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Community and Policing: Partnerships, Policing and People.

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Community and neighbourhood policing

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Abstract

There has been a multitude of studies formed on how community policing should be done, but by finding direct information on current statistics and information regarding community policing it can be beneficial to a reader. This alongside comparing studies can have a stronger impact on a report's conclusion. By using these different methods, the report will show a range of information regarding communities and how they are policed, whilst also looking at what is to be done for the future of policing them.

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Introduction:

In this report, it will cover a range of topics that link in with policing and the community, and how the relationship was in the past versus how the relationship with the police is in present. This report will include statistics to try and help better visualise how trust in the police easily changes, and normally what circumstances normally cause these rifts in police-community relations. It will cover how delicate and how often public-police relations change using statistics to further show this.

Also, how social media can affect the public views on the police service, especially how there are so many different platforms and how so many people use social media, meaning more and more people see more of the bad than good in police due to media being uploaded that does not favour the police.

Trust in the police:

The police have always had an aim to have a good and trusting relationship with the community. Many plans have been put in place over the years to assure this like 'Rebuilding trust and delivering safer communities: A plan for reforming UK policing.' They also make it very clear during a future police officer's training that relationships with the community is key and the police as a whole have a job to build those relationships and try

to keep them steady. Not only does good relationships in the police allow a more trusting community, it also allows victims of a crime to give the full details allowing a smoother process. If people think that the police won't do anything to help them, they will not speak up therefore, police don't get the details they need, possibly leading to the situation not being handled and this can repeat into a vicious cycle that leads to even less and less trust in the police.

Trust with the police in the public's eyes is always changing, whether if for the better or for the worse. Situations arise and the way the police deal with a situation is deemed appropriate or not- ultimately by the public even though it's the IOPCC's job to review and act based on evidence. This is due to social media becoming an ever-expanding platform that most of the population use and most likely, where they get their information from. News outlets generally don't report on the good the police do, they mainly report on the bad as that is what gets the views. Due to so much negative light being shone on the police, it is bound to affect someone's opinion on the police. Of course, there are people who have had bad experiences with the police, or simply thought that they did not do much with resolving a victim's situation. As of October 2024, '52% of adults told a YouGov Survey that they had no/not very much trust in the police' *UK Parliament, 2024*.

Compared to the 2015 statistics where the public were 'twice as likely to speak positively of their local police.' *HMICFRS, 2016*. It can be seen through these statistics that public trust in the police has its highs and lows and can change in the span of only a few years, though it seems that trust in the police as of recent years is rarely on the more positive side. '63% say they trust the police, down from 71% in 2020 and 76% in 2019' *IPSOS, 2021*.

Partnership working:

How a person holds themselves as a police officer is integral to how people can view the police. For example, dealing with victims can be a very delicate process and saying the wrong thing or showing little to no empathy can really affect the relationship the officer is building with the person or people they are talking to. Showing empathy and assuring that the police will do all they can to bring the victim peace can make all the difference. Making false promises can negatively impact this, though if the criminal or criminals have not been caught.

They can also strengthen this bond by working with other agencies that specialise in different fields. Partnership working is very important for the police as it is where they can get information and a better understanding of certain things, for example, a mental health expert will help officers understand how to deal with all different types of mental health

episodes rather than going straight to detainment and possibly worsening the situation. This allows the police to have a smoother conclusion to situations but also, the victim who is being dealt with by the police, will have better trust in them because of the way the police are going about it.

Partnership working also isn't just beneficial for the police, it benefits everyone who is in the partnership due to the fact that it gets things done quicker, more professionally and allows little room for error, but even if there is a small mistake, it can easily and quickly get fixed and sorted. This also allows a continued partnership as everyone does their own bit to help and no one is riding off the back of the other.

Communication:

Effective communication can be really good to build up public trust in the police. It first of all allows the public to have a better understanding on why the police have approached a situation the way they have, it can also show the public that the police do care at least enough to take a few minutes to explain what they are doing, why they are doing it and even what they hope the outcome to be, a quote being 'effective communication shapes services delivery towards the needs of the public' *College of Policing, 2020*. It doesn't have to be communication with the public that strengthens relationships, the police having effective communication amongst themselves greatly helps. It helps 'build rapport and trust' and helps the police 'use a procedurally just approach'. *College of policing, 2021*. It also allows police to be more effective in their jobs due to the communication, the public sees that the issue has been resolved and in turn, ups the respect and the trust the public have in the police.

Modern challenges of Policing:

Modern day policing has developed loads since the first police force was formed, this also means different challenges throughout the years. Back then, when the police force first came in there was a lot of scepticism around them, similar to today's but modern-day police officers are faced with scepticism for reasons, for example, institutional racism was one because that made the public- especially those who do not come from a white background, suspect of the police. A 2023 review revealed that even though the police has come a long way from what they used to be when it came to those of a different race than white 'just being black in the organisation is still a challenge today' *Baron Casey Review, 2023*. Paired with targeted and unjust stop and searches, it really does not help how the

public view the police. 'There were 24.5 stop and searched for every 1,000 black people and 5.9 for every 1,000 white person'. *Home office, 2024*. These statistics are from 2023, so still very recent and it can be understood as to why those of a black ethnicity have less trust in the police than those who are white.

Due to the rise of social media, it seems as though public opinion does decline quite quick. It is easy to notice that in the modern day, every time there is a police encounter there is at least one mobile phone pulled out and recording, and it is most likely that that recording will be posted on a platform somewhere on the internet. The problem with this is that most of the time, the videos never really truly show the whole picture and can be spliced to make the officer seem bad or make the arrest, if there is one, seem over the top when really, the arrest was needed. This can very easily turn the tide on how the public view the police if all they are seeing are the negatives. Platforms like twitter and TikTok also popularised the letters ACAB, which stands for all cops are bastards, further not helping with the public view of police.

Some cases that have come to light to the public have also really affected how the police are viewed. One case being Wayne Couzens. Because of his disgusting acts against women and him being in the police, it made a lot of the community, especially women, feel like they can't even trust the people that are set out to protect them, it worsened when it was later found that he even had the nickname 'the rapist' whilst in the police causing further unrest and scrutiny within the police service.

Another case being when WhatsApp messages got leaked between police officers who were saying and sharing disgusting words and pictures of victims. This, rightly so, once again made the public question how sick minded people are getting into the police and how they were not picked up, or, how the higher ups did not get them fired.

Police Development:

The police has developed quite a bit since it was first formed, for example, PCSO's did not become a role until 2005. PCSO's are officers dedicated to community and neighbourhood policing, whilst other officers would focus and specialise in other fields for example, traffic police. There are many different communities out there that cover a range of different characteristics, like, a community that is mainly made up of the elderly, or a community that is mainly made up of new families. PCOS's are expected to form bonds with these communities, this in turn, can make the community view police in a more positive light but also feel safer in their own community if they see officers actively surveilling or being 'bobbies on the beat'. It has been thrown around that the future of neighbourhood policing

is on the edge of a cliff, with a quote being 'The meaning of neighbourhood policing is becoming more ambiguous and agreement on what it is and how it should function risk breaking down.' *The police foundation, 2017.*

It seems as though the decline has been noticed as Home Secretary Yvette Cooper announced a policing reform aimed towards rebuilding trust between local communities and police. She promised more than half a billion pounds will be funded to help support the police in the 'Safer Streets Mission'. She aims to raise public trust and confidence in the police and to get more police on the beat around communities and neighbourhoods.

It can be seen though that there is at least some sort of respect in the police as policing by consent is still in effect. The police would basically be no more if everyone decided to turn against them, there are way more civilians than there are police officers in the UK, so the police would easily be overrun by the public if they all decide they did not want to follow rules anymore. The police have no authority if the public did not consent to them.

Conclusion:

To bring this report to an end, it has been found that when it comes to trust towards the community and police, it is very delicate and can change in an instant and it is up to the police to amend that. It was found that good communication with the community can help with police-public bonds therefore, increasing trust. It is also important to keep neighbourhood policing alive and thriving as PCSO's are constantly with people in communities and those people in community's link PCSO's with other officers, PCSO's simply patrolling areas increases the feeling of safeness but also shows the public that the police care about the people and its community and is there to provide when needed- this naturally ups the respect and trust in the police.

There are also many challenges that the modern day police have to face, especially with the rise of social media where the trust can be easily bent or the whole picture being shown. It is seen often in the modern age where whenever there is a police encounter there is at least one mobile phone out filming.

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