Welcome to the first edition of the Thames Valley Police Journal

I am delighted to be writing the foreword for the Thames Valley Police Journal. The journal shares some of the recent evidence based research and thinking from across the force and is the culmination of some amazing work led by Katy Barrow-Grint and supported by Lee Barnham to turn an idea into the product you see today.

This is only a small sample of the wealth of energy, interest and expertise in police research going on across the force, and we look forward to sharing more of that work in the future. In this edition we have articles covering a wide range of issues including domestic abuse, shoplifting and terrorism as well as discussion pieces about tackling Child Drug Exploitation in two Local Police Areas. There are also reflective pieces from Catherine Parfitt about dealing with victims of serious sexual assault and Quoc Vo on his experience of undertaking a secondment.

The purpose of this journal is, at least, three fold.

Firstly we want those engaged in academic research in the Thames Valley to be able to share that work with colleagues across the force and further beyond. The sharing and debating of ideas is the fuel which allows the research base to grow.

Secondly we want to encourage people to bring those thoughts together more formally and share them – so the journal provides space for literature reviews and discussion pieces to allow ideas to be explored and developed more fully.

Thirdly we want to encourage an evidence based approach throughout the organisation, and the sharing of those thoughts and experiences. There is therefore part of the journal dedicated to sharing the experience applying an evidence based approach to operational policing. Whether that’s the effective analysis of a neighbourhood intervention, or the application of an established approach is some area of the business, we want to hear about it! These practitioner notes will be shorter and less formal, to encourage that wider participation.

Underpinning all of that is a commitment to take this learning and apply it; which of course should include stopping activity which has been shown not to work as well as developing activities that do. Where something looks promising but the evidence base is not yet strong enough we will be looking to contribute to the further development of that evidence base.

I hope you will find the articles both interesting and challenging. This is not an academic journal, but a practitioners journal with articles written by a range of officers with varying levels of academic experience, and it is all the better for that. Evidence based policing is not a purely intellectual exercise; it is a way of thinking which asks those in all ranks and roles to consider: What do we know about what works? How can I apply that to my day to day work for the benefit of the public? Where are there opportunities for me to help better understand what works and to share that with others?

No single piece of research can hold the solution to what are often complex problems, but by sharing our work we hope to make our contribution to the growing body of knowledge which informs police practice now and in the future.

Chief Superintendent Robert France
Head of Governance and Service Improvement
Joint Editor of the Thames Valley Police Journal
Articles appearing in the Thames Valley Police Journal

The purpose of the Thames Valley Police Journal is to ensure the diverse range of academic work undertaken within the organisation is captured and shared to inform the evidence based development of policy and practice. It is also intended that the Thames Valley Police Journal will support the development of discussion about a variety of policing issues which are not necessarily related to formal pieces of academic work.

There are three levels of submission to the Thames Valley Police Journal:

(1) Full article emanating from academically rigorous work undertaken as part of a formal qualification.

(2) Research/practice note which is not completed as part of a formal qualification, but is of high quality and evidence based. This could include papers from those seeking to undertake future academic work, but who have not yet gained a qualification.

(3) Comment/discussion piece relating to evidence-based policing but that does not increase the evidence base per se. This could include sharing experiences of trying to implement a practice locally and what was learnt from the experience.

Criteria for the inclusion of articles in the Thames Valley Police Journal

It is important that whilst the articles in this journal support evidence based policing the content cannot compromise operational activity or undermine the public trust and confidence in Thames Valley Police.

In order to determine this, the following criteria will be considered and articles will not be included where they:

- Contain information capable of identifying victims in any circumstances. This goes further than data protection legislation as it also covers individuals who are deceased.

- Disclose information about an ongoing investigation, covert tactics or affect proceedings undertaken by any other public body.

- Deter victims or witnesses having the confidence to speak to the police.

In addition any information published must:

- Comply with legal requirements, court restrictions and media law.

- Be subject to Parliamentary Privilege.

Further consideration must be given to the impact that may be caused by those affected by reading previously unknown detail about the case.

Process for reviewing articles

Each article is reviewed by one internal peer reviewer and the editorial team prior to publication. In order to ensure the criteria for inclusion are met, the editorial team will also seek specialist advice from other departments where necessary. Where recommendations are made articles are sent to the Head(s) of Department for the business area for consideration against the wider evidence base and any limitations of the research.
Chief Superintendent Robert France

Rob joined Thames Valley’s Oxford Local Police Area having completed his undergraduate and doctoral degrees in Chemistry at St John’s College, Oxford and fell in love with policing as a whole new aspect of a city he thought he knew opened up in front of him. He has performed a wide variety of roles across the force area in response, neighbourhood and investigative policing, particularly enjoying his time as a detective inspector. Most recently he was the Local Police Area Commander for Wokingham (and latterly Bracknell and Wokingham) for over four years, overseeing the merger of those two areas. He has always been interested in organisational development, and was part of the small team which delivered the force’s Local Policing Model in 2011. He currently leads the Governance and Service Improvement department, which is committed to using and developing the best available thinking to guide and develop the organisation and maintains his operational exposure as an active Public Order Silver Commander.

In 2011 Rob completed a master’s degree in police leadership and management at the University of Leicester, with the emerging culture of Police Community Support Officer’s the focus of his dissertation. He has a particular interest in the challenge of translating research into practical operational change, and how the practical wisdom that has been developed over many decades can not only inform but also drive that work. He sees the journal as a fantastic opportunity not only to share the huge range of fantastic research that is being conducted across the organisation but also to explore that core question: how can we use the growing body of research to make practical day to day policing better?

Superintendent Katy Barrow-Grint

Katy joined Thames Valley Police in 2000 having studied Sociology at the London School of Economics and developed an interest in crime and policing from her dissertation work on girl gangs. She has worked in a variety of roles and ranks including uniform patrol, CID, neighbourhood policing, child abuse investigation, surveillance and strategic development.

As a Detective Chief Inspector, Katy oversaw the Oxfordshire Protecting Vulnerable People Unit, and introduced the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) into Oxfordshire. Katy’s domestic abuse team were the subject of the BBC1 documentary ‘Behind Closed Doors’ and she has a keen academic interest in domestic abuse, having recently published an academic journal article on domestic abuse attrition rates.

More recently Katy worked on the project team to introduce the Operating Model to front line Local Police Areas, and in 2017 was promoted to Superintendent and is now Head of Criminal Justice for Thames Valley Police. In this role she has encouraged the academic review of a pilot scheme to fast-track domestic abuse cases in the crown court by implementing a research project with Huddersfield University, the PCC’s office, the CPS and Aylesbury Crown Court. She is keen to join academic research with operational policing and the criminal justice system and sees the value of both academics and police officers and staff working together.

Katy’s academic interest amplified when she completed her Masters in Police Leadership and Management at Warwick Business School in 2015.

She was keen to develop the Force’s understanding of the academic work being completed by officers and staff, and as a result, the TVP Journal has emerged. She is really pleased that TVP will now have a fantastic gateway to recognise the academic work of its officers and staff, and there is significant national interest in the journal which will encourage other forces to progress similarly.

You can contact Katy by email: katy.barrow-grint@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk or follow her on Twitter: @ktbg1
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Domestic Violence Protection Orders: An Effective Intervention to Reduce Harm and Risk?

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Abstract

On average, the police receive a call relating to domestic abuse every thirty seconds (Women’s Aid, 2015) and tackling domestic abuse is a priority for the police service.

In 2009, Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) were trialled in three police forces in the United Kingdom. This article goes further than any known previous studies, focusing not just on re-victimisation but escalation in offending and risk. Through analysis of one hundred domestic abuse cases, this article has been able to gain an understanding as to whether DVPOs are an effective tool to protect victims of domestic abuse.

This research has identified that whilst the likelihood of a victim being re-victimised remains the same, regardless of whether a DVPO has been obtained; DVPOs do reduce the number of subsequent incidents of abuse a victim reports, by more than three incidents in six months on average. Similarly the escalation in the severity of offending in subsequent reported incidents of abuse significantly reduces in cases where a DVPO has been obtained, particularly in cases involving a high risk victim. Through the use of qualitative research with police officers, this research has shown that opinion as to whether DVPOs are effective is generally positive although mixed among specialist domestic abuse investigators. It was highlighted that Thames Valley Police mostly rely on victims to report breaches and that perpetrators are not proactively monitored. Overwhelmingly however, the vast majority of respondents believed that the use of DVPOs should be encouraged.

This article concludes that DVPOs are an effective way for the police service to prevent an escalation in harm and risk, thus protecting vulnerable domestic abuse victims.

Key words: domestic abuse, vulnerability, domestic violence, perpetrators, orders.

Introduction

Background to the study

Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) were introduced following a review in 2009 by Chief Constable Brian Moore of Wiltshire Police, the domestic abuse policing lead at the time. Following a trial in Greater Manchester Police, West Mercia Police and Wiltshire Police in 2011 and 2012, the order was launched in the remaining forty forces in 2014 (Crown Prosecution Service, 2018). Research into the effectiveness of these orders has been limited, likely due to the fact that police forces have only been able to utilise them for a short time. It could also be argued that research into the effectiveness of other domestic abuse protection orders has been limited, with the vast majority of research focusing on interventions outside of the United Kingdom (Kinder, 2012; Ibrahim et al, 2015; Courts, 2007; Frantzen et al, 2011; Robertson et
al, 2007; Brame et al, 2013; Kothari, 2012; Logan et al, 2011 & Carlson et al, 1999). Protection orders outside of the United Kingdom are not directly comparable with orders within due to the many differences in law and so whilst this article will explore research outside of the UK, conclusions cannot be drawn.

The most in depth review of DVPOs was carried out following the trial of the orders in three police forces during 2011 and 2012 (Kelly et al, 2013). Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) focussed on police forces’ use of the power in their review titled Everyone’s Business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse (2014). Figures (Kelly et al, 2013) have identified that police forces are inconsistently using DVPOs in order to effectively tackle domestic abuse. A perpetrator is nearly forty times more likely to be given a DVPO by Greater Manchester Police than the Metropolitan Police Service (HM Government, 2016), where ironically there are nearly double the amount of homicides committed by a partner or spouse (Office of National Statistics, 2016). Similarly, the large Metropolitan force of West Midlands Police issued less DVPOs between March 2014 and December 2014 than the much smaller Cheshire Police (HM Government, 2016), highlighting that there is inconsistency across the country. Whilst the Home Office have hailed the order a success and an effective method to tackle domestic abuse (Woodhouse & Dempsey, 2016), research has solely focussed on re-victimisation rates. The independent review of the pilot which ended in June 2012, highlighted that DVPOs reduced re-victimisation compared to cases where no further action was taken (Kelly et al, 2013). However aside from a seven page report detailing the number of DVPOs issued by police forces in the first year (HM Government, 2016), there does not appear to have been any further analysis and research conducted into the effectiveness of the orders. The fact that there is such disparity between the use of the orders among similar metropolitan and non-metropolitan police forces would indicate some form of reluctance or a lack of awareness as to how a DVPO could potentially assist in maximising the safety of domestic abuse victims. HMIC (2015) also suggested that forces conduct research into their use of DVPOs in order to provide an evidence base.

This research aims to explore the orders in greater detail than previous research (Kelly et al, 2013 & HM Government, 2016) with the benefit of being able to closely analyse Thames Valley Police over a specific period of time. This research will measure effectiveness through not only re-victimisation but also escalation (or de-escalation) of harm since the DVPO was issued. The escalation (or de-escalation) of risk according to the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment risk assessment tool widely used by frontline professionals in cases involving domestic abuse (Safe Lives, 2014) will also be used as a tool to measure the effectiveness of the orders. This will allow the reader to gain an understanding of whether there was any escalation in similar cases where a DVPO was not used. This research will also focus on whether DVPOs are more or less effective with certain perpetrators (such as serial perpetrators and first time perpetrators) and whether a DVPO has any effect on the amount of time before a victim requires the assistance of the police again.

The overall aim therefore, is to understand whether the use of DVPOs should be encouraged by providing an independent analysis as to whether they are effective.
Literature Review

Orders to prevent domestic abuse

As already highlighted there has been very little research into the effectiveness of DVPOs, likely to be due to the order being relatively new. Non-molestation orders and restraining orders have been in existence for many years and similar protection orders have been actively used in other countries. In a review to understand the reasons behind a significant reduction in victims applying for non-molestation orders, Burton (2009), identified that victims felt orders were of little help and regardless, the abuse continued. However this may be due to the fact that protection orders are not effective on every type of perpetrator. Travis et al (1998) identified limitations with regards to protection orders and concluded that a protection order in isolation was highly likely to be ineffective against perpetrators with a history of being violent towards their victims and that prosecution may be the only way to prevent future offending.

Brame et al (2013) concluded from their research into non-contact orders in the United States that such an order did not have any tangible impact on re-victimisation and the only benefit was that those victims that had sought such an order had better communication with the police. However that these victims were in regular communication with the police, it may be that they felt able to report further abuse whereas those in relatively poor communication with the police, were not able to report continued abuse, a limitation that Brame et al concluded may have influenced their findings. Kothari (2012) also noted similar findings during their critical analysis of protection orders on serial perpetrators and highlighted that those victims with orders contacted police significantly more after the order was granted but that when police responded effectively to breaches, concluded that the orders eventually did reduce instances of abuse and reduced the risk of harm over a four year period. This research would indicate that whilst there may not be an immediate impact on re-victimisation when an order is imposed, provided the police respond effectively to subsequent incidents, the long term positive impact of an order could be significant.

Humphries et al (2002) conducted research into the effectiveness of non-molestation orders and discussed their effectiveness with victims that had sought such protection. An overwhelming 75% of victims found that the order was useful, had allowed them to seek additional support elsewhere and made them feel more protected as the abuse lessened. Interestingly, the fact that the abuse ‘lessened’ would indicate that victims remained in the abusive relationship regardless of the order in place. Other research has also highlighted positives, such as Logan et al (2011) with their research into civil protection orders in one city in the United States. The vast majority of victims that had sought such an order, reported that there had been no further abuse or that the order had reduced instances of abuse considerably. This research suggests that the protection orders do in fact have an effect on the behaviour of perpetrators, if not immediately then once a period of time has passed after an order has been served. Protection orders were associated with a reduction of abuse for many women in Australia (Carlson et al, 1999) and research highlighted a significant decline in instances of abuse over a two year period before and after the order was obtained. There was however a small proportion of women that were subject to further and more harmful abuse after an order had been made.

Whilst the majority of research into the effectiveness of orders is positive, Ibrahim et al (2015) concluded after their evaluation of Domestic Violence Orders in Australia that there was inconsistent enforcement across states with differing conditions attached to the order, meaning that enforcement was scant and at times non-existent. This meant that breaches were not dealt with which no doubt had a detrimental impact on the confidence of the victims and encouraged continued abuse without fear of prosecution. For orders to be effective, there must be robust enforcement by both the police and courts and this is as crucial as the perpetrators and victims taking the orders seriously (DeJong, 2006).
The only research known to evaluate the effectiveness of DVPOs in the United Kingdom concluded that they were an effective tool to reduce re-victimisation (Kelly et al., 2013). The evaluation did however identify that there were varying degrees of support for the orders from frontline police officers as well as a lack of understanding with regards to the process required to obtain a DVPO. Generally however, DVPOs were seen as a positive introduction by victims of domestic abuse and were attributed to a reduction in incidents reported to police (one incident of domestic abuse per victim). There are obviously limitations to putting a numeric value on the number of incidents a victim suffers given that domestic abuse victims do not report each abusive incident to the police. The methodology of this research is therefore important to ensure a fair conclusion as to whether DVPOs are effective.

**Methodology**

In order to effectively make an accurate assessment as to whether DVPOs are effective, a mixed methods approach was utilised (Prein & Bird, 1995) which involved employing both quantitative and qualitative research. This was considered crucial in ensuring this dissertation establishes the reasons behind why police forces' use of DVPOs vary so widely with some using the orders far more than others. This also prevented mono-method bias, which Clarke and Dawson (1999) describe as being too focused on one data collection method and thus does not provide an accurate assessment. This mixed methods approach would also allow comparable data to be abstracted from police systems as well as being able to gather the opinion of frontline officers and policy makers from not just Thames Valley Police but other police forces too.

This research needed to be able to measure the effectiveness of police interventions and the methods used in order to establish this would be approached scientifically and any conclusions would be evidence based. A mixed method research approach was selected as the most appropriate in order to obtain reliable data. This approach uses two or more different methods of research within one project, with the intention that the author increases the accuracy of the data gathered and the level of confidence afforded to it (Prein and Bird, 1995). These methods allow the author to gain the most from research projects and the benefits from a fusion of the two methods are clear (Bryman & Cramer, 2004). It is however important that such data retains its integrity.

By gathering data through the use of primary research, bias could be completely removed from the research phase; recognising that everyone has some form of bias (Smith and Noble, 2014). It is recognised that each domestic abuse incident is unique and that each perpetrator and victim are different. In order to reach a meaningful conclusion, a significant amount of data would need to be gathered. It was therefore decided to abstract data in relation to one hundred criminal investigations motivated by domestic abuse. This number was chosen simply due to the strict timeframe in which the author was working under and had there been more time available, further cases would have been reviewed. It should however be noted that a significant amount of data was obtained from these one hundred cases, ensuring that a robust conclusion could be obtained. King and Wincup (2008) highlight the need for data to be 'clean', in simple terms free from errors. In order to achieve this, the author has re-tested all data gathered as well as checking the data when an anomaly is identified to ensure that conclusions are only drawn as a result of reliable data.

**Surveys**

Surveys were sent to different groups of individuals involved in the response to and investigation of domestic abuse as well as police officers of Superintendent rank who authorise DVPNs. Representatives from police forces other than Thames Valley Police also provided responses to the surveys as well as officers from Thames Valley Police. Whilst representatives
from three victim focussed charitable agencies were also invited to take part in a survey, whilst agreeing to do so, they failed to complete the survey in time for the results to be included within this dissertation. The results can be found in the full dissertation and were not able to be included in this article.

Results

Re-victimisation

The fifty cases whereby a DVPO was sought have firstly been compared directly with the cases whereby a DVPO was not sought. In all cases where a DVPO was not obtained, the criteria was met to allow for a DVPO to be sought. This comparison has shown that a DVPO has not had any effect on overall re-victimisation rates.

Table 1: Table showing re-victimisation comparison rates

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<th>Re-victimisation within 6 months</th>
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<tr>
<td>No DVPO obtained</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVPO obtained</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Of the fifty cases where a DVPO was obtained, 56% of perpetrators re-offended within six months and the same victim was re-victimised. The same number re-offended in cases where a DVPO was not sought. This indicates that a DVPO has not had any additional effect, either negative or positive on perpetrators above what other policing interventions have, namely police attendance and arrest. This analysis also goes some way to prove Vigurs et al theory (2016) which highlighted that police attendance alone can be enough to dissuade some perpetrators from abusing their victims again, regardless of the outcome of the police intervention. However these figures are unable to take into account the possibility that those victims that were able to obtain a DVPO, are more likely to report domestic abuse than those were not. This was identified in previous research (Kothari, 2012) which highlighted that orders increase victim confidence in reporting matters to the police. Therefore re-victimisation alone cannot solely be used to ascertain whether a DVPO is effective.

In their analysis of DVPOs that had been used in trial forces, Kelly et al (2013) identified that the use of a DVPO reduced incidents of victimisation by one incident per victim, meaning that whilst perpetrators subject to DVPOs did go on to re-offend, the number of subsequent incidents decreased. The number of subsequent incidents within a six month period have been gathered in Thames Valley Police. This has shown a far greater reduction in incidents of domestic abuse reported to police when a DVPO has been obtained.
This research indicates that whilst perpetrators are just as likely to re-offend within six months whether a DVPO has been obtained or not, the subsequent incidents reduce by more than three incidents per victim in six months. Whilst not conclusive, this could indicate that the long term effects of the order; whilst only lasting up to twenty-eight days, are significant. These findings are consistent with research into the long term effects of protection orders that suggest that such orders reduce incidents of abuse significantly once the order has been served (Logan et al, 2011; Carlson et al, 1999).

DVPOs have been implemented in order to provide the victim with breathing space and time to make key decisions about their lives. There have been a number of limitations to this research and arguably most importantly, a lack of data showing victims’ actions once a DVPO had been obtained. It is therefore highly likely that some victims have remained with their perpetrators even after a DVPO has been obtained, whilst some had the courage to make the decision to flee the relationship and cease contact. The data obtained is also unable to take into account the perpetrators actions in order to locate a victim that has fled and therefore there may be less re-victimisation due to the victim’s actions and not the DVPO. However what can be measured is the time between the intervention and the subsequent report of abuse to understand how long it takes for a victim to be re-victimised and contact police.

Table 2: Table showing amount of time before reported re-victimisation

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<tr>
<td>No DVPO obtained</td>
<td>80 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVPO obtained</td>
<td>74 days</td>
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Importantly, DVPOs can only last for up to twenty-eight days (Crown Prosecution Service, 2017) and the above table highlights how crucial it is to obtain a longer term non-molestation order to provide long term protection. The impact of a DVPO overall on offending times appears to be minimal and in any case both categories show that victims are likely to report abuse over
two months after the initial intervention regardless of whether a DVPO had been in place or not.

Figure 2: Graph showing number of days for re-victimisation based on risk grading

This graph shows that in both medium risk and high risk cases (the risk grading which police officers assign to a victim), the number of days before victims reported re-victimisation increased once a DVPO had been obtained, with the most notable increase in medium risk cases whereby DVPOs appeared to allow victims an additional twenty nine days before victims were re-victimised. In high risk cases, victims were allowed an additional thirteen days. Whilst outside influences such as means to commit a further offence could account for the time it took for a perpetrator to re-offend in some cases, the impact of a DVPO in allowing victim additional time to flee a relationship cannot be dismissed.

Escalation in offending

Whilst Kelly et al (2013) analysed re-victimisation with regards to DVPOs, there has not been any research conducted as to whether DVPOs have an impact on whether the perpetrators severity of offending increases. Whilst table 1.1 has determined that obtaining DVPOs does not reduce the likelihood of a victim being re-victimised, analysis has been conducted on the incidents that followed the initial intervention in order to understand whether subsequent incidents resulted in an escalation or de-escalation in harm. This has been determined by reviewing the subsequent incidents and identifying the criminal offence alleged and injuries caused, comparing the seriousness with the original incident.

Whilst this alone would not be conclusive in determining the effectiveness of DVPOs the analysis, together with other sections of this chapter, would be able to inform their effectiveness.

Figure 3 shows that when perpetrators do re-offend within six months, in the vast majority of cases, the level of offending escalates or remains the same in subsequent incidents of abuse. Only in very few cases (3%) does the perpetrator’s offending actually de-escalate as result of this intervention.
Whilst it would not be possible to gain a full understanding as to the reasons behind why the level of offending escalated or de-escalated, when compared with cases where a DVPO was utilised, it does show significant differences. A large proportion (44%) of perpetrators' level of offending de-escalated and nearly half of the number of cases showed a level of escalation when compared with cases where a DVPO was not used (11%).

This indicates that when a DVPO has been obtained, whilst it may not prevent the victim from being abused again, it does have a significant impact on the level of harm the victim is subject to. The reasons for this are not clear, however Kothari (2012) conducted long term research into the effectiveness of non-contact orders in the US and concluded that as long as the subsequent incidents reported to police after an order is granted are dealt with effectively, the order will have a positive effect on reducing harm in the future. This was proven during a four year analysis of incidents after an order was granted. It has not been possible due to time constrictions to review each subsequent incident in minute detail however this is one hypotheses. The fact that a perpetrator is subject to a DVPO would indicate some form of risk of harm and therefore despite a responding police officer not understanding the full circumstances surrounding their case, the gravity of the abuse the victim is experiencing should be clear given the court process which the DVPO must go through. The level of service provided by the police and partners is therefore likely to be of a higher standard.
Risk Gradings

In Thames Valley Police, when a Police Officer attends a report of a domestic abuse incident, the officer attending will complete a risk assessment with the victim to establish the level of risk the perpetrator poses (Richards, 2008). On occasions, the victim may refuse to complete the risk assessment with the officer and on such occasions, the officer would use their professional judgement to determine what risk the perpetrator poses.

DVPOs in Thames Valley Police, during the time period selected, were only issued to perpetrators that posed such a risk to their victims that they were graded as medium or high risk. The majority of DVPOs were issued in medium risk cases. It is important in order to understand the effectiveness of DVPOs to understand whether they were more or less effective in cases that involved medium or high risk victims and whether there was any escalation or de-escalation in the level of the risk grading at subsequent incidents of abuse.

Figure 5: Graph showing subsequent risk in cases where a DVPO has not been obtained

![Figure 5](image1.png)

Figure 6: Graph showing subsequent risk in cases where a DVPO has been obtained

![Figure 6](image2.png)

Figures 5 and 6 show significant differences in the risk levels afforded to cases where a DVPO has not been obtained compared with those where a DVPO was obtained. These results show...
that obtaining a DVPO is more likely to reduce risk to victims. This appears to be consistent with the level of offending analysis that showed similar results overall.

In order to understand whether DVPOs are effective across all victim and perpetrator risk levels, further analysis was required.

**Figure 7:** Graph showing levels of re-offending after intervention

Figure 7 shows that DVPOs have the most significant effect on cases where the victim has been judged to be at medium risk from their perpetrator, with a 14% reduction in reported re-offending in medium risk cases. Also evident is the likelihood of perpetrators re-offending in cases where the victim has been judged to be of high risk and even in cases where a DVPO has been obtained, the effect is minimal; with over three quarters of perpetrators re-offending within six months. DVPOs had not been obtained in any cases where the officer had assessed the risk to the victim as standard and therefore it is not possible to draw conclusion on the effectiveness of DVPOs for standard risk victims.

Whilst DVPOs evidently do not have a measurable effect on re-victimisation in cases involving high risk victims, before DVPOs are precluded, further analysis was required to establish whether DVPOs had an effect on the number of subsequent incidents a victim would report and whether a DVPO had any effect on the escalation or de-escalation of harm.

**Table 3:** Table showing escalation in offending and subsequent incidents of re-victimisation based on risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk level</th>
<th>Escalation in level of offending</th>
<th>Number of subsequent reported incidents</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard risk</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard risk DVPO obtained</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium risk</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium risk DVPO obtained</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
<td>-3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 highlights that DVPOs have the most significant effect on the escalation of offending in cases where the victim has been assessed as being at high risk from the perpetrator. In only 6.25% of cases where a DVPO was secured against a high risk perpetrator did the level of offending escalate, compared with 37.5% of cases where a DVPO was not sought. However, Table 3 also shows that the number of incidents rose slightly when a DVPO was secured in cases involving high risk. This indicates that whilst a DVPO does not have any effect on whether a high risk victim is re-victimised or how many times the victim is re-victimised, a DVPO does have a significant impact on the behaviour of perpetrators, with only one perpetrator going on to commit a more serious offence than he had committed prior to being subject of a DVPO.

When analysing medium risk cases, DVPOs have been effective at reducing both escalation in offending as well as the number of subsequent incidents. Medium risk victims that had not obtained a DVPO reported, on average, a further six incidents over the next six months. This was significantly reduced when a medium risk victim obtained a DVPO and such victims were subject to 3.6 less incidents of abuse than victims that did not obtain a DVPO.

**Enforcement**

For orders to be effective at reducing the risk of harm, they must be properly enforced (Travis et al., 1998). It is not clear from Thames Valley Police records how DVPOs are monitored and enforced (an issue which is raised again during qualitative research) however HMIC (2015) reported that 17% of DVPOs that had been granted by the courts in the United Kingdom had been breached by the perpetrator. In 2015, despite only Cambridgeshire Police obtaining less DVPOs, the number of breaches in Thames Valley Police was forth highest in the country. A number of reasons behind this could be cited with Brame et al. (2013) suggesting that protection orders do not have any tangible impact on re-victimisation, only better communication and trust for the police, which encourages more reporting of abuse. Kothari (2012) also identified that communication between victims and police improves after an order and thus breaches are reported as victims now have the confidence to report them. Equally, it could be that DVPOs are simply ineffective and the abuse continues regardless, as Burton (2009) highlighted in their research into non-molestation orders. Thames Valley Police does not routinely monitor DVPOs centrally in order to understand their effectiveness whereas HMIC (2015) highlighted good practice in Derbyshire Police whereby a Detective Sergeant oversees all DVPOs to ensure continuous monitoring and accountability.

Ibrahim (2015) identified that a lack of effective robust action in dealing with breaching of orders in Australia, meant that some orders were completely ineffective. Of the fifty DVPO cases analysed in Thames Valley Police, 12% of victims (six), reported that their perpetrators had breached the conditions set by the court. In all of these cases, the perpetrator was arrested however Thames Valley Police systems do not accurately reflect the result of the case at court in some cases. One case whereby the perpetrator breached the conditions of a DVPO resulted in the perpetrator receiving a fourteen day imprisonment whilst others that breached their DVPOs did so whilst also committing substantive offences which they could be charged with separately. Breach of a DVPO is not a criminal offence however does constitute the perpetrator being held in contempt of court. Due to the small numbers in which to draw a conclusion from (six) and the lack of detail on the police crime system, further analysis of breaches has not been possible.
Recommendations and conclusion

The following recommendations have been made to the force in order to develop more effective usage of DVPOs:

**Recommendation one:** A process should be considered whereby the National Centre for Domestic Violence (NCDV) are automatically notified by police of a DVPO being granted so that there is no delay in obtaining a Non-molestation order provided the victim consents. There are many examples of a DVPO being granted without further consideration of a long term solution.

**Recommendation two:** All DVPOs obtained should be put on the LPA briefing slide to ensure that all officers are aware of the perpetrator and the victim as well as the conditions attached to the order.

**Recommendation three:** A DVPO SPOC should be identified on each LPA to ensure that the effectiveness of DVPOs are monitored to identify missed opportunities, share learning and highlight good practice.

**Recommendation four:** In the most high risk/high demand cases, DVPOs should be enforced similar to a curfew check with the victim’s address to be checked to establish whether the perpetrator is present. The RMO can then be updated by officers completing such checks. This research has indicated a lack of monitoring and enforcement.

**Recommendation five:** Discussions should be held with Legal Services to understand what conditions could be applied for. Each DVPO contained the same conditions (not to molest and not to contact). Scoping required to understand whether we can apply for live, sleep and present conditions at an alternative address or exclusion zones.

**Recommendation six:** Further research to be conducted in this area to ascertain the views of victim’s of DVPOs to understand whether this process can be improved.

**Recommendation seven:** DVPNs and DVPOs are particularly difficult to search for on Niche and it is difficult to evidence where one has been obtained or considered. Scoping required with the Niche team to understand whether DVPN templates are possible.

**Recommendation eight:** Training needs analysis to be conducted to establish whether training is required in the use of DVPOs, particularly in light of new bail changes.

As highlighted, the use of DVPOs across the United Kingdom varies dramatically. As shown in the qualitative research in which other police forces and police officers of differing ranks and specialisms were asked for their opinion and experiences, the varying use of the order is likely to be due to differing opinion as to the effectiveness of the order. DVPOs are not automatically considered in each domestic abuse case and therefore it is difficult to ascertain the true reasons behind a DVPO being precluded from a certain case of domestic abuse. The police service is unable to get away from the fact that the attrition rate in cases motivated by domestic abuse remains high (Barrow-Grint, 2016) and whilst prosecution of the perpetrator remains the advantageous position for an investigator, an alternative is required to protect victims in cases where the evidence is not sufficient for the case to proceed to court.
This research shows that whilst the likelihood of a victim being re-victimised remains the same, regardless of whether a DVPO has been obtained; DVPOs do have a significant effect on subsequent incidents of abuse. Research has shown that the number of subsequent incidents the victim reports reduces by more than three occasions per victim on average within six months. Similarly the escalation in the level of offending significantly reduces in cases where a DVPO has been obtained, particularly in cases where the victim has been judged to be at high risk of abuse, where research shows a 31% reduction in the escalation of harm. This research highlights that when served on medium risk perpetrators DVPOs afforded victims, on average, an additional twenty-nine days before they were re-victimised, providing them with valuable time to flee the relationship.

There have been significant limitations in this research which has meant that the views of victim’s have not been captured. Further research is required in this area to understand their views and opinions of DVPOs and in particular whether they found the orders helpful in fleeing their abusive relationship. Whilst this article focuses on the effectiveness of DVPOs in purely risk and harm terms, one cannot ignore the costs involved in tackling domestic abuse, which costs the United Kingdom economy and various services £5.7 billion a year, with £1 billion of these costs solely attributed to the criminal justice system (Walby, 2004). Establishing whether DVPOs are cost effective in Thames Valley Police will require further research. Logan et al (2012), concluded that civil protection orders in one city in the United States saved a significant amount of money when compared with the cost of obtaining orders through the courts. The evaluation conducted by Kelly et al (2013) concluded that they were not cost effective however this research was focussed on three trial forces only.

Whilst this article has identified that DVPOs are not an effective way to reduce re-victimisation, they are an effective way to reduce harm and risk. Times are changing in the arena of domestic abuse (Monkton-Smith & Williams, 2014) and the use of DVPOs as a tool in which to protect vulnerable victims of domestic abuse should be encouraged.
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Key to the Government’s Prevent Strategy is combating radicalisation: How effective is training in enhancing teachers’ understanding of their role in tackling radicalisation and understanding their Duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015?

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Abstract
The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a legal Duty on specified authorities to have ‘due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.’ The Department for Education guidance suggests that schools should be identifying and reporting concerns in order to safeguard pupils. In addition, it suggests that schools should be building resilience to radicalisation in their pupils. This study looks at how training has influenced teachers’ understanding of the role they have in respect of the new Duty. The literature review looks at the current context of the terrorist threat, how young people are being radicalised and the Government’s Prevent Strategy. Through interviews with teachers at one school in Oxfordshire, the study then examines how training has influenced teachers’ understanding of the Prevent Duty. The study identified that the training that had been delivered focused on a safeguarding role. In this the training had been effective. However, the teachers interviewed had not considered how they may help build resilience to radicalisation in their pupils. There was a willingness to do this amongst those interviewed but it was apparent that there was uncertainty about how to do this. A skills gap was identified and the study suggests that there is further training needed to increase teachers’ ability and confidence in this area.
**Introduction**

In February 2015, Shamima Begum, Kadiza Sultana, and another schoolgirl, from Bethnal Green Academy School in London, travelled to Syria to join the Islamic State. They were just 15 and 16 years old. They were not the first school children to have become radicalised and to have gone to Syria and they would not be the last. The Prime Minister, David Cameron said in response to this incident that the Police and Security Services could not tackle this threat alone. He made clear the Government’s belief that society as a whole needed to work together to tackle the problem of extremism and radicalisation. He said, ‘It needs every school, every university, every college, every community, to recognize they have a role to play’ (Evans, 2015). The Prime Minister was suggesting that communities need to work together to prevent people from becoming radicalised and in particular educational establishments. The current threat of young people being radicalised would appear to be significant with over 700 United Kingdom nationals believed to have travelled to Syria (BBC, 2015).

The Government of the United Kingdom has had a Prevent Strategy since 2006, designed to counter the threat of people being radicalised and drawn into terrorism. However, in 2011 the Strategy was revised as the Government felt it needed to have more focus and a more cohesive approach. It also recognized that whilst there is no profile of a terrorist, young people are particularly at risk of being radicalised. The revised Strategy focuses on encouraging professionals in many fields to see preventing people being drawn into terrorism as a safeguarding role (Home Office, 2011).

Legislation has been introduced in the form of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to provide a legal Duty on specified authorities to have ‘due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’ when exercising their functions. The specified authorities are many but include, Local Authorities, Police, Prisons, Schools, Colleges and Universities. The idea is that these authorities identify concerns whilst conducting their normal functions and refer individuals for support.

This study will look at the Prevent Duty introduced by the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and how schools and teaching staff understand the role they have in relation to this new Duty. In the literature review the study will look at the current threats in relation to extremism and how people are being radicalised. It will look at the Prevent Strategy, its stated aims and how it is designed to achieve these aims. Finally, it will examine some of the reasons why the Prevent Duty has been enshrined in legislation and it will also look at some of the criticism there has been of the Prevent Strategy and where this criticism has come from.

The study will then look at one school in Oxfordshire and the knowledge and training staff have in relation to the new Prevent Duty. Through interviews with four staff at this school it will establish what training they have had in respect of Prevent. It will look at what knowledge staff had of the Prevent agenda prior to this training and what their understanding is of the Prevent Duty and the role this gives them. It will also explore if teaching staff feel that they should be discussing such topics as terrorism, extremism and radicalisation with their pupils and if so, whether or not they would be confident to teach these subjects. These are complex areas but according to authors such as Alison Jamieson and Jane Flint (2015), children and adults are hearing these terms frequently in the media with only a vague understanding of their meaning. Finally, through an interview with a Police Officer working in Prevent, the study will take a broader look at how the new Duty is perceived to be being accepted by schools. It will examine what, in the opinion of a Prevent practitioner, schools still need to do to help tackle extremism and better protect their pupils from being radicalised.
Literature Review

Definitions

The terms radicalisation, extremism and terrorism get used frequently in the media, but it is important to understand what they mean. This proves somewhat problematic when considering the term terrorism, as there is no internationally agreed definition of what constitutes a terrorist or terrorist organisation. Part of the issue here is that what one country may perceive as a terrorist group, may not be considered so by another country and may well depend on the political situation at the time (Townshend, 2002). For instance, currently in Syria the United Kingdom is working closely with Kurdish groups who are fighting Islamic State. However, Turkey, a NATO ally of the United Kingdom, would view many of these groups as terrorist organisations and is currently bombing Kurdish territory (BBC, 2015a).

There are many such examples of how one country can take a different view to another based on its own national interests. This is what causes such difficulty in determining a universally accepted definition of what an act of terror is, as countries cannot agree to distinguish what constitutes a terrorist act and what is considered legitimate struggle for self-determination (Jamieson and Flint, 2015). For the purpose of this study, when referring to terrorism, the definition used will be that of the Terrorism Act 2000,

‘…the use or threat of action made for the purpose of advancing political, religious, racial or ideological cause where the use or threat is designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation or to intimidate the public or a certain section of the public…(Terrorism Act 2000)’.

Extremism is a word that is again open to interpretation. What one person considers an extreme view, may not be considered so by someone else. The fact that a person holds an extreme view does not in itself mean that they will support or commit acts of violence, but it does suggest that they hold an opinion which is at odds with the majority of people within society (Jamieson and Flint, 2015). The definition of extremism according to the Government's Prevent Strategy is,

‘…vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces’ (Home Office, 2011).

The Prevent Strategy suggests that being drawn into terrorism includes non-violent extremism, as well as violent extremism, as this can create an atmosphere which can popularise views that can be exploited by terrorists (Home Office, 2011).

It is widely accepted amongst many academic authors that radicalisation is a process and that in order for an individual to become radicalised they must first have a perceived grievance, a feeling of injustice or feel isolated from society (Richardson, 2007 and English, 2009). The Prevent Strategy defines radicalisation as being ‘the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism’ (Home Office, 2011).

Current Threat

The threat from international terrorism has arguably never been greater with high profile attacks in Tunisia, Egypt, Paris and Belgium, which have left hundreds dead. According to the Security Service MI5 (2015), the majority of terrorist attacks planned to be carried out in the United Kingdom have been the result of plots by British residents.

There has been a significant increase in Islamist extremism across the world in recent years. The vacuum left by the collapse of states such as Libya and conflicts in Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan, have proven to be breeding grounds for support for extremist groups such as Al
Qaeda, Al Shabaab, Boko Haram and the Taliban. However, the civil war in Syria and the rise of Islamic State, or Daesh as they are now referred to, has arguably seen the emergence of the biggest threat to the West. Unlike previous groups, Daesh has significant resources at its disposal and has captured huge swathes of territory. In addition, its use of social media and the internet to publicise its cause has attracted significant numbers of foreign fighters. These fighters may return to their home nations indoctrinated with an extreme Islamist ideology and intent on carrying out violent attacks (Saltman and Winter, 2014).

The involvement of the United Kingdom in the conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and now Syria has been argued by some, such as Dame Stella Rimington, the former Head of MI5, to be a catalyst for the radicalisation of some Muslims resident in the United Kingdom (Norton-Taylor, 2008). Others such as the former Prime Minister, Tony Blair, would argue that Islamic extremism would still exist regardless of foreign policy decisions (BBC, 2011). However, it is clear that Islamist extremists will use the actions of Western Governments to further their own narrative. They try to use Western military involvement in conflicts in the Muslim world to their advantage by radicalising and recruiting Muslims within the United Kingdom (Engage, 2008). This can be seen in terrorist acts such as that of Michael Adebolajo, one of the two men convicted of the Lee Rigby murder. He has claimed his attack was as a direct result of British foreign policy. The attack, he says, was revenge for the death of Muslims at the hands of British soldiers (Dodd and Halliday, 2013).

Another consequence of the conflicts in countries such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan is the refugee crisis this has caused. There had already been an increasing number of migrants coming to Europe and the United Kingdom prior to these conflicts. However, the Syrian civil war has seen the numbers of migrants coming to Europe at record levels. The summer of 2015 saw the largest migration of people across Europe since the Second World War. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2015) has said that Europe will have received over 1 million asylum applications in 2015 and this is likely to increase in 2016. There have been tragic images in the media of children and families drowning whilst trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea, such as the graphic pictures of the body of three year old Aylan Kurdi washed up on a Turkish beach (Withnall, 2015). Yet the huge number of refugees has caused political unrest in many European countries with some, such as Hungary, closing their borders and erecting security fences. There have been protests in some countries in response to concerns about the Islamisation of Europe and an increase in support for far right groups such as Pegida (Porter, 2015).

Recently the English Defence League has come to the fore as well as groups such as Britain First. These groups argue against what they claim is the Islamisation of the United Kingdom. The risk with these groups is that they can act as a catalyst for the radicalisation of individuals towards violent extremism. The Metropolitan Police have reportedly seen the number of anti-Islamic incidents triple in the wake of the November 2015 Paris attacks (Townsend, 2015). The danger is that as the migration crisis continues more extreme groups will recruit and radicalise vulnerable individuals. They may exploit perceived grievances over migrants getting priority over jobs or housing and encourage violent attacks on Muslim communities or refugees (Mulhall and Lowles, 2015). There is a clear risk of such groups becoming a recruiting ground for more violent extremists. ‘Islamophobia’ also no longer appears to be confined to marginal groups or individuals in the political arena. Donald Trump has said that the United States should stop all Muslims from entering the Country. Such language from someone who was then a potential candidate for the Presidency can be seen to be encouraging anti-Islamic sentiment and potentially creating an environment ripe for radicalisation by both Islamist and far right recruiters (Talev, 2015).

Radicalisation of Young People

Groups’. This report highlighted that there is increasing evidence that terrorist groups are targeting and recruiting school-aged youths. The report identified that 23 of 42 groups designated as Foreign Terrorist Organisations, actively utilised children in their terror groups. The report also noted that these groups prey upon vulnerabilities in young people and offer them incentives. It identified that in many areas of the world, terrorist groups will use schools themselves to radicalise and recruit young people such as in Gaza, where Hamas has control of the school system and has used schools to promote its message of struggle and conflict with Israel.

The Homeland Security Institute (2009) report recognised that the internet is a significant resource which terrorists can use to get their propaganda across to a mass audience. According to the report, in 2009 there were almost 7 000 known terrorist websites and this number is constantly increasing. The internet provides an ideal means of communication for those who wish to radicalise and young people can be particularly vulnerable. In October 2015 a 15 year old British boy was sentenced to life in prison for inciting another boy in Australia to carry out a terrorist attack. The boy himself had become radicalised online and had then, via the internet, encouraged an Australian boy to carry out a terror attack which was to involve beheading a Police Officer (Connors, 2015).

The importance of children to terrorist groups can be seen in Syria. In Raqqa, Daesh has reportedly set up training camps for children from as young as five, where they are taught to use weapons and practise beheadings with dolls (Dearden, 2015). Children’s brains are often described as being like a sponge as they absorb the information that they are given. As the psychologist Albert Bandura (1977) stated in his Social Learning Theory, children will learn from the environment they are exposed to and from what they observe. This makes them an attractive proposition for radicalisers.

The Prevent Strategy

The Prevent Strategy has existed since 2006 and was designed to counter the threat of ‘home grown’ terror plots. That is to say terrorist acts perpetrated by British residents who have become radicalised. The aim of Prevent was ‘to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremists’ (HM Government, 2008 and Richards, 2012). However, the Strategy attracted a lot of criticism and was mistrusted by many, particularly those within Muslim communities. Prevent was criticised in 2010 for wasting money on community projects which were doing little to further its objectives and which had questionable value. It was also seen by many within Muslim communities as a tool for spying on their activities (Murray, 2010). As a result, the Strategy was reviewed and in 2011 a revised Strategy document was published. The revised Strategy set out three clear aims and these were to respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism, to prevent people being drawn into terrorism and to work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation. It also recognised that young people in particular are at risk of being radicalised and it identified education as a priority area for its work. Additionally the Strategy promised more stringent monitoring and evaluation of Prevent work (Home Office, 2011 and Richards, 2012).

In 2014 concerns were raised in relation to schools that were said to be failing to safeguard their pupils and leaving them vulnerable to radicalisation. The Ofsted inspection into the Park View School in Birmingham identified a number of serious concerns in relation to the safety of pupils and inadequate leadership and management. The report found that children were not being taught how to use the internet safely and were not being given adequate awareness of the dangers of extremism and that there was little promotion of equality of opportunity (Ofsted, 2014).

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a legal Duty on a wide range of professionals to have ‘due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.’ This includes staff working in schools and is designed to be an extension of their existing safeguarding duties such as protecting children from neglect, sexual exploitation and
drugs. According to the Department for Education (2015), in order to fulfil this Duty, staff must be able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do when they do identify them. In addition, they should look to build their pupils’ resilience to radicalisation. It suggests that this should be done by promoting a safe environment for pupils to discuss the risks associated with terrorism and challenge extremist ideas.

The Government’s desire to encourage schools to focus on the risk of radicalisation is understandable given incidents such as that of Shamima Begum and Kadiza Sultana travelling to Syria to join Daesh. They have forced schools to deal with this issue by legislating for a Prevent Duty. However, Russel Hobby, the General Secretary of the Association of Head Teachers, has expressed his concern at the lack of training and expertise that teachers’ have in this area. He has also expressed his concern at the prospect of teachers feeling that they are being asked to spy on their pupils and how this could impact on the relationship they have with them (Williams, 2015).

Methodology

This study is an empirical study which examines the Prevent Duty introduced by the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. This is clearly a new piece of legislation and unsurprisingly there is very little existing research available on the subject. This study was designed to be an exploratory study which would look to identify key issues for teachers’ in respect of the Prevent Duty. This involved identifying a school to take part and then identifying members of staff to interview. According to Denscombe (2010) interviews are best suited to gaining an understanding of a participant’s emotions, feelings, experiences and opinions, particularly when it comes to exploring more complex subjects. Key to this study was eliciting from the participants the depth of their understanding of the complex issues around radicalisation and their role in preventing this. In order to validate the answers provided during the interviews with school staff, it was decided to interview a specialist Police Officer working in the area of Prevent. This was to get a broader perspective of how schools are adapting to the Prevent Duty across the region.

A consideration at the commencement of this study was that of bias and how to ensure those being interviewed were answering honestly. Denscombe (2010) describes the interviewer effect as being when those interviewed respond differently due to their perception of the person interviewing them. In this study the researcher’s role as a Police Officer could be seen to be a significant potential barrier to eliciting completely honest answers to the questions posed. It was, therefore, made clear to participants in a verbal briefing that this study was not directly connected to the researcher’s role and that the interviewer was acting in the capacity of a student studying for an academic qualification. However, bias in the answers has to be a consideration as some of the participants may have felt they needed to answer questions a certain way in order to please the interviewer.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed and after analysis a number of themes were identified from them. A criticism often levelled at qualitative research is that it lacks scholarly rigour. Gioia et al (2012) argue that in order to demonstrate academic rigour when presenting qualitative data, a framework should be used which demonstrates first order concepts from the answers of those who were interviewed. This involves analysing the data and identifying categories from the answers given. These concepts are then refined and revised into a number of second order themes.
Table 1: Qualitative data analysis from subject interviews with teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Order Concepts</th>
<th>2nd Order Themes</th>
<th>Aggregate Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Not heard of Prevent prior to training.</td>
<td>Previous Knowledge of Prevent</td>
<td>Training/media portrayal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not aware until training.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It’s very new.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It’s things you see on the news.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You see it in areas that are a lot more Muslim-based areas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Families of Muslim communities moving across to Syria.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I am quite aware of it as my father was part of the Prevent team.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If you don’t pick something up or don’t do anything and something happens, that’s your responsibility.</td>
<td>Understanding of Role Within Prevent Duty</td>
<td>Basic understanding: understanding mainly in relation to safeguarding role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I do have a responsibility and if these things are happening then I need to report it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prevention of any criminal act is something I am keen to promote.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers are critical as they are frontline. They are in the best position to identify children’s behaviour changes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It could be a general vulnerability to crime or sexual exploitation but equally it could be extremism.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers need to be aware of how to have difficult conversations about extremism and terrorism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I think with regards to all of the things we have mentioned moral, spiritual social and cultural development of pupils’ things like this should be covered within that obligation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I don’t think they should be taught about that under that certain title.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I do think they should be educated about these sorts of things but it needs to be done in a way that is safe.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Kids are innocent. Terrorism, extremism and radicalisation are three words I never thought I would have to teach about.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I don’t think it’s just generally vulnerable people</td>
<td>Ability to perform role envisaged by the Prevent Duty</td>
<td>Further training need/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When you say vulnerable what does class as vulnerable?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To do an assembly on extremism/terrorism/radicalisation is something I wouldn’t do.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vulnerabilities could be very generic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• It’s difficult because if you give them too much information it could spur them on.
• With the right training
• The training online was good but it didn’t go in-depth enough.
• More interactive training
• What if I make the wrong call?
• It’s putting a lot of pressure on schools.
• Schools are fragmented and Local Authorities don’t have overall control anymore.
• I think schools need to be holding much more open debate.

This enables the analysis that has been done to be presented in a table which allows for scrutiny of the thought processes used by the researcher in arriving at the themes they have identified.

Previous Knowledge of the Prevent Strategy

Three of the four teaching staff interviewed had no prior knowledge of the Prevent Strategy. Teacher 2, who worked as a Student Manager, did have some knowledge but this was due to her father having worked for the Counter Terrorism Unit in a Prevent role. This is therefore unlikely to be representative of most teaching staff. It was clear from the answers that they gave that the other staff interviewed had no previous knowledge of Prevent when asked about their awareness prior to the training they had done.

‘No… I said I will be very honest with you until September… it’s 8 weeks old to us, so it is very new. Whether it has been around but… I was never really aware of it.’ (Teacher 1, 2015)

‘I wasn’t no. I am aware of items in the news. Families of Muslim communities moving across to Syria… that sort of thing going on, but no not specifically Prevent…’ (Teacher 3, 2015)

Until the Prevent Strategy was revised in 2011 the way resources were allocated was down to the size of the Muslim population of an area (Home Office, 2011). Although the staff interviewed indicated that they had no previous knowledge of Prevent, it may be that subconsciously the previous approach of the Prevent Strategy created an impression that extremism was an issue that predominantly affected Muslim communities. It could also be due to the fact the media coverage of extremism has predominantly been of Islamist extremists in recent years. This is perhaps reflected in some of the answers provided during the interviews.

‘No, it’s as I said you come from a predominantly, ninety five percent… white British school… You see it on the news but you see it in areas that are a lot more Muslim based area…’ (Teacher 1, 2015)

It is perhaps not surprising that those interviewed had no prior knowledge of Prevent given that their school is not in a Prevent priority location. Therefore, under the old Strategy it would have been an area that would have seen little attention from Prevent officers or related initiatives.

Understanding of Role within the Prevent Duty

The Department for Education (2015) has issued guidance to schools in which it defines the role that teachers have in respect of their Duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. This guidance makes it clear that staff need to be able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and need to know how to safeguard children, when they do identify concerns. The Prevent practitioner made clear his expectation of the role of teachers in
identifying and reporting concerns and how important a role they have to play in safeguarding their pupils.

‘Teachers are critical because they are frontline. They are the ones who know their pupils best. They are in the best position to actually identify children’s behaviour changes. So if they see something of concern they should flag that to their safeguarding lead…’ (Police 1, 2015)

All the teaching staff interviewed appeared to understand that the Duty requires them to perform a safeguarding role. This was in terms of identifying concerns about pupils being radicalised or displaying extremist views. They also understood that they had a duty to report concerns where they were identified and appeared to know who they would report these concerns to within the school.

‘…as a Teacher, I do have a responsibility and if these things are happening then I need to report it, so that we can prevent it…’ (Teacher 1, 2015)

‘If your alarm bells go you need to do something about it. For example when I did a bit of cover teaching… They had to draw a beach and then they had to label it and hand it in and one of them, it was after the Tunisian massacre, had dead people on the beach. So I just flagged that up straight away and I think she was spoken to but I don’t think it came to anything.’ (Teacher 4, 2015)

All the teaching staff interviewed appeared to be less sure about their role when it came to building resilience to radicalisation. This is perhaps not very surprising, as it was not an area covered in the training they received. Most of those interviewed did not appear to have considered that they had a role to play in this area until they were asked about it in the interview. They were all asked if they thought the requirement under the Education Act, (2002) to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils included educating pupils about the meaning of terms such as terrorism, extremism and radicalisation. The two qualified teachers in particular appeared the most uncertain and initially appeared reluctant.

‘No. In terms of what we see as SMSC, it’s very much to promote British values. British values, understanding cultures so for example Diwali this week… but for me to do an assembly on terrorism, extremism or radicalisation, is something that I wouldn’t do…’ (Teacher 1, 2015)

‘I don’t think they should be taught about that, under that certain title. I think maybe starting to stereotype…’ (Teacher 4, 2015)

As they thought about the question they did eventually appear to see some merit in the idea of teaching pupils about these topics. Indeed the Department for Education (2015) guidance specifically refers to ‘promoting fundamental British values’ as being about building pupils’ resilience to radicalisation. The other teaching staff displayed far less reluctance to discussing these topics with pupils. This in part may be because the qualified teachers were concerned about additional workload and this may be supported by some of the comments made.

‘I think teachers at the moment are overstretched. I think that there needs to be more pastoral roles available in schools that can support these types of interventions.’ (Teacher 2, 2015)

Eventually all those interviewed agreed that there was a need to speak to pupils about terms such as extremism, radicalisation and terrorism and that this should be done within schools. However, it was clear that there was some uncertainty about who was best placed to do this and exactly how it should be done.
Ability to Perform the Role Envisaged by the Prevent Duty

The training that the teaching staff undertook was an online training package that presented several case studies and looked at the concerns these studies identified, how these concerns should be dealt with and who they should be referred to. The package was designed to give a basic awareness of what may make an individual vulnerable to radicalisation. Richardson (2007) has argued that for an individual to become radicalised there needs to be a combination of disaffection, an enabling ideology and an enabling community. Those who are radicalised will often have existing vulnerabilities that are exploited by terrorists. In the interview with the Prevent practitioner he described what may make an individual vulnerable to radicalisation.

‘…So there would be an individual that was presenting with various vulnerabilities. …it could be educational issues. …it could be they are autistic; it could be mental health issues... So that young person traditionally would be susceptible to being influenced for various reasons, which could be sexual exploitation; drugs, crime and terrorism is no different.’ (Police 1, 2015)

The interviews identified that the teaching staff had a basic awareness of what may give cause for concern in their pupils. However, they also highlighted that their understanding of what may make someone vulnerable and, therefore, susceptible to being radicalised, was limited.

‘From the website, from where we looked on training, it's very much made it out that it is vulnerable people. I understand that, I can get it, but I don't think it's just generally vulnerable people...It can be an everyday person.’ (Teacher 1, 2015)

‘At times it could certainly be vulnerable students, but you see it all over the news, it could literally be anybody, and again that's the hardest part of the thing, thinking it could be anybody and how are you meant to identify these pupils…’ (Teacher 4, 2015)

As can be seen in the answers above, the interviews identified that teaching staff were not entirely clear on exactly what could make someone vulnerable. Therefore, there is perhaps a need for further training in this area to help them explore what vulnerabilities there are that could make someone susceptible to becoming radicalised.

When looking at the ability of those interviewed to build their pupils' resilience to radicalisation, it is clear that there was a general willingness to do this if required. They were asked if they would be prepared to discuss with their pupils terms such as extremism, radicalisation and terrorism. All those interviewed were willing but there was some uncertainty as to whether they had the knowledge to do it and also about exactly how to deliver it.

‘…if you have the right training and you do the right courses and you have the expertise to do it, but if you turned round to me today and said I want you to go and do an assembly... I have a basic understanding but to go beyond that, it wouldn’t happen.’ (Teacher 1, 2015)

‘I think I would. I do keep up with the news and stuff… But again it's difficult because if you have got somebody who has potential to go down that line then you're giving them too much information about this stuff. It could almost spur them on, so it's a bit tricky...’ (Teacher 4, 2015)

When it comes to further training all those interviewed thought that there was a need for more in-depth training. All the participants stated that it would be useful to have some more interactive, face to face training with a subject matter expert.
Although we have done the online training with a limited amount of scenarios… it will be useful to do some sort of role playing or whatever to get somebody… to dispel the myths.’ (Teacher 3, 2015)

‘I think maybe outside people coming in and doing actual talks, maybe interactive stuff. Maybe working in groups and having certain situations put to you and sharing ideas with a group, rather than being told, this is what you should do…’ (Teacher 4, 2015)

There did not appear to be any concern voiced about being perceived to be spying on pupils. However, staff did appear to be worried about the impact an overreaction could have on both them and the pupil concerned.

‘… It’s definitely made me aware but then at the same time it’s also like, what if I make that wrong call…’ (Teacher 1, 2015)

‘So do you doubt anything that you see and raise a concern immediately in relation to counter terrorism… what if I report something and it turns out not to be true…’ (Teacher 3, 2015)

In order to get a broader perspective of the position within schools more generally, the Prevent Officer was asked what impact the new Duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 was having on schools in the region. It appears clear from his answer that many schools are still uncertain what the Duty means for them and what training they should be providing for their staff.

‘…we can see the early signs that it is putting a lot of pressure on schools… and they are struggling to work out a method of being effective in delivering Prevent requirements… Some of that is around the skills level of their teachers… Nationally they are probably feeling that some schools are not getting the support they need to do it, which is difficult because schools are now fragmented. …so it is much harder to have a cohesive support package put in place for these schools…’ (Police 1, 2015)

Recommendations for TVP and Subsequent Action

The study identified the need for further training for teachers in relation to Prevent and this was subsequently arranged and delivered across the district. However, the research also provided an opportunity to consider safeguarding work in schools more generally in areas such as child sexual exploitation, substance abuse and internet safety. Based on the responses from teachers it was clear that there was a willingness to do more, but a lack of subject knowledge in these areas. As a result schools in one area were approached, by the author, about forming a collaborative group to plan and coordinate safeguarding work across all schools and look at the training that was required for teachers. Other Professionals such as social workers, drug workers and those with specialist knowledge were invited to join the group which was named Safeguarding Children in Banbury. This group then planned suitable content on key safeguarding themes for delivery across Primary and Secondary schools in the area. It has led to a much more coordinated approach to safeguarding work in schools. In addition, the group has planned and delivered training on key safeguarding themes to teachers who have then been able to deliver this content themselves. The group has subsequently been highlighted as good practice across Oxfordshire and the wider Thames Valley.

Conclusion

Terrorist groups are increasingly looking to radicalise vulnerable young people in order to further their cause (Homeland Security Institute, 2009). The Government of the United Kingdom has responded to this threat by introducing a legal Duty on schools and others to have ‘due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’ under the Counter
In addition, when it comes to the teaching profession, there is an expectation that schools look to build the resilience of their pupils by developing their critical thinking skills and creating a safe environment to discuss and challenge extremist narratives (Department for Education, 2015). However, some people such as Russel Hobby, the General Secretary of the Association of Head Teachers have stated that they feel schools have not been adequately supported in preparing for the new Duty and that teachers lack training and expertise in the area (Williams, 2015).

This study looked at four staff within one school in Oxfordshire. The interviews with staff were conducted in October 2015 shortly after the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 came into effect. The staff had received some online training which contained case studies designed to help them see the Duty as an extension of their existing safeguarding responsibilities. What was clear from the interviews was that the staff interviewed had no previous awareness of the Prevent Strategy. They were aware of terrorist incidents and extremism from the media but they had not previously thought about any role they may have in preventing radicalisation. Therefore, in terms of increasing awareness as the training was designed to do, it is clear that the training provided was effective.

There were a number of key issues for the teaching staff interviewed and some common themes identified during the study. Staff understood that they had a safeguarding role but displayed only a basic understanding of why a person may be vulnerable to radicalisation. All the teaching staff demonstrated a willingness to talk to their pupils or teach lessons on topics such as extremism, radicalisation and terrorism. However, there was uncertainty about exactly how this should be done and by whom. This perhaps highlights a lack of confidence when it comes to the subject matter and a need for increased knowledge and expertise amongst teachers. According to the Prevent Officer interviewed this appears to be reflected in most schools (Police 1, 2015). Certainly from the researcher’s perspective this study demonstrated a skills gap locally and a training requirement which needed to be addressed. Therefore, following this study, additional awareness training was provided to local schools.

According to the Department for Education (2014) there are around 24,000 schools and 438,000 teachers in England, who educate around 8.4 million students. Many of these schools are now academies or free schools beyond the direct control of Local Authorities. During this study it was suggested that the fragmented nature of schools could be impacting on the ability of Local Authorities to adequately coordinate training. This was beyond the scope of this research but it may be an area worth further exploration in a separate study.

In conclusion, training can be said to be effective at ensuring teachers understand the safeguarding role that they have in relation to the new Prevent Duty. Where training is provided teachers do demonstrate a willingness to undertake this safeguarding role, but are worried about over-reacting to concerns. There is, however, work still to do to ensure teachers feel confident to facilitate open discussion within schools on topics such as extremism and terrorism, so that they can build their pupils’ resilience to radicalisation. Further training should be provided to build on teacher-awareness and harness the apparent willingness that exists to perform this crucial role. The threat from terrorism is growing and terrorist groups are increasingly finding more sophisticated methods of radicalising and recruiting young people. Teachers can play a crucial role in ensuring young people have the critical thinking skills to recognise the dangers in some extremist rhetoric and are protected from those who may look to radicalise them. However, there appears to be a skills gap which needs to be addressed in order to help teachers perform this role with confidence.
References


Abstract

On average investigators spend three hours dealing with shoplifting suspects in custody when the full code test is already met prior to interview. Operation Retail has been used widely at Abingdon Custody since its implementation. Custody Sergeants have deemed the initiative to be eligible in 44% of cases where the suspect has been arrested and 35 suspects have been charged without interview during the trial period, saving approximately 105 hours and £2,310. Feedback from investigating officers has been overwhelmingly positive.

All suspects have entered a guilty plea at the earliest opportunity despite not ever being interviewed except one individual who is awaiting trial in October. Fourteen individuals are currently imprisoned without ever being interviewed.

It is estimated that if implemented force wide, approximately 363 hours would be saved in the first month; resulting in £7,986 cost savings (£95,832 per annum). As demonstrated by the early guilty plea rate, not interviewing eligible suspects does not have a detrimental effect on successful prosecutions.

An implementation plan has been devised in anticipation of a force wide implementation prior to the end of the year.

Key words: shoplifting; theft; demand reduction; custody; interview

Introduction

On 1st July 2017 a two month trial period commenced at Abingdon Custody whereby suspects arrested for shoplifting would be charged without interview where the full code test was already met. Hampshire Constabulary and Surrey Police have recently adopted this process and this was agreed at CCMT in January 2017 as part of a wider demand reduction project. Concerns were raised specifically around not offering a suspect the opportunity to provide an account. This may have an impact on how we determine which court they should be sent to (not guilty anticipated court or guilty anticipated court) as we wouldn’t know what their likely plea would be without interviewing them.

Eligibility for not conducting an interview

- The custody Sergeant must authorise the use of the scheme having applied the full code test.
The suspect must not otherwise be eligible to receive a caution (this requires a PACE compliant interview to record admissions).

- There must not be offences other than shoplifting under investigation.
- The OIC must not be considering taking other offences into consideration (TICs) as this requires an interview.
- The suspect must be over 18.

In real terms, this means investigators should have sufficient quality CCTV and an identification statement. The custody Sergeant retains the right to request an interview if there are aggravating factors such as modern slavery concerns or exceptional circumstances that would deem an interview necessary. Operation Retail does not have any impact on any other custody procedure such as obtaining the suspect's fingerprints and DNA and does not affect their rights in custody. Suspects can still be remanded if this is deemed necessary.

Methodology

All prisoners at Abingdon Custody that were arrested for shoplifting were reviewed two months prior to the trial and whilst the trial was underway. Abingdon was chosen due to this being the closest custody suite to where the project team were based. A period of two months was chosen to balance the wish for a swift and wider implementation whilst also allowing for an effective review. Each disposal decision rationale made by the custody Sergeant was scrutinised. Prior to the trial, this entry was used to understand whether the prisoner would have been eligible under Operation Retail to be charged without interview. A period in the Summer of 2017 was selected to avoid the annual shoplifting increase during the Christmas period. Guidance was sent to custody Sergeants and a single point of contact (SPOC) was identified to share good working practice and development opportunities.

Custody records were also reviewed to establish the time between investigating officers being ready to interview and receiving a disposal decision, therefore providing an estimated time to allow for solicitors to arrive, disclosure, interviews and waiting for a disposal decision from a custody sergeant. An average time has been used to estimate time savings however it should be noted that this time can often be quicker (less than an hour if the suspect does not request a solicitor and the OIC is able to get a disposal decision quicker) and sometimes much longer if officers are interviewing in pairs, wait a significant amount of time for solicitors and the suspect requires an interpreter for interview. A cost saving has been devised based upon the £22 per hour Police Constable ‘ready reckoner’ rate devised by the force and widely available on Knowzone. All described cost savings do not factor in the use of a cell, custody staff, legal aid costs, the use of interviewing facilities and equipment and overtime costs incurred requiring officers to remain on duty to interview in some cases. Custody records were scrutinised and custody sergeant’s decision making reviewed. Their disposal rationales were reviewed in detail to ensure the scheme was implemented accurately.

Investigating officers that have used Operation Retail have been asked to provide feedback for the purposes of this evaluation.

Trial Results

During the review period (four months), there were 160 shoplifting prisoners at Abingdon Custody. Through analysis of custody records and charging rationale, it is estimated that prior to the trial 36 prisoners would have been eligible under Operation Retail to not have been interviewed. On average in these 36 cases, officers spent 3 hours from when they informed the custody sergeant that they were ready to interview to receiving a disposal. This is the relevant
time used to calculate time savings during the trial. These time savings are conservative given that officers sometimes interview in pairs, custody records do not always accurately reflect the time officers are waiting for solicitors and this figure does not take into account time officers spend planning and preparing for such interviews.

A total of 35 individuals were deemed eligible under the scheme by custody Sergeants during the trial period.

Table 1: Number of prisoners and eligibility at Abingdon Custody with estimated and actual time and cost savings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recorded month</th>
<th>Number of prisoners</th>
<th>Number of those eligible for Op Retail</th>
<th>Time saving estimate</th>
<th>Cost saving estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May (pre-trial)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>26 (46%)</td>
<td>65 hours</td>
<td>£1,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June (pre-trial)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10 (40%)</td>
<td>35 hours</td>
<td>£770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20 (45%)</td>
<td>60 hours saved</td>
<td>£1,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15 (44%)</td>
<td>45 hours saved</td>
<td>£990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>71 (44%)</td>
<td>205 hours (105 hours actual)</td>
<td>£4,510 (£2,310 actual)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All shoplifting cases were reviewed to understand whether opportunities had been missed and whether Operation Retail had been misused.

Figure 1: Chart showing use of Operation Retail and disposals of shoplifting cases

OPERATION RETAIL
A suspect was arrested and the custody Sergeant was satisfied that they were eligible to be charged under Operation Retail. The custody Sergeant charged the suspect within 15 minutes, allowing officers and custody staff to focus their attention on cases involving threat, harm and risk.

BEFORE OPERATION RETAIL
Two officers spent 7 hours waiting for a solicitor and an interpreter before interviewing a suspect when they would have been charged regardless of their account in interview.
Force wide results

Operation Retail was implemented across the force in phases to ensure a close review. The results are shown below in figure 3.

There was evidence of custody Sergeants deciding to interview and not apply this process based upon modern slavery vulnerability concerns. There was not any identified misuse of the scheme however part way through the implementation phase, a new Niche template needed to be devised to ensure that decision makers consistently applied the same process as there were examples where officers had reviewed CCTV and not the custody sergeants. Similarly there were increased concerns raised around missing modern slavery and so the template added this as an additional reminder.

Table 2: Force wide implementation results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Custody</th>
<th>Total number of shoplifting prisoners</th>
<th>Op Retail prisoners</th>
<th>Conviction rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aylesbury</td>
<td>33 (implemented 15 September)</td>
<td>15 (45%)</td>
<td>100% (100% early guilty plea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abingdon</td>
<td>162 (imp. 1 July)</td>
<td>68 (42%)</td>
<td>100% (96% early guilty plea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loddon Valley</td>
<td>12 (imp. 15 November)</td>
<td>5 (41%)</td>
<td>100% (100% early guilty plea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newbury</td>
<td>3 (imp. 15 November)</td>
<td>1 (33%)</td>
<td>100% (100% early guilty plea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maidenhead</td>
<td>38 (imp. 15 October)</td>
<td>12 (31%)</td>
<td>100% (91% early guilty plea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton Keynes</td>
<td>91 (imp. 15 September)</td>
<td>25 (27%)</td>
<td>100% (100% early guilty plea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Wycombe</td>
<td>26 (imp. 15 October)</td>
<td>7 (26%)</td>
<td>100% (100% early guilty plea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banbury</td>
<td>28 (imp. 15 September)</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>100% (100% early guilty plea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>393</strong></td>
<td><strong>136 (34%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>100% (98% early guilty plea average)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total estimated time saving since implementation: 408 hours (based on 3 hour average)

Total estimated cost saving since implementation: £8,976 (based on PC hourly cost)

Feedback

“I thought that the process worked really well. It made it remarkably simple and saved lots of time waiting for solicitors”

*PC – Investigation Hub Team 3 - Oxford*

“It saves so much time. It is efficient and time effective and I had no issues at all. My experience was a prolific shoplifter who openly admitted the offence and went guilty at court. An interview would have been unnecessary”

*PC – Investigation Hub Team 1 – Oxford*

“It allowed me to start the file straight away rather than going through the interview process which can take hours. I didn’t have any issues with the case file or later with CPS”

*Designated investigator – Investigation Hub Team 1 - Oxford*
“It saved an enormous amount of time. I had two Romanian shoplifters which would have wanted solicitors and interpreters to interview when we already had enough evidence”

PC – Investigation Hub Team 5 – Oxford

Conclusion

Table 3 shows that 136 prisoners were charged without interview and 100% of these were convicted, 98% of which plead guilty at the earliest opportunity. The low usage at Banbury Custody remains under review. Not interviewing shoplifters where the full code test is already met does not have a detrimental effect on the outcome at court.
Responses of women to rape and the impact this has on the credibility of the allegation and subsequent investigation

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Abstract

This article will explore the commonly held assumption that, if a woman has been raped, she should be able to tell you about it and should have fought back. If she cannot provide detail, it couldn't have happened and is likely a false allegation.

Introduction

Assumption and critical incident are the foundations of this reflective writing. An assumption is defined as a thing that is accepted as true or as certain to happen, without proof (Oxford Living Dictionary, 2017). A critical incident is one that challenges your own assumptions or makes you think differently (McAteer et al, 2010). Human behaviour is governed by assumptions and beliefs, referred to as ‘Theory in Use’ in the Argyle Communication Cycle (Argyle, 1988) – what behaviour did I display, how did it uphold the commonly held assumptions and what were the outcomes?

In England and Wales 33,431 rapes were recorded in 2016 (Office for National Statistics, 2016). As a police officer with fifteen years’ service, I have been involved in numerous investigations of rape with varying outcomes. I am concerned that, when women report rape to the police, these allegations are not always believed by officers. This situation, that might well be subconscious, could impact on the investigation and ultimately the outcome. Commonly held assumptions are an underlying factor which needs to be addressed to protect against any future impact.

Critical Incident

I will explain, then later reflect on, my experience of an incident from my first year as an officer: A lady reported being raped by a male she did not want to name. Before engaging with her, I conducted secondary research. She had reported anti-social behaviour incidents and had been arrested for theft and criminal damage. Her photograph was on the police system, showing a dishevelled woman in her mid-50s, not what I thought a rape victim would look like. Upon visiting her I had already decided the rape allegation appeared false. She could tell me little about the incident thus confirming my assumptions. I noted what brief details there were, did not feel the need for a video recorded interview (VRI) as it would be a waste of time and forensic timescales had been surpassed. I reported my thoughts back to CID: that it had not happened, backed up by the lack of supporting evidence. Subsequently I became aware that her mental health had declined and she later committed suicide, not directly due to the rape but it was a contributory factor in the deterioration of her mental health. After her death, I found that she had indeed been raped and it was her trauma which had triggered her behaviour, which in turn was a cry for help.
How did this assumption arise and what consequences did it have?

The incident, which has been critical in how I now practise, left many questions. What should a rape victim look like? How should a rape victim react? Was my response wrong and if so why? I was caught in a culture of stereotyping, expecting people to react in a certain way. A lack of knowledge of the subject’s wider issues, together with the seemingly relieved response by CID, led me to consider and reflect upon my professional competence.

The commonly held assumption that, if a woman has been raped she should be able to tell you about it and should have fought back, is evident within the police. I am aware of other factors linked to this assumption, including stereotyping relating to location, dress, occupation and age, which undoubtedly link to the subconscious assumptions held by investigating officers.

Culture is defined as the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time (Cambridge Dictionary, 2017). I know there is a culture within the police but see this as both positive and negative. The family element, looking out for each other and team work is vital. However, this fostering of group loyalty can be to the detriment of an officer’s duty (Hall 2002). Socialisation within the force, which strengthens the bond and thought processes, can make the independent decision maker vulnerable. The erosion theory – with constant exposure to the lower aspects of society it becomes easier to accept criminal behaviour and easier to justify shortcuts (Delattre, 1996), would impact on more experienced officers who tutor their newer colleagues. Acceptance of the assumption made me one of the lads, a team player, a good officer; possibly more important to me as the only female officer on the team who subconsciously assimilated into the environment.

Unconscious bias is defined as your background, personal experiences, societal stereotypes and cultural context can have an impact on your decisions and actions without you realising. Implicit or unconscious bias happens by our brains making incredibly quick judgements and assessments of people without us realising (Equality Challenge Unit, 2017). The issue of unconscious bias is that it doesn’t allow you to stop and think about the impact on others – my thoughts that the victim, in her 50s, very vague, not attentive, attention seeking, contributed to her not feeling supported enough to disclose. The limitations of this bias are obvious, being aware you have bias is not so obvious. ‘Unconscious bias is the enemy of diversity’ and ‘there is a fine line between logic and divisive stereotyping’ (Jeffery, 2014) – this is true and a line I crossed to the detriment of a thorough investigation and justice for the victim.

My response, lack of independent thinking and knowledge meant I was not prepared for the victim being unable to articulate what happened during the assault. Her inability to answer my questions prompted my uncertainty and called into question the legitimacy of the claim. My lack of knowledge allowed me to embed the assumption. The underpinning knowledge I thought I had was a preconceived opinion formed through culture and bias, that women will fight if being assaulted or raped and tell you all about it; an opinion held by many (Allison and Wrightsman, 1993). However, because of the way in which the human brain works, some people might fight whereas others might freeze to protect themselves and survive the attack (Levine, 1997). Whether someone fights or freezes is beyond their conscious control and is governed by the part of the brain associated with threat detection, the amygdala (LeDoux, 1996). Unfortunately, the former belief seems to prevail in the police force; resulting in stereotyping.

The victim may have the same preconceived idea, therefore not understand their response, resulting in self-blame. Not only does our response to the victim have a bearing on the case but also on the recovery for that victim as our bias is transferred in some way to them, increasing confirmation bias. Investigating professionals need to step back from judgement and into psychology, not just of the victim but of themselves, as I have learnt to do.
Decision making

To reflect upon an incident, I need to understand my decision making. Within the police the National Decision Making Model (NDM) is used (College of Policing, 2013). It is a tool for ensuring a situation is worked through methodically, with the code of ethics at its heart.

I use this model every day but now reflect upon my decision making with the victim in this case and know that I put up a barrier to this model to facilitate my mindset. I chose to gather only the information which supported my assumption: confirmation bias at work. Confirmation bias is defined as the tendency to search for, interpret, favour and recall information in a way which confirms one’s pre-existing beliefs or hypotheses (Plous, 1993).

I could only work with such information which meant the action taken would be minimal, again confirmation of my hypothesis that the allegation was false. I did not go back around the wheel, as I should have, to gain further information. I entered the situation with my conclusion determined; no objectivity demonstrated.

The ladder of inference (Argyris, 1990) is a model which links my decision making detailed through the NDM to the reflective practice adopted as a result. You are always going to draw meaning, inferences and conclusions based on your past experience. 'It would be an inefficient, tedious way to live, but you can improve your communications through reflection, and by using the ladder of inference in three ways' (Senge, 1994):

Becoming more aware of your own thinking and reasoning (reflection);
Making your thinking and reasoning more visible to others (advocacy);
Inquiring into others' thinking and reasoning (inquiry).

Figure 1: Table showing my decision making and the reflection which followed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ladder steps</th>
<th>My decisions</th>
<th>After reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reality and facts</td>
<td>Report from a lady alleging she had been raped by a male she did not name. Her name and address given.</td>
<td>Report from a lady alleging she had been raped by a male she did not name. Her name and address given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected reality</td>
<td>Secondary research showed she was known to police, bit of a nuisance, mid 50s, quite dishevelled, come to police attention quite a bit in recent weeks. Lives on a problematic estate.</td>
<td>Research showed a lady in her 50s, who has only come to police attention within the last few weeks having lived in the area for many years. Worked full time as a manger until recently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpreted reality</td>
<td>Living on that estate, looking like she does, been a nuisance calling police over several matters recently, most likely attention seeking and rape hasn’t happened. Mention her name and officers raise eyebrows and are dismissive.</td>
<td>Lady, until recently, not known to police, behaviour has changed, trigger for this change unknown. Had a well-paid job now resigned from, why make a false allegation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>False allegation, she is in a state, not that presentable, life going off the rails, very vague, bit of a pain, be good if this can be concluded swiftly.</td>
<td>Vulnerable, escalating behaviour, something must have triggered it, doesn’t make sense that she has changed so much. She is a professional woman so should be able to articulate what has happened, what is stopping her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>It hasn’t happened, as she cannot detail it, therefore no evidence.</td>
<td>She needs time, careful management. The rape may have been the trigger to the other issues as a cry for help, not knowing how to express herself. This may be a long and protracted investigation but she needs understanding and reassurance, where she lives and how she looks does not matter at all.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Beliefs | I am right, as were the other officers, it hasn’t happened. | She is vulnerable and needs to be treated with care. She is a victim of a serious crime, I want to help her and protect her from further trauma.

Actions | Attend, see if she has anything more to tell me, if not then no point in a VRI, STO (specially trained officer), see CID with a view to getting the job filed after their review. | Initial visit, consider forensic opportunities, scene. Where does she feel most comfortable? A VRI may be the best approach. Gentle questioning, possibly around the other incidents and work towards discussing the rape. What support does she have – an ISVA (independent sexual violence advisor). STO may be needed. CID informed. An investigation is commenced.

The initial information remains the same, however the approach taken makes a significant impact on the outcome. My approach ended in no investigation, but reflection gives a deeper understanding, looking at the bigger picture and is far more professional. My beliefs effected what information I selected to use, which caused me to jump to a conclusion. Now, with greater experience and understanding, I would ensure that each step is fully explored before making a decision. The ladder of inference has evidenced that my cognitive heuristics allowed wider attitudes, stereotypes and beliefs to enter my judgments and decisions. A rape case which conforms to ideas of ‘real rape’ (Estrich, 1987), has a better chance of getting to court due to officer and decision maker’s support, whereas a case in which the complainant does not fit the idea of ‘real rape’ (Estrich, 1987) is less likely to pass even the initial hurdles. If not addressed, a self-perpetuating cycle is set in motion that sustains the influence of rape assumptions and gender stereotypes. (Munro and Kelly, 2009).

Reflection

Reflection is defined in several ways; I personally relate to the following:

‘Reflection is different from simply recalling an event, or even discussing a day at work with a colleague. The benefits of reflective practise are many and varied. It can lead to an analysis of actions in such a way that it can become evident how things might have been done differently, or equally the recognition that things are done well and should be repeated’. (Hogston and Simpson 1999).

‘A process of looking back on what has been done and pondering on it and learning lessons from what did or did not work . . . The act of deliberation, when the practitioner consciously stops and thinks what shall I do now?’ (Conway, 1994).

Reflection has been a key part of my professional learning journey allowing me to unpick my decisions. I had an internal dialogue as I worked through the NDM again and again - the ‘if only’ questions started. I had not been thinking or acting independently but following the bias that I had absorbed - she did not fight back, provide details, doesn't look like someone who would be raped - this was what the cultural assumption had taught me. My initial response influenced the investigation, which was key to the eventual outcome.

Several models exist to aid reflection. For less experienced reflectors or in coaching others, these deal with reflection in stages until the participant feels comfortable and fluent with the concept. Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (Gibbs, 1988) is commonly used.

Reflective behaviour is regarded as a key aspect of continuing professional development, ensuring that practitioners constantly review their patterns of work (McMillan and Weyers, 2013). I have learned that reflection is an ongoing process: that through further experience,
age, knowledge and exposure I can reflect upon a situation and see another perspective. I see that continuing professional development is, or should be called, continuous professional reflection. It is through this development of self and others we can guard against assumptions in the future.

My critical incident, subsequent experience and reflection remains ongoing and is a powerful attribute, allowing me to evolve into a reflective practitioner – I am more self-aware and have learnt to critically evaluate to progress. A reflective practitioner is described by Donald Schon and applies to me as a police officer ‘... indeed practitioners themselves often reveal a capacity for reflection on their intuitive knowing in the midst of action and sometimes use this capacity to cope with the unique, uncertain, and conflicted situations of practice’. (Schon, 1983).

I am a caring, empathetic individual who wants to do the right thing, using reflection to improve both personally and professionally. Through unpicking my decision-making, I realise that all my values and morals were there and still are. I was imbued with the organisational culture, working practise and lack of knowledge and understanding of victims’ trauma. ‘Maybe reflective practices offer us a way of trying to make sense of the uncertainty in our workplaces and the courage to work competently and ethically at the edge of order and chaos...’ (Ghaye, 2000). My reflective practice has aided my continuous professional development and made me more competent.

In general, reflective practice is understood as the process of learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and/or practice (Boud, Keogh and Walker, 1985). This has now become part of my journey to examine assumptions of everyday practice, mulling them over as part of life-long learning.

My reflective practice has given me my professional identity, defined as ‘one’s professional self-concept based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences’ (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). I have a greater understanding of how I formulate my decisions, what influences them, the science behind them and the impact they have. I am self-aware and can critically evaluate my decisions which has had a positive impact on my investigative skills as well as my professional advancement.

**Conclusion**

I started with the assumption that if a woman has been raped, she should be able to tell you about it. If she can’t provide detail, it couldn’t have happened, it is likely to be a false allegation. There are numerous factors that impact on a victim’s response to an attack, her ability to lay down memory of it and later recall detail. As investigators/practitioners we need to ensure we are not being led through pre-judgemental traits, organisational culture, stereotyping or indeed assumption.

My enquiring mind and wish to help others is the foundation on which my reflective practice, modifying my behaviour and my professional identity, can be laid. I started with a confusion of models, not knowing how they could help, how I should read these into my actions. I have concluded that you find your own method of travel to take you on your journey; the road less travelled is often the most enriching for me.

Reflection is not just about me but about understanding the influences around me and models perhaps help that process. “Let us not forget that the model is a tool, not a mirror.” (Gordon, 1984).

This article was initially written as a degree course submission. There have been a number of formative cases through my career; ones that I reflect on again and again and continue to re-examine in light of my developing experiences. This is one of those cases. While this article applies a level of academic rigour to my reflections I have always tried to apply a learning
mindset throughout my policing practice. Just as my own attitude towards rape investigations has developed over the last sixteen years, so has the whole of British policing. There is still much to be done, but in writing this article I hoped to make a personal contribution to the development of this critical area of policing.
References


Discussion piece: How Operation Buffer has increased the police’s understanding of Child Drug Running Networks in Oxford

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Abstract
This discussion piece describes the approach taken by a team of officers in Oxford to the issue of Child Drug Exploitation (CDE). The article identifies the importance of professional curiosity in identifying the issue and explains the initial approach taken. In particular, the article focuses on the use of a technology company called Safeguarding Analytics who carried out Social Network Analysis (SNA) using data from the police and partners to identify the children involved and the priorities for investigation of those cases. The article recommends applying a definition of CDE, advocates the importance of engagement with young people and, crucially, their families and highlights the benefits of using SNA in understanding the complex social networks inhabited by young people. The discussion also identifies the value of using Child Abduction Warning Notices as a method of disruption. The article concludes by re-stating the importance of a partnership approach to deal with this form of exploitation of children.

The Importance of Professional Curiosity
Two years on from Operation Buffer what have we learned about the child drug running networks in Oxford? Firstly the scale and nature of the child running activity was not immediately apparent to police and partners in 2016 as it is 2018. That is because Child Drug Exploitation (CDE) involves elements hidden to professionals and immediate family members including the use of force/enticement-based methods of compliance and is frequently accompanied by violence or threats of violence. It is important to recognise that a child or young person’s pathway into drug running does not always start out as a negative experience, with positive benefits being attached to the activity such as earning large sums of money, staying in hotels, gaining greater peer recognition and having adult role models. In one particular case a Snap chat image seen in the early phase of Buffer showed two young people smiling into the camera in a hotel room with boxes of sports shoes, bags of clothing and cash strewn across the room. These perceived positive incentives are meant to inspire loyalty on behalf of the drug dealer and give the child or young person no motivation to see the behaviour in a negative light or a desire to inform their families or professionals of their activities.

While this activity is taking place, the child or young person is often in the early stages of being exploited. School attendance remains high, no missing episodes (key police indicator) are reported, nor do immediate family members see any outbursts or overt behavioural changes. Crucially the child or young person does not take cocaine or cannabis meaning no physical indicators of substance misuse is seen. It is only when the overnight missing episodes begin, school expulsion takes place due to aggressive behaviour or when the child or young person is found wandering late into the evening in areas that are not close to their home address, that police and social care involvement takes place. It is at this point that child or young person presents key challenges for police and social care as often there are no disclosures made by
the child to prompt further professional action. Arguably this is because the child or young person has been drug running for some time, has established links and relationships with drug dealers and fellow runners that is hard to break away from.

The question is how did we become aware of the problem if it was hidden? Confirmation that the activity was taking place initially came from a young person who was experiencing the negative effects of drug running. The young person informed his mother that he had been beaten while returning home from school, he was unwilling to tell her how he obtained his injuries and the person who inflicted them upon him. The young person confirmed that he had initially been running cannabis at school and was earning an average of £100 week. He disclosed that over a period of some months, he moved to running cocaine and confirmed that force had been used as means of ensuring on-going control especially when he stated he did not want to sell to mothers when he was dealing on the street. The young person’s mother contacted the police, where a police investigation was instigated and social care secured a placement for the child out of the County. The immediate safeguarding measures were successful. A key limitation the investigator faced was that the young person would not speak to police and social care, making identification of the offender difficult. He simply would not tell his family or police the identity of the male. Without his disclosure and with no corroborating evidence, it would have been reasonable to submit information to the intelligence team and file the case as an undetected crime. The professional curiosity of the investigator and their Sergeant ensured that efforts to continued to identify the unknown male. From speaking to the child’s associates and analysing NICHE records the suspect was identified and it was confirmed he had well established links to a known local Organised Crime Group. Information from the Schools Officer identified the young person was not only one who was possibly running drugs and the activity may have extended to other young people in his school. This raised the possibility that Oxford Organised Crime Groups (OCG) were mirroring the behaviours of other County lines in London and Birmingham by using children as a mechanism to extend their drug dealing activities in and out of cities. It was the decision of the young person’s mother to report to the police and the professional curiosity of the investigator and the School’s Officer that led to identification of the problem.

**Operation Buffer**

The consequences of failing to explore these concerns would have had significant implications for the police if they had not been acted upon. A key decision was to attach resources early to address the problem in order to fully understand its scale and nature. An Inspector, a Sergeant and three Constables were attached in order to co-ordinate the initial and disruptive response called Operation Buffer.

The team faced a number of challenges, the principal one being that child drug exploitation did not have a definition and there was very little academic research or case studies that could be drawn upon to use as best practice. Furthermore, the team had very little experience in this area and at an operational level, there were very few examples of children being arrested with prominent Organised Crime Groups, with no internal policies in place on how best to proceed. Officers faced the dilemma: should the children be treated as victims in the first instance or be dealt with entirely through active catch and convict methods? It was decided that each child the team identified as being involved in drug running would be best managed as victims. By managing children as victims ensured the focus was on the welfare of the child and secure social care involvement. This course of action proved successful later on in the process, as it was found that the local authority did not previously know some of the children.

Initially six children were suspected of running drugs and a number of attempts were made by the team to build rapport and trust with each child. While positive relationships were made with parents and older siblings, none of the children suspected of involvement would confirm their
connection with drug running. However, families did prove vital in confirming friendship networks. The one to one’s with the children’s mothers identified similar patterns of behaviour displayed by their children and confirmed the intelligence about the six children was accurate. Further confirmation came from the School’s Officer, who had been working with the secondary school on a programme of monitoring the children’s behaviours in the school. It was identified that each child was wearing multiple layers of clothing, were constantly on mobile phones and were openly displaying and talking about having access to cash and expensive trainers.

Work with the Local Authority proved vital as the team had very little knowledge of social care procedures and in the Operation’s early days a great deal of the time was allocated to creating child protection occurrences and completing national referral forms. A key decision was to request for a senior social care manager to oversee the management of the children ensuring that police had the same point of contact. This measure also brought consistency to the child management plans and ensured joint police and social care visits were pre-planned with professionals in each organisation working to the same plan. An added benefit was the social care manager was currently attached to the Kingfisher Team¹ and had a good understanding of the police as an organisation; she had also been present at the start of Operation Bullfinch² and had experience of managing hidden harm cases.

Joint police and social care visits to the parents often found that they had struggled for some time with parenting and were often lone parents. The work the team carried out with the parents proved extremely beneficial for fostering better relationships. It also ensured the parents attended and fully participated in multi-agency meetings. Later on, when the team wanted parents to provide statements to serve child abduction warning notices on drug dealers, they supported the process and welcomed the use of police disruption tactics and safeguarding activity. A key learning area for the team was being open and honest with parents and working with them throughout. This co-operative approach adopted by the team has continued into 2018.

Through the use of this strategy the team were able to confirm there were thirteen children involved in drug running and all were males living across the City. These children were possibly connected with two different and rival OCGs. Each one of the children had appeared to start dealing cannabis and moved up to dealing Class A Drugs earning an estimated £400 a week.

Social Network Analysis: Mapping Oxford’s Child Running Network

For the first time in TVP’s history, Social Network Analysis was carried out by a third sector technology company Safeguarding Analytics. Working alongside the team Safeguarding Analytics carried out Social Network Analysis (SNA) on the children identified as part of Operation Buffer using data from the police, health and social care. This work enabled the police and partners to understand the complex networks and relationships each of the children had. The analysis also aimed to prioritise key children, identify new children, make predictions and highlight disruption opportunities.

An immediate benefit of the analysis was that it identified prevalent risk factors. It was identified that each child involved in Operation Buffer had experienced one or more of the below factors:

- Serious Domestic Violence in early childhood
- Physical assault – early/mid-childhood

¹ The Kingfisher Team is a multi-agency team in Oxfordshire which deals with referrals concerning children who are suspected of or who are being exploited.

² Operation Bullfinch was an investigation into the sexual exploitation of children in Oxford.
• Poor parental supervision/control from early childhood
• Lack of suitable male role models
• ADHD and Conduct Disorder
• Mother’s poor mental health
• Intergenerational poor parenting/criminality
• Problematic transition to secondary school

Placed alongside the key behaviour traits of the children such as wearing multiple clothing, possession of multiple phones, wearing expensive clothing and associating with males linked to OCG’s, the hidden elements of Child Drug Exploitation become less hidden enabling recognition of the presence of Child Drug Exploitation taking place at an operational level.

The analysis also made key recommendations to the police about where to concentrate resources in order make the most significant impact on CDE activity.

The table below shows those recommendations and how they were translated at an operational tactical level.

Table 1: Recommendations emerging from analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Adults associated with children to be identified and prioritised.</td>
<td>ANPR utilised /Stop and Search legislation/Witness statements from families.</td>
<td>Child Abduction Notices served on key adult nominals. Proved effective short term with arrests made on prominent OCG members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It identified five of the thirteen children were key “gatekeepers” who recruited and were believed to be controlling others within the group. The analysis advised focusing on them would lead to a destabilisation of the group.</td>
<td>Key engagement with the gatekeepers took place, youth intervention was offered over a period of time but was rejected by the group and therefore police disruption took place.</td>
<td>Four of the five gatekeepers were arrested having been found with wraps of controlled substances. Court conditions imposed and attached to the youth offending team. Only one of the group was never charged as they were not found not have cash or drugs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A number of fast food outlets/shopping areas/leisure centres identified as meeting points.</td>
<td>Neighbourhood tasking and plain clothes operations took place. Safeguarding advice given to staff and advice made to contact police with reports of CDE activity.</td>
<td>Led to significant arrests and confirmation that the network analysis on key locations was correct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early intervention opportunities</td>
<td>The analysis identified eight children as being particularly vulnerable to recruitment from the nominals.</td>
<td>All of the children attended a youth intervention programme. None of that group featured in future intelligence reports with the group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From a catch and convict perspective the SNA was extremely beneficial in the planning of the enforcement activity and resulted in five of thirteen children been arrested, convicted for supplying drugs and working with youth offending teams. Four of them were heavily involved in drug running and were attached to rival drug gangs with one of them arrested for the murder of a rival OCG member and also recently remanded for being in possession of Class A drugs. Four of the children appear to have no involvement in drug running and were attached to rival drug gangs with one of them arrested for the murder of a rival OCG member and also recently remanded for being in possession of Class A drugs. The last two children have only recently been involved in drug running and are suspected of running drugs for a separate line.

The key limitation of the SNA was that it implied that all thirteen children and their network were connected to one organised crime group when, in fact, the team found the matter to be more complex with some of the children working for two organised crime groups and others not clearly linked to any. However, the analysis was correct in that all thirteen children were all connected in terms of knowing each other socially, had been to school together and shared same friendship networks.

The analysis identified the need to provide youth intervention programmes to divert activity away from child drug running. This was not a new idea to the team and prior to the analysis taking place, a key theme of the child protection plans was the need to provide such interventions. However the team found there were only a few early intervention youth programmes available and none were designed to tackle early signs of CDE. Therefore the team were unable to effectively measure whether the children would have responded positively to them and determine whether such intervention resulted in fewer prosecutions.

The SNA also made key recommendations for the Local Authority to consider, which were presented to key senior managers. One of the Local Authority’s responses to the analysis led to a member of the Children and Families Assessment Team at Oxfordshire City Council being seconded two days a week to work alongside the police team and the youth offending team. This measure led to improved access to multi-agency information and increased efficiency between the team and the Local Authority. It has resulted in joint policies being written and the team are now working on a new screening tool that encompasses those key risk factors identified by the analysis. It is anticipated the screening tool will allow identification of children at a much earlier point, leading to more targeted, effective interventions and potential reduction in the number of child drug running cases.

**Recommendations**

Child Drug Exploitation needs to be clearly defined and this article recommends that it sits under the umbrella of exploitation in the same way as Child Sexual Exploitation. With this in mind it is suggested that police and partners adopt a definition. One that is going to be adopted by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board is to define CDE as a:

‘form of abuse that occurs where an individual or group takes advantage if an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 to become involved in the manufacture, distribution or direct supply (dealing) of illegal or controlled substances.’

The benefit of police working with children’s families as well as the young people themselves is a key area of learning the team has taken away from Operation Buffer. The rapport that was built by the team in the first few months proved particularly beneficial when their children were going through the custody and court processes. At no time did the families blame or complain about the police and viewed the team as trying divert their children and protect them from harm.
The use of the SNA was extremely effective in understanding the complex networks and relationships each of the children had. The analysis helped the team prioritise the key children, identified new children and provided key information that assisted with the enforcement plans that led to key arrests and convictions.

The analysis also has made key recommendations that the LPA are currently working with the Local Authority to put in place. It is clear that SNA has the potential to assist the organisation in understanding the complex networks and TVP should consider wider use of this tactic across the force.

The serving of child abduction warning notices on key OCG nominals proved extremely effective and stopped the adult male associating with the children. It did result in other older males being brought in to work with the young people, which led to the identification of new perpetrators that had not previously been known to police. However it is to be recognised that two years on and with the young people being sixteen and seventeen, four of them are not with those males and are now suspected of operating on their own.

The team also spent a significant amount of time managing the investigations of children in a custody setting, the learning gained by the team is already in the process of being shared with colleagues in Criminal Justice to help formulate a policy that sets out how to effectively investigate and safely manage child drug runners in custody. Recognition of the importance of this is crucial as it is known that a child is under increased risk when arrested and understanding how that threat can materialise at an operational level is necessary in order for TVP to manage that risk.

**Conclusion**

Two years on from Operation Buffer, this article highlights the identification of a new form of criminal child exploitation. The success of Operation Buffer was due to the multi-agency approach and the dedication to all of those that were involved. It is hoped that exposure to this new form of exploitation and knowledge how to disrupt at an early stages will be of benefit to the professionals working in this area. It is also hoped that this will create a network effect allowing for wider intelligence sharing to take place across the organisation to help reduce criminal activity in the future.
Discussion piece: Reading Police Area fast-time response to the emerging threat of County Lines\(^3\) and Child Drugs Exploitation: Trauma Informed Policing

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Introduction

In October 2017 a rise in violent and associated crime in Reading town centre was identified within the LPA. This was highlighted by three stabbings: the first was in July which was investigated as manslaughter with a further two incidents of GBH in October. The two stabbings, so close together, were the turning point and led to a fast time operational response. A rise in Robbery for the LPA showed a year-to-date (April to November 2016 compared with April to November 2017) increase of 46%, with 60% of these within the town. Non-domestic violence against the person (VAP) experienced a 51% increase in the month before the operation.

The LPA ran Operation Sceptre on three occasions from the summer of 2017 in addition to a high visibility operation in the town utilising members of the Special Constabulary and Cadets intended to reassure the community and deter offenders. As part of the patrol and search operation, eight weapons being seized with some being found at known selling point locations for County Lines.

The LPA had two years previously set up and run operations under the four Ps, to Pursue, Prevent, Prepare and Protect for youth violence with the local DCI leading on the Prevent aspect through Operation Educate. Operation Educate involves working with partners to identify and divert youths from criminal activity.

\(^3\) County lines is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines. It involves child criminal exploitation as gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money. It is a major issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery and missing persons (Home Office: Criminal Exploitation of Children and vulnerable adults, 2017). Violence, incidents of kidnap, use of weapons and ruthless debt control are common themes against the children, exposure to this gang exploitation has the potential to generate emotional and physical harm. Children from urban areas are recruited by gangs to courier drugs and money to the county location, often via train but also in cars or on coaches. (NCA: County Lines Gang Violence, Exploitation & Drug Supply, 2016).
Local intelligence indicated that drug dealing activity was taking place in and around a set location in the town centre with other residential addresses being targeted by perpetrators for the purpose of “cuckooing” (this is where drug dealers target vulnerable persons and take over their home address for selling drugs) across Reading. The nature of the offences required a fast-time, operational response to prevent further violence and injury. The LPA needed to understand what was causing the rise and how to prevent it. An OSARA problem profile paper had been completed to inform and hypothesise what was behind knife crime in Reading. The profile suggested that knife crime in Reading was drug related (Class A) and, in particular, that youths and County Line dealers were using knives significantly more frequently than other offenders in the commission of violent offences such as robbery.

The hypothesis included a presumption that the associated violence had a number of contributing factors, including, but not solely:

- Rival dealers gaining control/asserting authority over lucrative areas.
- Drug dealers robbing each other.
- Local users dealing for multiple Lines & creating/causing conflict.

The impact on the community identified:

- Increases and surges in demand from local businesses and residents.
- Increase of fear on the community and businesses as a whole

And particular impact for the following sectors of the community:

- Retail population and visiting community.
- Young people, the vulnerable, easily influenced community.

The response

The initial response required prevention tactics as well as a more detailed examination of what was causing the high levels of harm. This consisted of two parts; the first being uniform patrol of the hotspot locations to provide a visible presence to prevent any further serious violence. The second was support from Operation Encounter which was initiated to scope the hypothesis of County Line drug dealing operating within the town centre and surrounding streets. This article focusses particularly on the Pursue element of the LPAs response.

Developing Operation Encounter

The initial priority was to find the most effective and efficient way to respond working within the context of the implementation of the new operating model and below minimum staffing levels. It was determined that support would be needed using centralised resources.

The operation was established and run through the local Crime, Tasking and Co-ordinating group (TCG) and raised to the force TCG. Resources and funding were requested for staff overtime and support from specialist departments. This included Armed Response officers, Dog Handlers, Roads Policing and Mounted Section. The operation built on tactical options from previous Op Encounter operations.
**Delivering Operation Encounter: Phase 1 (Two weeks)**

The operation ran for five days each week, from Monday to Friday.

The first two-week phase objectives were:

1. In partnership, reduce violent crime across the area, focusing on hotspot locations.
2. Provide a service to victims in line with Code of Ethics and Victims Charter; building public confidence.
3. Pursue suspects bringing a positive resolution to the crimes.
4. Monitor, review and respond to change in methodology.

The table below shows how staff were deployed in the first two weeks of the operation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>07:00 - 10:00 hours</th>
<th>10:00 - 16:00 hours</th>
<th>16:00 - 01:00 hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red time PCSO patrols</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>CCTV support staff</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 x Police Constable (uniform)</td>
<td>4 x Police Constable (uniform)</td>
<td>CCTV support staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 x Police Constable (plain clothes)</td>
<td>2 x Police Constable (plain clothes)</td>
<td>CCTV support staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ARV - 2 x Police Constable (unmarked)</td>
<td>ARV - 2 x Police Constable (unmarked)</td>
<td>CCTV support staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force Intelligence Hub</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Force Intelligence Hub</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An Inspector led the operation (Silver) with multiple Neighbourhood (NHPT) Sergeants (Bronze) working on the ground delivering on the tactics. Officers from the Force Intelligence Hub supported this with daily intelligence briefings.

NHPT PCSOs were deployed from 07:00 to the hotspot locations as visibility and reassurance. This linked into the LPA’s daily welfare checks of the homeless (Red time).

A NHPT Sergeant would deploy at 10.00 with six local officers supported by Joint Operations Unit (JOU) staff. The deployments were focused on the hotspot locations identified from Operation Sceptre. Intelligence had been developed to identify individual perpetrators drug dealing within a specific area of Reading which indicated that suspects were hiding machetes for use in their crimes.

NHPT staff supported the local businesses on a one-to-one basis, preventing drug dealing activity occurring on and within their premises. This was mainly confined to the toilets of cafes being used to exchange the drugs. This provided contact and reassurance to the local businesses.

The operation was debriefed each day and deployments amended as required to reflect improving intelligence.

The LPA longer-term and partnership working was developed under the Prevent element of Stronghold. The council-led problem solving meeting was initially unable to support the process due to focus on another area.

**Phase 1 outcomes**

In the first two weeks there were 22 arrests, with 11 for possession with intent to supply. The first phase identified the following concerning factors:

- A quarter of those interacted with through Encounter were 18 years or younger. It is believed they were ‘plugging’ large quantities of Class A to travel with and holding these up until the point of sale. During police contact, drug items were seized from concealment in underwear. There was no use of the drug toilet during Encounter.
With the early identification of youth involvement in criminal activity a policy decision was made to ensure officers took a trauma informed approach to treat the young people as victims not offenders where appropriate.

Due to the age of the suspects being stopped and searched, funding was required to ensure an appropriate adult was available for the operation to prevent additional time in police detention. As the tactics of strip searching juveniles was necessary, an effective response time of 30 minutes was required so that they could be searched without lengthy cell watches. Interviews could then be conducted in a timely fashion.

The dealing activity spanned at least 17 hours (1000 – 0300) during the entire time of the operation and was relentless throughout showing no signs of easing during the first ten days of results.

The identification of County Lines from Birmingham and a rise in risk regarding firearms. Kent and London County Lines also identified.

To ensure consistency and accountability it became clear that one Sergeant had to be given responsibility as Bronze commander throughout the operation. This improved the development of tactics and skill set of officers.

The team of PCs developed their skills and by managing the whole process from deployment to court they had a strong emotional evolvement in the process, bringing a high level of commitment to the task.

The focus was on the dealers for enforcement, with local customers known to the teams supported through IRIS and Launchpad. Most dealers were arrested, charged and remanded. Safeguarding of young people was completed as necessary through Liaison and Diversion in Custody, YOS and referrals through to child protection. Contact was made with out-of-town social services where children were not local residents whilst the suspects were in custody to manage the risk to the young people.

Delivering Operation Encounter: Phase 2 (Two weeks)

The number of staff deployed in Phase 2 was the same as Phase 1 (see Table 1).

The plan for Phase 2 was informed by learning from Phase 1. It was necessary to submit further bids for funding and resources through the TCG process to continue the operation, which were successful. The operational response increased, with a wider spread of resources to cover the particular period between 10:00 and 02:00. Due to the age of the young people being stop and searched and the lack of flexibility from local agencies to provide appropriate adults, funding was secured to have professional appropriate adults from a private company on standby to support this. The key priority for Phase 2 was to mitigate the risk of harm to young people from carrying large quantities of class A drugs within their bodies as well as the other risks associated with the operation.

Phase 2 outcomes

Police activity during the second phase of Operation Encounter provided clear and significant intelligence that multiple County Lines were targeting Reading. Youths as young as 12 years of age were travelling to Reading by train to sell class A drugs. An additional County Line from Bradford was identified and three of the OCG were arrested for possession with intent to supply, charged and remanded. This built a picture of a significant threat to Reading from multiple County Lines and the associated threat and harm that comes from this activity. Initial learning from the operation identified:
A quarter of all persons the operation came into contact with were 18 years of age or younger.

The preference is to use the 24 hour PACE clock to ensure the download of phones is complete, providing the evidence either way to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to support charge and remand.

Officers have developed a best practice template for Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) files for remand for both child and adult Stronghold prisoners.

Crime Scene Investigators (CSI) refresher training was required and delivered to staff regarding the handling of drugs and phone exhibits, as a lack of forensic packaging knowledge by the officers was identified. Officers face the additional risk of packaging being covered in faeces.

To support a charging decision there needs to be evidence the substance seized is indeed a controlled substance. The advice from CSI was to sub-exhibit one item from the seizure to enable forensic testing of the small sample to inform the threshold test decision for charge and remand (where there are grounds to do so).

That the arrest may expose the youth to more risk from the drug dealers as they will owe them the money for the drugs and money seized. This consideration was identified after consultation with the Serious and Organised Crime Unit (SOCU).

The importance of local contact and joint-working with Hackney, Birmingham, Bradford, Manchester police and associated services to develop the safeguarding of young people involved.

Whilst deployments were reduced midway through this process (cost being a factor) it was possible to focus more closely on the drug dealers causing most harm.

**Delivering Operation Encounter: Phase 3 (Two weeks)**

The deployment of staff in Phase 3 was altered as shown in the table below.

**Table 2: Staff deployments in weeks 5 and 6 of Operation Encounter**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>07:00 - 10:00 hours</th>
<th>16:00 - 01:00 hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red time PCSO patrols</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CCTV support staff</td>
</tr>
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<td>4 x Police Constable (uniform)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ARV - 2 x Police Constable (unmarked)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Force Intelligence Hub</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The objectives of Phase 3 of the operation were:

- To target, disrupt and bring to justice Class A dealers that use firearms, extreme violence and exploitation.

- To locate, identify and secure the children being exploited and provide safeguarding and onward support through the relevant agencies.
- Make it unattractive to deal drugs in Reading by disrupting the most harmful networks and preventing new ones establishing, by timely and robust enforcement.

- Eradicate the street crime culture that is associated with street dealing and crack houses.

- Divert persons from entering the criminal networks.

- Reduce class A availability, thereby reducing the number of users who visit & commit crime in Reading.

- Increase public reassurance & empowerment to report drug dealing activity and take preventative action.

In Phase 3 the operation became more focused (within an eight hour deployment) in order to target a key suspect who was arrested, charged and remanded in custody. Throughout the period the team processed their own prisoners to minimise the impact on the LPA. During Phase 3 the targeting became more concentrated and was also able to focus on vulnerable young people.

As the operation continued the following outcomes were observed.
Table 3: Outcomes from Operation Encounter 13th November 2017 until 8th January 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stop search / strip search</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop Checks</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Checks</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sightings</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S35 Issued</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrants</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Arrests</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Arrests</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aim of the first eight weeks of the operation was to reduce the initial risk and to understand the nature of crime occurring in the town. The team effected a total of 76 arrests which they managed themselves. This is outstanding work from an inexperienced team, with further court outcomes awaited.

Charges for less serious offences have resulted in five convictions. Three members of an OCG from Bradford had their initial Crown Court date within weeks of the arrest and all submitted guilty pleas.

Whilst the police operational activity reduced risk it has not lessened the demand for, and supply of, drugs.

The following issues require further consideration as Operation Encounter develops:

- The development of a command structure and the role of senior leaders.
- The need for an analytical product to evidence the national drug interest in Reading.
- Detective support to assist Operation Encounter staff with more complex investigative actions.
- Discussions with SEROCU for further development of the operational activity to tackle the ongoing demand for, and supply of, drugs.
- Partnership activity: Conference and development of a joined-up approach.

Following initial exploration of the problem, the operation moved to focus on the development of the LPA’s response to Child Drugs Exploitation (CDE) with seven key individuals immediately identified. LPA activity was informed by national publications as well as practice in Bracknell (Op Loquacious) and Oxford.

A partnership conference was held to develop a shared vision of the problem with local agencies. This has started a conversation, with ongoing work required by the LPA. Barriers exist with partners in engaging and understanding the vulnerability of the local young people. An additional challenge is the financial positions faced by partner agencies making a new and emerging threat from crime problematic to prioritise and focus on.
Summary of outcomes

In summary, the work from Operation Encounter has led to:

- The identification of local vulnerable missing youths being exploited through Child Drugs Exploitation.
- The establishment of the LPA’s CDE plan.
- Development of the partnership approach to trauma informed policing.
- Identification of multiple County Lines.
- Identification and mapping of top five County Lines causing harm to the LPA.
- The overall reduction in large knives and machetes being stashed in the town centre.
- Increased communication and confidence with public regarding the crime type.
- Twenty-four charges have been laid to date with a 100% positive outcome rate. This includes three members of an OCG from Bradford pleading guilty to PWITS (receiving sentences of three and two years’ imprisonment).
- Robbery rate reduced from an increase of 46% with 60% of this within the town to an increase of 31% with 39% in the town.
- Non domestic violence slowed from a 40% increase a month before the operation to 24% a month after the operation.

Learning points and long term issues for development

1. Operational response:

The team developed quickly from the start of the operation from patrol PCs to subject matter experts in pursing PWITS charges. The team of 6 were rotated through the roles to have a full understanding of how each officer impacts the outcome of the investigation from before first contact with the offenders. They have supported other officers from the LPA and NHPT in developing their own operational skill set. We have received no complaints against police, which is significant, considering the individuals and the environment staff are working in.

The outcome rate for “trafficking drugs” in this one ward in Reading (Abbey) is an outlier for the force in a positive way. That is, Reading LPA shows (from the start of the operation to date) an increase of crimes with a reduced outcome rate of 81% last year down to 38% this year. The hot spot area of Abbey ward shows an improved outcome rate of 42% to 63%. This supports the underlying ethos of the operation to focus on the right drug dealer at the right time in the right place. The outcomes from the focused work are significantly higher than the rest of the LPA.

One of the main learning points was the effectiveness of ownership through to charge and remand; conducting fast-time investigations “in-house” with the same motivation as the operational response.

This allows for effective outcomes and an enhanced ability to introduce safeguarding. However, this does require a change to mind-set for some stake holders within the police (custody and LPA officers). A quote from an officer helps to evidence this. She explained that after working on the operation she understood “how important the golden hour is and how this impacts on the overall investigation. Both are equally as important.” She had not previously joined the dots of why the golden hour was important.
The investigative caseload can be managed effectively. However, the forensic support in Berkshire is reduced due to staff shortages. Officers spend a considerable amount of time on the ACESO process. That is both the submission process and then reviewing data. Taking the current national review of disclosure for rape cases into account, the outcomes support the wider use of ACESO.

It was also imperative to have the support of a Sergeant in the role of Bronze commander to provide tactical advice and support.

2. Youths and appropriate adults:

Difficulties associated with organising appropriate adults led to delays in investigations and young people spending longer in custody than necessary. In order to resolve this finding was initially obtained to use a private contractor. This has developed from a private company to YOS workers (on overtime). There is an opportunity to develop this further with independent support with appropriate adults being present on patrol with officers, allowing them to engage with the youths from the first interaction. This will then allow them to ensure the appropriate support for the individual either on a local or national basis. Opportunities have also been identified to work with partners in local hospitals when someone is admitted with an injury consistent with stabbing victims to undertake early intervention. The ultimate goal is to have a front line multiagency team staffed with partners to respond quickly to these cases.

3. Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups

During a review of the operation it became clear that a high number of BAME individuals were being stopped and detained on suspicion of dealing drugs in the town. This has been recorded on the TVP stop and search corporate memory. There are challenges associated with monitoring this effectively due to difficulties in using the mobile application on TVP mobiles. During Operation Encounter officers had to return to the paper system of recording.

4. Communication

Internal communication worked well with regular updates provided via briefings, Yammer, email and face–to-face conversations with key groups. External communications were not as effective due to local skill sets and confidence in using social media applications. In addition messages became blurred when mixed with linked prevention work. Contact was made with HQ Communications for support however an initial face-to-face meeting did not happen due to the Christmas period creating delay in informing the public. Early consultation with HQ Communications is therefore key to ensuring key messages are communicated.

5. Resources

The optimum staffing levels for an operation of this nature are:

Table 4: Optimum staffing levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>Bronze on the ground or with CCTV team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCTV support staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 x Police Constable (uniform)</td>
<td>- strike team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 x Police Constable (plain clothes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactical Support dog (drugs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations

The key question arising from this paper is: how prepared is Thames Valley Police for County Lines and Child Drugs Exploitation?

A significant amount of time, money and effort has been focused on understanding this issue locally and local practices have had to be developed quickly. Opportunities exist to share this knowledge across the force to prevent the repeated hard work, belated learning and missed risks. A question for TVP to ask is, ”is CDE the new CSE? Does each LPA understand their risk and how will the force support the development of this?"

There are some practical recommendations that arise from this operation in addition to the steps that can be taken to address the issue described throughout this paper.

1. ACESO

A significant amount of time is spent by officers seizing, packaging, obtaining authorities and ensuring the movement of the phones from Reading to Loddon Valley (location of forensic hub) and back again. They then need to spend a significant amount of time reviewing the data.

Consideration to be given for TVP to review the policy and provide parameters in line with the efficient and effective management of crime on when to seek downloads. That is, corporate support and ownership of risk in reviewing, or not, for certain crime categories.

TVP to consider the use of police staff to apply for and review the data instead of a constable.

2. Analytical support

There is currently no set analytical product to demonstrate or lay out the threat, harm and risk from County Lines. Local analysis to identify County Lines relies on examining “all-crime non-domestic” because as a category it incorporates a range of crime linked to drug users and their crime of choice to support their drugs habit. There is a wider picture to evidence; of needles in the street, general unease amongst the public and local businesses who can see drug users and dealers on a daily basis. This is a topic on the agenda for the lead analyst meeting for the first quarter of the year.
References

Discussion piece: It’s not just time away: The value of secondments in policing

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Affiliations: Detective Sergeant, Thames Valley Police

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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Thames Valley Police for releasing me on the secondment and providing me with other opportunities to learn. I am also grateful to the Open University for opening their doors to me and making me feel so welcome.

A research secondment in a potentially long career

In the summer of 2016, I found out that I was accepted on a three-month secondment (later extended to six months) with The Open University (OU). I joined a research team to study public value in policing. As an officer for Thames Valley Police (TVP) for 10 years, I continue to view policing as a vocation, one where I am fortunate enough to enjoy a sense of job security for the next 27 years should I choose to. By then, I would have been an officer for 37 years. That is plenty of time to perhaps become institutionalised. A lot of time for a mind-set to become fixed. Even more time for an officer to potentially become detached from the public whom they serve.

Secondments might just be a way to help prevent this, perhaps even reduce turn over and increase morale. As I will explain later, unfortunately the current climate is such that there is both a lack of interest and opportunity for such secondments. This article will urge for more officers to be given the opportunity to spend time away working and immersing themselves in other organisations. When such opportunities are advertised, they come along very rarely and tend to be targeted towards senior officers. Even when they appear and are open to everyone, there is still the real risk that a police force is unable to release the officer due to lack of resources, i.e. the department the officer works in does not have the spare capacity to let the officer go. A short three-month secondment would merely represent less than one percent of the potential career of many officers and for me, this figure is a minuscule 0.7%. I will begin with explaining why I applied for the secondment in the first place before describing my time with the Open University as a Senior Practitioner Fellow. I will conclude by summarising what I have gained from the experience and leave some final remarks hoping for more officers to be encouraged to pursue such opportunities.

I applied for the secondment because I was interested in policing research and wanted to learn from academics. I wanted to see for myself how the Evidence-Based Policing (EBP) movement was seen from the outside as it is something still relativity new from within policing. The term EBP was first defined in the 1990s by Prof. Lawrence Sherman, with research into policing dating back decades before that. Yet, it took until 2010 for the formation of the UK Society of Evidence-Based Policing. It took a further two years after that before The College of Policing (formally the National Police Improvement Agency) placed an “evidenced-based approach to policing” at its core. Why has it taken so long? I also felt that this practitioner and academic “co-creation and use of research” (Hartley, 2017) was an ideal environment to de-mystify what academics do. Police officers and staff are inundated with emails, newsletters, and reports informing them of policy changes or invitations to take part in research by completing online...
questionnaires. It could be said that frontline officers generally do not have a complete understanding of how such policy changes were decided upon or what was the evidence base used to support a decision. Is there actually any practical purpose of completing these questionnaire requests, or is it to help a colleague or academic obtain a qualification from a thesis that would end up gathering dust on a desk, having no impact on day-to-day policing and ignored by policy makers? I hoped that accepting the secondment would help strengthen my position about the value of research when arguing against such cynicism and negativity. From my perspective, I believe the secondment has fulfilled this goal, as I will explain.

The work of the secondment

I started my secondment in July 2016. I worked within a research team examining public value in policing. Given the range of activities that the police undertake, and the pressure on budgets for policing, a substantial part of my work was to develop the use of a particular method (called Q methodology) to identify how stakeholders view policing priorities. These stakeholders are: the public, the police and policing partners. What someone values most or least about policing is heavily dependent on their own personal experiences. Q methodology is a research method that aims to provide a systematic and rigorous means of studying subjectivity (McKeown & Thomas, 1988) by examining social issues where there is “much debate, conflict and contestations” (Barry & Proops, 1999, pg. 339). It is this ability to study subjectivity that makes the method well equipped to study such a contested issue like policing priorities. It is a mixed method approach, combining elements from both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Until I joined the secondment, I did not even know such a methodology existed.

My secondment with the OU was extended from three months to six months because it was felt by both Thames Valley Police and the Open University that the extra time would benefit the research project, enable me to contribute to writing up the research (Vo et al, 2017) and allow me to learn more to take back to my organisation. I led the design of what we called the Q-Board. This is a magnetic board where participants are asked to rank 62 policing statements relating to priorities that are written on acrylic tiles. One of the advantages of a Q sort over a survey with Likert scales (range of answer options) or binary questions (two answer options) is that the participant is forced to prioritise some statements over others. This is possible because the shape of the Q Board means that only a particular number of statements can be given a high priority, while others must inevitably take a lower priority. The 62 statements were obtained from a number of sources, such as Police and Crime Commissioner Plans, focus groups, neighbourhood surveys and other literature.

The analysis revealed four distinct views amongst the participants about what policing should prioritise: 1) Personal Harm - reducing serious personal psychological and physical harm; 2) Engagement - reducing community harm and creating a fearless society; 3) Crime-fighter - a focus on crime itself; and 4) Good Cop - policing that is committed to serving the public. It found that there were more similarities of views across the stakeholders than differences. In other words, the public share very similar views to police officers about what is most important, contrary to many neighbourhood surveys. This might be as a result of the methodology requiring participants to view all the statements and be forced to prioritise in such a manner that not everything can be most important. Doing so reflects the reality that there is a limited police budget with a finite number of officers. The study also unexpectedly discovered that the Q Board worked well as a community engagement tool and a means to educate the public about what the police do. To reach the findings briefly summarised above, I organised the fieldwork to collect the ranking of policing priorities from police, partner agencies and members of the public. I also drafted a how-to guide on Q methodology to help police and other public organisations use this research method.
The secondment was not just about conducting research. I was able to participate in various seminars, conferences (including presenting at an international public management conference in Budapest), held meetings with partner agencies and the public about the research and attended events such as the PMM Live! at the House of Lords. PMM Live! was an opportunity to meet Lord Bichard along with academics and practitioners to discuss the problem with government access to knowledge. I was introduced as an example of how knowledge could be shared between different organisations. In my case, this was between the Police and academics. I spoke with attendees about my experience and how arrangements like this could be beneficial for their own organisations. To give an idea of what my typical work pattern looked like, it involved doing a lot of reading focused on the research topic; time to think about the research design, method and analysis; organising focus groups; travelling to complete these focus groups and collecting data using the Q-Board; writing up the research; record what is being done and why in order to be able to lead the writing of the final report at a later stage.

A learning culture

As I became immersed into the academic working environment, I was immediately struck by how friendly and engaging everyone was at the OU. This was a feeling that was replicated when I met with academics and partners from other institutions in the UK and abroad. Everyone I spoke to was genuinely interested in what I did as a police officer on a day-to-day basis and keen to discuss how we (as academics and practitioners) could work together. Through close collaboration between academics and practitioner, we have the real potential to contribute to the literature and knowledge through rigorous research. If done correctly, the research we complete could also be of real practical benefit from senior leaders in the police right down to front-line officers.
The different types of meetings I sat in, both as an observer and as a contributor highlighted something very different to what I had become accustomed to in policing, at least from a front-line perspective. Whilst there would usually be someone who chairs the research team meeting, it was sometimes not clear to me who was the most senior member of staff. Discussions were open, with feedback and constructive comments to challenge thinking expected and welcomed. It was done very professionally and thoughtfully. It was a safe environment for staff to improve their own research and learn from each other (including discussing any mistakes to avoid in the future), regardless of seniority. The OU also held regular seminars where academic staff presented to colleagues their current, recent or future research. Such activities help to foster a learning environment. Experiencing this first hand allowed me to take away two points.

Firstly, for the majority of meetings I had been involved with in policing, it was abundantly clear who was the most senior member of staff. Does such an atmosphere inhibit learning, prevent challenge and hinder openness? The experience has definitely made me more aware of how I deliver briefings or chair certain meetings. When young officers approach me to ask a question and say “Sarge”, I cannot help but cringe on the inside. This never used to be the case before I went on the secondment because I was so used to hearing it around me on a daily basis. It was the norm. I can sometimes sense the nervousness in their voice, especially those who do not know me. Whilst I appreciate the term, along with “Ma’am” and “Sir” are used out of respect, evoking a sense of tradition and perhaps even nostalgia, I can’t help but feel they create a barrier. As soon as I say to the officers to call me by my first name, I can immediately see that they are less tense and appear to speak more freely. Some refuse to do so, reinforcing the idea that it is deep within the culture of such a hierarchical organisation. However, even for those who are not used to dropping the formalities, the invitation alone was enough for me to see they felt more at ease to talk. Does something so simple like dropping a formality enhance the flow of information and ultimately lead to better decision-making? This is only my observation, so in the spirit of EBP, it is not evidence but might be something worth exploring through further research. It’s such a small thing, but to me, it makes such big difference in improving communication between ranks. I accept that a transactional style of leadership is without doubt needed in certain scenarios like a public order situation or commanding a crime in action (such as a kidnap), but how often are officers in that situation?

Secondly, it feels to me that policing has some way to go before it can have such an open mind towards learning, at least on an individual level. A number of officers and staff can have negative feelings towards any form of “constructive criticism” and become defensive. They may be inclined to immediately think about how they can defend their actions or decisions rather than actively listening to the comments being made. Perhaps this reflects the nature of policing. The police are in the public eye and the media are quick to react to our apparent failures and slow to report our positive contributions. The current discourse internationally about public trust in and engagement with the police adds to this scrutiny. It may also be how feedback is delivered internally in such a hierarchical organisation, where the use of terms such as “negative feedback” and “constructive criticism” can set the wrong tone. As a supervisor, I still have a hard time convincing officers that “Development Plans” or that a meaningful Continuous Professional Development entry on their record are not terrible things. I think part of the reason for this is because they are used to be called “Action Plans” and would only be given to underperforming officers. Their mindset could be such that if they are asked to improve regardless of whether or not they are performing well, it is a seen as career damaging criticism. This is a branding and cultural problem, where the old negative perceptions and reputation of such learning discussions still prevail.

Part of the problem could be that as a fast-moving organisation, reacting to the environment around us whilst also actively preparing for what could happen leaves little to no time for genuine praise and meaningful coaching at the individual level. Officers may feel as though their hard work go unrecognised or that their career aspirations become stifled because their
personnel records do not show them to be a perfect police officer. It should be the norm for every single officer at every rank to be improving on something. I am talking about meaningful and genuine personal development and not just entries on their records for a compulsory force wide or departmental-wide course. This shift in mind-set is going to take more than just time and cannot simply be driven from top down. There is a recognition of this within my organisation. An example of this is how TVP have invested in getting outside speakers and organising conferences for front line supervisors such as Sergeants and Inspectors. These days also include workshops designed to reinforce the message that we are striving to be a learning organisation. Such opportunities used to be reserved to more senior members of staff.

If the police fail to rid itself of a blame culture then officers would be reluctant to make decisions. This would only serve to foster a climate of fear and unfairness that would prevent learning (Chase, 2018). This may create an imbalance that could lead to a workforce that feels undervalued, demoralised and insecure. I am aware that nationally and definitely within my own organisation, there is a push to move away from a blame culture to one that is learning. I expect this to take considerable time and imagine that as the policing culture changes, there will be moments where the urge to blame is too strong to resist. We are all human after all and our natural instinct is on self-preservation. As a result, strong leadership at all levels is required to resist any political pressure or personal temptation to find someone to blame for a mistake regardless of how catastrophic it may be (except in cases of serious misconduct or gross negligence). In addition, the message that the organisation is striving to become a learning one must be continually re-enforced. Failure to deliver the right leaders who would support the message being delivered will result in a workforce who is not convinced and reluctant to report any mistakes. It would only take one example of someone being blamed unfairly for all the hard work and progress to be undone, and trust to be lost.

Escape or co-creation?

Everyone I met was not only interested in what I did as a police officer, but equally how I was able to find and “escape” onto such a secondment. Escape is not my word. It was a word repeated several times to me by some of the people I met. It is as if from an outsider’s perspective, they see policing as quite insular, inward looking and the only time an officer can experience the outside world is by escaping. Is there an ‘us’ (the public) and ‘them’ (the police) attitude? If that is the case, then it’s a far cry from the Peelian Principles: “the police are the public and the public are the police”. Similarly, officers who have used this term to me may be implying that they are trapped within something. Whether or not such a view reflects reality is debatable. They could have said it as a way to make conversation or merely repeating what the media portrays, but for people to use such a word is interesting in itself. Now that I have returned to Thames Valley Police, I have held training sessions, conducted presentations and advised on various aspects of policing research within my own organisation and with other police forces. The Q-Board has been adopted by Thames Valley Police and other police forces to train police officers and also using it as a public engagement tool. Some front-line officers who have used the Q-Board have reflected on the many activities the Police as whole pursue and it has helped to remind them that they are part of something much larger than the specific department they work within. The work has interested police forces as far away as Australia where I was invited to present as a keynote speaker on the Q Board and Missing Persons (another area of policing I am interested in). However, I believe my most valuable contribution are not these various outputs, but in changing views of officers who approach me and ask me where I have been and what I have been up to for those months away. Some of these officers had the impression that the time away was like a holiday. Fortunately, when they understood that what I ended up doing was of real use to them, they could then see the benefit of the time away and how useful research can be. For example, the possibility that the Q-board could help reduce police complaints because the public better understand police priorities. In addition, it
has introduced a tool that has the potential to start a dialogue with harder to reach communities which may help make their jobs easier.

I have realised that police practitioners and academics conducting police research are not at all that different from one another. Both groups have one main common goal: to improve the society we live in. They achieve this goal in a different manner, but arguably no method is inferior to another. In fact, they naturally complement each other and it is a shame that real collaborative forms of research where practitioners become part of an academic research team are not the norm across the UK. This brings me back to the Evidence-Based Policing movement. Policing in the UK and some other countries have started to push for a better understanding of the benefits and harms of police activity. An understanding that is grounded in good research. The aim is to try to ensure that police action and decisions are based on the best available evidence. However, I can’t help but feel that there is a key missing component. There needs to be an equal push towards the co-creation of research. We need to get beyond the days when academics completed research only for the police to disregard because their response is either: “we knew that already” or “we can’t apply this practically to real day-to-day policing”. Equally, when police do their own research, only for academics to say: “it’s not real research” or “the methodology is flawed so the findings are unreliable”. There needs to be a more symbiotic relationship between police and academics. EBP is substantially advanced when both groups no longer work in silos. Simply for the police to provide data to academics and waiting for the results is not collaborative, nor is it co-creation. Both parties need to have a vested interest in the research being conducted and understand both the academic and the police operational decisions that are relevant to the study. The research needs to have the flexibility to adapt and grow according to needs of both to ensure it is useful. This may actually mean for certain types of studies, the research question is changed or improved, either in the planning stage or part way through. Without this continuous dialogue, a research project may continue on rails heading in a direction that is of little or no use to police officers and practitioners. One of the best ways to avoid this, in my opinion, is to second an officer or police staff onto the research project itself. This may not be practical or possible in every research project, but it should be something that is seriously considered.

So back to my question at the start about EBP: why has it taken so long? From my observations having spent time away, academics have always been enthusiastic about research in policing. I suspect it has taken half a century or more to get to where we are because officers have never felt the need for research. After all, we’ve lasted since the early 19th century (Metropolitan Police Act 1829), so why change how we do things? Who would really want someone to potentially provide evidence that what they’ve been doing all this time may not only be ineffective, but could potentially cause harm? As a result, I suspect academics have had a hard time in persuading the police of the benefits quality research could provide. Even once they gain access to some of the police data, there is then the issue of data quality. Front-line police officers would not have data quality that is sufficient for research at the forefront of their minds after dealing with an incident. Sherman (2013) presents a causal model that may help to explain the rise of EBP. It could be that the cumulative effect of external demands (political, social and financial) on policing over time has forced police leaders into action. These external demands are transformed by policing leaders who have the foresight and skill to identify critical issues that require research. These types of talented leaders can take 20 or 30 years to appear due to a lag in recruitment conditions, which is highly dependent on police salaries and research funding (Sherman, 2013).

Attitudes and cultures about secondments

Going back to my original comment about the 0.7% time span of a secondment in a career. Despite the period of time I’ve been away taking up hardly any of my potential 37-year career,
the time away is not the issue. The real issue here is persuading officers that not only is it safe for their careers to gain experience by working with policing partners, but it could be beneficial for their personal development and for the organisation. There is a need to develop "a positive attitude towards these career decisions [to] encourage greater recognition of the value that external experience can bring" (College of Policing, 2015, p. 27). Comments made in jest to me such as “have you had a nice break?” only help to reinforce perceptions that somehow secondments away from the police are a holiday and not seen as “proper” police work. In the same way it can be difficult to assess the value-added to society on a certain policing activity, it would be misguided to simply put a time or financial cost on the value of secondments. Officers not only bring back to policing the experiences they have gained but also add value to their host organisations, not least the public confidence and trust such engagement creates. Secondments such as the one I have just completed also allows time to reflect and think about what it means to be a police officer for that individual, allowing them to return more enthusiastic and committed. I recognise that with continued austerity, it is difficult to find the money to release officers on secondments unless they are funded fully or in part by the host organisations. I believe this is where many police forces maybe missing an opportunity and selling themselves short. Its greatest assets are in its people and it is not unusual to see over 80% of a Police Force’s budget spent on its employees. Officers are highly skilled and professional. If we are able to show potential host organisations the mutual benefit that could be gained, then I am confident that many will see the value in funding such secondments. Whilst there are many positive aspects to a secondment, one thing I was mindful of was ensuring that I did not de-skill or lose the networks I had created before going away. To mitigate this, I made a conscious effort keep in regular contact with my colleagues. The benefits of a short secondment far outweigh any drawbacks in my opinion.

It will take time for police culture to change. It will take much longer and will be more difficult if the vast majority of officers spend their entire careers without any experience away. I appreciate that whereas opportunities used to be few and far between, the current climate with constrained budgets, coupled with officer recruitment and retention difficulties mean that the situation is unlikely to improve in the immediate future. This is shame. Even if the situation improves to an extent that would allow the provision of secondment opportunities, this may still not be enough. Officers will need encouragement. There needs to be an active push to reassure officers that going away does not harm their careers. The Police should not fear letting their officers go on secondments. If the right environment is created, it will draw them back and more importantly, that they would not be seen as less of a police officer on their return. From my perspective, the secondment has more than fulfilled what I had hoped to achieve from it. Not only have I further developed my academic research skills, but also I have taken away something much more valuable. It has given me a reminder that the public and our partners genuinely value what the Police do and are really interested in helping us make the society we all live in safer. I have returned more positive about the future of policing and feel a sense of responsibility to share everything I have experienced with my fellow officers.
References:


