

Essay one:

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

Your answer must be based on academic research.

Policing in the United Kingdom has experienced significant demographic changes in recent years, with increasing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, prompted by contemporary perspectives that suggest the police force remains inherently racist against a background of deep-rooted discrimination and prejudice (Joseph-Salisbury, Connelly and Wangari-Jones, 2020). This narrative has necessitated police adaptation in serving increasingly diverse communities to build trust. Diversity in policing is recognised to be the representation of various demographic groups including race, gender, sexual-orientation and socio-economic status which facilitates the reflection of the communities that the police serve, facilitating culturally-sensitive practices in addressing the concerns of minority communities (Akinwunmi-Othman, 2024). This essay will explore the effectiveness of the UK police force in adapting to diversity, focussing on police force composition, recruitment, internal structures, and community engagement. While notable progress has been made, pervasive discrimination and lack of trust in police present challenges in achieving full integration and unanimous confidence in policing.

Historically, diversity in UK policing is characterised by significant democratic change and social upheaval, prompted by the alteration of the national demographic landscape where communities became more diverse, yet were not reflected within the police (Cockcroft, 2020). Such disparities contribute to fragile community-relations, specifically from the underrepresented communities, magnified by key events such as the 1981 Race Riots leading to the Scarman Report (1981) and Stephen Lawrence's murder prompting the Macpherson Report (1999) through which the police were recognised to be inadequate in working with ethnic minorities

and working-class populations, revealing considerable institutional failings. These reports were pivotal in recommending diversification of policing and the adoption of more inclusive practices, as advanced through the Equality Act (2010). Recent reports suggest not only is the police institutionally racist, but also misogynistic and homophobic through which genuine ethnic, cultural and religious diversity remains a distant aspiration, and confidence in policing remains at an all-time low (Wicks, 2024), prompting significant changes in police practices and accountability. Thus, the conservative views of hierarchy and order inherent to policing manifest themselves in racial prejudice, theorised by scholars to be sustaining institutional racism, despite continuous attempts of diversification, highlighting an inability to address the racial bias and reducing police effectiveness (Caveney et al., 2019).

Efforts have been made to depart from this deep-rooted racism and misogyny by accommodating diversity through recruitment, although challenges in cultural-competence and community trust persist. Recruitment strategies have been implemented to improve representation for underrepresented groups, with women now making up 34.7 percent of the force, compared to 16.8 percent in 2000 (Home Office, 2023). However, this disguises gendered inequalities, with women underrepresented at Sergeant and Inspector levels, where traditional masculine values can also undermine fairness and compassion, compromising positive outcomes (Charman, 2024). Despite recent improvements, ethnic minority officers make up 8.4 percent of the force, despite representing 18.3 percent of the population (Home Office, 2023). Such disparities fail to reflect diverse communities, with the police force remaining predominantly white and male. Addressing this, targeted representative-recruitment schemes have been implemented where characteristics have replaced personality to facilitate better cultural-competency amongst officers (Stubbs et al., 2023). The College of Policing (2022) have promoted such diversity strategies, setting a national expectation in improving diversity through both recruitment and training, making it compulsory to regularly train officers in cultural diversity to enhance effective engagement with diverse communities.

Community engagement strategies in policing have evolved to accommodate diverse communities in which focus is placed on building trust through cultural-competency training which is suggested to influence professional perspectives and is fundamental in effectively engaging with diverse groups (Tarver, Herring and Friend, 2019). A prominent model is Neighbourhood Policing Teams which aims to embed officers within communities to build stronger relationships and be responsive to individualised community concerns, performing particularly successfully in areas with high ethnic diversity where trust in police is historically low (Innes et al., 2020). Such engagement is pivotal in addressing the 19-23 percent increase in hate crime post-Brexit, highlighting the ongoing challenges in combating discrimination when working with local communities to encourage trust in the police who recognise the impact of targeted discrimination on underrepresented communities, and respond effectively (Devine, 2020). Building such community trust is paramount against the background of disproportionate patrol of ethnic minority areas and stop-search of ethnic minority individuals, in which understanding the local communities and being knowledgeable of stop-search regulations were equally as impactful in improving community relations in diverse areas (Miller et al., 2020). Police officers support diversification but view existing approaches as ineffective and tokenistic (Farrell and Barao, 2022); noting input from underrepresented officers is essential in addressing the limitations of diversity initiatives and overcoming historical mistrust and systemic biases. While police engagement with diverse communities has facilitated some improvements, studies indicate distrust in police-community relations persist, and although racism and misogyny are not as widely observed, they are still recognised to be prevalent and detrimental (Caveny et al., 2019).

While forces continue to make significant changes, the failure to be fully representative raises questions into the longevity of any positive effects that might derive from such approaches, specifically the issues of retention of this diverse workforce, and their successful engagement with local communities while becoming an increasingly professional service (Martin, 2021). While there are positive examples of the police service using recruitment strategies and cultural-competency training, the ongoing bias of discrimination and limited career progression present the complexity of the issue. Representation remains a vital feature in developing a

police force culture that effectively works with diverse communities, and to achieve such meaningful change, opportunities must be enhanced for those from underrepresented backgrounds (Sebire, 2020). There is a conflict between discourse suggesting Black officers are perceived more favourably when considering trust, confidence and legitimacy, supporting the necessity for more ethnically diverse workforce (Davies et al., 2020), and those arguing that representation alone isn't enough, having little effect on perceptions of the police force and not improving outcomes, requiring more radical changes to better engage with diverse communities (Benton, 2020). This conflict highlights a lack of consistent research into the matter which hinders a comprehensive understanding that could be utilised in informing future policy and practice, indicating there is no standardized approach, and addressing diversity requires a more nuanced approach at all levels.

While significant progress has been made in accommodating and engaging with diversity, challenges remain through internal structures and community engagement where deep-rooted historical conflict with minority communities maintains a level of a distrust. Institutional bias and underrepresentation highlight the necessity of continued reform where a more holistic approach in future efforts focussed on enhancing cultural-competency, improving recruitment, and addressing systemic barriers to fully accommodate the UK's diverse population should be considered.

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Essay two:

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

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

Policing is inherently high-pressure and onerous, requiring officers to navigate pressurised incidents that can have detrimental effects where mental wellbeing is not managed effectively (Copley, 2019). In a role characterised by exposure to trauma, mental wellbeing in policing is fundamental, being recognised to be a multifaceted concept that encompasses positive indicators such as self-esteem, life satisfaction, and lack of stress (Jackman et al., 2020). This essay argues that managing police wellbeing is imperative for both individual officers and the organisation in effectively serving communities. Through examining the prevalence of mental health issues, the significance of mental wellbeing-management, and recommending policy changes, an increasingly nuanced understanding of the multifaceted implications of mental health in policing will be achieved.

The demanding nature of the role, particularly for response officers who frequently encounter traumatic situations, unavoidable violence, and high-stress environments, presents significant risk-factors contributing to depression, anxiety and Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder (Stevelink et al., 2020). The systematic review of sixty-seven empirical-studies analysed 272,463 officers of which 14.6-percent had depression, 14.2-percent had Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder and 9.6-percent had anxiety (Syed et al., 2020). These occupational stressors, irregular hours, and public scrutiny contribute to significant psychological strain, leading to significantly higher rates of mental illness amongst officers than the general public, yet many go undiagnosed and unsupported due to stigma within a culture that values strength (Jetelina et al., 2020). Such prevalence necessitates both individual and

organisational wellbeing-management where neglecting this influences a decline in performance and increased risk of long-term mental and physical health-deterioration. Theoretical frameworks such as Hans Selye's Stress Theory highlight how prolonged exposure to stressors can lead to burnout and diminished performance, having detrimental physiological effects deriving from the manifestation of self-protection from stimuli (Selye 1976). This concept is integral to policing, providing a nuanced framework for understanding the physiological impacts of stressors faced by officers in emotionally and physically demanding roles; this is pivotal in devising strategies that safeguard officers' mental wellbeing and enhance police effectiveness.

Unmanaged mental health issues can exacerbate adverse psychological and physiological outcomes, impairing officers' decision-making and job performance, specifically in morally challenging incidents which are comorbid with long-term psychological effects (Lentz et al., 2021). Shift work itself is linked to adverse effects on sleep, mood, and cognition, elevating safety risks due to these poor health outcomes (Brown et al., 2020). Research consistently demonstrates that chronic-stress and poor mental health increase the likelihood of errors in judgement, reduce cognitive-functioning and impair emotional-regulation, compromising public safety where lapses can result in poor tactical-decisions, escalation of confrontations, or even fatalities (Penney et al., 2022). Thus, officer performance is contingent upon mental health, impacting the quality in serving communities and can place forces at risk of legal and reputational damage where officers with poor mental health are more likely to display irritability, overreaction or lack of empathy, exacerbating community tensions and trust (Carleton et al., 2020). This is evident given that a substantial proportion of officers experience poor mental health, emphasising the critical requirement of targeted interventions in building resilience. Such resilience, specifically when promoted within the organisational culture of the police force, can support officers in developing positive coping-strategies in response to traumatic stressors and conflict, mitigating adverse health outcomes and enhancing performance, contributing to a high-quality service (Janssens et al., 2018).

Police forces that fail to provide adequate resources, training and mental health support risk creating a culture of stigma where officers are reluctant to seek help; such an environment not only exacerbates individual officers' struggles, but impacts the organisation's health through increased sickness levels, high turnover rates and decreased morale where officers are becoming increasingly unable to meet the demands of the job (Edwards and Kotera, 2021). This creates increased pressure on the remaining officers due to low resourcing and absent support, further exacerbating their mental health, creating a vicious-cycle. Strong support mechanisms and social support-networks have been noted in policing empirical research to be pivotal in mitigating the psychological stressors experienced by officers (Civiloti et al., 2021); these support-networks can be fostered in forces who promote inclusion and openness to reduce the deep-rooted stigmas surrounding mental health in policing. This is reflected in academic discourse where organisational and operational factors are the primary factor in officer burnout, while individual factors can act as protective factors (Alves et al., 2023); this underscores the critical role of the police force in managing mental wellbeing, given the profound implications of inadequate management.

Despite the critical necessity of managing mental wellbeing, several barriers impede its implementation in which stigma remains a primary challenge in officers seeking support due to fears of judgement or repercussions, with officers theorising that guaranteed confidentiality and support that is occupation-specific content would alleviate these barriers (Newell et al., 2021). This is compounded by a lack of resources and insufficient training within police forces, so despite recognition of the prevalence of this matter, forces are failing to implement comprehensive mental health strategies to combat both the personal and organisational repercussions (Whittmann et al., 2021). While academic discourse highlights these barriers, few studies explore the sustained impact of the long-term effectiveness of mental wellbeing initiatives, where a more nuanced understanding of implementing effective mental health support while reducing the deep-rooted stigma is required (Porter and Lee, 2023). Although structural support facilitated by the police force is fundamental, individual officers must concurrently take accountability in educating themselves and changing attitudes, recognising it is not always the job itself augmenting mental

health conditions but the culture of individuals within (Edwards and Kotera, 2021). Despite the extensive academic discourse in mental health, interventions to promote officer wellbeing remain underexplored with studies primarily focussing on males, neglecting the growing number of female officers (Chitra and Karunanidhi, 2021). Existing research is primitive given advancements in understanding of physiological and psychological human-functioning, specifically within the evolving context of modern-policing. This necessitates increasingly nuanced discourse to develop comprehensive-strategies for mental health in policing, addressing scalability of existing initiatives and their long-term sustainability.

Managing mental wellbeing in policing is vital for individual officers and the force; it directly impacts decision-making, performance and community engagement. Neglecting mental health can result in increased sickness and turnover with poor morale and decision-making, where it is necessary for both officers and the organisation to remove the deep-rooted stigma creating barriers in wellbeing-management. Extensive empirical research into the sustained effects of mental health interventions could produce a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted implications of poor mental wellbeing in a role that is inherently onerous. This could inform the implementation of successful proactive-policies and embedded mental health resources, ensuring a more supportive and sustainable approach in managing police mental health to reduce negative outcomes.

WORDS - 1100

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Essay four:

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

Your answer must be based on academic research.

Serious and organised crime presents significant challenges to public protection, undermining community safety, public health and economic stability, while exploiting those most vulnerable in society through increasingly sophisticated and pervasive methods (Dugato, Calderoni and Campedelli, 2019). Such criminal enterprises engage in trafficking, exploitation and violence, collectively having extensive consequences for both individuals and wider-society. This essay will argue that serious and organised crime is deeply interconnected with public protection issues, particularly through the exploitation of individuals who are often intrinsically vulnerable due to poverty, lack of education, absence of family-support, intellectual difficulties, and social-isolation (Pickles, 2021). Through exploring the nature of serious and organised crime, examining the impact on public safety and health, identifying characteristics that heighten exploitation risks, and reflecting on policy implications, this essay will critically explore links between serious and organised crime and public protection issues.

Serious and organised crime refers to planned and coordinated criminal activities undertaken by groups or networks with the intention of generating substantial financial profit, often operating through the exploitation of hierarchical structures within the organisation where leaders orchestrate operations and lower-level operatives run many of the illicit activities (D'Souza and Shapland, 2021). Historically, empirical research on serious and organised crime primarily concentrated on drug trafficking; recent studies have noted the rising prevalence of human trafficking, smuggling, cybercrime and organised fraud, reflecting the increasing sophistication of criminal networks (Levi and Soudijn, 2020).

Technological and communication advancements have facilitated this globalisation of serious and organised crime, enabling criminal networks to operate across borders (Clark, Fraser and Hamilton-Smith, 2021). This proliferation of these groups has raised significant public protection issues, including societal and individual implications such as violence, exploitation, financial harm, and long-term consequences such as social instability and diminished trust in criminal-justice (Davies and Wyatt, 2020). Serious and organised crime is inherently territorial, and its prevalence is associated with local politics and economics (Sergi and Storti, 2021), thus individuals in economically disadvantaged areas are often more susceptible to exploitation by these groups. This is exacerbated where people experience individual factors of mental-health or poverty, making them particularly susceptible to exploitation by groups who might coerce, deceive or force them into illegal activities due to this intersection of different risk-factors (Langhorn, 2021).

Organised crime significantly undermines community safety by fostering environments of violence, fear and instability, with research consistently demonstrating a strong correlation between the presence of criminal groups, increased crime rates, and the associated drug abuse and public disorder (Canton, 2021). Notably, the illicit drug trade not only exacerbates violence between opposing groups, but also leads to widespread drug addiction, increasing demands on public health systems (Ryder, Bourton and Hall, 2023). This is compounded by the health risks associated with the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis-C linked to drug-use, with eleven-million people globally injecting drugs and 39.4-percent possessing related infections (World Health Organization, 2024). This economic burden is profound as organised crime diverts resources from legitimate economic activities where governments must fund health care for the implications of drug-use and repairing property damage, while placing substantial strain on police and social services to deal with the social and legal implications (Bright and Whelan, 2020). Consequently, this exerts a substantial influence on public safety where resources are diverted from addressing other critical issues. However, the extent of such impacts has been challenged in criminological discourse, questioning serious and organised crime truly causes economic decline, or merely shifts illicit activity into certain sectors, making it more noticeable (Hosford et al., 2021). This is specifically

prevalent with the increasing sophistication of criminal networks where it must be noted that while organised crime undeniably affects community safety and public health, the exact implications remain complex and multifaceted due to this shift in criminality.

Vulnerability to this exploitation is shaped by a combination of social, economic, demographic, and psychological factors. Empirical research consistently shows that individuals from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds facing poverty, poor family-support, unemployment, and intellectual-difficulties are inherently vulnerable to exploitation, with social and economic factors being the most prevalent in making people susceptible to coercion, while criminal history, youth and gender also contributing to their susceptibility to organised crime recruitment (Calderoni et al., 2022). Poverty can foster an environment where financial incentives from criminal enterprises outweigh the perceived risks, while limited education can prevent individuals from accessing better alternatives (Kleemans and Koppen, 2020). Psychological factors such as trauma, mental-health issues, and social-isolation also exacerbate vulnerability, making people susceptible to exploitation by criminal gangs who offer a sense of belonging or escape (Macdonald et al., 2022). Yet it must be assessed whether focus on these individualised factors oversimplifies the complex-nature of criminal exploitation, where it might also stem from structural-inequalities and criminal-justice failures. Criminological discourse in this field primarily encompasses problematic power-dynamics and exploitation within criminal groups, yet many gang members acknowledge exploitation yet willingly participate for financial gain rather than being coerced, while being aware of available exit-strategies (Ashton and Bussu, 2020). This raises the question of whether members are exploited victims, or collaborators, diverting attention from direct victims exploited by the group's criminality; this remains under-researched and sparse within discourse. This is prevalent when human trafficking is perpetrated by these groups, having clear-identifiable victims unlike drug trafficking; this considerable harm is often through the exploitation of gender dynamics where vulnerable females are targeted by organised crime groups (D'Souza and Shapland, 2021).

While social, economic, demographic, and psychosocial factors remain highly interrelated in vulnerability to exploitation, their prevalence differs across types of criminal organisations, with individual motivations for joining groups differing depending on the type of organisation and criminality (Comunale et al., 2020). This emphasises the requirement for a nuanced approach in addressing both the immediate and systemic risks to public safety from dynamic criminality which is becoming increasingly sophisticated and pervasive when targeting vulnerable individuals. Such criminality is most prevalent in disadvantaged areas, yet policing strategies that are efficient in cities might not be suitable in smaller communities due to unequal distribution of funding (Owens and Ba, 2021); thus, effective strategies are often absent in the areas where they are most required, and a multifaceted approach in addressing both exploitation of the vulnerable and public protection is fundamental. The implications of serious and organised crime on public protection are notable through the social impact of increased violence and crime-rates, health implications of drug-use, and the resulting economic burden from diverted and increased resources. This is pivotal in the context of the targeted exploitation by these groups of those experiencing comorbid social, economic, demographic, and psychological vulnerabilities, exacerbating their health-outcomes where they require enhanced public protection, perpetuating this vicious cycle.

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Essay five:

How effective is early intervention an effective means of preventing young people from offending or re-offending?

Your answer must be based on academic research, but you may make reference to relevant case studies.

Youth offending is a critical issue in which young people are engaging in criminal behaviours at a period where they are more susceptible to risk factors such as peer pressure, family dysfunction, and socio-economic and psychological disadvantage, collectively contributing to the onset of criminality through which 'child' transitions to 'offender' (Case and Bateman, 2020). Early intervention strategies in youth offending require a nuanced understanding due to the social, economic and psychological implications where these juveniles are at risk of persistent and escalating criminality; such early intervention and life-course approaches have gained prominence due to this principal objective of allowing children to thrive and reduce offending (Day, 2022). Through exploring the theoretical frameworks underlying early intervention, analysing its successes, limitations and discussing the broader implications for policy and society, this essay will argue that while early intervention is fundamental in reducing youth offending and re-offending, its effectiveness is contingent upon various factors including the type of intervention and the context in which it is implemented.

In the context of youth offending, early intervention refers to the proactive approach of addressing risk factors and implementing strategic and coordinated escalating interventions to disrupt the pathway towards serious adult offending through the integration of policy and practice across multiple sectors such as police, social services, health, education and youth-justice to enable a comprehensive and cohesive approach (Lambie, 2022). Interventions can range from educational support and mentoring to more specialised services in mental-health care and family counselling, with such initiatives being grounded in the understanding that early life

experiences and environmental factors play a critical role in shaping the likelihood of future criminality (Cavanagh, 2022). Key theoretical frameworks underpinning this approach include developmental psychology which provides a nuanced understanding of critical periods of development during which interventions are most effective, and social learning theory through which behaviours are learnt through observation and interaction with peers and family (Eme, 2023). These frameworks have re-emerged in response to growing concerns about juvenile criminality, where responses initially encompassed punishment, yet shifted towards increasingly supportive approaches against this criminological background which facilitated a more nuanced understanding of the underlying causes of youth offending which punitive approaches were not addressing; this was an area found to be relatively underexplored in child welfare and crime prevention discourse (Reil et al., 2021). With the contemporary understanding of the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on youth offending such as childhood maltreatment, abuse/neglect, inadequate parental discipline, insecure-attachment, and household disfunction being causative factors in sustained criminality, contemporary approaches are adopting a social-work-orientated-model in response to crime trends informed by empirical research, not only designed to reduce offending, but to address these systemic issues in a more care-based framework (Baglivio, 2020). This approach is better aligned with the social reality of overrepresentation of children from child-protection backgrounds in youth justice, where interventions now aim to foster lasting behavioural change through comprehensive, holistic support (Baidawi and Ball, 2023).

This notable shift in early intervention approaches becoming more multifaceted and dynamic prompted more effective results than traditional punishment and deterrent-based responses. Research shows that programmes that simultaneously address the environmental, institutional and individual factors impacting juveniles is essential in successful intervention, and one-dimensional approaches are inadequate in achieving sustained desistance from criminality (Baskin-Sommers et al., 2022). Specifically, the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime, a longitudinal research project, has demonstrated early intervention addressing family dynamics and school engagement facilitated a significant decrease in youth crime and

sustained desistance, despite recognising desistance is a complex process through which is individualised and dynamic, so effectiveness of such approaches remains precarious (McAra and McVie, 2022). Similarly, Reil et al. (2022) highlight this necessity of socio-structural concerns in child welfare being addressed to provide timely and effective support for families in supporting children's wellbeing and preventing future-victimisation where collaborative approaches between families, criminal-justice agencies and social services have been the most successful early intervention approaches. The research provides a nuanced perspective on the relationship between family dynamics and adolescent delinquency, acknowledging both risk and protective factors where collaborative and dynamic responses are proven to be more efficient and effective than punitive approaches encompassing punishment and deterrence. Such modernisation and interventionism provide new hope for crime prevention, asserting that increasingly innovative intervention frameworks are replacing conventional formal models of youth justice to become more comprehensive and care-based models. This has been mirrored by the almost fifty-percent reduction in the volume of crime in England and Wales in the past three-decades which is believed to be largely influenced by reduction in youth offending, largely-influenced by these multi-agency interventions (Griffiths and Norris, 2019).

Despite improvements in early intervention approaches that have paved the way for reductions in youth offending and re-offending, several limitations hinder their full effectiveness. One key barrier is inadequate funding, limiting the scale and reach of interventions specifically in under-resourced communities where youth offending is often most-prevalent (Hurley and Boulton, 2021). Thus, access to such services is unequal, where those from economically-disadvantaged areas cannot access comprehensive support, perpetuating the cycle of youth offending leading to prolonged criminality of marginalised individuals who are inherently more likely to have faced the risk factors linked to offending where a more holistic approach is required (Arnez and Condry, 2021). Such approaches can also prompt community resistance when interventions are perceived as stigmatizing or intrusive, posing challenges to successful implementation when considering the significance of collaboration between families, criminal-justice agencies, and social workers within the most successful models (Deakin et al., 2020). Notably, existing research

maintains methodological limitations through reliance upon small-sample-sizes and the necessity of longitudinal studies being time consuming yet necessary in results of sustained desistance, with numerous studies primarily focussing on punitive measures rather than holistic support, posing significant challenges for comparison (Farrington et al., 2023). Policy makers must prioritise holistic and integrated approaches, allocating sufficient funding and focus continuous research on longitudinal studies to track the sustained impact of early intervention on youth offending and developing best practice to ensure positive outcomes for children, families and communities.

While early intervention is pivotal in preventing youth offending and re-offending through addressing underlying risk factors through a holistic and collaborative approach, continued research is required to sustain and enhance these efforts by facilitating the long-term impact of these programmes. Its effectiveness is inherently reliant upon the social, institutional and individual factors all aligning to facilitate positive outcomes due to their influence on criminality, where the type of intervention and the engagement of the individual and their support networks is fundamental in ensuring and sustaining effectiveness, maximising impact and reach of early intervention strategies.

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