strategies can target communities with low collective efficacy, and subsequently improve trust in police effectiveness (Sargeant, 2017). However, the extent to which the police should engage in building community capacity for safety and collective efficacy remains an open question. The police are required to detect crime, undertake enforcement activity, and prioritise local, collaborative crime prevention and problem-solving activities, but the scope for wider community engagement is unclear (Bradford and Myhill, 2015).

3.7.4 Training

Nagin and Telep (2020) reviewed research examining the effects of procedurally just treatment by the police for citizens' willingness to comply with the law. They suggested procedural justice is based on the principle that treating citizens with dignity should be the rule not the exception in police interactions with the public, but there was limited evidence showing the effectiveness of procedural justice training for improving public perceptions of policing. This should not preclude the implementation of procedural justice into police practice. In this literature review, several studies – while they did not report the effect on confidence and trust in the police specifically – have reported findings suggesting that training in procedural justice can encourage fair and respectful policing, improve effectiveness of the police, and public perceptions of policing.

Gibbs et al. (2021) highlighted several studies that found training which targeted the development of procedural justice skills, such as active listening and perspective taking techniques, resulted in positive effects, including lower levels of use of force and reductions in complaints (for example, Owens et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2020, cited in Gibbs et al., 2021). Additionally, teaching procedural justice skills, along with increasing awareness of medical conditions such as autism, can reduce police misunderstandings and misattributions. This could lead to fairer and more respectful encounters and improved provision of practical support.

In the US, Dai (2021) evaluated a procedural justice training programme for police officers. The training programme significantly improved officers' attitudes towards procedural justice, with an immediate effect. There was also a long-term significant effect for all 4 elements of procedural justice (respect, trustworthiness, neutrality and voice). Systematic social observations, through observations of BWC footage of police-citizen

interactions, suggested that the procedural justice training had positive effects on officers' behaviour and citizens' interactions on the street. Citizens who interacted with the police also perceived the interaction positively in terms of procedural justice.

In addition, findings from an experimental study examining perceptions of procedural justice, including measures of fairness and legitimacy, and the moderating effects of the vehicle driver's race during an encounter, recommended that procedural justice training efforts should focus on avoiding disrespect during encounters with the public (Soloman, 2019). Police officers may not need to be overly friendly during encounters, but they should avoid disrespectful behaviour, as this may be sufficient to convey procedural injustice. In addition, law enforcement officers should utilise procedural justice to build community trust and legitimacy.

Miles-Johnson and Pickering (2018) examined Australian police recruits' trust in the public. Results suggested that police mistrust of people from diverse communities can have serious outcomes for police organisations. For example, police mistrust of sections of the community can diminish police confidence in being able to engage effectively with all members of the community. It was also suggested that police mistrust of communities may also erode police confidence in their ability to fulfil their duties and responsibilities, which increases the likelihood that officers will not provide the same level of service to all community members.

Weisburd et al. (2022) conducted an RCT in the US to examine the effects of procedural justice training for officers on policing outcomes. Officers who completed the intensive training showed more procedurally just behaviour and less disrespectful treatment of people in high-crime areas. The intervention also reduced arrests by police officers, positively influenced residents' perceptions of police harassment and violence, and reduced crime.

3.7.5 Number of officers

The number of officers in a police force may not be linked to the numbers of visible patrols in an area. Visibility may be linked to the deployment of officers in an area, which is important for improving public perceptions. Sindall and Sturgis (2013) examined data from the BCS for years ending March 2007 and 2008 to understand the effect of police numbers on confidence in the police across England. The researchers found that the extent to which the police were seen patrolling the streets on foot (a measure of visibility) was related to the number of police officers employed in the area. Results showed a modest influence of police numbers on confidence, which was partially explained by police visibility. Confidence was higher in areas where there was a higher ratio of police officers to residents and where the police are more visible. However, the authors suggest most of the difference in confidence was due to factors relating to the individuals (for example, age) rather than the number of officers or their visibility in a geographic area.

Nägel and Vera (2021) found a strong negative correlation between the number of police officers per inhabitant and trust in the police across Europe. For example, Finland and Denmark had low numbers of officers per inhabitant but scored highest on the trust variable, whereas Cyprus had relatively high numbers of officers per inhabitant but scored low on trust measures. This was a robust predictor of trust in the police at the country level, but the effect was not present when levels of perceived corruption in the country was accounted for. There was no apparent reason to believe that increasing or decreasing the number of police officers per inhabitant had any effect on trust in law enforcement institutions at the country level. Police numbers only appeared to be associated with trust in the police through the perceived levels of corruption. Nägel and Vera suggest that the results do not support the notion that police forces should be kept 'small' or be used to argue for reducing police budgets. They suggest that fighting corruption and other forms of police misconduct is a promising approach to maintain, restore or increase public trust in the police.

4. Conclusions

This literature review assessed the research evidence relating to public perceptions of police, in particular confidence and trust. It explored the meanings of confidence, trust and satisfaction, and why they are important for policing. We found this area of research was complex, with overlap and conflation between different concepts and measures. In summary, confidence was described as a generalised support for the police as an institution. Trust was related to ethical standards, police integrity and competency. Definitions of satisfaction included perceptions of fairness in the outcome people received and their treatment during police procedures. The review has identified the relevance of procedural justice, legitimacy and police effectiveness as important concepts for policing. Confidence and trust can be lost if public perceptions of these concepts are impacted by policing policy, procedures or actions.

The review has identified factors that influence public perceptions (such as contact and individual factors). These highlighted the complexity of attaining confidence and trust in policing, and satisfaction with police actions. There is strong evidence showing that the relationship between the police and public is negatively affected if there is a poor quality of police-citizen contact, and by a lack of community engagement. If the public views the police as lacking legitimacy, working in procedurally unjust ways or not engaging with them, then confidence and trust will reduce. The public will also be less likely to cooperate with the police. Evidence also shows that socio-demographic variables, such as age, ethnicity and community cohesion, can impact public perceptions of policing. The police should

consider these individual and social group variables when engaging with different communities.

Several interventions have shown the police can improve public perceptions. Communication and community engagement are important, with the evidence showing that openness and transparency can improve confidence and trust. Research showed this was particularly important for communities who initially had reduced trust and confidence in the police. Communication and being kept up to date with the case was shown to improve perceptions of the police for victims of crime. Procedural justice and legitimacy contribute to public perceptions and are impacted if the public perceives that the police are not complying with these principles, such as during stop and search.

The review identified existing literature examining how the public's awareness and engagement with PCCs may influence their perceptions of policing, if there has been any change over time in public perceptions, and whether contact and engagement with PCCs has an influence on confidence and trust. However, there was limited literature on these topics.

There are limitations of this review in that it was not a systematic literature review and we did not conduct secondary analysis of data. In the UK, government, policing bodies (such as ONS and MOPAC) and police forces conduct regular surveys and collect data that relate to public perceptions of policing. However, for the purpose of this review, we did not analyse or review the data, as we focused on recently published literature. We examined research within the UK context but in areas where literature was sparse, we considered older research and research conducted outside the UK.

The review has identified gaps in the literature that may benefit from future research. For example, research examining PCCs and how they influence confidence and trust in the police, would be useful to increase knowledge of their role in improving public perceptions of policing, such as in their role of holding the police to account and investigating complaints against the police. Exploring perceptions of the police within the UK immigrant population may help to increase understanding of perceptions for different groups. Research examining the influence of social media should also be considered. For example, exploring whether social media reports related to policing influence public perceptions in different geographic regions.

Public perceptions of policing is a complex area. It is important to understand different concepts and factors that may influence public views, but the public should be seen as multiple groups of individuals who have different perceptions of the police. Targeted interventions that engage with different communities are more likely to improve the individual's perception of policing, than a one-size-fits-all approach.

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1. ONS slightly changed methodology for collecting CSEW data in 2012. This resulted in small but significant increases in positive results. Data for the year ending March 2011 and earlier are not directly comparable with those for the year ending March 2012 onwards (ONS, 2023).
2. There are other sources of data (for example, National Rural Crime Survey) providing information on rates of public perceptions of policing, but analysis or report findings from those data are outside the scope of this review.



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