

Essay 1 – Maintaining Professional Standards

This essay is going to critically evaluate different police policies and procedures that are aimed at reducing malpractice. The policies and procedures being evaluated are, the Police And Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 and how officers can be dealt with if they breach PACE, the police code of ethics and Body Worn Video (BWV). This essay will also examine how those policies and procedures have affected public confidence in the police's ability to act justly and lawfully.

PACE came into effect in 1984 and was introduced in response to extensive civil unrest and violent riots as a result of police abusing their powers and specifically what was known as, 'the sus law' (Cecily Jones 2007). The riots and civil unrest that took part in Brixton is a prime example of what can happen when public confidence and trust in the police becomes low due to malpractice and misconduct. This is why more legislative restrictions in police powers were introduced to increase public trust and confidence.

PACE 1984 codes of practice cover six main areas, stop and search, arrest, detention, investigation, identification, and interviewing detainees. All areas provide detail as to how the police should treat the public. These legislative have a positive effect on public confidence as it prevents the police from behaving unjustly. The importance of dealing with the public correctly and fairly can be seen by the Office of National Statistics (2022) who found that 36.3% of adults whose confidence in the police had been affected was by a positive experience, compared to only 16.7% for those with a negative experience.

It is important to consider that PACE is only as good as how breaches are policed. This is why the Independent Office for Police Complaints (IOPC) was introduced to "oversee the police complaints system in England and Wales" (IOPC 2023).

Brooke (1999) backs up PACE assisting in public confidence by pointing out that PACE has created a "more professional attitude" which has likely resulted a reduction in decreases of public confidence. However, Zander (2011) understands that PACE will cause a variety of opinions as everyone has different personal beliefs, therefore, there is "no 'right balance'" of police powers.

PACE can have a positive effect on public perception and should be used properly as it allows the police maintain consistent actions, standards and professionalism. However, as stated previously PACE is only as good as how it is policed and officers adhering to it.

John Kleinig (1996) stated "In these public statements [code of ethics], they have sought to articulate standards that should characterize their membership or operations and that would therefore mediate their provision of goods or services." The policing code of ethics is guidance that was set in statute for police in the UK in 2023. The code of ethics has since been simplified by the College of Policing to three main principles. Firstly, courage, this is explained as, making decisions and being accountable for those decisions and pushing back on anything which may make the police appear unprofessional. Secondly, respect and empathy, which relates to ensuring that officers are respectful and empathetic to the public regardless of the capacity in which officers are dealing with them. Finally, public service, which is ensuring that everything officers do is in the best interests of the public (College of Policing 2024). This guidance helps in reducing malpractice by instilling a set of ethics in officers which ensures they act with high morals.

However, sticking to the Code of Ethics more than powers can result in problems. Becoming too focused on the end result and not how it is achieved can result in what is known as Noble Cause Corruption. This can be caused by a belief that police powers given by PACE are too restrictive. Delattre (2002) said that he is “fearful” of Noble Cause Corruption. This shows that in order to increase public confidence you cannot just follow the Code of Ethics to act in a way that would increase public confidence.

The Code of Ethics can be an effective way of reducing malpractice and misconduct by making sure officers do the right thing for the right reasons. However, focusing too much on ethics may result in officers engaging in unlawful activity with the reasoning of trying to obtain a positive end result.

Body Worn Cameras (BWC) was first introduced in the UK in 2005 by Devon and Cornwall Police. It is a small device capable of recording video and sound that has had a significant impact on complaints of malpractice or misconduct. In fact, the University of Cambridge’s Institute of Criminology (2016) stated “the use by officers of body-worn cameras is associated with a startling 93% reduction in citizen complaints against police.” This is obviously a dramatic reduction from the number of complaints prior to BWC. Even if a large number of complaints didn’t go further than words of advice to the officer at fault, the number of complaints alone would be enough for a person to lose trust in the police not to abuse their power. BWC also allow people to know if they are the victim of police misconduct, they will be believed. Amanda Graham et al. (2019) explains in her article that the majority of people are in favour of the police wearing BWC’s, and “it may be a means to increase police legitimacy.” Showing that BWC are a means of boosting public confidence. Wright and Headley (1999) agreed with this by concluding from numerous studies that the public are “Overwhelmingly supportive” of the use of BWC. As seen by a number of different sources BWC’s are an effective tool at reducing malpractice and increasing public confidence in officers.

To conclude, PACE 1984, the Code of Ethics, and BWC are all effective policies and procedures aimed at reducing malpractice and misconduct. Despite this, it is up to individual officers to learn and understand these policies. Regardless of what policies, or procedures are in place it is an individual responsibility to adhere to them; and doing so will increase public confidence and trust so officers are able to do their job effectively.

Word count – 1017

Essay 2 – Public Protection

This essay is going to discuss how certain vulnerabilities and characteristics will make a person more likely to be exploited by Organised Crime Gangs (OCGs). Those with financial hardship, people with additional learning needs and people who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), are the characteristics that are going to be examined throughout this essay. In addition, this essay will discuss how each of these characteristics make those people more vulnerable to different types of exploitation.

Simon Harding (2020) said that children who have grown up in poverty are at a higher risk of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). The Home Office (2013) described CCE as the process of an OCG taking advantage of an imbalance of power between them and a child. The Home Office also stated that a method used by OCG's is by offering an exchange. For example, the child delivers drugs for the OCG in exchange for money.

This tactic is commonly used on children in poverty, as once becoming involved with an OCG, they attain access to money which they never would have achieved by legitimate means. Social media also plays a vital role in this form of exploitation as gang members will post photos of their lifestyle which will further entice those with financial hardship into gang culture.

The Office of National Statistics (2024) shows that Gwent Policing area had 2.5 drug offences per 1000 people which is higher than North Wales Police (1.9 per 1000 people) and South Wales Police (2.1 per 1000 people); and, According to BBC News (2019) the Gwent policing area has 3 of the 10 most deprived areas in Wales. These statistics show that financial hardship does have links to drug offences. OCG's will more commonly exploit people going through financial hardship as drug runners for county lines drug dealing which would explain why the Gwent policing area has a higher number of drug offences.

In addition to this, it is important to note that adults can and have previously fallen victim to this form of exploitation however, it is not as common as an imbalance of power is not as often in place with adults whereas, it is with children. Exploiting financial hardship is very common and very effective at ensuring people stay involved in the criminal world.

People with additional learning needs or other disabilities are considered to be vulnerable due to a heightened risk of exploitation, abuse or neglect. This is normally due to reduced social understanding and functioning. The most common form of exploitation exacted on those with additional learning needs is Cuckooing. Macdonald et.al (2022) defined Cuckooing as "the process of an OCG taking over the residence of targeted adults housed in a community setting with the purpose of facilitating criminal enterprises" Macdonald et. Al goes on to explain that the OCG will send a member to an address to become friends with the occupant and then exploit them through various means after a relationship has formed. This has resulted in Cuckooing being linked to 'Mate Crime'. Mate crime being defined as, "deliberately abusive actions against a person by someone known to them, often someone considered a friend." (Forster and Pearson 2019). Forster and Pearson continue to explain that the abusive behaviours can include exploitation and "is often aimed at disabled people." Adding that, about 80% of autistic adults have been victim to mate crime. This shows that people with reduced social functioning and understanding are at significant risk to exploitation. Although under English and Welsh law Cuckooing on its own is not an offence, unfortunately it is extremely common for other offences to be committed such as assaults on the victim and drug offences.

ACEs have a significant impact on brain development and will commonly result in children becoming involved in criminality or getting exploited at a young age. Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (2024) gave 9 examples of ACEs. These being, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, living with someone who: abuses drugs, alcohol or has a serious mental illness, having a parent be arrested, exposure to domestic violence, or losing a parent through divorce, death or abandonment. Approximately 18 million children under the age of 18 suffer maltreatment such as ACEs which can cause toxic stress which may lead to “Cognitive impairment and behavioural problems (World Health Organisation 2013). The more ACEs a child experiences the more of an impact it will have on the child. ACEs are commonly associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) for girls, and CCE, as discussed previously in this essay, for boys. Hugh Hanlin et. Al (2024) found that children with higher number of, and more severe ACEs are more likely to become involved in CSE. This could be because the ‘behavioural problems and cognitive impairment’ of children with ACEs will cause them to struggle more in a social settings causing them to suffer with social isolation which is where OCG’s are able to infiltrate their lives and cause them to be exploited.

There are more characteristics that could cause a person to be vulnerable to exploitation as each person has their own personal vulnerabilities. However, people with the characteristics discussed during this essay are believed to be the most at risk. Only by having an in-depth knowledge and understanding of what makes a person vulnerable to exploitation can Police Forces and other public services begin to prevent those who are vulnerable from entering a cycle of abuse, exploitation and criminality.

Word count – 904

Essay 3 – Vulnerability and Risk

Early intervention is a method used by different public services to try and prevent people within their community from engaging in harmful, delinquent or criminal behaviour. This essay will be examining both community intervention through investment in areas prone to crime and delinquency, in order to reduce crime; and retrospective early intervention in the form of youth offending teams who work closely with young people at risk of criminality. This essay will also examine the effectiveness of these methods and evaluate if they have a positive impact on young people in breaking the cycle of criminality.

Blyth and Solomon (2009) believed that community intervention may be an effective means of early intervention in preventing youth involvement in criminality; stating that families in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are at “Heightened risk” of being involved in criminality. This is backed by the UK government (2024) who found that London, that contains a borough with the highest number of gang violence in the UK (Blyth and Solomon 2009), also has the highest number of youth stop searches by region in the UK between 2021 and 2023. Neighbourhood intervention has been proven to work in other countries across the globe as seen in some communities in Columbia. Cedra et al. (2012) examined the rates of violent crimes before and after community investment in a community in Columbia and found that violent crime was reduced by 75%. This dramatic difference in violent offences was achieved only by investing into the community and creating a trainline into the nearest city. Tate et al. (2023) was able to evidence that investment in the community can reduce the number of disadvantaged families. He stated that for every £1 invested into simple green and blue spaces, in a community in the UK, between £1.34 and £1.59 was returned.

All of this evidence shows that community-based interventions are more effective than custody (Alder et al. 2016). Investments such as those explored by Tate et al. and Cedra et al. create positive change in a community and will also provide additional employment opportunities which are not as commonly available without these investments. This could draw families out of poverty cycles, reduce cycles of offending in adults and reduce the number of children becoming involved in criminality and entering the same cycle of offending as seen in adults. A drawback of the effectiveness of neighbourhood intervention is that despite it is effective at prevention at its problems roots, it will not physically prevent a young person from becoming involved in criminality nor is it personal enough to stop the cycle of criminality once it's begun.

Youth Offending Team's (YOT's) are teams associated with local councils which provide support to youths become involved with criminality and the police. They will commonly provide prevention programmes aimed at stopping the youths from entering into a cycle of criminality. One method of early intervention used by YOT's is mentoring. This is where an adult will form a kind of relationship with the youth in order to rehabilitate and prevent further offending. Smith et al. (2015) conducted a study into the effectiveness of mentoring and found it to be good for the young people involved but not good enough to tackle the “structural inequalities and disadvantages”. Mentoring allows the youth and mentor to build a connection and gives the mentor time to understand the youth and give a better idea of the root cause for the offending. De Vires et al. (2018) found that intervention without a therapeutic foundation is “ineffective at reducing delinquency.” which mentoring does have. However, given these strengths mentoring is only as effective as the relationship formed.

Since YOT's began in 1998 there has been a steady decline the number of proven offences

committed by youths which can be seen in the UK government (2024) data along with a multitude of other sources. This vouches for the effectiveness of the YOT's as since 2020 when Covid-19 restrictions were in place and there has been an increase in proven offences committed by youths. This may be due to a breakdown in relationships between mentors and their mentees as a result of not being able to see each other in person and a reduction in educational courses.

Greenwood (2008) believed that effective early intervention can save extensive amounts of money, meaning the implantation of YOT's and their continued effectiveness can assist in developing other areas of community such as education, further decreasing youth offending. The above evidence proves the effectiveness of YOT'S as an early intervention tool to prevent youths from becoming involved in criminality. However, despite its effectiveness, it is a retrospective tool only used on those who have either committed an offence or regularly take part in anti-social behaviour. By which point the offence has already taken place, the damage is done, and the young person may already have entered a cycle of criminality.

In conclusion, based off the evidence presented in this essay early intervention is an effective means of preventing young people from entering into a cycle of criminality. A combination of both forms of intervention discussed would present an extremely effective means of intervention. If impoverished communities are invested in to become linked to central parts of the county where high paying jobs are and those living in the community are surrounded by an enriching environment with lots of employment opportunities, then young people becoming involved in criminality in the first place will become less common. As evidenced by multiple studies and government data YOT's are effective at reducing youth offending and preventing a child from entering a cycle of offending. The quality of this service has decreased in recent years due to restrictions implemented for the Covid-19 virus however, if the effectiveness of YOT's continues on trend then youth offending should continue to decrease.

Combining the two would lead to an effective intervention as community intervention is aimed at reducing offending before it begins and YOT's are aimed at stopping young people from entering a cycle. Despite all of this, these methods will only ever be as effective as young people allow them to be. As not engaging with opportunities provided or the YOT will stop them from being effective.

Word count – 1029

Essay 4 – Valuing Difference and Inclusion

Diversity in the UK is becoming an ever more common topic of discussion. With diversity rising across the country (Office of National Statistics 2022) are the police able to accommodate the ever-changing cultural landscape of the UK? This essay is going to discuss different policies put in place, training given and how effective these are at assisting the police in adapting to the diverse communities which they police.

In 2022 the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) came out with the Police Race Action Plan (PRAP). This is a document created by the NPCC along with the College of Policing and is followed by all home office forces. PRAP explains how the police plan to become an "actively anti-racist organisation" (NPCC and College of Policing 2022).

One of these sections is to have a more representative workforce. A way that Police Forces do this is through positive action. Positive action is a means in which institutions can "encourage and train people from under-represented groups" (Miller 2020), this is something which has been adopted by many forces across the UK to increase representation as per the PRAP. Positive action has been lawful since the Equality Act 2010; however, it hasn't always been effective. Between the years 2013 and 2017 Black and other Ethnic Minorities had between 15%-35% less successful applicants to the police than white applicants even with there being significantly more white applicants (Hesketh 2024) although this research does not have any more recent figures. This shows that positive action on its own is not a means to an end for forces to become more representative and accommodate cultural change, and to be able to fully understand the effectiveness of positive action more research needs to be done. It is also important to recognise that positive action does not change officers' acceptance and attitudes of different cultures and races.

Another method to assist in the accommodation of cultural and ethnic diversity is education. Some forces such as Gwent and South Wales police have brought in training from outside agencies such as, No Boundaries, to assist in the education of its staff. Cole et al. (2011) found that diversity courses increased understanding and knowledge of cultural disadvantages and did have a slight effect on attitudes. However, more recently, Majda et al. (2021) found that cultural communication education does have its benefits to knowledge however, has a lesser effect on changing discriminatory attitudes.

Rice (2007) found that without proper knowledge of cultures public services may be providing improper services and better knowledge also increases the relevancy of said service. This means that increasing knowledge through cultural education is paramount for police forces to be equipped to deal with an ever-changing cultural environment. Cultural and racial education also goes along with commitment 3 of PRAP which is to understand the history of black and other diverse groups.

With positive action becoming more accepted and frequent, as previously discussed, being able to tackle racism and insensitivity from within the police organisation can have an extremely positive impact. Prengler et al. (2023) believed that the best way to tackle this is through the actions of staff and officers internally by calling out and challenging inappropriate behaviour. Thus, education is important in order to learn how to best deal with diversity. As per the research by Cole et al. and Majda et al. education is an effective means of adapting to diversity.

and being able to deal with diversity while maintaining professionalism.

Community engagement is also brought up in PRAP as important to re-build diverse communities' confidence in the police. Due to previous attitudes towards those of diverse backgrounds, like those highlighted in the McPhearson report, understandably a considerable number of people from diverse backgrounds have low confidence that the police are able to work alongside their communities effectively and without prejudice. Baroness Cassey released a review 2023 that looked into multiple failings by the Metropolitan Police service. Part of her recommendations was to increase the number of neighbourhood officers and have a visible police service that engages with the communities it serves. This would lead to better community engagement which was previously "patchy and inconsistent" (Baroness Cassey 2023). The importance of community engagement was also mentioned in a home office report from 2012 saying that "community engagement in both identifying priorities and taking action to tackle them" is a key element of a police force that serves its communities (Home Office 2012). The report goes on to explain that if neighbourhood policing teams work in partnership with other agencies for local residents it can lead to, increased empowerment in its residents, perceived reductions in an area's anti-social behaviour and increased perceptions of safety. Continued engagement with the community also means that officers will be able to continually adapt to the diversity within their community as it changes. This only boasts the effectiveness of community engagement and neighbourhood policing. Being able to tailor the service officers provide to their communities is imperative for a police force to work effectively and with the public's consent.

There are multiple methods available to the police to enable them to better serve their ever-changing communities and adapt to diversity while still being able to provide a good service. However, there is not one single answer to how the police can better accommodate diversity as each has their strengths and weaknesses. The police will need to adopt a holistic approach of all three methods discussed in this essay. This approach will need to begin with better neighbourhood policing which works with those in the communities and other agencies. This is where public confidence that the police can behave professionally and without prejudice will increase. This will go hand in hand with educating officers of different culture and ethnicities. From then more people from diverse communities will feel more like they are in a position and have the opportunity to join the police where positive action is able to work the most effectively. To conclude, the police have come a long way in adapting to diversity but there is still room for improvement, better organisation of these methods will increase their effectiveness in how the police continue to adapt to the changing cultural landscape of the UK.

Word count – 1030

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