

DHEP Assignment

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1000 words - Understanding the role of Constable/Maintaining Professional Standards

Critically evaluate the concept of 'the professionalisation of the police service' considering how 'Maintaining Professional Standards', 'ethical and inclusive' and 'Coaching and Mentoring' approaches contribute to this.

Answer:

This work will evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and appropriateness of the ongoing professionalisation of the police service in British policing. A 'profession' is distinguished from a 'trade' by a heightened understanding, accreditation, and code of practice to develop a more specialised institution (Gates and Green 2014: 75). I will therefore consider specifically the roles of professional standards, ethics and mentoring in increasing the overall knowledge and expertise of modern police services.

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) saw a major development in police professionalism as the rights of the public were balanced with police initiatives to ensure an accountable and transparent police service through the correct use of its powers (Bryant and Bryant 2020: 25). To date, through the evident ethical failings of police officers (BBC 2022a) to the emphasis on evidence-based policing in meeting local and national demands (College of Policing 2022a), the drive to professionalise the police service has never been larger. As in the now academically accredited nursing profession, police officers carry powers and responsibilities which, if wielded inexpertly, can unnecessarily invade people's privacy, cause distress and damage public confidence in the police.

Maintaining professional standards is integral to the professionalisation of the police service, as evidenced in recent ethical failures leading to inquiries into police culture and resignations of senior police officers (BBC 2022b). Compliance with the Code of Ethics (College of Policing 2014), National Decision Model (NDM) and force policy is monitored by Professional Standards Departments (PSDs) and, in extreme cases, Anti-Corruption Units (ACUs). These are departments of police officers who monitor and enforce professional standards across forces, and act as deterrents against non-compliant behaviour (Prenzler and den Heyer 2015: 10-11). The Code of Ethics (College of Policing 2014) is a highly beneficial approach to improving the professionalisation of the police service as its 10 precepts are easy to remember and identify in behaviour. Gilley et al. (2010) highlight the importance of ethics codes in businesses as setting clearly defined 'rules' make organisations transparent and therefore trusted by customers. Likewise, establishing professional standards of behaviour in the police not only ensures that ethical practices are followed for the benefit of victims and suspects, but also for the public's confidence in police action.

However, fearing the critical eye of PSDs has likely caused a critical shortage of officers transferring to departments where minor judgment errors could result in suspension or prison sentences (Guardian Online 2016). Additionally, Dahm and Glazer (2015) highlight the importance of altering behaviour through appealing to benefits rather than punishments and criticise organisational policy which threatens constant observation of its employees. This creates a culture of fear, mistrust, and a lack of loyalty to the organisation which consequently leads to poor quality of work and high staff turnover (McKendall 2010: 277). Thus, while professionalisation is largely welcome, its methods are often contested as hostile to police officers leading to organisational disloyalty.

Becoming 'ethical and inclusive' as a workforce is also important in professionalising the police service. The Equality Act (2010) ensures that 'reasonable adjustments' are made for those with 'protected characteristics' and people who share these characteristics must not be discriminated against in the workplace. Abiding by this legislation is not only required under law, but beneficial to the police as an organisation through attracting and accommodating diversity. Since "the police are the public and the public are the police" (Peel, in Police Federation 2022), a workforce which is representative to the population allows the police service to understand and respond to its communities' needs better (South Wales Police 2022). While inclusivity and a representative workforce is an aim of the police service, its success is lacking. In 2020, ten years after Equality Act, 92.7% of police officers were white (despite an 86% white UK population), and only 4.3% of senior officers were of other ethnic origins (Gov.uk 2021a). Additionally, 75% is the mode value of male officers in every rank of UK police services (Statista 2022). Thus, while becoming 'ethical and inclusive' is important for police professionalisation, its implementation has been severely lacking.

Mentoring can be defined as "the act or process of helping and giving advice to a younger or less experienced person" (Cambridge Dictionary 2022b) and is distinguished from 'teaching' by its more personal and long-term structure (Kram 2017). In South Wales Police, student officers undergo a 12-week tutorship period after their initial training, during which they receive practical advice and experience under the supervision of a qualified tutor. Mentorship's one-to-one structure is an advantage over classroom-based learning since information can be tailored to a student's learning style and discussions can take place freely, hence acting as Oxford and Cambridge University's primary learning structure (New College Oxford 2020). Instilling mentorship among higher ranks has also been met with success as a means of developing aspiring leaders and managers (College of Policing 2022b).

While Chief Constable of Northamptonshire Constabulary Nick Adderley highlighted that many academically minded student officers are "sadly lacking" in life experience (Mail Online 2021), mentorship allows student officers to apply knowledge to practical circumstances in a healthy learning environment – slowly building experience. Despite this, the role of mentorship may not be as advantageous to the professionalisation of the police service as maintaining professional standards and encouraging inclusion, since these latter

developments are integral to organisation-wide transparency. While mentorship applies knowledge to practical experience, employees of all businesses will naturally gravitate to more experienced colleagues and learn 'on-the-job' (Seibert 1999: 54).

In conclusion, the professionalisation of the police service is imperative if the police are to be trusted, depended upon, and respected by the public and other institutions. While this vision has been increasingly implemented over the last 50 years, areas for improvement have been identified such as a) healthier treatment of police officers by PSDs, b) greater implementation of mentorship, and c) greater action to create a representative workforce. Further study and action in these areas would allow for a greater appreciation of police professionalisation by those currently in the profession.

Word count: 987

1000 words - Community/Response Policing/Policing roads/Conducting Investigations/Digital Policing

Critically evaluate the role of the police in one of the following areas:

- Community policing (strategies and incentives)
- Response policing (public perception and critical/major incidents)
- Policing the roads (application of regulations)
- Counter Terrorism Policing (Structure/ Risks/Insider threat).
- Digital Policing (Internet related crime / Digital evidence retrieval).

NB: If you wish to pursue a detective role within the police service, please choose the following option.

Critically evaluate the role of the police in:

- Conducting Investigations (Volume, serious and complex)

Answer:

This work will critically evaluate the role of the police in conducting criminal investigations by focusing on volume and priority crime in turn. A criminal investigation is "an investigation conducted by police officers with a view to it being ascertained whether a person should be charged with an offence, or whether a person charged with an offence is guilty of it." (Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act (1996). Police investigations are therefore integral to the criminal justice system as lines of enquiry are investigated, evidence is gathered, and suspects are identified and charged to court.

Criminal investigations typically fall under two categories: 'volume' and 'serious' crime. 'Volume crime' refers to criminal activity, which effects most of the population and entails significant financial or emotional impacts on its many victims, such as theft, assault and criminal damage. By contrast, 'serious crime' is criminal conduct which "involves the use of violence...[or] substantial gain or is conducted by a large number of persons...[or where can

offender can be] sentenced to imprisonment for a term of three years or more.” (Section 93(4), Police Act 1997). While investigating volume crime can be complex, most police specialisms and resources are dedicated to investigating serious crime such as murder, rape, kidnapping, and dwelling burglaries. The police service thus plays a critical role in conducting investigations in order to protect the public and maintain public confidence in the police (College of Policing 2020).

Investigating volume crime is mostly conducted by uniformed officers as part of their daily duties. Officers are seen by the public while they are out in the community journeying to conduct witness interviews, CCTV enquiries or execute arrest warrants. As such, they provide a visible deterrent to criminals and reassure the public while investigating crime (Bahn 1974). In addition, pursuing lines of enquiry with an increasing understanding of suspicion, proportion and determination in investigations is important in developing officers into competent investigators, problem-solvers, and users of discretion (de Maillard and Savage 2022). Conducting investigations into volume crime thus builds officers’ professional competence and public confidence in the police.

However, investigating volume crime by nature means officers are in contact with large numbers of victims, witnesses, and suspects. While positive encounters with the police result in heightened victim satisfaction and trust in the police, Skogan (2007) discovered that negative encounters with the police fuelled dissatisfaction and hatred of the police across communities, yet positive encounters did not result in heightened victim appreciation. Therefore, it is imperative that criminal investigations, even into apparently low-level volume crime, should be carried out with a great attention to professional standards and the needs and expectations of victims (Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales 2015). Volume crime statistics indicate that the number of criminal investigations finalised due to victim withdrawal increased from 9% in 2015 to 26% in 2021 (Gov.uk 2021b). Furthermore, the number of volume crime suspects charged decreased from 16% to 8% over this period (Gov.uk 2021b).¹ While investigating volume crime is a priority for all police services due to their substantial negative impacts on victims and witnesses, such investigations rarely result in positive outcomes for victims, and victims are being increasingly disappointed with crime results.

Serious crime requiring more complex investigations are often conducted by detectives possessing higher investigative accreditation and experience (College of Policing 2022c). As such, conducting more complex criminal investigations is useful to aid officers’ continual professional development as they obtain higher investigative qualifications (such as ‘PIP 2’), conduct complex interviews and pursue challenging lines of enquiry (Metropolitan Police 2022). It may be argued that some serious criminal investigations do not rely on the police as much as civilian agencies such as the security services for terrorism investigations (Pickering et al. 2008). However, Bayley and Weisburd (2009: 81-99) highlight that it is easy

¹ The outcome statistics are lower for sexual offences such as rape. In 2020, only 843 cases of rape were charged in the UK from the 52,210 cases reported (Rape Crisis 2022).

for assumptions to be made about largely invisible criminal investigations such as counter terrorism, fraud, and internet-based crime. However, this does not assume police absence. Rather, police investigations are integral in exhibiting evidence correctly and utilising powers to arrest suspects and search premises (pp. 90-91). The powers provided to police allow detectives to search, seize, arrest and intercept communications to assist in the most complex of investigations where other agencies may appear to lead.

Not only do police powers provide a substantial advantage in conducting investigations into serious and complex crime, but also police technology. Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) is used by police at all levels of investigation to capture when vehicles pass specialised cameras, however is especially useful in identifying patterns of travel used by Organised Criminal Groups (OCGs) distributing drugs, weapons and modern slaves across the country (Gov.UK 2022c). While useful in tracking suspects using the roads, this police tool is not unique to policing. The Police National Computer (PNC) by contrast, although created in 1974, continues to be a key database for officers, holding over 13 million people records and 62.5 million vehicle records (UK Parliament 2021). Police access to PNC allows suspects to be identified and linked between incidents, revealing patterns of behaviour and linking modus operandi (MOs) to connect crimes to criminals. Thus, PNC is more effective in identifying criminals and gathering information on them than ANPR is.

In conclusion, police investigations are conducted at all levels of policing and vary in complexity across volume crimes and serious or priority crimes. Success rates for investigations are low and decreasing. This, coupled with the concerning numbers of victims withdrawing from investigations suggests a reform is needed in the police's approach to victim support, appreciation and morale during the potentially long and intrusive investigatory process. Despite this, the police are unequalled over civilian agencies through both the powers and technology it possesses to identify and track suspects and bring offenders to justice. Indeed, while in need of reform, the police service has proven indispensable and unparalleled in conducting investigations.

Word count: 975

1000 words - Information and Intelligence/Communication Skills

Critically evaluate the methods used by police in gathering information and intelligence, how information contributes to the 'tasking and coordinating' process and how information and intelligence is communicated.

Answer:

This work will evaluate the police's processing and use of information and intelligence, specifically evaluating (1) the methods used by police in gathering information and intelligence, (2) how information contributes to the 'tasking and coordination' process and (3) how information and intelligence is communicated. 'Information' can be defined as "facts about a situation, person or event" (Cambridge Dictionary 2022a), while 'intelligence'

refers to “information that has been analysed to assess its relevance and reliability.”
(National Crime Agency 2022)

Information and intelligence is key in allowing the police service to better understand and respond to its communities’ needs by identifying and linking suspects or vulnerable individuals, and planning police strategies to respond to local and national priorities (James 2016).² Therefore, it is imperative to evaluate how the police gathers, processes and uses information and intelligence to ensure communities are best served and crime and antisocial behaviour is most effectively understood and addressed.

Information and intelligence can only be gathered for a policing purpose (College of Policing 2015a)³ and collected through three avenues: routine collection, tasked information and volunteered information.⁴ ‘Routine collection’ is when information and intelligence is gathered in the course of regular police encounters such as arrests, stop searches, responding to incidents or simply speaking with the public. These methods of gathering intelligence are useful since they do not require additional police resources or tasking to organise. Furthermore, the necessity to gather information from the public encourages officers to engage more with the public during their regular duties, in turn building a greater public image as an approachable force (Gourley 1954: 135). Despite this, some communities unused to public police engagement consider such intelligence gathering as deceptive. For example, some Kurdish or Chinese communities may see public engagement as a tool for obtaining personal information or attempting to access their closed communities where they are not welcome (Bartkowiak-Theron 2011).⁵ Therefore work must be done within these communities to improve relations.

‘Tasked information’ refers to the deliberate and prioritised gathering of information and intelligence based upon a policing problem.⁶ Such methods of intelligence gathering are highly effective since they can directly inform the tasking and coordination process (mentioned later) and give police greater understandings of priority issues. Police intelligence gathering on Twitter was key to identifying local tensions and predicting hotspots during the London riots of 2011, allowing police to patrol localities and deter gatherings of protesters (Proctor et al. 2012). Additionally, actively looking for intelligence can often lead to intercepting crime itself. For example, the Streatham terror attack was brought to an early end since covert officers were already following the suspect to ascertain his movements, actions and interactions (BBC 2021). However, the classic pitfall of research-informed statistics is that the more something is studied, the more data increases for that

² The police service’s gathering of information and intelligence must be governed by the Data Protection Act (2018), Human Rights Act (1998) and the Freedom of Information Act (2000).

³ Such as protecting life or property, preserving order, bringing offenders to justice or preventing offences from being committed.

⁴ ‘Volunteered information’ will not be discussed further like the others. This is information which comes from the community or partners such as Social Services and is given to police freely.

⁵ This falls into the wider Orwellian fear of a government and police constantly watching its population and gathering information on them (Orwell 1949).

⁶ Such as through covert operations, CCTV, ANPR or Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHISs).

category (Pielke and Landsea 1998). Therefore, tasked information may make crime statistics inaccurate or morphed on certain issues compared to others (such as drug supplying), in turn altering policing priorities since more-researched problems appear larger than less-researched problems.

Information and intelligence is key to informing the ‘tasking and coordination’ process. Strategic tasking and coordination (henceforth ST&C) is a meeting among senior police officers and partner agencies where information and intelligence is used to inform both the ‘strategic assessment’ and the ‘control strategy’ (College of Policing 2015a). The strategic assessment is a live document which arises from the ST&C meeting to identify priorities on local or force-wide scales using trends, statistics and case study profiles (College of Policing 2015a). The ‘control strategy’ then responds to the priorities addressed in the strategic assessment by setting plans and goals, and communicating priorities to be addressed throughout the force. This is highly effective since strategies filter down to local-level policing where supervisors allocate resources and devise plans to directly implement the control strategy and reduce crime or providing reassurance (Walsh 2018: 59-97). However, while curtailing drug supply or human trafficking may be a major priority for forces based on intelligence, smaller problems like the prevalence of e-scooters may be more impactful on communities and their views of the police (BBC 2022c).

The police service communicates information and intelligence using different methods and models to ensure information is kept discreet and only disseminated for policing purposes. Once assessed,⁷ ‘handling codes’ – security classifications – are placed on intelligence: ‘P’ meaning ‘lawful sharing permitted’ or ‘C’ meaning ‘lawful sharing permitted with conditions’. This system is highly effective in determining if intelligence can be sent to anyone and everyone, or if certain sensitivities exist which restrict sharing conditions.⁸ However, there is limited training for officers regarding the process for submitting intelligence, and how information they encounter may be of interest, or have implications for, other policing areas (HMICFRS 2011; Harper and Harris 1975). Therefore, greater training on intelligence is required to maximise further the benefits of these effective systems.

On a larger scale, Government Security Classifications (GSCs) place all police and government documents into three categories which govern its sharing conditions – Official,⁹ Secret and Top Secret¹⁰ (Gov.UK 2018). This system is far simpler than its predecessor (Gov.UK 2018) and is effective since viewing classified documents is criminalised under the Official Secrets Act (1989). Finally, ‘audit trails’ are created whenever any intelligence is

⁷ When information is first gathered, intelligence can be ‘submitted’ to the Intelligence Department for analysis and appropriate dissemination (College of Policing 2015a). This is a formal document accessible via internal police systems.

⁸ Such as identifying sources, or relating to sensitive police investigations.

⁹ That is, most documents often restricted to official eyes only.

¹⁰ That is, government clearance required to access.

shared by the police.¹¹ This is an excellent system in ensuring accountability for all decisions made to share intelligence, and allows leaks or 'moles' to be identified in the chain of officers possessing the information if intelligence is leaked without authorisation (Manchester Evening News 2013).

In conclusion, information and intelligence is key in allowing the police service to better understand and respond to its communities' needs. The methods used by police in gathering and communicating intelligence, as well as its informing the tasking and coordination process are highly effective and operate successfully on local, force-wide and national levels. While areas for improvement have been identified such as improving training in intelligence and furthering the police's approachableness within differing communities, the current methods employed by police have proven highly effective and should stand as examples for other nations' police services.

Word count: 1,004

1000 words - Public Protection

Critically evaluate police strategies for dealing with public protection incidents considering the impact of abuse on victims, the impact personal attitudes and values on the investigative process and the association between Serious and Organised Crime groups and public protection issues.

Answer:

This work will evaluate police strategies for dealing with public protection incidents, giving special attention to a) how the police deal with the impact of abuse upon victims, b) the extent of police biases impacting investigations and c) the extent Organised Crime Groups (henceforth OCGs) link with such incidents.

All police officers have a duty to protect the wider public and maintain peace, but 'public protection' is a term specifically referring to how the police engage with special cases involving certain vulnerabilities. Although public protection can include "ensur[ing] the public are protected from dangerous, and serial sex, offenders" (Cheshire Constabulary 2022), it is an overarching term to refer to police engagement with incidents involving vulnerabilities. "A person is vulnerable if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to take care of or protect themselves...from harm or exploitation." (College of Policing (2021) This may include those with severe learning difficulties being exploited, child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, honour-based violence among others. Public protection is therefore integral to policing as it ensures the police and other agencies assist those most vulnerable and at-risk in society appropriately.

¹¹ This is a document which includes details such as the recipient, exact material disseminated, purpose of dissemination and exact time it was disseminated (College of Policing 2015a).

There are three main policing strategies for dealing with public protection incidents: (1) Police-led strategies, (2) Co-partnership strategies, and (3) Other agency-led strategies. Police-led strategies are often employed with violent or dangerous crimes resulting in substantive victim trauma and high-priority suspects (Cheshire Constabulary 2022). This can include incidents of rape and child sexual exploitation among others. Policing strategies include priority investigations and arrests leading to possible remands in police custody due to the danger suspects may present to the public (King et al. 2006: 1).

However, this is not always the most appropriate option in some cases. Police-led strategies can also include incidents where children sexually abuse their younger siblings, or extensively bully a vulnerable schoolmate (Kemshall and Maguire 2001: 237-238). In such cases, it is often more appropriate to arrange Voluntary Attendances at police stations or deal with incidents by means of Restorative Justice. This is because a hands-on police approach may impact children's futures by giving them criminal records or making them hate or fear authority, leading to a downward spiral of deviant behaviour (Nalla et al. 1998: 151-152). Both approaches to police-led strategies must be carefully judged. Myhill (2017) highlighted that a 'heavy' police-led approach is mostly appropriate to save lives, apprehend dangerous offenders, and preserve key evidence in priority cases, while (Kemshall and Maguire (2001) note that tailor-made 'lighter' police strategies are most appropriate to address suspects' and victims' vulnerabilities, and should therefore be considered in equal measure.

Despite the benefits of police-led strategies, co-partnership strategies and other agency-led strategies are more advantageous. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA; College of Policing 2017) evidence the police's identification that working with other agencies is key in assessing and addressing vulnerabilities and creating long-term strategies to reduce risk. For example, social and children services hold information on individuals and can arrange counselling courses, safe houses, long-term housing, carers and regular visits to vulnerable victims and suspects. In their dealings with these individuals, information and intelligence can be passed to police who can consequently develop the best safeguarding strategies with these agencies (MASH, Bridgend County Borough Council 2022). Officers submitting Public Protection Notification Reports (PPNs) is an excellent example of how officers can communicate vulnerabilities to police departments who will then share information with partner agencies as appropriate (HMICFRS 2015: 13). Therefore, multi-agency approaches carry a significant advantage since sharing information is key to an intelligent, tailor-made approach to each incident, and allows for expertise and experience outside the police to inform police action (Lawrence 2005), in turn reducing police error and addressing potential biases (mentioned later).

Public protection incidents can have great impacts upon victims. Not only can incidents result in substantive physical trauma, but emotional trauma can especially occur in any serious cases or cases involving those with vulnerabilities such as age, mental health or learning difficulties. In the most extreme and unfortunate cases, vulnerable victims have killed themselves due to the failures of the police (BBC 2011). Campbell et al. 2019 highlight how psychological trauma caused by sexual violence supersedes all other trauma types in its ability to affect every aspect of a person's experience of life – personally, socially, physically, and economically. Additionally, other public protection incidents such as children's

grooming into OCGs can cause downward-spiralled behaviour if not addressed. For example, a particular gang of teenagers in Huddersfield was established after obedient schoolchildren were groomed and exploited by an OCG into dealing controlled drugs, carrying knives and engaging in 'turf wars' with rival OCGs in exchange for money and fashionable clothes (Huddersfield Hub 2021). OCGs can also exploit the homes and resources of vulnerable people to use as a den for drug storage and brothels (known as 'cuckooing'). This can lead to financial impacts on the victim as their income is stolen as well as result in physical abuse or exploitation into criminal activity themselves (Spicer et al. 2020).

Investigations into public protection incidents can also be impacted by police biases and attitudes. Eck and Crabtree (2020) recognised that police are more likely to treat males more harshly and seek higher sentences for them than females (p. 4484). Furthermore, police are more likely to believe women's accounts of events rather than men's (Simon et al. 2011: 4485). An inquiry into the murder of Victoria Climbié revealed that social workers made cultural judgments that Victoria's fear of her parents was due to Caribbean culture rather than abuse (BBC 2001). Additionally, the inquiry into the suicide of Fiona Pilkington revealed that police failed to recognise her learning disabilities due to her appearance and failed to connect incidents to build a picture of antisocial behaviour against her (BBC 2011). Therefore, victims of crime can also become victims of the criminal justice system when gender, cultural and vulnerability judgments are made, preventing investigators from recognising a larger picture of abuse or linked incidents.

In conclusion, the police work most effectively when creating a tailor-made, multi-agency approach to public protection incidents. The significant impact of such incidents upon victims can create a domino effect of further trauma and behaviour which, if addressed with poor attitudes, values or biases by the police, can result in significant and unfortunate failures. Overall, established policing strategies standing on the shoulders of historic failings presents a plethora of support for those most vulnerable in society.

Word count: 1,067

1000 words - Evidence based policing/criminology and crime prevention/criminal Justice

Critically analyse the concept of evidence-based policing and 'what works' in policing, evaluating crime prevention theories and strategies and considering the options open to reduce reoffending.

Answer:

This work will critically analyse the concept of Evidence-based policing (henceforth EBP) by evaluating crime prevention theories and strategies to understand the most effective means of reducing reoffending. EBP refers to a policing approach whereby "police officers, staff and volunteers create, review and use the best available evidence to inform and challenge policies, practices and decisions." (College of Policing 2021) This evidence is usually in the form of peer-reviewed papers and studies. EBP was developed into British policing by Sherman (1998) who emphasised the importance of research and evidence in informing

how police forces operate to perform more effectively, reduce crime and safeguard victims.¹²

EBP is integral to modern policing for varying reasons. In an age emphasising the 'professionalisation' of public sector organisations such as healthcare through heightened training and established processes (Titler 2008: 70-80), it is imperative that police services demonstrate similar emphases lest it threaten public confidence in police action. Furthermore, the increased transparency of the police service, as evidenced in part by being externally inspected annually (HMICFRS 2022), heightens the importance of police officers and departments justifying actions using proven and evidence-led approaches. The Brickston Riots of 1981 were the result of poor judgement executed by police officers based on 'hunches' and 'sus law' rather than informed suspicions (Lawrence 2020). This case study demonstrates how police action which is not based upon objective and informed information can have catastrophic implications for public trust and confidence in the police.

With criticism being made of the Home Office for the small number of police officers being unable to manage demand (BBC 2019), it is imperative that limited resources are allocated effectively using evidence-led and justified strategies (Benson and Rasmussen 1998: 77; Sherman 2016).

Among the numerous crime prevention theories, two have been particularly historically noteworthy: Rational Choice Theory and Routine Action theory (henceforth RCT and RAT respectively).¹³ While RCT is useful in highlighting the solution to crime through unbalancing the cost-versus-gain equation, this is a simplistic model which presupposes rational choice to offenders' actions which is not always the case (England 1989). Overall, RAT is a superior theory in appreciating that crime is often committed by opportunists or those with deviance instilled in their regular 'muscle memory' behaviour.

Crime prevention strategies using an EBP approach take numerous forms. Problem-Orientated Policing (POP) is concerned with identifying a local crime or antisocial behaviour problem before strategising effective solutions which are tailor-made to tackle the problem (Eck et al. 2010). The OSARA framework is commonly used to identify an objective, scan for research to discover the root of the problem and analyse data before implementing solutions and reviewing actions (College of Policing 2020c). Eck et al. (2010) highlight that while local POP strategies generate "overwhelmingly positive results" (p. 172) in reducing crime, officers are not typically academically minded when writing the results reports, making it difficult for accurate and statistical results to be obtained and solid conclusions to be drawn and implemented elsewhere. Therefore, while demonstrating effective results in

¹² EBP develops a 'what works' approach whereby those policies, procedures and strategies which are demonstrated to 'work' and be effective are shared and implemented elsewhere. The College of Policing's 'What Works' initiative is a useful resource from which to obtain and share the latest EBP data to inform policing initiatives elsewhere (What Works Network 2020).

¹³ RCT proposes that offenders make a rational cost-versus-gain analysis to determine whether to commit crime, and therefore crime can be tackled by target hardening and a heightened threat of police action to reduce the 'pay-off' from crime (Cornish and Clarke 1987). RAT, by contrast, proposes that offenders are opportunists who build offending not their daily behaviour, and therefore crime can be tackled by altering offenders' surroundings, social circles and routines to facilitate convenient obedience to the law (Cohen and Felson 1979).

reducing crime, officers implementing POP strategies using the OSARA framework require more training or a peer-review process to ensure results are clear and concise for sharing with other forces.

Likewise, differing EBP strategies have been utilised to reduce reoffending. In 2020, 57.5% of adults released from custodial sentences of 12 months or less reoffended, a decrease by 2.4% from 2018 (Gov.UK 2020). Studies on Out of Court Disposals (henceforth OOCs) for youth offenders reveal that youths have a 34% less reoffending rate after taking an OOC such as a classroom course than those who were charged for offences (College of Policing 2021d). Serin and Lloyd (2009) note that OOCs in the form of classroom courses are effective because people become socialised by their surroundings, therefore stable surroundings with a healthy input of positive affirmation aids to rehabilitate offenders. Thus, while stand-alone classroom sessions are useful to begin the rehabilitation process, longer-term OOCs would be more advantageous to facilitate the further rehabilitation of offenders out of deviance.

It is evident that each EBP strategy aimed at reducing reoffending must be tailor-made to the problem at hand. For example, while gating alleyways can reduce reoffending of antisocial behaviour in alleys by 100%, (College of Policing 2016), it can be an expensive solution and is irrelevant to, for example, domestic abuse reoffending. A newly implemented EBP strategy to reduce reoffending has been introduced in 2022. Focussed Deterrence Strategies (FDSs) utilise Hirschi's (1969) classic work on social control to (1) target problem offenders' family with a view to them discouraging the offender's criminal behaviour, (2) implement regular targeted patrols around offenders' addresses, and (3) communicate with offenders regularly to warn against targeting certain individuals or locations (College of Policing 2022e). While demonstrated to be highly effective, the few early 2022 studies are still in their infancy and have proven highly complex and expensive to co-ordinate. Therefore, while EBP strategies can show promising results for reducing reoffending, an awareness of cost and practicality can raise concerns, especially for new studies.

Restorative Justice (RJ) mediation meetings between offenders and victims allow victims to air their concerns about the impacts of an offender's actions on them and allow offenders to explain their actions to the victim for their closure. Fifteen separate studies reveal that reoffending decreases by 34% after RJ mediation meetings (College of Policing 2015b; 2021c). However, it is important to note that not all offenders are remorseful, and secondary victimisation can take place when victims speak about their experiences (Schunemann 2009). Therefore, such mediation meetings may not always be possible nor appropriate. It is also important to note that while EBP strategies may be highly effective in reducing reoffending, they may cause crime statistics to increase rather than decrease. For example, healthcare screening is a strategy whereby medical practitioners confidentially ask those admitted with various injuries about any concerns at home. Thirteen separate studies have shown that women are three times more likely to report domestic abuse through this screening strategy (College of Policing 2017b). Although reports to police increase, offending and reoffending can be identified, dealt with, and crime statistics made more accurate.

In conclusion, EBP is integral to reducing crime, antisocial behaviour, and reoffending. While its limitations often come in the form of confusion for officers or limited data, the ongoing professionalisation of the police services promises a workforce increasingly aware of EBP and the importance of evidence-led justifications for police action in tackling crime and protecting vulnerable individuals.

Word count: 1,072

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