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# **An Evaluation of the 'What Works Centre for Crime Reduction' Final Report**

**Gillian Hunter, Tiggey May and Mike Hough**

**June 2017**

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**Gillian Hunter**

**Tiggey May**

**Mike Hough**

**June 2017**

## SUMMARY

The 'What Works Network', launched in 2013, is a nationally co-ordinated initiative which aims to "improve the way government and other organisations create, share and use high quality evidence for decision-making"<sup>1</sup>. The What Works philosophy is that good decision-making should be informed by the best available evidence. If relevant or adequate evidence is unavailable, decision-makers should be encouraged to use high quality methods to find out 'what works'.

The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction (WWCCR) was launched in September 2013, led by a team from the College of Policing with support from an Academic Consortium<sup>2</sup>. Its work (the Commissioned Programme) involves:

- Building and refining the evidence base by systematically reviewing available research on the effectiveness of interventions to reduce crime;
- Summarising that evidence in terms of its strength and quality, cost, impact, mechanisms (why it works), context (where it works) and implementation issues;
- Providing police, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and other crime reduction stakeholders with the knowledge, tools and guidance to help them target their resources more effectively.

### Aims of the evaluation

Our over three-year evaluation - 2014 to 2017 - conducted alongside the work of the Consortium, but independently of it, has aimed to:

- Assess the impact of the WWCCR, including whether it has engaged key stakeholders, produced tools and guidance that they find clear and easy to use, and improved stakeholder understanding and application of research evidence;
- Chart outputs, modes of dissemination and user reactions during the evaluation;
- Identify changes in use of research evidence, especially in strategic decision-making and resource allocation;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network>

<sup>2</sup> Led by the Jill Dando Institute (JDI) for Crime Science at University College London. The JDI is further supported by: The Institute of Education (IoE), the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Birkbeck, University of London, and Cardiff, Dundee, Glasgow, Surrey and Southampton universities.

- Use an *action research* model to provide feedback to the College and the academic partners over the course of the project.

The parameters of the WWCCR – and thus the focus of the evaluation – were only loosely defined. The WWCCR includes the commissioned programme as well as various evidence products and activities that predate it, and there is now considerable overlap with wider College activities, including the Police Knowledge Fund<sup>3</sup> and the revision and development of the Police Entry Qualification Framework<sup>4</sup>. We do not claim to have conducted a process evaluation of all the activities that may complement the work of the WWCCR, instead our main focus in terms of process, has been on progress of the work of the commissioned programme.

## Methods

These have included:

- Conducting in-depth interviews in 2014 (49) and 2016/17 (40) with chief officers; Police and Crime Commissioners, and Community Safety Partnership managers;
- Launching a 'before-and-after web-based survey – hosted by the College – in 2014 and 2016;
- Conducting a case study of evidence dissemination and adoption in a single force;
- Mapping the range of products and activities of the WWCCR and the College, including tracking the outputs of the Consortium; and collecting data on internet traffic to the WWCCR microsite and associated evidence structures;
- Reviewing progress made in building the evidence base by interviewing those responsible for producing and developing key research products, including members of the Consortium (7); College staff involved in the WWCCR (3); and senior stakeholders, drawn from the Cabinet Office and the College (6);

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<sup>3</sup> The Police Knowledge Fund is a £10 million fund, launched in March 2015 by the College, Home Office and Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to support development of sustainable education and research collaborations between police forces and academic institutions in England and Wales. <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Partnerships/Knowledge-Fund/Pages/Police-Knowledge-Fund.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> The revised Police Entry Qualifications Framework will necessitate degree level qualification, achievable via three routes: securing a degree in policing prior to entry; serving a degree-level apprenticeship at entry; and, for serving officers with other degrees, doing a conversion course.

- Interviewing end users, including 19 Evidence Champions<sup>5</sup> and 7 officers on the High Potential Development Scheme<sup>6</sup> (as representing mechanisms through which research was being promoted and embedded).

Our final report draws together the various evaluation activities of the past three or so years to describe and appraise the processes and development of the WWCCR and to identify shifts in perspectives about the value and use of research evidence in practice.

## **Context of WWCCR**

Arguably, the longer-term aim of the WWCCR is to change the organisational culture of the police and other crime reduction practitioners, to increase their use of research evidence for policy and strategic decision-making and to make evidence use a 'professional norm'. The WWCCR operates in a wider and changing context of the professionalisation of policing, including the revision of training and entry requirements to policing and review of leadership style but also amidst decreasing resources for police forces.

Our assessment of the WWCCR has also been informed by existing research on organisational pre-conditions for evidence-based practice. These include workforce capability and skills, subject knowledge and capacity for critical thinking; workforce motivation to engage with research; and organisational support and opportunity in terms of time and access to research evidence.

## **Distance travelled since 2014**

### *Development of the WWCCR*

Over the last three and a half years, a series of research activities have been undertaken to support the development of the WWCCR. Their common focus has been on building the knowledge base for crime reduction and making it accessible and comprehensible to practitioners. These activities have included:

- The identification of over 300 existing systematic reviews in the crime reduction field;

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<sup>5</sup> Officers recruited (mostly voluntarily) by their forces on behalf of the College to act as promoters or champions of research and evidence-based practice within their force.

<sup>6</sup> The HPDS is a five-year programme designed to provide officers with academic learning and the opportunity to embed this learning into practice.

- The identification, systematic mapping and synthesis of 12 new specified priority areas in crime reduction; seven of which have been delivered as part of the Crime Reduction Toolkit<sup>7</sup>;
- An evaluation framework to standardise, rate and rank the effectiveness of interventions and overall cost savings; this has included the development of a method for systematically reviewing interventions (EMMIE), explanatory guidance on 'how to' appraise interventions and an online toolkit which has been trialled with stakeholders;
- The writing of 45 narrative research summaries based on the systematic reviews, to accompany the entries on the Crime Reduction Toolkit;
- Guidance for practitioners and researchers on cost analysis of specific interventions, including what data to collect, how to calculate and present all costs associated with implementing interventions. This is available both as a short summary and as an online interactive tool<sup>8</sup>;
- Four focus groups conducted as part of an Evidence Champions<sup>9</sup> Day organised by the College in March 2014 to discuss how champions perceived their role and the kinds of challenges they foresaw in advocating for greater use of research in practice;
- The development of practical instructions ('a training package') on how to understand evidence-based approaches and the delivery of this training on evidence to police and other practitioners – this has included the delivery of training in four pilot sites<sup>10</sup>;
- A workshop (with the College) "Embedding evidence-based practice in policing understanding common barriers and facilitators" at the International Crime Science Conference in July 12<sup>th</sup> 2016. This was aimed at analysts and police middle management, where researchers and practitioners could learn about latest evidence in crime reduction and share experiences of challenges to implementation;
- Primary research to address knowledge gaps, including on domestic violence, crime prevention messaging, and a review of lessons from general crime prevention for tackling violent extremism<sup>11</sup>;
- A *What Works* conference in January 2017 to present the work of the Consortium, the College, and others working in this field and to debate the role of research in policing and highlight progress, challenges and future plans<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Systematic\\_Review\\_Series/Pages/default.aspx](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Systematic_Review_Series/Pages/default.aspx)

<http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/Cost\\_benefit\\_tool.aspx](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/Cost_benefit_tool.aspx)

<sup>9</sup> Fleming and Fyfe (2015)

<sup>10</sup> Fleming, Fyfe and Wingrove (2016 a; b; c)

<sup>11</sup> E.g. Medina, Robinson and Myhill (2016); Robinson, Myhill, Wire, Roberts and Tilley (2016); Innes (2016a and b); Innes and Levi (in press)

<sup>12</sup> [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/Pages/WWW\\_conference.aspx](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/Pages/WWW_conference.aspx)

### *Shifts in attitudes towards research*

- There has been some shift since 2014 in how interviewees discuss the status of research in their organisations. This includes more references being made to research (in the broadest sense) having informed decision-making in the previous 12 months, in their accounts of the importance given to research by their force but also in the number of instances where forces were reported to be actively involved in research.
- The surveys also indicate a shift towards greater use of research and imply that greater importance is now attached to using research, with some movement in the perceptions of senior officers of their organisations' support for evidence-based practice.

### *Increasing police and academic collaboration*

- Interviewees were much more likely than in 2014 to be involved in research, in partnership with a university, and identified benefits resulting from these collaborations. These included forging longer-term relationships with partners from outside the policing world, the opportunity to engage in work with a “critical friend” and new knowledge gained from viewing policing dilemmas through a ‘different lens’.
- Interviewees also spoke about associations with universities creating opportunities for officers and staff wishing to develop their careers, gain further skills or study for academic qualifications.
- These research partnerships were relatively new (most were under 5 years) and alongside the benefits there were difficulties, including continued resistance to research among some police officers, the time required for research to produce useable results and the challenge of turning theory into practice.

### *Dissemination and reach*

- The support of the chief officer team continues to be viewed as crucial for encouraging an interest and commitment to evidence-based practice.

- However chief officers noted a range of ways – more concrete plans than were reported in 2014 – in which forces were disseminating evidence-based practice to operational staff. These included modifications to intranet to allocate space for promoting research and links to the products of the WWCCR; use of hand-held devices to provide easy access to the internet/intranet to all frontline officers; holding ‘research cafes’ for neighbourhood and response officers to initiate discussion about local problems and possible solutions; offering force training on evidence-based practice; targeting of ‘relevant’ evidence to frontline staff to help demonstrate its usefulness.
- The dissemination of research was not exclusively a top-down endeavour and we were provided with several examples of more junior ranks initiating activities to develop force engagement with research.
- However, it was clear from the survey that there were large differences between senior and other ranks, in terms of engaging with research; the former tending to have more positive attitudes to, and usage of, research on a variety of measures (e.g. more likely to read research and use the WWCCR products).
- There were some differences amongst interviewees in the understanding and currency of the term *evidence-based practice*. This highlights the way academic and policy debates about what counts as good evidence may be affecting how the idea of research is being received ‘on the ground’ and to some extent this is creating divisions among practitioners in how different types of research is valued. A key issue is the perception that evidence-based practice ignores or devalues professional or craft knowledge. A briefing paper (in progress) outlining the position of the College of Policing on this issue should make much clearer the ways in which different research methods and professional knowledge can be employed to develop best evidence.

#### *Organisational facilitators and barriers*

- There has been no change since 2014 in the perception of the main *practical* barriers to greater engagement with research. Lack of time is still the most commonly mentioned problem for interviewees keeping up to date more routinely with the evidence base, and ‘austerity’ and limited resources continue to be organisationally challenging when trying to promote greater engagement with research and to build capability.

### *Messages for the WWCCR and the College of Policing*

- All police interviewees had heard about the WWCCR and the Crime Reduction Toolkit and even if most had not used the toolkit themselves in any detailed way, they discussed how other officers or PCC staff may be using it, how they have promoted it within their force or that links to the Crime Reduction Toolkit had been inserted into force intranet.
- Levels of contact with the College varied, with some interviewees perceiving it to be a distant entity, with little established presence in their day-to-day policing experience, and others reporting close and productive links with members of College staff.
- A common response to a question about what the College could do to improve engagement with research was to promote and publicise where evidence-based practice had been successfully applied – to hammer home ‘live examples’ of its impact on policing practice; this is despite the various efforts being made by the College to this end. Also common was the view that research needed to be locally relevant to engage practitioners and “gain traction in the service”.
- A final issue raised during interviews was the College’s role in coordinating or making clearer the ways in which evidence-based practice is being introduced across the service and the extent to which other bodies in policing and crime reduction (e.g. National Police Chiefs’ Council or HM Inspectorate of Constabulary) are similarly focused on the importance of research and whether that message is being consistently applied.

### **The future**

There will be interest now in what can be done to develop and sustain the work of the Commissioned Programme and the WWCCR. It will be essential to continue to update the Crime Reduction Toolkit as new evidence becomes available. Failure to invest in this basic maintenance task will send out negative messages about the importance of evidence-based practice. There also remains a need for primary research about effectiveness not only in crime reduction but across the range of police functions to ensure that evidence-based practice can continue to develop and thrive. Building capability amongst police officers is an aim - and should over the longer-term be a consequence - of the revised qualifications and training curriculum in policing and there are the future products and potential of the various policing and academic partnerships to consider. With completion of the foundational work of the

commissioned programme and the WWCCR, there is also now greater scope to focus attention on targeting of resources, expanding user audiences of the WWCCR and increasing links with other national and international WW centres.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Aims of the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction (WWCCR)

In March, 2013 the Cabinet Office launched the ‘What Works Network’, a nationally co-ordinated initiative which aims to “improve the way government and other organisations create, share and use high quality evidence for decision-making”<sup>13</sup>. The purpose of the network is to “support more effective and efficient services across the public sector at national and local levels”<sup>14</sup>. There are currently seven What Works centres<sup>15</sup> and two affiliates (in Wales and Scotland), focusing on six areas of public policy, including health, education, early intervention, well-being, ageing, local economic growth and crime reduction. The What Works philosophy is that good decision-making should be informed by the best available evidence; and that if relevant or adequate evidence is unavailable, decision-makers should be encouraged to use high quality methods to find out ‘what works’. The What Works centres were intended not to act as centres of research excellence but to help policy makers, commissioners and practitioners to make decisions based on the best available evidence of what works, what is cost-efficient and what is useful.

The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction (WWCCR) was launched in September 2013, led by a team from the College of Policing<sup>16</sup> (hereafter the College) with input and support from an Academic Consortium<sup>17</sup> (hereafter the Consortium). The Consortium has been jointly funded by The College and the Economic and Social Research Council, and its work (the commissioned programme) involves:

- Building and refining the evidence base by systematically reviewing available research on the effectiveness of interventions to reduce crime;
- Summarising that evidence in terms of its strength or quality, cost, impact, mechanisms (why it works), context (where it works) and implementation issues;

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network>

<sup>15</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Sutton Trust/Educational Endowment Foundation, College of Policing What Works Centre for Crime Reduction, Early Intervention Foundation, What Works for Local Economic Growth, the Centre for Ageing Better, and the What Works Centre for Wellbeing.

<sup>16</sup> College of Policing is the professional body for policing. Further details about the aims of the College are available at <http://www.college.police.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

<sup>17</sup> Led by the Jill Dando Institute (JDI) for Crime Science at University College London. The JDI is further supported by: The Institute of Education (IoE), the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Birkbeck University of London, and Cardiff, Dundee, Glasgow, Surrey and Southampton Universities.

- Providing police, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and other crime reduction stakeholders with the knowledge, tools and guidance to help them target their resources more effectively.

An important issue to highlight is that the parameters of the WWCCR – and thus the focus of the evaluation – were only loosely defined. The WWCCR includes the commissioned programme as well as various evidence products and activities that predate it (described in Chapter 2), and there is now considerable overlap with wider College activities (e.g. the Police Knowledge Fund and the revision and development of the Police Entry Qualification Framework)<sup>18</sup>. We do not claim to have conducted a process evaluation of all the activities that may complement the work of the WWCCR, instead our main focus in terms of process, has been on progress of the work of the commissioned programme.

## 1.2. Context

A central, long-term aim of the WWCCR is to increase the use of research evidence for policy and strategic decision-making and, in essence, to make evidence use a ‘professional norm’. In order to frame our evaluation findings, we note below some of what is known about the preconditions for creating a culture that embraces the use of research evidence but also what organisational features can inhibit interest and uptake.

In brief, some of the prerequisites needed for organisations to adopt evidence-based decision-making comprise<sup>19</sup>:

- Workforce capability and skills, including subject knowledge and capacity for critical thinking;
- Workforce motivation to engage with research; and
- Organisational support and opportunity in terms of time and access to research evidence.

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<sup>18</sup> The Police Knowledge Fund is a £10 million fund, launched in March 2015 by the College, Home Office and Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to support development of sustainable education and research collaborations between police forces and academic institutions in England and Wales.  
<http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Partnerships/Knowledge-Fund/Pages/Police-Knowledge-Fund.aspx>.

Revised Police Entry Qualifications Framework will necessitate degree level qualification, achievable via three routes: securing a degree in policing prior to entry; serving a degree-level apprenticeship at entry; and, for serving officers with other degrees, doing a conversion course.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. Lorenc et al (2014); Rousseau and Gunia (2016); Langer, Tripney and Gough (2016)

Key factors that determine what evidence gets used include the credibility and reputation of the research producer in the eyes of the potential user, and whether research is communicated clearly and in a timely way, and made relevant to users. However, more fundamental is the importance of practitioners' involvement in and co-production of research<sup>20</sup> and in turn, researchers' proximity to, and understanding of the realities of practice. This last point serves to underline some of the debates and tensions about the primacy and extent of influence of science in policing and the crucial role of professional experience in building the knowledge base<sup>21</sup>.

A recurrent issue throughout the evaluation concerned the nature of 'evidence' and how this evidence is incorporated into the decision-making process. For reasons that will become increasingly clear throughout the report, we think it important not to be overly restrictive in defining what counts as evidence, and not to presume that research evidence can ever totally displace professional judgement and experience as the basis of decision-making in complex institutions such as policing. For this reason it is our view - and that of others in the Consortium<sup>22</sup> - that the term *evidence informed* decision-making is preferable to *evidence-based* decision making. However, this report respects the fact that the College and the police service generally refer to evidence-based decision-making and evidence-based practice (EBP) and we have followed these conventions. The College is soon to publish a briefing paper to make clear their definition, stressing the need to use *best available* evidence to inform policy and practice.

The medical profession has generally been taken to be the exemplar of evidence-based practice, with an implicit consensus that evaluative research trials form the bedrock of medical evidence. This is not the place to examine to what extent medical trials in reality have this privileged status. However, research on evidence use in *other* policy fields where its use is historically or institutionally less embedded, shows that while academic or formal research is one information source used by decision-makers, the concept of what counts as good evidence tends to be much broader. For example, research into local government decision-making<sup>23</sup> noted the importance given to local evidence – local data and experiential knowledge - in developing practice and a perception that academic research often lacked that local relevance or was 'practically un-useable', a point that is discussed further in Chapter 3.

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<sup>20</sup> E.g. Bradley and Nixon (2009); Laycock (2014); Lenihan (2015)

<sup>21</sup> Sparrow (2016); Fleming and Rhodes, (2017)

<sup>22</sup> Fleming, Fyfe, and Wingrove, (2016a)

<sup>23</sup> McGill et al., (2017)

The key inhibitors of evidence use are the reverse of the preconditions outlined above but also of note is the significance of leadership in setting the 'cultural tone' within an organisation. Leaders can legitimise and promote evidence-based practice, but conversely, they can cast it as a threat to the professional identity of experienced practitioners<sup>24</sup>.

The WWCCR forms part of a broader strategy of professionalisation of policing and this current policy and practice environment is clearly important to the WWCCR in achieving its aims. It has been argued for some time now that the increasing complexity of policing makes traditional forms of hierarchical accountability outdated; that to function effectively, police systems now require greater autonomy for front-line workers, and greater exercise of judgement and knowledge, making the professional mode of accountability more appropriate<sup>25</sup>.

We have discussed in some detail previously<sup>26</sup> the various defining features of a profession, including a specialist body of knowledge, extensive training and qualification to degree level before practice is permitted, a professional body to regulate members and the establishment of a code of ethics. The College of Policing provides some of these structures for policing: it is becoming a membership body; it has oversight of training standards; it specifies professional practice standards; and it sets standards of police ethics.

Further, to prepare officers for this greater professional autonomy, entry requirements to policing are set to change substantially in the next few years<sup>27</sup>, with an expectation that all officers will be trained to degree level and beyond. Work is ongoing to develop the training curriculum and standards in collaboration with police forces and higher education institutions, to offer new entry routes into policing for graduates and to upskill the workforce – and to formally accredit existing expertise<sup>28</sup>. The recent review of police leadership<sup>29</sup> promotes a framework for continuous professional development and urges cultural change, where chief officers are expected to encourage within their force an ethos of enquiry, reflective practice and engagement with the knowledge base. In addition, a report from the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC), outlining their vision for policing over the next decade<sup>30</sup>, states that the use of evidence based-practice is to be embedded and to inform day-to-day policing practice.

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<sup>24</sup> E.g. Rosseau and Gunia (2016); College of Policing (2015); Griffiths et al. (2016)

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Neyroud, (2010); Loader and Mulcahy (2003); College of Policing (2015)

<sup>26</sup> Hunter et al. (2016); May, Hunter and Hough (2017)

<sup>27</sup> College of Policing (2016) Policing Entry Qualifications Framework: Consultation

<sup>28</sup> See College of Policing, (2016). There will be three entry routes: securing a degree in policing prior to entry; serving a degree-level apprenticeship at entry; and, for serving officers with other degrees, doing a conversion course.

<sup>29</sup> College of Policing (2015)

<sup>30</sup> National Chief Police Council (2016)

A final point to raise here is in relation to the financial context in which the WWCCR is operating. Government funding of police reduced by 20% between 2011 and 2015, resulting in £2.53bn worth of cuts being made across policing, and this is set to continue. Whether, this has served to increase interest in ‘what works’ as a way of channelling limited resources or is perceived as reducing capacity for experimentation and innovation will be explored further below.

### **1.3. Aims of the evaluation**

Our three-and-a-half-year evaluation – 2014 to 2017– conducted alongside the work of the Consortium, but independently of it – is surprisingly the only independent evaluation of a What Works Centre in the UK to date. It aims to:

- Assess the impact of the WWCCR, including whether it has appropriately engaged key stakeholders, produced tools and guidance that stakeholders find clear and easy to use, and improved stakeholder understanding and application of research evidence;
- Chart outputs, modes of dissemination and user reactions over the course of the evaluation;
- Identify changes over time in the use of research evidence, especially in strategic decision-making and resource allocation;
- Use an *action research* model to provide feedback to the College and the academic partners over the course of the project.

In the first year of the evaluation<sup>31</sup> we sought to establish and describe a baseline from which to measure change over the three year programme in the understanding, use and application of research evidence in crime reduction. During 2014, in-depth interviews were conducted with stakeholder groups targeted by the College and the WWCCR, including senior and middle management police officers, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), and Community Safety Partnership managers (CSPs). In addition, a quantitative web-based survey was undertaken with officers of chief inspector rank and above (including civilian staff equivalents), PCCs and CSP managers. These interviews and the survey were repeated during the autumn and winter of 2016 (Year Three of the evaluation), the original intention being to gauge any change since 2014 in the above.

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<sup>31</sup> Hunter et al. (2015)

It was intended that the evaluation would include an assessment of both the impact and the process of the activities of the WWCCR. However, as noted in our second report<sup>32</sup> it became clear that the business of increasing the use and application of research evidence in crime reduction is a long game (and certainly longer than expected at the outset of the project), of which the full impact is unlikely to be seen for some years.

Our final report draws together the various evaluation activities of the past three or more years to describe and appraise the processes and development of the WWCCR and to identify shifts in perspectives of police and other crime reduction stakeholders about the value and use of best available research evidence in practice.

## **1.4 Methods**

A detailed description of the research methodology is provided in Appendix A. In brief our methods included:

- Conducting in-depth interviews – face-to-face and by telephone – with 29 chief officers in 2014 and 30 in 2016, of whom 12 were interviewed in both years; 10 Police and Crime Commissioners in 2014 and in 2016/17 and 10 Community Safety Partnership managers (in 2014 only);
- Launching a ‘before-and-after web-based survey – hosted by the College – in 2014 and 2016; and inserting questions about views and use of research in the College Membership Survey;
- Conducting a case study of evidence dissemination and adoption in a single force;
- Mapping the range of products and activities of the WWCCR and the College, including tracking the outputs of the Consortium; and collecting data on internet traffic to the WWCCR microsite and associated evidence structures<sup>33</sup>;
- Reviewing progress made in building the evidence base by interviewing those responsible for producing and developing key research products, including members of the Consortium (7); College staff involved in the WWCCR (3); and senior stakeholders, drawn from the Cabinet Office and the College (6);

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<sup>32</sup> Hunter et al. (2016)

<sup>33</sup> These are detailed in Table 2.1 alongside the date of their introduction.

- Interviewing end users, including 19 Evidence Champions<sup>34</sup> and 7 officers on the High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS)<sup>35</sup> (as representing mechanisms through which research was being promoted and embedded).

### *Analysis*

All in-depth interviews were recorded and fully transcribed, with analysis facilitated by NVivo 10<sup>36</sup>. A comprehensive coding framework was developed through research team discussions of themes identified through the initial manual coding of approximately one quarter of the interviews. The framework was then added to and refined during the formal coding process using NVivo. The quantitative data from the online surveys were analysed using SPSS version 23. However, as is discussed below, the surveys ran into difficulties that reduce their usefulness.

### *Limitations*

Chief officers<sup>37</sup> were interviewed about the role of research within their force because they are considered to be important drivers of force strategy and culture. However, we also note the limitations of using senior officers as a barometer of operational attitudes and practice.

Leaving this point aside, the surveys encountered various problems that substantially reduce their value. First, both the 'before' survey and the 'after' survey had low take-up rates. We had 655 usable returns in the 'before' survey and 601 in the 'after' survey. As both samples were self-selecting, and represent – especially in 2016 – small proportions of the total population of eligible people, we can be sure that both samples are skewed. The 'before' survey had a sample of 655 senior officers (Chief Inspector or above, and equivalent staff, or slightly under a fifth of eligible people) with a very small number of less senior officers, whose returns were not used because they did not fit the rank criteria. In planning the 'after' survey we took the decision to secure a viable sample of respondents below the rank of Chief Inspector, as well as a sample to match the 'before' sample of senior officers. We achieved 601 usable returns, of which only 67 were from senior ranks.<sup>38</sup> Whilst the 'before' sample of senior officers

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<sup>34</sup> Officers recruited (mostly voluntarily) by their forces on behalf of the College to act as promoters or champions of research and evidence-based practice within their force.

<sup>35</sup> The HPDS is a five-year programme designed to provide officers with academic learning and the opportunity to embed this learning into practice.

<sup>36</sup> A computer package for the analysis of qualitative data.

<sup>37</sup> Mainly rank of Assistant Chief Constable and above or corporate equivalent but on several occasions the Chief Officer team nominated a Chief Superintendent with particular responsibility for developing EBP for example.

<sup>38</sup> We asked the College and others to promote the 'after' survey, but despite their best efforts, the response was low. The response *rate* was higher amongst senior officers (at roughly 2%) than for other ranks, but absolute numbers were low. We believe that 'survey fatigue' was a large factor as several other surveys were ongoing at the same time.

represented a significant fraction of the total number of eligible people, this cannot be said for our 'after' sample of 67 senior officers. Moreover, the small sample size of this group means that any estimates carry very large sampling errors, and that only large differences between the two samples of senior officers are statistically significant. We use comparative before-and-after data cautiously in Chapter 3, though we make some use of the survey findings at the end of this chapter to examine factors associated with support for evidence-based practice.

We had anticipated the possibility that we might struggle to get usable 'after' samples, and as a back-up we asked the College to include some questions in its own concurrent survey of its membership. The 12 questions that were included were based on, and similar to, our own items on evidence use and orientation to evidence-based practice, but were simplified to an extent that makes comparison impossible. We have not presented findings from the members' survey in this report.

## **1.5 Report structure**

In Chapter 2 we map the various evidence structures provided by the College and the WWCCR and examine how these have progressed over the past three years or so, charting interest as measured by website traffic and downloads. Chapter 3 focuses on interview and survey findings, and what these indicate with regards to changing awareness, interest, uptake of and involvement in research. In Chapter 4 we present a Case Study of a single force as a 'working' example of how research evidence is being prioritised, developed and disseminated as part of organisational strategy. Our final Chapter outlines the implications of our findings for the future of the WW programme.

## 2. DEVELOPING THE WHAT WORKS CENTRE

### 2.1 The WWCCR and associated evidence mechanisms

In our Year 2 report<sup>39</sup>, we attempted to map the various evidence ‘mechanisms’ provided by the WWCCR and the College more generally, showing how these overlapped (see Figure 2.1) in terms of an overall aim to develop and embed evidence informed practice into policing.

The work of the commissioned programme is detailed as a sub-set of the WWCCR. Some of these mechanisms, such as Authorised Professional Practice are part of wider College activities but are noted here because of their focus on dissemination and application of best evidence.

### 2.2 The Consortium

#### *The Commissioned Programme*

Over the last three or more years, a series of research activities have been undertaken to support the development of the WWCCR. Their common focus has been on building the knowledge base for crime reduction and making it accessible and comprehensible to practitioners. We discussed in our last report some of the challenges of this task. There was a consensus amongst those we interviewed – from both the Consortium and from the College – that progress had been slower than expected due to a combination of factors, not least, unrealistic expectations about what progress could be achieved in the short term, given the large-scale nature of the change required. However, as discussed in Chapter 1 – and also below – linkages to other College ambitions are becoming clearer (e.g. the revision and development of the PEQF to enhance capability) and so too how the ‘what works’ programme sits within the wider agenda to professionalise the police.

The eight complementary ‘Work Packages’ from the Consortium have delivered the following outputs (as at May 2017):

- The identification of over 300 existing systematic reviews in the crime reduction field;

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<sup>39</sup> Hunter et al. (2016)

- The identification, systematic mapping and synthesis of 12 new specified priority areas in crime reduction; seven of which have been delivered as part of the toolkit<sup>40</sup>;
- An evaluation framework to standardise, rate and rank the effectiveness of interventions and overall cost savings; this has included the development of a method for systematically reviewing interventions (EMMIE), explanatory guidance on 'how to' appraise interventions and an online Crime Reduction Toolkit which has been trialled with stakeholders<sup>41</sup>;
- The writing of 45 narrative research summaries based on the systematic reviews, to accompany the entries on the Crime Reduction Toolkit;
- Guidance for practitioners and researchers on cost analysis of specific interventions, including what data to collect, how to calculate and present all costs associated with implementing interventions. This is available both as a short summary and as an online interactive tool<sup>42</sup>;
- Four focus groups conducted as part of an Evidence Champions<sup>43</sup> Day organised by the College in March 2014 to discuss how champions perceived their role and the kinds of challenges they foresaw in advocating for greater use of research in practice;
- The development of practical instructions ('a training package') on how to understand evidence-based approaches and the delivery of this training on evidence to police and other practitioners – this has included the delivery of training in four pilot sites<sup>44</sup>;
- Workshop (with the College) "Embedding evidence-based practice in policing understanding common barriers and facilitators" at the International Crime Science Conference in July 12<sup>th</sup> 2016. This was aimed at analysts and police middle management, where researchers and practitioners could learn about latest evidence in crime reduction and share experiences of challenges to implementation;
- Primary research to address knowledge gaps, including on domestic abuse, crime prevention messaging, and a review of lessons from general crime prevention for tackling violent extremism<sup>45</sup>;
- A *What Works* conference in January 2017 to present the work of the Consortium, the College, and others working in this field and to debate the role of research in policing and highlight progress, challenges and future plans<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Systematic\\_Review\\_Series/Pages/default.aspx](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Systematic_Review_Series/Pages/default.aspx)

<sup>41</sup> <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx>

<sup>42</sup> [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/Cost\\_benefit\\_tool.aspx](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/Cost_benefit_tool.aspx)

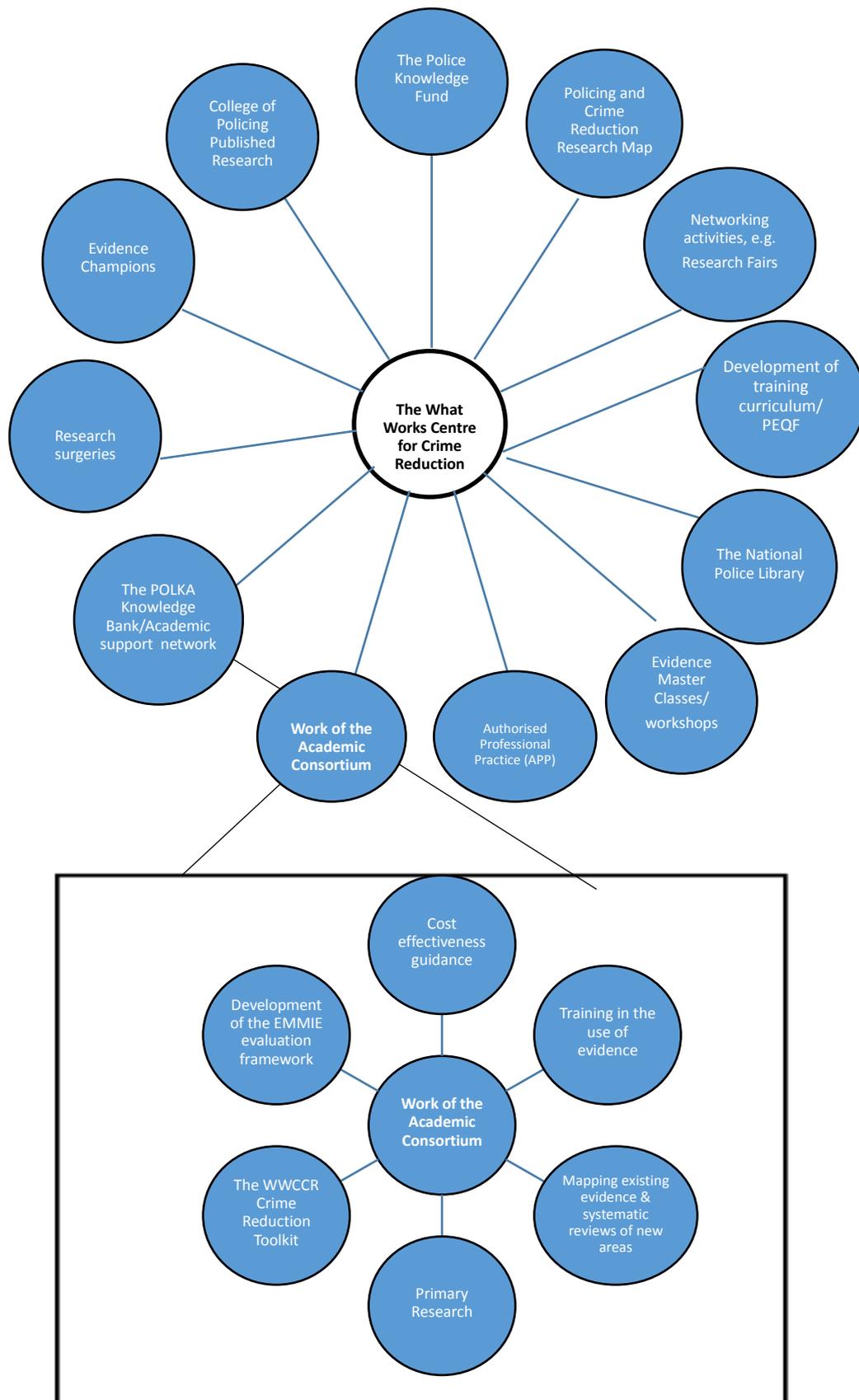
<sup>43</sup> Fleming and Fyfe (2015)

<sup>44</sup> Fleming, Fyfe and Wingrove (2016 a; b; c)

<sup>45</sup> E.g. Medina, Robinson, and Myhill (2016); Robinson, Myhill, Wire, Roberts and Tilley (2016); Innes (2016a and b); Innes and Levi (in press)

<sup>46</sup> [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/Pages/WW\\_conference.aspx](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/Pages/WW_conference.aspx)

**Figure 2.1 Key evidence mechanisms of the WWCCR**



## 2.3 Progress since 2014

There is increasing research evidence about the best mix of strategies to achieve a shift in the direction of evidence-informed decision making<sup>47</sup>. At the start of their lives, What Works centres tend to focus effort on *'push strategies'* that make evidence available to decision-makers but over time these tend to be broadened to create a more balanced approach that includes a range of *'pull strategies'* – designed to stimulate organisational demand for evidence. Table 2.1 outlines progress made in the range of approaches by which research evidence is being created, promoted and shared. We have discussed this previously using the framework of evidence use proposed by Tripney, Langer and Gough, (2016). On the basis of extensive reviews of the research across a wide range of professions, they propose that the key processes in leading organisations to make greater use of evidence are:

- building awareness and positive attitudes towards evidence use;
- developing a mutual understanding and agreement on policy relevant questions;
- communicating and providing access to evidence;
- facilitating interactions between decision-makers and researchers; and
- supporting decision-makers to develop skills to access and make sense of evidence.

In terms of outputs and activity, the College and the WWCCR have developed a mix of 'push' and 'pull' strategies. We cannot address in any detail the level of interest in or uptake of research (although data on web-page users of WWCCR products provide a blunt assessment of curiosity and this is discussed in 2.4). We cannot say anything about the impact of these various strategies on evidence use and application but, the knowledge base is developing with the Crime Reduction Toolkit (CRT), for example. The Police Knowledge Fund (PKF) described in Table 2.1 below (and other approaches to stimulating partnerships with academic institutions/researchers) is providing foundations for co-production of further research, with bids focusing on developing 'evidence-based approaches to problem solving, increasing research on reducing crime, and building capacity amongst officers and staff to understand, critique and use research' (see Appendix C for the full College of Policing list of HEFCE/ Home Office funded collaborations). In addition, revisions to police entry qualifications, promotion requirements and professional development, are aiming to re-focus training to increase capability and skills in evidence appraisal and use.

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<sup>47</sup> E.g. Breckon and Dodson (2016); Langer, Tripney and Gough (2016); Rosseau and Gunia (2016)

**Table 2.1: Key evidence mechanisms of the WWCCR and College**

Structure	Date introduced	
<b>What Works Centre's Microsite</b>	Feb 2015	The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction Microsite ( <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Pages/default.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Pages/default.aspx</a> ) This showcases the work that the Centre is involved in and hosts the products of the WWCCR. It is an ancillary site to main College of Policing website ( <a href="http://www.college.police.uk/Pages/Home.aspx">http://www.college.police.uk/Pages/Home.aspx</a> ), provides access to most other key evidence mechanisms (discussed below) and links to a range of national and international online resources, detailing research on policing and criminal justice interventions <sup>48</sup> .
<b>Crime Reduction Toolkit</b>	Mar 2015	Online resource that aims to make the crime reduction evidence base easily accessible to practitioners and decision makers, through rating the impact, cost and implementation of a range of interventions. The toolkit was launched in March 2015. It is a main output of the commissioned programme and will continue to be developed in-house by the College from 2017: <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx</a> . Currently the CRT details evidence on 45 different crime reduction interventions.
<b>EMMIE Framework</b>	2015	EMMIE is the framework through which findings are framed and filtered for practitioner use and the online CRT. EMMIE was developed as part of the work of the Consortium and stands for: Effect, Mechanism, Moderator, Implementation and Economic Cost. It combines findings of randomised control trials with consideration of intervention context.
<b>Systematic reviews</b>	2013 –May 2017	The identification, systematic mapping & synthesis of 12 new priority areas in the crime reduction field (of which seven are included in the Crime Reduction Toolkit) <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Systematic_Review_Series/Pages/default.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Systematic_Review_Series/Pages/default.aspx</a>
<b>Costings Guidance</b>		Guidance for practitioners on cost analysis of specific interventions, including what data to collect, how to calculate and present all costs associated with implementing interventions. <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/Cost_benefit_tool.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/Cost_benefit_tool.aspx</a>
<b>Police Knowledge Fund</b>	July 2015- March 2017	The Police Knowledge Fund is a £10 million fund, launched in March 2015 by the College, Home Office and Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). It aims to support development of sustainable education and research collaborations between police forces and academic institutions in England and Wales. A total of 14 bids involving 39 forces and the British Transport Police were awarded funding in July 2015 for two years. Further details are available here: <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Partnerships/Knowledge-Fund/Pages/Police-Knowledge-Fund.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Partnerships/Knowledge-Fund/Pages/Police-Knowledge-Fund.aspx</a>
<b>Policing &amp; Crime Research Map</b>	Revised Jan 2015 ongoing	The interactive Research Map is hosted by the College and provides details of ongoing research at Master's level and above across the UK. It is intended to increase collaboration across forces and between police and researchers. At time of writing there were 257 research projects listed on the map, of which 22 were randomised control trials (RCT). Details of completed research projects are also available as a separate list. The research map can be viewed here: <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Research-Map/Pages/Research-Map.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Research-Map/Pages/Research-Map.aspx</a>
<b>Networking activities, e.g. Research Fairs</b>	Ongoing	A research fair is a "marketplace", hosted by a police force or a partnership of regional forces to match policing-related research requirements with resources. Universities, further education colleges and research institutes are invited to fairs and have the opportunity to express interest in undertaking research projects (usually at a Masters level or above), and to apply to match a research knowledge gap with a student or employee who may undertake the research at no additional cost to the police force. The College has facilitated various events. More information is available here: <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Partnerships/Pages/Research-fairs.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Partnerships/Pages/Research-fairs.aspx</a>

<sup>48</sup> Campbell Collaboration: Evidence Based Policing Matrix - A translation tool, hosted in the George Mason University's Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy (CEBCP); Global Policing Database.

<b>POLKA and the Knowledge Bank</b>	POLKA (2009) Knowledge Bank (2010)	POLKA is a secure online collaboration tool for the policing community to network, ask questions, share insights, discuss ideas and suggest new ways of working. It can only be accessed by those who have a PNN or .gsi address. POLKA is hosted by the College. The Knowledge Bank is one of 300 communities on POLKA but this is the community where research findings are uploaded. There is also an academic support network to support police officers and staff undertaking further study.
<b>Authorised Professional Practice (APP)</b>	2015-ongoing Revised	APP is authorised by the College as the official source of professional practice and standards for policing. It is developed and owned by the College. The College has been updating APP to be evidence-informed since 2015. These are available here: <a href="https://www.app.college.police.uk/">https://www.app.college.police.uk/</a>
<b>The National Police Library</b>	-----	The National Police Library is located at the College of Policing site in Ryton. It provides book loans and an online library catalogue to serving UK police officers and police staff. More details can be found here: <a href="http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Research/Library/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Research/Library/Pages/default.aspx</a>
<b>Training in research use, generation &amp; application /critical appraisal skills</b>	Ongoing	Revised Police Entry Qualifications Framework will necessitate degree level qualification, achievable via three routes: securing a degree in policing prior to entry; serving a degree-level apprenticeship at entry; and, for serving officers with other degrees, doing a conversion course.  Currently module on evidence-based policing is included in the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP). This is a two-year programme for police constables. <sup>49</sup> Such modules are also included in the National Policing Curriculum <sup>50</sup>  One off 'Master-classes' for officers in developing skills in research appraisal have taken place in Humberside, Derbyshire, Northumbria, Sunningdale and Ryton. Workshop at International Crime Science Conference for analysts and police middle management, where researchers and practitioners can learn about latest evidence in crime reduction and share experiences of challenges to implementation. This is set to be an annual event.  College Bursary Scheme 2016/17 offered contribution towards tuition fees of up to £6,000 for those undertaking degree or post graduate study alongside work in force; 25 bursaries were awarded during 2016/17. This scheme will be reopened in 2017/18 if funds allow.
<b>Evidence Champions</b>	Network launched in Sept 2013	Officers recruited (mostly voluntarily) to promote evidence-based practice in policing and to share ideas and knowledge across forces. The network is intended to enable police forces to support each other in efforts to embed EBP through discussion and collaboration. <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Support/Pages/epc.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Support/Pages/epc.aspx</a>
<b>College Published Research</b>	Ongoing	The College contributes to the evidence base through managing primary research which is disseminated via a range of peer-reviewed research publications, on areas including ethics and values, leadership and strategic command, community engagement and crime prevention and intelligence and counter-terrorism.
<b>WWCCR primary research</b>	2014 – May 2017	Primary research chosen to address the gaps in knowledge. This includes research on domestic abuse, crime prevention messaging and tackling violent extremism.
<b>Research surgeries</b>	Started in 2015 Ongoing	The Research Surgeries are scheduled events that offer 'drop-in' practical help and guidance to police forces involved in or planning research projects and activities: Since July 2015, the College has delivered 58 surgeries in London, Ryton, Sunningdale and Harrogate. <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Support/Pages/Research-Surgeries.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Support/Pages/Research-Surgeries.aspx</a> .

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.college.police.uk/what-we-do/learning/curriculum/initial-learning/pages/initial-learning.aspx>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Curriculum/Pages/Core-Learning.aspx>

Previous College ‘products’ are being revised to match the focus on research-based practice; for example, the College are developing national guidance for professional practice (APP) to ensure this reflects best research evidence and practitioner expertise, and the Research Map collates and shows details of current research projects – from Master’s level research projects and above – on crime interventions and policing across the UK (involving police forces and universities); the College also archives the details of completed projects. Thus, the College and the WWCCR is building its reputation as an information repository.

We noted previously that quite widespread criticisms have been voiced about the limited coverage of the Crime Reduction Toolkit content and the lack of evidenced interventions available for more contemporary policing concerns, for example for reducing cyber-crime or tackling child sexual exploitation (also discussed in Chapter 3). This reflects the state of the evidence base, which was limited and predominantly American. However, the CRT is continuously being developed (covering 45 interventions as at May 2017) and research to fill these recognised gaps and to address these more contemporary policing issues should develop over time in response to the information needs.

We also previously focused on Evidence Champions<sup>51</sup> as an essential component of knowledge mobilisation. Their role is variously described in the research literature as ‘intermediary’, ‘broker’ ‘messenger’ ‘opinion leader’ or ‘role model’ but essentially, these are enthusiastic practitioners who act as a mediator between the researcher and other practitioners, helping to promote and filter evidence into viable policy and practice.

The College has endorsed two types of champion: first *Frontline Champions* were operational officers recruited and paid for by the College for six months in 2013 – before the WWCCR was set up – to raise awareness of the College and its programmes and services and to act as a point of liaison between the College and force; second, a network of *Evidence Champions*<sup>52</sup> was developed as part of the WWCCR to encourage discussion and collaboration amongst peers about evidence-based practice both within and across forces. This was a voluntary role, open to anyone with an interest in research.

Our interviews with both types of champion during 2015 showed them to be engaged in a range of activities which were contributing to the ‘groundwork’ and providing a framework to embed evidence-based practice. This included managing partnerships with universities, (e.g.

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<sup>51</sup> Hunter et al. (2016)

<sup>52</sup> This was a voluntary initiative and open to anyone with an interest in EBP.

coordination of student work placements, PhDs placements or officers' participation in university courses or undertaking research supported by universities); reviewing knowledge gaps and research needs of their force; developing systems for feeding learning from research into practice; and cataloguing research undertaken within force to ensure greater knowledge about what work had already been done, to avoid duplication.

This was being done alongside many other work responsibilities, often because of personal enthusiasm for research. We found there was no standard way in which a champion was deployed within a force; they were, for example, of varying rank and department, but we also noted that they appeared to be more visible at promoting or disseminating research when they had a formal link to the senior command team. A common request was made by interviewees for greater contact with the College and with other force champions and there is clear scope for developing the network.

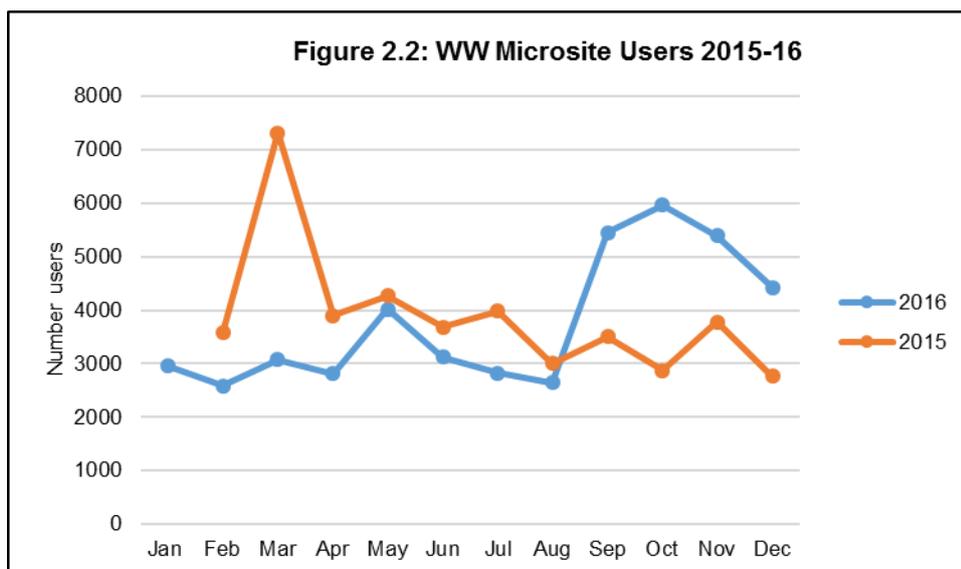
The College is currently reviewing the Champions Network - which its records show has more than 600 members – so that it can better tailor and target the support it gives to maximise the benefit of the network<sup>53</sup>.

## **2.4 Interest in What Works as mapped by College Analytics**

The College monitors traffic to the WWCCR microsite using google analytics, including visits to the Crime Reduction Toolkit and the Research Map. Figure 2.2 shows how many *users* visited the microsite homepage from February 2015, when it was first launched, to December 2015 and then during 2016. This is a public site and is therefore not restricted to police and other crime reduction practitioners.

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<sup>53</sup> Miller (2017) Personal Communication

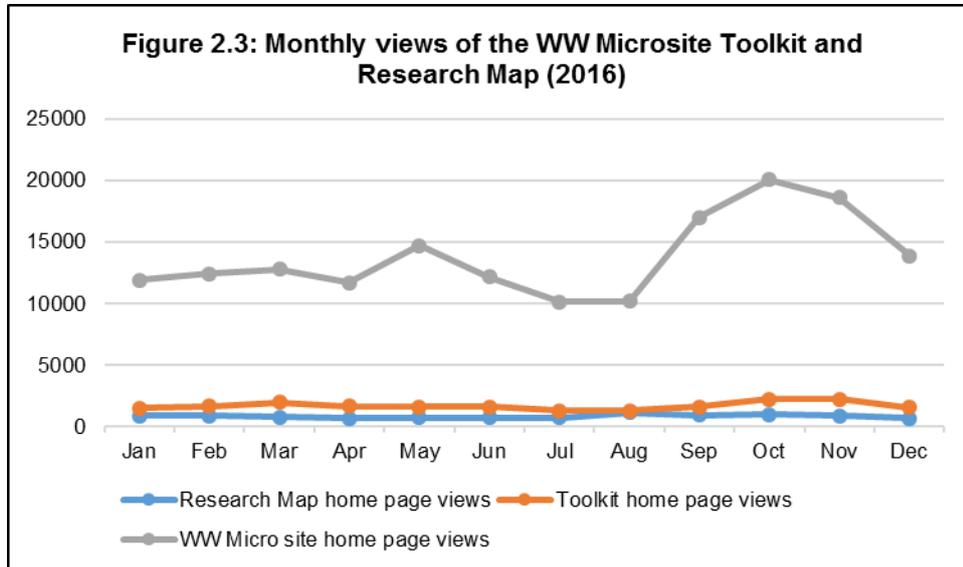


The total number of microsite users (n = 7,316) peaked in March 2015 with the launch of the Crime Reduction Toolkit and the announcement of the PKF the previous month. Following this peak in 2015, the number of users dipped, peaking again in May, in what appeared to be an overall decline in user traffic to the microsite. However, during the second half of 2016, with the on-going development of the Crime Reduction Toolkit, there were consistently greater numbers of microsite users compared to the previous year. This may in part be due to publicity for the CRT on the College website and email updates about additions to it, to those who are part of College circulations.

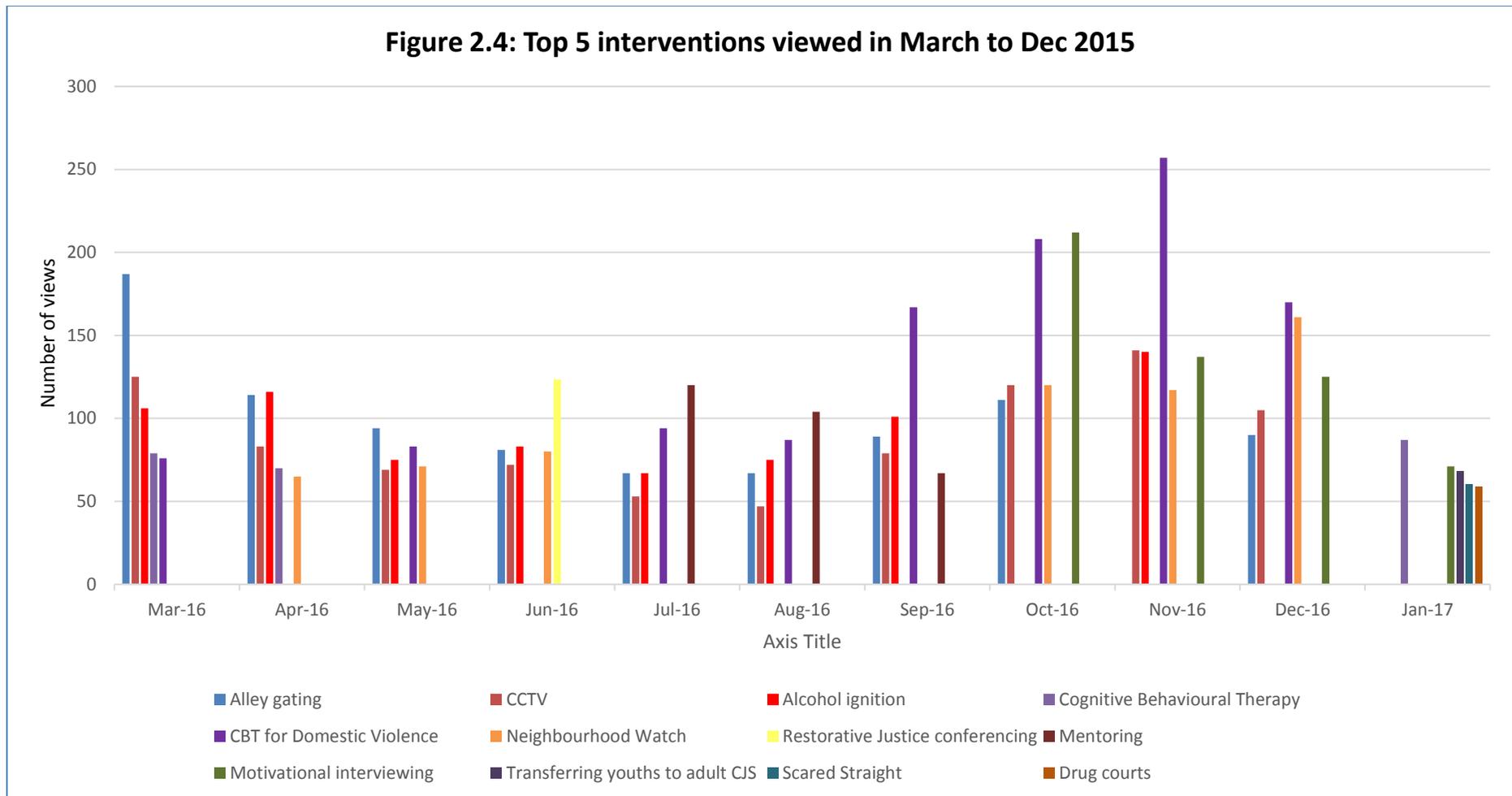
Figure 2.3 shows monthly views of the microsite (measured by number of homepage views), CRT and the Research Map for 2016. Data show that monthly views never dropped below 10,000, and peaked at 20,000 in October 2016; training sessions with police, as part of the commissioned programme, took place in September 2016 and may explain some of the increased interest in the Autumn of 2016. The CRT averaged 1,700 views per month in 2016, with the Research Map less used at under 1,000 views in most months during 2016. The ‘after’ survey (in 2016) found that over half of respondents (54%) had used the CRT at least once, and 46% had visited the WWCCR microsite at least once.

At the time of writing there were over 40 interventions included in the CRT. Figure 2.4 shows the top five interventions in terms of views, each month in the CRT’s second year (March to December 2016). There was some consistency in what interventions were being looked at most often. These included Alley-gating, CCTV, Neighbourhood Watch, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for perpetrators of domestic abuse and Alcohol Ignition. This last intervention was

used in the training provided on using the CRT, conducted by members of the Consortium and thus may account for some of the interest in the intervention.



**Figure 2.4: Top 5 interventions viewed in March to Dec 2015**



### 3. SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES ON RESEARCH

#### 3.1 Key findings in 2014

In 2014, the in-depth interviews with chief police officers and PCCs and the online survey (N=655) with police officers of Chief Inspector rank and above (including staff equivalent), PCCs and CSPs took place in the early stages of development of the WWCCR (see Appendix A for full account of methods and timescales). The focus of enquiry was on: 1) factors influencing decision-making; 2) familiarity with and use of research evidence; 3) extent to which research evidence was meeting practitioners' needs; 4) organisational culture and value placed on the use of research; and 5) views about College services and resources. The in-depth interviews with chief police officers also covered experience of working with universities through commissioning or undertaking research.

#### *Status of research in decision-making*

Baseline findings are reported in full elsewhere<sup>54</sup>, however, in brief, interview findings showed that *research*<sup>55</sup> was cited as one of many factors affecting decision-making. Other influences included force intelligence and data analysis – for example 'demand' with respect to resource allocation, practice-based 'evidence' such as national guidance from Home Office, NPCC<sup>56</sup> or HMIC<sup>57</sup>, public opinion and professional judgement. Most (72%) survey respondents reported at least one occasion during the previous year where research evidence had affected how they had allocated resources. Over half (57%) felt that research evidence played an important role in their day-to-day decision-making, however, just over a quarter stated that they rarely (26%) or never (3%) used research evidence to inform their decisions about police or operations. Survey respondents also highlighted the importance of experience and professional judgement (81%) as influencing their decision-making, as well as 'local' information (80%) and input from colleagues (77%).

#### *Barriers and challenges*

Common criticisms were made about the excessive length and clarity of academic research, but also its applicability to practice; there was a perception that research often lacked

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<sup>54</sup> Hunter et al (2015)

<sup>55</sup> Research was defined as any published research (including 'grey' literature such as internal reports, working papers, technical reports, conference proceedings, student theses) on the effectiveness of a particular policy, intervention, tactic or approach which aims to reduce or prevent crime.

<sup>56</sup> The National Police Chiefs Council is the successor body to the Association of Chief Police Officers.

<sup>57</sup> Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

contextual relevance, which reduced its credibility amongst practitioners. Nearly half of survey respondents felt that research findings were unclear and full of jargon (48%), and a third believed research lacked clear enough messages to make it usable (34%). Few interviewees reported confidence in their ability to assess the quality of research. Four out of five (81%) survey respondents had not received training or support around the use of research evidence in the previous year and confidence in one's ability to appraise the quality of research evidence was significantly associated with having studied to at least degree level.

Time capacity was frequently mentioned as a barrier to engaging with research. For example, whilst many interviewees thought that keeping abreast of new research was important to their role, it was also considered to be a luxury in their time-poor working lives. In addition, budget cuts were reported as reducing organisational capacity for research. Access to sources of research evidence was also limited; only a third of survey respondents felt able to keep up-to-date with research evidence on policing and crime reduction (34%) and the most common source for regularly obtaining information about research was via a general web search such as Google (86% of survey respondents).

Views about the organisational emphasis given to research varied. Most interviewees reported an increasing emphasis on this, sometimes mentioned in the context of better targeting of resources. A large minority (44%) of survey respondents stated that evidence-based approaches were promoted by their organisation, however, over half felt there was no organisational weight given to research evidence in decision-making (51%) and few felt informed about the research evidence supporting the introduction of new policies and procedures to reduce crime. Many of these organisational barriers and challenges were also raised by participants in focus groups and pilot training activities conducted as part of the commissioned programme.<sup>58</sup>

#### *Working with universities*

Among the interviewees, experience of commissioning research was relatively common, although the focus of the studies being commissioned varied widely. So too was drawing upon local university students to conduct research. A frequent criticism, of research, however, was that it took too long to complete and was out of kilter with the faster-paced decision-making required in policing.

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<sup>58</sup> Fleming, Fyfe and Wingrove (2016 a & b)

### *Expectations of the College*

In 2014, there was a lack of knowledge about the particulars of the WWCCR amongst interviewees and only 12 per cent of survey respondents reported being aware of it, although they did have some clear expectations of the College. Of note was the importance of its 'reach' and ability to be relevant to operational as well as senior staff. Suggestions were made about improving the marketing of College services and products, including, demonstrating local relevance when disseminating research; simplifying and increasing the accessibility of the College and emphasising research competency in professional development. A key message was that the College needed to establish research-based practice as "*here to stay*", rather than a fleeting "*fad*" for policing and crime reduction.

During the subsequent two or so years, much has happened to develop the WWCCR and the various 'push' and 'pull' strategies for engagement with research that the WWCCR promotes (described in Chapters 1 and 2). In 3.2 we present findings from the survey and interviews with chief officers and PCCS undertaken during 2016 and early 2017 to identify some shifts since 2014 in how research is accessed, used, promoted and valued.

### **3.2 Key findings in 2016**

We have carried out trend analysis of the 'before' and 'after' surveys to examine changes in responses by the senior officer samples in the two years. Whilst there are clear signs of a shift, and several statistically significant changes, we stress that the surveys are subject not only to sampling error, but also to sample bias, as the respondents were self-selecting, and it seems likely that people interested in, and positive towards, evidence-based practice would be more inclined to take part than others<sup>59</sup>. As the 2016 sample of senior officers was much smaller than in 2014, sample bias may be larger. Thus the survey findings should be interpreted with care.

Though it would obviously have been desirable to have more reliable survey data to set beside our qualitative findings, the reader should bear in mind that our in-depth interviews were carried out with interviewees who had been selected precisely because they were well-informed to reflect on changes relating to evidence-based practice.

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<sup>59</sup> Three quarters of forces provided respondents of senior rank for the survey, typically with between one and four respondents per force. However, a single force provided 14 respondents, accounting for 21% of the total sample of senior officers.

### 3.2.1 The status given to research

There has been some shift since 2014 in how interviewees discuss the status of research in their organisations. This includes more references being made to research (defined in the broadest sense and including research on specific interventions, on policies and management styles) having informed decision-making in the previous 12 months, in their own accounts of the importance given to research by their force but also in the number of instances where forces were reported to be actively involved in research.

The before-and-after surveys contained a suite of questions about evidence use, and these indicate a shift towards greater use, and imply that greater importance is now attached to doing so. Table 3.1 shows proportions of senior officers who never or rarely used various evidence resources.

**Table 3.1: Changes in evidence use by senior officers: percent “never or rarely” using**

	2014	2016
Never or rarely used academic consultants	43%	31%*
Never or rarely used academic journal articles	69%	56%*
Never or rarely visited Campbell Collaboration website	93%	79%*
Never or rarely made use of material from the Society of Evidence-Based Policing	84%	58%**

Notes:

1. Maximum sample sizes were 655 in 2014 and 67 in 2016, with varying but very low rates of attrition in different questions.
2. ‘\*’ and ‘\*\*’ denotes statistical significance at the 5% and 1% level respectively

There were also changes in the importance that senior officers said they attached to evidence use, although these did not quite reach statistical significance. The proportion saying that research evidence played an important part in their day-to-day decision-making grew from 57% to 67%, and the proportion saying that research evidence had changed their working practices increased from 68% to 78%.

In 2014, research was mentioned as one of a number of factors that influenced decision-making but few of our interviewees, when pushed, were able to cite a specific piece of research that had shaped policy or practice. These other influences persist, including financial

considerations, professional judgement and, in the case of the PCCs, the importance of public opinion remained a strong influence:

Well, I think a great deal, and as I said, very often, the evidence conflicts with the public opinion, which I also have to take account of. So you walk a line between the two sometimes. WWY3-33

However, interviewees, especially from the police, were more forthcoming in 2016 in offering examples of useful research. These included research on particular interventions such as predictive policing and body-worn video cameras for officers, on policies for dealing with vulnerability of arrestees or complainants but also reference to research that had affected the management or organisational tone of a force:

*Have any operational or strategic decisions in the past 12 months been guided by research evidence?*

Yes, quite a lot actually. I've just invested a considerable sum of money in body-worn video for the force, a couple of million pounds. That was borne out of a piece of work we did with Cambridge University. WWY3-21

I now understand the concept of perceived organisational fairness, so everything I do in my interactions with my staff in public pronouncement, I actually make sure that I'm feeding and nudging that concept of perceived organisational fairness. There is a perception of organisational fairness; everything else flows from that. WWY3-04

One interviewee, from a force which has invested significantly in building research capacity through collaboration with other forces and academic institutions, explained their "integrated" process for how research is used to inform practice, using the example of a review of force strategy for policing the night-time economy (NTE):

With our partnership, we have commissioned all sorts of things..., including literature reviews and experiments and trials and evaluations. So one of the things we asked them to do was around the NTE and looking at what the evidence base is around what works in terms of policing a NTE.... [Based on that] we then undertook an audit across Force to say against What Works evidence, what is it that Force is doing around NTE?... if you take that whole approach from actually we understand that NTE policing takes up a lot of our time and resource... We do specific campaigns around it, so we wanted to understand the evidence base. We then understood what that evidence base meant in the local context. And off the

back of that, we are evaluating an approach that we are using to understand whether it makes any difference. WWY3-11

Interviewees' perceptions of the importance placed on research by their organisation has also shown some movement since 2014, with more accounts describing a more central or foundational position for research within force strategy:

More generically we have an evidence-based philosophy as a force so any business change from a performance point of view within the Force then there is an expectation that will be based on the 'what works' philosophy. WWY3-08

For us it's really started to become far more embedded around making sure that all our approaches to operational matters are as effective and as efficient as they can be. And I think that the evidence-based approach helps us with that enormously. WWY3-05

The before-and-after surveys show clear movement in the perceptions of senior officers of their organisations' support for evidence-based practice, with respondents in 2016 seeing their organisation supporting the use of evidence to a much greater extent. Four of the seven items show statistically significant changes in a positive direction.

**Table 3.2: Change in perceived organisational support for EBP: percent agreeing**

	2014	2016
Decisions often have to be made quickly which makes it difficult to consider research evidence.	72%	60%*
There is no organisational emphasis on the use of research evidence to inform decision-making.	75%	48%*
My organisation promotes collaboration with research institutions, such as universities, in order to generate and share evidence-based learning.	25%	73%**
My organisation provides sufficient support and resources to implement evidence-based practice.	25%	33%
My organisation encourages and supports its workforce to gain knowledge and understanding from research evidence.	31%	49%**
When new policies and procedures are introduced, I am made aware of the research evidence which supports them.	16%	15%
Research evidence based approaches are promoted by influential figures or leaders in my organisation	44%	46%

Notes:

1. Maximum sample sizes were 655 in 2014 and 67 in 2016, with varying but very low rates of attrition in different questions.
2. '\*' and '\*\*' denotes statistical significance at the 5% and 1% level respectively.

### **3.2.2 Collaboration: Police and academic partnership**

In 2014, experience of commissioning research was already quite common amongst interviewees. Chief Officers had commissioned work in a variety of areas (e.g. tactical, organisational and police service consumer surveys), and were also more involved in commissioning academic research compared, to either PCCs or CSPs. All three groups, however, drew upon university students to conduct research. Commissioning ‘cheap’ local students was seen by many interviewees as an area ripe for development, especially in an increasingly austere financial climate.

By 2017 the collaborative landscape appeared markedly different than in 2014. This was, in part, due to the Police Knowledge Fund (PKF) (see Chapter 2). Thirty-nine police forces in collaboration with 30 universities and partners had been awarded a share of the £10 million Knowledge Fund (see Appendix B for the full College of Policing list of HEFCE funded collaborations) for two year projects from 2015 to 2017<sup>60</sup>. Of the 30 chief officer interviewees in year 3, all but one was part of a PKF Partnership; some were involved in more than one partnership. In addition to the PKF projects, interviewees discussed a number of other research collaborations; the scope, funding arrangements and range of partners was diverse<sup>61</sup>. Research projects ranged in design from large scale randomised control trials (RCT) to smaller qualitative pieces of work. Collaborative projects and partnerships with universities were at a local, regional and trans-regional level. Funds had been secured from a variety of sources including: The Economic and Social Research Council, the Higher Education Funding Council for England and Wales, charitable trusts, foundations, the Home Office (e.g. Innovation Fund) and various European funding bodies. One of the few really large differences between ‘before’ and ‘after’ surveys related to collaboration with researchers: 25% of senior officers said in 2014 that they were encouraged to collaborate with research institutes, a figure that had grown to 75% in 2016.

While PCCs were co-signatories of the PKF applications, involvement in the projects was variable amongst the PCC interviewees. They were generally aware of the bids in their force area and a few were able to provide a description of the work being undertaken, but overall the PCCs seemed to have had limited or no involvement in these collaborations.

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<sup>60</sup> These projects are subject to a national evaluation at the end of the funding period.

<sup>61</sup> One indicator of the range of research projects being undertaken by the police, academics and partners can be found on the College of Policing Research Map. <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Research-Map/Pages/Research-Map.aspx>

### *The benefits of collaboration*

Interviewees highlighted benefits derived from working in partnership with academics and researchers. These included forging long-term relationships with partners from outside the policing world, the opportunity to engage in work with a “critical friend”, new knowledge gained from viewing policing dilemmas through a different lens and the advantages of “academic rigour”:

One of the benefits is that it's about developing relationships, be it at an individual, institutional, or regional level. Now we have academic overlay in what we're doing, it's established a relationship which will grow and develop. WWY3-19

I do think we feel that we get a real benefit. When I talk to some of the people who are engaged in this collaborative work they're just inspired by it. Some of them will say, “It's been that moment for me where I've found myself”...It's just really inspirational for them. WWY3-18

I suppose in some ways the police are well meaning amateurs in terms of research; I mean some officers did research but not on the scale that the universities are currently doing it and not with the same academic rigour that is required. We're now talking to pro-vice-chancellors, to research groups in universities. WWY3-02

Interviewees also spoke about associations with universities creating opportunities for officers wishing to develop their careers, gain further skills or study for a structured academic qualification such as a Masters or PhD; building capability was one of the core objectives of the PKF. So despite the economic uncertainties, several interviewees talked about their home force investing in ‘bite-sized’ academic training courses for officers, academic placements and secondments and funded Masters and PhDs. Continued commitment to funding staff development was discussed in terms of recognising the changing role of policing:

*Are you still sending all your superintendents to the Management School at [University]?*

Yes, we still do that. Honestly, they absolutely adore it. Actually I think the staff at the University really enjoy it too because they've got people who are mature students who are engaged, with plenty of life experience, they have a real commitment to work hard and to deliver. I think it's something that's really aided our approach to a new style of leadership, we're just more open-minded, more compassionate, certainly very concerned about the morale, the motivation and the wellbeing of our staff. WWY3-19

I think we've got to recognise now the complexity of policing, particularly the challenges that I'm posing to my staff; for example, understanding [aspects of psychology], so all our staff have been trained by [university] in this ...to understand how a victim [reacts when in terror]. People don't always do what the received wisdom would say. Albeit it's tricky to do this, it's pivotal. We've just got to make sure that whatever stuff is out there, we actually engage with it and implement it. WWY3-04

The extract below describes efforts to ensure return on investment in further degree education for officers, in terms of 'harnessing' the knowledge gained. This was also a theme in our interviews with Evidence Champions<sup>62</sup> who reported involvement in coordinating officers' degree studies, for example matching officers' degree or masters' projects with force research interests and developing systems for feeding learning from research undertaken by officers into practice.

We are just about to advertise some places on a Master's course... We've managed to find some funding. What we are trying to do is create longevity, so those people who successfully apply and then complete that qualification we'll use them to be a network... to support each other. I think in the past we have probably supported maybe two people to go on courses such as the Cambridge Masters. I think what we need to do is look at the support that we provide for them, once they have completed it, how do we harness the knowledge they have got? WWY3-05

### *The challenges of collaboration*

Engaging in collaborative work was also challenging. Embedding research into policing is very much in its infancy and many of the partnerships that interviewees spoke about had been running for less than five years. Thus, alongside the benefits described above, there were difficulties, including continued resistance to research among some police officers, problems with presentation of research (see barriers below), the time required for research to produce useable results and the challenge of turning theory into practice. While these were often described as frustrating, none were viewed as insurmountable.

Compared to 2014, there was more discussion about the compromises required from both sides – police and academics - to achieve more constructive collaboration:

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<sup>62</sup> Hunter et al. (2016)

The service culturally needs to be a bit more grown up about how it receives, thinks about and then builds on research. WWY3-19

I think the police have got to try and make more of an effort to try and step towards some of the complexity that research brings and academia needs to step towards how evidence is presented to a fundamentally operationally task-orientated police service. So there needs to be a coming-together, rather than just blaming one side or another. WWY3-24

There was also some appreciation shown of the limitations and nuance of research findings and the capacity for offering any definitive instructions for practice:

I suppose for us as hard-nosed cops, we always want to see a very clear outcome from whatever academic research we embark upon and yet I think at times we've just got to manage our own expectations that it won't always be possible to come out with some sort of definitive proposals, clear recommendations, "If you do this, this will happen." ... WWY3-18

Interviewees' accounts highlighted the view that collaboration was more than just providing data or access to populations to academics for RCTs – a criticism made of researchers raised in baseline interviews. Rather, it was also about professionalising and 'future-proofing' policing and equipping police officers with the many skills they will need to police an increasingly complex environment.

The chief officers not only discussed interest in research about reducing crime, but also about new ways of problem-solving, managing increasing demands with decreasing budgets, and about the changing face of crime. Other subjects, including understanding and dealing with vulnerability, staff well-being, and how to be organisationally just, also featured in their discussions about research – both as examples of current involvement in research and interests for future work.

### ***3.2.3: Dissemination and reach***

The baseline interviews and survey presented a clear view that research-based practice in the police was largely a concern of senior ranks - sometimes officers' interest in research was viewed quite cynically as a route to promotion - and the concept had no significant currency with operational officers. Promoting evidence-based practice to the frontline was also seen as crucial to the What Works programme so a topic of interest for these second interviews was

views about the current reach of evidence-based policing, including details about any efforts to promote, translate and disseminate research within force areas.

The influence of leadership in either promoting a force culture open to research or indeed one which suppresses innovation, was one interview theme. Transformation<sup>63</sup> activity, the College leadership review and its mandate for leadership style were mentioned by police interviewees as affecting changes to the traditional ways of policing, all of which could create a better environment for evidence-based practice to develop.

The issue of generational change in leadership was raised, including a view that chief officers who remain unconvinced by evidence-based practice would inevitably retire. This alongside various proposed changes to entry requirements and a reduced rank structure being proposed as part of Transformation, would have positive effects in the longer-term on police attitudes to research. Such developments would help to create a less authoritarian organisation which in turn could allow for greater reflection on practice and create opportunities for experimentation and innovation:

There are probably too many chief officers around the country with an unconscious contempt for research, who don't read very much, who hold a professional judgment, intuitive view of the world and because they're senior they can stamp their authority and it stifles progress and innovation. What we're trying to create [in force] is an entrepreneurial, action research environment where people are allowed to fail, to try things out and we will learn more quickly because we are continually trying stuff out and being innovative and creative and sometimes we can go academically robust RCT or with the academic rigour of a PhD. Sometimes, we'll do a trial for a few weeks to try stuff out. WWY3-08

Policing has a mind-set of very hierarchical, do as you're told, follow these rules and society has moved away from that. Kids are taught to question and people are supposed to say, "I want to understand that better." Policing has always operated on a hierarchical structure based on a rank that says, "You do this, protect yourself, tick the box and follow the rules." That is no longer fit for purpose. WWY3-02

The top-down support of the chief officer team remains essential for encouraging an interest and commitment to evidence-based practice:

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<sup>63</sup> £26 million over the next 3 years to 28 policing projects designed to help transform the police service for the future. This includes monies for developing digital technologies and innovative crime reduction initiatives.

[It's dependent on chief officers], and I undoubtedly have been blessed by having two who are really supportive of EBP, I think if you don't, if you haven't got that support from top down, that absolutely will fundamentally make or break your use of evidence-based practice. WWY3-12

While this should not be over-stated and there seems to be inconsistency in how the term is understood, there were some indicators of widening appeal, with accounts, for example, of more regular use of the term "evidence-based" and of chief officers being challenged about the evidential basis of their decisions.

I think [EBP] has crept into [Force] lexicon now, so we are challenged. The unions will challenge us, our staff will challenge us: 'What's the evidence base? Why are you making that assumption? ... I wouldn't for a minute say it's embedded from chief constable to probationer, but as an organisation it's common for us to discuss evidence-based practice. WWY3-21

What I've noticed over the last couple of years is the way that the term 'evidence-based' has sort of crept into mainstream policing. You hear an awful lot now, not just in my force, but when I go to regional bits of work, people talking about the 'evidence-base'. WWY3-09

Compared with 2014, Interviewees were able to provide more concrete examples of how they were disseminating or translating research throughout the force. This included:

- modifications being made to forces' intranet to allocate space for promoting research and links to the products of the WWCCR, including the Crime Reduction Toolkit;
- use of digital technologies – for example hand-held devices – to provide easy access to the internet/intranet to all frontline officers;
- holding 'research cafes' (see Case Study for details) for neighbourhood and response officers to initiate discussion about local problems and possible solutions;
- two-day accredited training course on evidence-based practice, introducing the concept and how that might be applied on a local basis. At time of interview 200 police constables and support staff had completed the course in this force;
- A planned master class programme on evidence-based practice for neighbourhood officers which will also signpost to routine sources of evidence;
- targeting of 'relevant' evidence to frontline staff to help demonstrate its usefulness and applicability to everyday practice, as described below:

Most of the changes that we are talking about require a cultural change, a real shift in how people think or how people approach policing and for me we need that buy in on the frontline. That is why we have tried to focus on small interventions. I am pointing people in the direction of small interventions that just help them problem solve in their area so they can hopefully see a couple of small benefits from using evidence-based research which hopefully will then turn them into an advocate for it. WWY3-07

The dissemination of research was not exclusively a top-down endeavour and we were provided with several examples of more junior ranks initiating activities to develop force engagement with research:

Our problem-solving team are all members of The Society for Evidence Based Policing, and have formed a group of interested people, different ranks, disciplines, throughout the organisation. They're all signed up and we're actually having a conference in November. We have a sergeant...He's got a lot of credibility throughout the organisation and he does a regular bulletin for us all at different ranks and levels about what's happening, summarising research, etc., and he's been part of organising the conference. WWY3-22

Whilst the 2016 survey could readily identify respondents below the rank of Chief Inspector with a strong positive orientation to evidence-based practice, it was clear that there were very large differences between senior and other ranks, with the former tending to have more positive attitudes to, and usage of, research on a variety of measures. For example 63% of senior officers read academic journals, 63% located research on the College website and 36% used the CRT. Corresponding figures for other ranks were 32%, 38% and 11%. (All differences are highly statistically significant.)

Another important topic to mention here is the understanding and currency of the term *evidence-based practice* – we have stated a preference for the term evidence-informed practice to denote methodological breadth and avoid any narrow alignment with experimental research and the College is also suggesting a boarder approach of matching the best method to the research question.<sup>64</sup> Academic and policy debates about what counts as good evidence, especially the primacy often given to experimental research, is affecting how the idea of research is being received 'on the ground' and to some extent this is creating some division and confusion among practitioners, including a concern that EBP ignores or negates

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<sup>64</sup>At the time of writing, the College was writing a briefing paper to provide clearer definitions of terms such as 'research' and 'evidence', setting out the position of the College of Policing.

professional experience; a topic also highlighted through research with police officers undertaken by Consortium members engaged in designing training on the Crime Reduction Toolkit<sup>65</sup>.

For example, some interviewees, who were well versed in RCT methodology – and had been involved in experimental research either within their force or as part of Masters’ study – were more likely to see other methodological forms of research as less valid or useful. However, the limitations of the RCT were also noted in terms of applicability to current policing priorities and costs:

I think one of the difficulties with evidence-based policing really, is that it’s quite difficult, isn’t it, to have a trial or try to take a new approach when you’re balancing such big risks, particularly around safeguarding, domestic violence, modern-day slavery, child sexual exploitation. WWY3-09

Other interviewees worried that an overly rigid concept of research would discourage creative thinking and problem solving, de-value professional knowledge and experience and in turn affect perception of police ownership or co-production of research.

When I was studying, I was always told, when you’ve got a problem, apply the approach or approaches that will help to solve that problem or take it to the next stage. And I just think evidence-based policing seems to be almost – it seems to be quasi-religious that you will only do the control studies and nothing else... I think the reason some of our senior leaders turn away from it isn’t that they don’t value having a full and scientific understanding of something before they make that leap of faith. It’s just that it’s very often their thoughts, experience, knowledge seem to be, you know, considered secondary. WWY3-01

Do I believe in using research? Yes, but again it depends whether it is very formal academic research or less formal. Experience, past-history, case studies and research are all very important on both immediate and future decision- making, policies, etcetera. WWY3-05

There is also the obvious duality’ of meaning of ‘evidence’ for police which one interviewee raised as a lingering problem for the task of embedding further the concept of research in policing:

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<sup>65</sup> Fleming, Fyfe and Wingrove (2016a &b)

The police concept of evidence is a set of arcane rules within jurisprudence that says, “Things like hearsay aren’t allowed in giving evidence.” An academic definition of evidence is different to a criminal justice definition of evidence, so there’s still that lingering difference, that lingering duality in what evidence means. WWY3-04

### **3.2.4 Organisational facilitators and barriers**

We have discussed the role of leadership in setting the organisational tone and fostering interest in research and innovation (3.2.3). We have also noted how research capability is being developed though collaboration with universities and the beginnings of a more structured approach to how for example, police masters’ and doctoral research is aligned with and fed back into force policy and practice. However, there has been no change since 2014 in perception of the main *practical* barriers to greater engagement with research. Lack of time is still the most commonly mentioned problem for interviewees (both police and PCC) keeping up to date more routinely with the evidence base, and ‘austerity’ and limited resources continue to be organisationally challenging when trying to promote greater engagement with research and to build capability:

We’re pretty pressured day to day just keeping things going and running forward. Actually having space to sit down and think about what works, what doesn’t work, what we’d like to do and how we could do it would be real luxury. WWY3-34

I’m still really, really keen on it, and I’ll push it as much as I can in force. But, it’s going to be a long battle against the backdrop of the austerity cuts. WWY3-09

I think one of the problems we’re facing is that in a time of austerity, officer numbers mean that time for training days, reflections, briefings and proper understanding when studies are developed, whether that’s body-worn video or perpetrator-based domestic abuse programmes. Getting them to understand what the changes are, what we’re trying to achieve and measure, is both *ad hoc* and sometimes poorly informed because of how stretched we are. WWY3-24

The before-and-after surveys largely support this picture. There are small – but not statistically significant shifts in senior officers’ attitudes towards academic research and their capacity to exploit this, shown in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: Senior officers' attitudes towards research: percent agreeing**

	2014	2016
I lack the time to be able to seek out research evidence.	53%	50%
Academics are producing research that is relevant to practice.	55%	65%
Research evidence doesn't have clear enough messages for us to make it usable.	34%	32%
I am not well enough informed about research evidence to be able to tell the difference between good and bad research studies.	33%	27%

Notes:

1. Maximum sample sizes were 655 in 2014 and 67 in 2016, with varying but very low rates of attrition in different questions.

Related to this is an ongoing concern about the translation of academic research for policing and its presentation for the time-poor office (we discuss reactions to the Crime Reduction Toolkit below). With respect to CRT, the College has carried out user consultation and testing to try to improve 'translation' for practitioners<sup>66</sup>. This may well be improving over time with continuing police and academic partnership but academic language, verbosity and density of research reports and papers continue to be identified as a hurdle to greater engagement:

I've had research done and now there's a 220-odd page document, where you've really struggled to find what the proposal's recommendations are. So for me, I absolutely understand why you need that supporting material behind it, but just cutting it down. Because if I put more than a two-page article out, I'll tell you now, cops don't read it. If I put a five or six bullet point, half a page, generally it will be read. And the reason being is, you know, ever-increasing demand, people coming in at the beck and call of the radio. WWY3-29

There were also concerns about the relevance of research, especially in how it is presented to practitioner audiences and some acknowledgment of the incongruity between academic and practice needs. A continuing theme in the interviews – also stressed in 2014 – was the importance of making research locally applicable and how essential that is to gaining wider appeal among practitioners:

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<sup>66</sup> User Consultation on requirements of the CRT included discussion with Frontline Champions, PCSOs, National Crime Prevention Panel, Third Sector criminal justice charities and a polling exercise conducted at a policing conference at the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science. Group discussion with police officers, conducted by Jenny Fleming and Nick Fyfe as part of the work of the commissioned programme, also focused on the Toolkit. Cognitive user-testing was carried out by an external agency, Orangebus (May 2006: College of Policing Crime Reduction Toolkit, Usability Testing and Recommendations.)

The biggest challenges for me I think, is that the academic side has a kind of purist element to it. So their reports are written in a particular way, because they want to be reviewed or published. Actually, in a policing context, that is all very well, but one, we don't necessarily have time to read lots and lots of pages of reports, or necessarily understand all the statistical elements of quantitative analysis; but the big thing is, so what does this mean for [Force]? How does it apply to us locally? What should we do? What difference does it make? How do you apply it in the business that we work in? WWY3-06

Do we dedicate enough time to research? Probably not, but also I think that we need to find, and I really do mean we on this, within policing generally a way to make research more accessible and more proven to policing. Again that is a cultural shift, there are people within policing who are absolutely sold on research to provide the evidence of the way forward. Not at the exclusion of everything else of course, but those people are in a minority. WWY3-03

### **3.2.5 Messages to the College of Policing**

All police interviewees had heard about the WWCCR and the Crime Reduction Toolkit and even if most had not used the toolkit themselves in any detailed way, they discussed how other officers or PCC staff may be using it, how they have promoted it within their force or that links to the CRT had been inserted into force intranet. Police officer interviewees were most likely to be aware of the revised Authorised Professional Practice and least likely to be aware of the Research Map:

The What Works Centre, I try and make a point of talking about quite a lot and putting up slides, and waving my hand around when I get the opportunity in drawing people's attention to it, because that needs to be done. WWY3-19

I know my problem-solving team are on there [CRT]. What I think I've done with that is I've asked them the question, "What are you doing with that?" and they go, "We've got it, ma'am. We're using it. This is what we're using to help us do the work that you're asking us to do. WWY3-23

If someone is doing a piece of work to try and prevent or tackle certain things, then there's almost like a standing question about, "Have you referred to the Crime Reduction Toolkit? Have you looked at that? If you haven't, why not?". WWY3-02

Some of the PCCs who were interviewed in 2016, felt the College (and its products) were too police-focused and that little had been done to broaden its appeal to engage with the PCCs:

Well, firstly, I think they should engage with PCCs more. I think they ignore us and their focus is around the operational side. I don't think the College understand the potential, necessarily with PCCs. I don't think they've really focussed on that. WWY3-32

Contact with the College varied, with some interviewees perceiving it to be a distant entity with little established presence in their day-to-day policing experience, and others reporting close and productive links with members of College staff.

In certain areas we've got quite a lot of contact with it. It seems to be not with the College as such. It seems to be the specific individuals in the College. WWY3-17

Maybe sometimes the College has to feel as if it has to go out more into the North of England, I would say. WWY3-02

We should feel like we are part of the College of Policing, and I think at the moment it feels that the College of Policing is a separate body. WWY3-05

There were two consistent messages for the College regarding its role in promoting research and evidence-based practice.

#### *1. Publicise the successes*

A common response to our question about what the College could do to improve engagement with research was to promote and publicise where evidence-based practice had been successfully applied – to hammer home 'live examples' of its impact on policing practice. This also links into the comments about research needing to be locally relevant to engage practitioners and "gain traction in the service". Although the College has been developing a programme of stories and vignettes to highlight the application of research<sup>67</sup>

It's about demonstrating the work of research. It's all very well pumping the email out but you almost need someone to showcase something that they've done that works, that gains traction in the service. WWY3-06

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<sup>67</sup> <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/RU2Drunk.aspx>  
[http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/S\\_Black.aspx](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/S_Black.aspx)  
[http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/Hot\\_spots\\_RCT.aspx](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/Hot_spots_RCT.aspx)

I have always found that once someone hears that something has worked or has been helpful, or has made their life easier, suddenly word gets round and that becomes so, so popular. Now that's what I would like to move it on to. I think that there's a myriad of things, that whenever there's opportunity to get the message out there...I do like the idea of successes, if you like. You know, so, "This has been successful; let's spread that word so that people know." WWY3-10

This was also recognition that while there may be a lot of research activity across the country, there is also a lack of knowledge about what might be happening in other forces and therefore there is the risk of duplication of effort. The College is a national repository for this kind of information. It can take the role of facilitator, to link those undertaking or interested in developing similar areas of research and also coordinate how the findings of research conducted in forces might be translated into national practice.

There is a lot going on but there was a lot of us there thinking, "Wow, we didn't know about this", now that is partly because of us, partly because we don't have the time that we should have. But equally as well it seems to be going on, not in isolation but not in full view. WWY3-01

This tendency for isolationism was noted by one interviewee as being a hangover from an earlier era:

In the past, forces have been very competitive about performance outcomes and therefore very reluctant to share what works or always seeking to find the new, best way of doing something. As a result, they'll be reluctant to be part of a bigger cohort of, "Let's find a new way of doing things." There's quite a culture of, "If it's not invented here, I don't like it." WWY3-22

## *2. Coherence*

The second related point was about the College's potential future role in coordinating or making clearer the ways in which evidence-based practice is being introduced across the service and the extent to which other bodies in policing and crime reduction are similarly focused on the importance of research and whether the message is being consistently endorsed:

One of the challenges I send back to the College is, you know, as a national centre around evidence based practice, if you like, what is your liaison with people such as HMIC, or NPCC?

You have got the College in the centre, you have got NPCC leads doing their own work across the country... You have got HMI inspecting the Forces. How does it all link up...have [you] got a coherent story to tell, can refer to, that they know meets the standards, they know it is compliant with APP, they know that it will meet the exam question when HMI come in, and it is in sync with what the NPCC leads are developing within their own steers of work WWY3-13

### **3.2.6 The drivers of EBP capability**

The final piece of analysis that we have carried out on the 2016 survey was some simple multivariate analysis designed to identify the predictors of evidence-based practice – or self-reported use of research evidence in decision-making. For the whole sample we constructed scales measuring three factors: self-reported practice of EBP (the ‘dependent’ variable that we aimed to predict); and two ‘predictor variables’ – self-reported capacity to use evidence and organisational support for evidence-based practice. Predictor variables additional to capacity and organisational support were: length of service; age; rank; and graduate status. We ran a linear regression analysis to identify the strongest predictors, and to rank these variables in order of predictive power.

The analysis identified only three predictive variables of evidence-based practice. The strongest predictor was, unsurprisingly, self-reported capacity to undertake evidence-based practice. The second was organisational support for evidence-based practice. The third was having a degree. None of the other variables – age, length of service and rank – were significant predictors. This analysis is of interest mostly for identifying factors that were *not* predictive of evidence-based practice. Age, rank and length of service were not associated with evidence-based practice. This finding is encouraging, because it suggests that support for the principles of evidence-based practice can be fostered at all levels in the organisation, and that it is in no sense something that characterises only those at the start of their careers. The finding that graduates are more supportive of EBP than others is not surprising, but it strongly suggests that if the police service is to move towards evidence-based practice the new graduate entry requirement is justified.

## 4. EMBEDDING EVIDENCE: A CASE STUDY

### Introduction

Across the police service there are a number of emerging 'evidence teams'<sup>68</sup> working alongside both local and regional partnerships; the overarching aim of these teams is to better inform police practice and decision-making by providing both senior and operational police officers and staff with the best available evidence. Most of the teams and their associated partnerships are recent. In 2014, our interviews with senior police officers and staff found only a small number of forces had or were developing their own evidence teams, many of which were situated within 'futures' or 'change and improvement' teams. Of those that were active, many were in the early stages both structurally and operationally; embedding evidence across and within forces appeared to be at an embryonic rather than fully developed stage.

In 2016/17 our interviews with chief officers found a shift in how interviewees discussed and used research (discussed in Chapter 3). There were more references to research informing decision-making and a greater number of instances of collaboration with academic partners and co-production of evidence. Disseminating evidence across and within forces was still, however, ad-hoc and often lacked a coherent strategy. To better understand the distance travelled since 2014 we decided to conduct a case study to examine the approach taken by one force towards embedding evidence in everyday practice. The force, which we have anonymised and referred to as Force A, covers an area of 2,000 square miles employing 5,000 police officers and members of staff. The force is split into three main policing areas. Each area is run by a Divisional Commander, under which a number of neighbourhood policing teams sit; each division is supported by a range of force-wide specialist departments.

As noted in Chapter One, there are recognised prerequisites needed to create an evidence-using culture. These include:

- organisational support and opportunity;
- encouraging motivation to engage with research; and
- ensuring officers are equipped with the capability and skills, including subject knowledge and capacity for critical thinking.

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<sup>68</sup> We have used the term 'evidence team' to refer to a group of officers, civilian staff and academics who work within the police service gathering, producing, co-producing and disseminating research evidence.

This case study provides an illustration of *one* approach as described by *one* force to embed evidence within and across the force and throughout the rank and police staff structure. It **is not an evaluation of the impact or effectiveness of the approach**, but a **description** by a range of Force A and PCC staff of the activities currently being undertaken to engender an evidence-using culture and create an environment where such an approach becomes the professional norm.

First, we examine how the organisational structure and governance of Force A is adapting, accommodating and promoting the gradual move towards evidence-based policing, we then discuss the measures being developed to promote evidence and enable officers to become consumers, critical appraisers and co-producers of evidence.

### **Embedding evidence at an organisational level**

Creating an organisational culture which values and embeds evidence was viewed as important by both senior officers and the PCC. One senior officer expressed the view that evidence should be an organisational *'thread'*, woven through the structure of the organisation. It should not be considered *'a luxury if we have time, or an after-thought'*. His view, which was shared by both the Chief Constable and the PCC, was that:

We want to be seen to be an organisation of individuals that learn, but that also make intelligent decisions. WWY3-CS08

In the last five years the senior command team has committed funds and supported a number of evidence building activities (mainly organised and undertaken by the EBR team), aimed at shaping policy and practice whilst also equipping officers with a greater awareness of the different types of evidence and where to access that evidence. Interviews with senior officers in Force A highlighted this commitment:

We got some money from our Police and Crime Commissioner last year to set up an evidence-based policing hub. It's got a full-time coordinator and a full-time academic, with a small team of staff who lead on evidence-based policing work in addition to their normal job. They are really focused on working their way through whatever is out there under whatever topic we might be thinking about. They have strong links with our learning and development department here. We appoint evidence-based policing champions, I think there's over 30 of them at the moment. We've set up and we encourage our staff to attend evidence-based policing cafés where they can just go along and have conversations with like-minded people...We assist them if they're looking to gain some educational qualifications. I do think the culture of the organisation is changing to be much more open. There's an evidence-based policing website on our own internal website that people can go

on and click and find whatever work is out there....It's part of the continuous professional development of staff. We're linking in with the College [of Policing] around the development of a force index or a research facility. We put events on, this year we had the first evidence-based champions event here at our headquarters. All of this goes onto our evidence-based policing Twitter account. We think we've got about 55 pieces of research going on amongst our staff at the moment at master's, PhD or commissioned research level. WWY3-CS09

Creating an organisational structure to help facilitate a change in officer attitude towards evidence was, however, very much the work of an enthusiastic Detective Chief Inspector (DCI), working with an academic from the local university. In 2012, the DCI and academic started working together on a small number of projects, some involved Masters students being provided with police data and others involved PhD placements within police departments. The arrangement provided the university with access to police officers, data and intelligence systems, and the police with a knowledge-base upon which evidence-based decisions could be taken. By 2015, the Evidence Based Research (EBR) team had formed. Working with the DCI were two inspectors, a senior community safety analyst, a full time administrator and a local academic. All of the police officers worked at the team in addition to their main responsibilities. In late 2015 the force submitted a proposal to the PCC requesting funds to enable the academic to be seconded, full-time initially, for a period of three years, to which the PCC agreed. The aim of the academic post was to:

- co-ordinate the work of the EBR team;
- assist in creating a database of past, current and future research projects (the 'organisational memory');
- harness work undertaken or developed across the force to ensure it is carried out with academic rigour and oversight;
- create links with universities; and
- represent the force (alongside other EBR team members) at the regional collaborative police research group.

The overarching aim of the team is "*to deliver a structure and process to assess, develop and manage evidence based research*". Interviewees, however, expressed the difficulties of accomplishing this without a 'place' in the organisational structure as highlighted below:

The biggest thing about evidence-based policing is embedding it within the constabulary, it's got to come from the top, if it doesn't come from the top no-one is going to listen... We [the EBR team] still need to find a place within the structure. What is currently going on is about putting a structure in place that means we/it are embedded within the organisation. To me that will be when the team becomes

a permanent fixture within the organisation. Otherwise it [the EBR team] will get lost. WWY3-CS04

### *Research strategy and governance*

Senior command staff appreciated the concerns of the team and recognised that without a place within the organisation and a senior officer championing their work, the team would not be 'seen' or taken seriously by officers and staff within the organisation. In an attempt to address this concern and embed the team within the force structure, an organisational tiered research strategy was drawn up by the EBR team and the senior command team. The strategy outlines at which tier of the organisation evidence can be embedded and the types of evidence most appropriate for each organisational tier. The tiered strategy outlines the potential to embed evidence at four levels:

- strategic;
- tactical;
- operational; and
- knowledge advancement.

At the strategic level research might be commissioned or sought regarding cyber-crime, vulnerability, legitimacy, change management or early action. At a tactical level the research areas covered include, improving force efficiency and effectiveness; at an operational level, the types of information sought would be at a 'what works' level, drawing on the literature or best practice both nationally and internationally, to assess whether the force policy is up-to-date and informed by the best available evidence. At a knowledge advancement level, research areas focuses on 'what is the evidence base behind what we do' e.g. why implement a zero tolerance policy for a particular problem, what is the evidence base behind our kidnap strategy etc. The strategy also outlines the potential for evidence to impact at an academic level, for example through PhDs, Masters, third year undergraduate study and literature reviews. Finally the strategy examines the data access required to deliver a satisfactory product for each level (whether the data needs to be anonymised or cleaned and whether access is restricted and to whom).

To ensure delivery of the strategy, senior officers developed an Evidence-Based Research Panel. The panel is chaired by the ACC, who is the advisor for all Strategic Research Priorities and is the Authorising Officer for Policy Change and Operational Implementation. Underneath the ACC sits the Research Panel, comprised of:

- a member of the EBR Team;
- head of Learning and Development;
- an academic partner (either a representative from a partner university or a member of the academic board of the regional police research group);
- an operational representative;
- a subject matter expert (this can be a non-police or police practitioner, a researcher or an academic); and
- an evidence-based policing co-ordinator.

The activities developed and managed by the EBR Team are varied and far-reaching; in an attempt to capture the range and volume of work being carried out, the EBR team document all research projects, pilots, literature reviews, educational courses attended by staff and any collaborative work being undertaken. The aim of documenting evidence in this way is to create an organisational memory, which is accessible by anyone working for the force and exists at a force level rather than at an individual level. In essence, it is an entity in its own right rather than an entity tied or associated to an individual. To ensure a force-wide coherent approach is adopted, all research proposals and ideas must fulfil at least one of the following criteria:

- Linked to the Constabulary's and/or OPCC's priorities;
- Related to the Constabulary's organisational requirements;
- Providing added value to the wider community;
- Related to a topical theme or current initiative within policing;
- Requested by a specific business area lead to provide detail required for their decision-making and future delivery.

### **Building capability at a force level**

Force A described using a number of approaches to encourage officers to engage with research at a force, local and individual-level, the aim of which is to provide officers with a menu of evidence possibilities. At a strategic level, Force A is part of an ambitious three-year European Union, Horizon 2020 funded study involving 18 partners across eight countries. The project aims to examine types of good practice which enforcement agencies and communities need to adopt to promote effective community policing. At a regional level Force A is part of a recently established collaboration of eight universities and 11 forces, which is a respected and

established regional group. Much has been written by many of the members regarding the co-production of knowledge and the challenges and benefits of partnership work.

As part of the regional group, Force A works with one of the participating universities examining the joint work of social services and the police. Two of the EBR team also represent the force at the regional meetings and events held by the consortium. Staff at the EBR hub were enthusiastic about the regional collaboration but realistic in their view that unless operational officers are directly involved in the force-level projects there is little likelihood of patrol, neighbourhood or specialist officers even knowing of the existence of these projects. Whilst these projects may not engage local officers, at a strategic level officers and staff are being exposed to new European funding bodies and possible future partners.

### **Building capability at a local level**

To build capability at a local level, Force A described a hub and spoke model, the EBR team acting as the hub, their initiatives the spokes. The current 'spokes' in Force A include:

- Bite-sized modules available from the Open University (OU) website;
- Courses available at Cambridge University targeted at infusing policing practice and thinking with evidence;
- Collaborative small-scale research projects with local universities;
- Individually funded educational courses (Masters and PhDs);
- A University management course for superintendents;
- Evidence champions;
- Evidence/practitioner cafés (described below);
- Commissioned literature reviews;
- The force evidence-based twitter page; and
- An intranet site with links to 'evidence' sites.

#### *Collaboration with evidence producers*

Force A is part of two PKF bids, one with the University of Cambridge "Promoting Tipping Points for Evidence-Based Policing: An International Centre of Excellence in Post Graduate Police Education and Training" the other with the Open University's "Centre for Policing,

Research and Learning". The two collaborations offer training to police officers<sup>69</sup> on interpreting and applying evidence to everyday situations. In addition, the Open University offers officers a range of open access 'bite-sized' educational resources, which are informal short courses aimed at police professionals. The OU collaboration also provides advice on setting-up and running evidence cafés (see below). Staff at the EBR team encourage officers, particularly those in neighbourhood policing teams, to visit the Open University site to enrol on their short modules.

At the time of the research Force A also had seven projects running with local universities, one carried out by a university research department, three carried out by Masters students, and the remainder part of student PhD studies. Topics under investigation included: the effect of the rules of disclosure on financial investigations; the attitudes, values and beliefs of police recruits; intimate partner violence and victim engagement with the police.

#### *Creating access: resources available at a local level*

Given the time pressures that many operational and neighbourhood officers face, the force intranet is a useful platform from which officers can access a range of evidence sites and resources. Force A's intranet site provides links to the force evidence-based twitter account, the College of Policing WWCCR and the OU bite-sized module page. The aim is to offer officers the opportunity to dip in and out of evidence sites as and when they have the time. To further enable access Force A was in the process of rolling-out provision of hand-held devices to operational officers, thus creating access to a range of information resources whilst an officer is out and about.

#### *Evidence champions and cafés*

Evidence champions have the potential to be an essential component of knowledge transfer; they are practitioners who act as a mediator between the researcher and other practitioners, helping to promote and filter evidence into viable policy and practice. Evidence champions can assist in promoting evidence and assuring officers that it has relevance across the rank and staff structure. In 2015 there were a small number of evidence champions in Force A, who were neither a coherent group nor a group with a strategy on being effective intermediaries or role models. By 2017 the network of research enthusiasts was better established, and with a greater sense of direction, whose activities were coordinated with the work of the EBR team. Two of the force champions were evidence team staff. One of the evidence champions described the situation in 2017 as follows:

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<sup>69</sup> The two collaborations complement one another in that the OU offers courses across the rank structure, whilst the Cambridge courses are targeted at senior officers or those with a first degree.

The evidence champions are now fairly embedded in the team and that's movement over the past 12 months. What you'll find in this Force and others is that [the evidence champion network] has grown organically, we're a strong example of that. You have disparate people doing their own thing, trying to serve EBP and slowly we've radiated toward each other and formed what is effectively a team but at one point we were all off doing our own thing. WWY3-CS02

Staff at the EBR team were very aware that operational officers have little or no time to gather, read, digest and reflect on the available evidence and research. Much of their work is either spent out in the community or completing paperwork. For operational officers, reading research or gathering evidence is very low on their list of priorities, and seeking evidence falls in the *'if it doesn't get counted it doesn't get done'* basket. Asking a colleague's advice is an operational officers 'go to' research resource, as it is considered to be the quickest, easiest and most reliable route to problem-solving. To address the lack of time and officers' inertia and cynicism at seeking out evidence, the EBR team, with the assistance of the OU, facilitated their own local evidence cafés.

Evidence cafés<sup>70</sup> were set up by the Centre for Policing Research and Learning, at the Open University and are hosted at (PKF) consortium member police forces. The idea that underpins the cafés is to translate research into practice and to facilitate a three-way flow of information between the practitioner (in this case police officers and staff), the café facilitator and the OU centre's online learning resources.

In the last year, staff at the EBR team have run two *'Evidence Cafés'*. The cafés are led by 'a knowledge exchange expert', which in Force A has been the hub's academic or force evidence champion. The aim of the cafés is to help officers to problem solve by using evidence, to direct officers to evidence sources and what works documents and to share ideas. Whilst the cafés are led by the academic/evidence champion, they are intended to be informal group discussions where each officer/staff member feels able to contribute. During the café, officers will be shown a range of learning resources they can use that are relevant to the problem they are trying to answer. After the café officers are able to follow-up with free 'bite-sized' modules and accredited courses available to them on the OU site. The aim is that by connecting officers to both online free resources and practical help via the cafés it will increase their awareness and understanding of evidence-based practices and equip them with the knowledge of where to go to find evidence. Informal feedback provided to the EBR team has been that officers

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<sup>70</sup> Evidence cafés are loosely based on the format of the worldwide café Scientifique movement, a movement which started in 1998 in Leeds. The idea behind the cafés was to provide informal venues where interested people can exchange knowledge about science. Anybody who is interested can attend.

have enjoyed attending the first two cafés and have accessed the OU modules. As one officer put it:

For me the biggest value that has come from that relationship isn't necessarily from the research they've produced, it's the help with the learning and development and the continuous professional development, and the analytics that they provide, the research is valuable, don't get me wrong. We're now rolling out evidence cafes, they've helped us a lot. WWY3-CS02

One final initiative undertaken by the EBR team has been to commission Masters and PhD students, research volunteers and serving officers to conduct short (4,000 word) literature reviews on a range of issues. The reviews tend to be commissioned on areas the force either has no evidence for or areas the force is planning work on. Reviews have been conducted on issues as diverse as:

- domestic violence;
- female genital mutilation;
- what evaluation work is available on multi-agency public protection arrangements;
- digital forensics;
- cyber-crime;
- honour based violence in the Asian community;
- forced marriage;
- how is confidence in the police measured; and
- games console forensics.

The benefit of commissioning these reviews is two-fold; the force receives a short review which can identify whether further work is necessary, and the reviews can be collated and placed on the force intranet for officers and police staff to read, thus adding to the force organisational memory of evidence. For the students, staff and volunteers who conduct the reviews, it allows them to gain experience of reviewing literature for a policing audience.

## **In conclusion**

There would appear to be numerous benefits and many challenges to embedding evidence using the 'top down bottom up' approach. Regardless of the number of initiatives being implemented in Force A, members of the EBR and senior command teams were realistic about

the journey ahead. In particular, they were aware of the hurdles that need to be cleared before many officers are convinced that evidence-based policing is not a passing fad, is not just for officers wanting promotion and that evidence is as pertinent to junior as it is to senior officers and staff. Changing the culture from one that relies on professional expertise to one that attempts to complement and infuse professional expertise with evidence, is a relatively slow process, however, it appears to be one which Force A wants to invest in. The view is that the EBR team and the work they coordinate is a necessity not a luxury:

My view is that it's [EBR team] absolutely not a luxury. Because of the challenges we face, we need to use whatever resources we have more intelligently, we need to deliver services more intelligently and we need to do this in partnership. We need to focus resources where they will make the most difference; in my view the evidence based team are the only way to make sure we deliver these services  
WWY3-CS07

What I've been attempting, through our organisational development work and the EBR team is to make it [evidence-based policing] a part of the lifeblood of the organisation, in the way that we recruit, the way that we think and in the way that we develop people. It's not a target, it's more to do with how we do things... To be a credible organisation and a learning organisation I think you need to be able to demonstrate that your decision-making is supported by evidence but isn't hindered by it. You need to understand the policing environment in which urgent decision-making may be required for command and control or vulnerability reasons, but you need to triangulate your processes, the development of your people, your partnerships, your IT infrastructure and everything else with a much sounder evidence base  
WWY3-CS08

## 5 CONCLUSION: DISTANCE TRAVELLED

This final evaluation report, has, we hope, given an account of the ‘distance travelled’ since 2014. Before discussing the finer details of what has been achieved and what remains challenging, it is important to highlight the various policy developments which will potentially, for the future, create a more enabling environment for evidence-based practice.

As part of the wider agenda for professionalising policing, entry requirements have been revised alongside the training curriculum for all ranks, which should now have evidence-based practice at its core. While this project is ongoing, the first stage - the police constable apprenticeship scheme - is being introduced in 2018. In their leadership review, the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) foregrounded evidence-based practice in their vision of policing and associated cultural and organisational changes<sup>71</sup>. The College of Policing has also set out a framework for professional development and encouragement of reflective practice, and engagement with the knowledge base<sup>72</sup>. Undoubtedly, the police service is continuing to give prominence to embedding evidence-based practice.

The implementation and effects of these developments and their impact in the long-term on evidence-based practice are for future evaluations. For the present, what can be said is that the foundations are being laid. In addition, the process for developing College guidelines is being updated and revised to ensure national police practice recommendations are drawn from the best available evidence.

In terms of creating the what works knowledge base for policing, work undertaken as part of the commissioned programme has identified, reviewed and coded over 300 existing systematic reviews of crime reduction interventions. Research findings have been summarised for practitioners through the Crime Reduction Toolkit. The CRT continues to expand and at time of writing holds information on 45 types of intervention. The EMMIE<sup>73</sup> system used to structure the web-based Toolkit has been developed to condense and translate the findings of meta-analyses. This aims to address practitioner concerns about local relevance of existing published research through its focus on *Mechanism*, *Moderator* and *Implementation*, which combines findings of randomised control trials with consideration of intervention context.

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<sup>71</sup> National Police Chiefs Council (2016)

<sup>72</sup> College of Policing (2015)

<sup>73</sup> EMMIE stands for effect, mechanism, moderator, implementation and economics.

In addition to documenting the development of outputs of the WWCCR, the evaluation has tried to assess how the 'what works' programme has been received by practitioners by identifying shifts in their accounts over time of how evidence is used and valued by their organisation. We have identified incremental changes, with an emerging consensus – among College and Consortium - that the impact of the work of the WWCCR will only be obvious in the longer-term. To summarise the main findings of our second round of interviews and surveys, we return to the *evidence-use mechanisms* defined by Langer, Tripney and Gough (2016) as a framework for assessing change. The key dimensions they identify relate to:

- Awareness about evidence and building positive attitudes to it
- Agreement between users and providers of evidence about priorities
- Access to evidence
- Skills in using evidence
- Interaction between users and researchers.

Baseline interviews and survey in 2014 and additional interviews conducted with Evidence Champions in the second year of the evaluation suggested that there was still only limited engagement with the WWCCR and the Crime Reduction Toolkit (although developing the CRT for practitioners was ongoing with the commissioning of cognitive testing during 2016). Research was ascribed some importance in decision-making by chief officers and PCCs but a range of other factors were given equal or greater weight, and when asked to give specific instances of where research had influenced practice, few examples were offered. Further, while senior police officers acknowledged the importance of engaging with research, they highlighted a variety of organisational barriers to this and were largely sceptical about how well ideas about evidence-based practice would be received by more junior ranks.

The interviews conducted in 2016/17 differed from these earlier investigations in several important respects. First, there was a shift in interviewees' accounts of the importance of research (defined in its broadest sense): they were more forthcoming with examples of research that had influenced recent resource or strategic decisions, interviewees in 2016/17, and were also much more likely to report their force's involvement in research, through collaboration with universities. Although not to overstate this, the chief officers felt that the term *evidence-based* was becoming more commonly used in 'police parlance' when discussing strategy and practice, and the surveys provide some evidence of a shift amongst senior officers in support for EBP principles. The potential for infiltration of research evidence

beyond senior officers' remit was also more evident with reports of various efforts being made to disseminate research to operational officers.

There were some indicators from College routine monitoring data of increased interest in the WWCCR microsite and Crime Reduction Toolkit in 2016 compared to the previous year but given that the micro-site and the CRT are publically available, numbers visiting remain low. These data also suggest interest is largely focused on a small number of the CRT's interventions.

*Agree – building a mutual understanding and agreement on policy relevant questions*

As we have reported previously, a main criticism of the CRT was the relevance of the interventions listed to current crime and policing concerns; it offered no response to the questions that the police service needed answering<sup>74</sup>. Common examples of immediate problems were how to deal with cybercrime and child sexual exploitation. However, in defence of the CRT, its contents reflect the current – quite limited – research knowledge base for crime reduction and are a first iteration, which will be expanded over time as further primary research is undertaken.

An important development here is the increased capacity for the police to influence the research agenda through the Police Knowledge Fund (PKF) and other policing and research partnerships. Most police forces are involved in a PKF partnership and feedback via interviews with chief officers suggest some clear benefits, not least increased communication and a better mutual understanding of co-working. The outcomes of those various collaborations will be hugely important in cementing future relationships and matching research to knowledge needs. PKF monies were for two years, ending in March 2017 so the ability to raise further funds for partnerships (and the availability of sources of funding) will influence their long-term impact.

There was also some evidence – via the chief officer interviews - of forces more consciously harnessing how officers' degree and doctoral studies were aligned with research needs and fed back into force practice.

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<sup>74</sup> See Fleming, Fyfe and Wingrove (2016 a-c).

### *Access to, and communication of, evidence*

We found that there had been changes since 2014 in how police officers get access to sources of evidence. These included adjustments being made to force intranet sites to provide links to the WWCCR and associated products (such as the Crime Reduction Toolkit), and the creation of dedicated web-pages for research on intranet sites. There were also reports of increasing use of digital technologies – such as hand-held tablet devices being rolled out across some forces – which allowed mobile internet access to operational officers.

Langer and colleagues (2016) recommend a “*cocktail of communication strategies*” as part of knowledge mobilisation and as noted in Chapter 2, there are now several evidence structures available to police, some of which predate the WWCCR, but have been or are being revised. These include for example, Authorised Professional Practice, but also primary research undertaken by the College and WWCCR, links and signposting on the microsite to international sources of research evidence and the WWCCR’s Research Map, which has been updated by the College and provides a directory of current academic research in the UK on a range of policing and crime areas.

The effects of improvements of access to information on uptake or level of interest cannot be ascertained with any confidence. However, even with arguably better access via the College and WWCCR, time capacity continues to be raised as a main barrier to engagement with research. Views about the way in which research evidence is communicated had not changed to any great extent, with many of our interviewees making similar complaints to those made in 2014 about length and complexity of academic research, and the failure of academics to translate findings usefully for a practice audience. This is despite the fact that the CRT and the EMMIE system were designed in response to these common practitioner criticisms and have been adapted in various ways in response to user testing. This includes a Quick Start Guide to help CRT users better understand the different components of EMMIE and how these relate to each intervention<sup>75</sup>.

Clearly part of the response to criticisms of this sort needs to be reshaping police expectations; but at the same time, our academic colleagues may need to listen harder to the message that the police are sending them.

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<sup>75</sup><http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/infographics/EMMIE/index.aspx>

Additionally, in terms of communication, we wish to stress that the term *evidence-based practice* or *evidence-based policing* is variously understood. Sometimes this is aligned with an exclusively experimental approach; from this perspective, other methods are considered less valid or useful, which in turn can seem to negate the importance of professional expertise in developing the knowledge base or conversely make research seem unfeasible because of difficulty of applying method or costs. We shall return to this issue later in the chapter.

*Skills – supporting decision-makers to develop skills to access and make sense of evidence*  
Building skills and capacity to critically appraise research findings has been another key task for the College and the WWCCR. The most significant development here since 2014 is the reform programme for the police entry training curriculum. The shift to graduate entry is of major importance, accompanied by the framework for professional development through officers' careers. Whether through degree-level apprenticeships, pre-entry policing degrees or in-service conversion courses for those who already have other degrees, the workforce should gradually transform into one that has real familiarity with the policing evidence-base. There is also arguably, greater motivation for engagement with research evidence because of the importance now being placed on demonstrating an understanding of research and evidence-based practice for career advancement.

Alongside these macro-level changes, the WWCCR and the College have, as part of the commissioned programme, developed and piloted training in evidence appraisal and application and continue to offer a series of smaller-scale opportunities for skills-building, including master-classes and research surgeries to discuss and develop research ideas. It will be important to ensure some consistency in terms of aims, content and linkage, across these various capacity building activities.

While many interviewees in both years noted the financial constraints as limiting their organisation's ability to fund further education for existing officers, the delivery of training or the supervision of police officers' master degree or doctoral research was included in some of the partnership projects. This was also promoted via the College Bursary Scheme, which offered a contribution towards tuition fees of up to £6,000 for those undertaking degree or post graduate study; 25 bursaries were awarded during 2016/17.

*Interact – facilitating interactions between decision-makers and researchers*

Collaboration between police and universities has seen a sea-change since the start of this evaluation. There is much more interaction than in 2014, and vastly more than in previous decades. The availability of various forms of funding has been an obvious form of stimulus

upon academics, as has the importance placed on practical impact by HEFCE<sup>76</sup> and the research funding councils. Police forces have also responded to the expectation that they should take evidence more seriously.

As noted, the PKF – coordinated by the College – has been a key mechanism for bringing together police and academic researchers. Cultivating academic partnerships was also a common activity reported by the Evidence Champions we interviewed in 2015. Other funding sources have also been significant, notably the Home Office Innovation Fund<sup>77</sup>, the ESRC and HEFCE, which provided a major grant for the N8 Consortium.

We highlighted in an earlier report, the considerable scope for the champions network to be developed as mechanism for facilitating interaction between researchers and decision-makers because such roles naturally attract the research enthusiasts within forces. The Evidence Champions Network is currently being reviewed by the College. Another important ‘broker’ is the Society for Evidence-Based Policing. Founded by a group of UK police officers in 2010 to increase the use of research to solve policing problems, it now has over 2,800 members, including its 750-member Australia-New Zealand affiliate and holds an annual conference to disseminate research.

## **The future**

We have been watching the development of the WWCCR for three and a half years and we end this final report with some more discursive observations that draw on findings gathered over the entire evaluation. These relate to:

- The future of the core function of the WWC – research synthesis
- The scope of any WWC for policing
- The best ways of structuring research synthesis
- Defining evidence and the relationship between research and professional judgement
- The location of the WWCCR within the College
- The WWCCR’s relationship to other WW centres
- The relationship between the WWCCR and local evidence hubs.
- The key target audiences for EBP within policing
- Sustainability.

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<sup>76</sup> Higher Education Funding Council for England

<sup>77</sup> Now rebadged as the Transformation Fund

### *The future for a policing WWC*

Our early assessments of the WWCCR were somewhat pessimistic. In the latter half of 2015 – when the web-based CRT was in its infancy – we found limited awareness of it, very little usage and much criticism of the narrow scope and value of the research summarised by the toolkit. Over the course of the evaluation we have become more optimistic. First, and obviously, the Crime Reduction Toolkit initially covered very few topics, and it inevitably looked slight. Now with coverage of over forty topics – and more in the pipeline – it is hard for the casual browser not to learn something new from using the web-tool. Secondly the scale of change in orientation towards evidence within the service – and especially amongst police leaders – has been marked, much increasing the demand for the sort of service that the Crime Reduction Toolkit can provide. And third, the announcement of the graduate entry qualification could potentially be a ‘game-changer’ in increasing the commitment to evidence-based practice. So on the one hand, we can now see a great deal of potential in the WWCCR’s research synthesis function developing into something that properly serves the needs of a workforce moving towards professional status. On the other hand, the professionalisation agenda is of such importance that in our view, there is no option but to invest in the further development of a formal evidence base that serves and supports professionalisation.

### *The scope of the WWCCR’s research synthesis function*

An important set of decisions facing the College – or any future custodian of the WWC – concerns the scope of subjects covered by the term “what works”. The centre was established with an explicit remit to focus on crime reduction, for perfectly understandable political reasons. Its location within the College, has *de facto* turned it into a policing WWC. At present, non-police users are few and far between.

Judged as a body that synthesises research evidence for policing, the WWCCR clearly needs to broaden its focus. Crime reduction is only one policing function. Public order policing is a core function, as is traffic policing (which ranges far beyond the policing of traffic offences). Then there is a wide range of emergencies which fall by default to the police to deal with, including dealing with missing persons, incidents associated with the mentally ill and with other vulnerable people, as well as risks presented by roaming animals and natural disasters, to mention only some. There is a clear pragmatic case for restricting the WWC’s remit to crime reduction in its early days, but it is hard to justify this as a long-term policy.

Several of our chief officer interviewees told us that the key areas of decision-making on which they would welcome more evidence were concerned less with crime reduction narrowly

defined, and more with *styles* of policing and *styles* of internal police management<sup>78</sup>. So far, the WWCCR has not embraced these issues, though in our view, there is an overwhelming case for doing so, at least in the middle term.

There are other decisions that flow from the focus of the WWC on the needs of policing. There are decisions to be made about the boundaries of the WWC's remit as it relates simply to crime reduction. Clearly it has already embraced topics of relevance to the workforce of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (previously NOMS) but if a freestanding WWC for justice is set up, there may be a need for setting clearer boundaries. We shall return to this below. Another consequence of the way in which the WWCCR is developing as a policing resource is that the interests of other institutions and organisations with a crime reduction remit or capability will be marginalised. Local authority community safety staff are not currently well-served by the WWCCR. And manufacturing bodies and other commercial bodies such as banks – that arguably play a central role in crime reduction – are currently not catered for whatsoever. It may not be for the College to offer a solution to these problems – but the need to address them is clear.

#### *Defining evidence and the relationship between research and professional judgement*

A recurrent theme throughout this and our earlier reports – and those of colleagues designing and delivering training as part of the Commissioned Programme<sup>79</sup> - has been the general confusion about what counts as evidence, in the context of evidence-based practice. In our first report, we found very basic confusion, for example between forensic and research evidence. In our final round of interviews, understanding had clearly developed. Nevertheless, we encountered amongst senior officers clear schisms in orientation. There were those who equated research evidence with experimental research on cause and effect, either meaning randomised controlled trials or a slightly broader concept that embraced quasi-experimental research. Others had a more inclusive view of what counted as evidence, including on the one hand descriptive research and on the other hand, research that involved the development of theoretical perspectives. Yet others recognised that research evidence rarely speaks for itself, and needs careful evaluation that involves professional judgement.

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<sup>78</sup> Two examples are the evidence about procedural justice and police legitimacy, and that relating to organisational justice within the police.

<sup>79</sup> Fleming, Fyfe and Wingrove (2016a)

It would be helpful for the College to set out its own position on this issue – and we are aware that a College briefing paper is forthcoming. We cannot set out an evidenced solution, but our provisional view – and that of the College, according to informal discussions – is that the police service should take their lead from other What Works centres, such as NICE and the Education Endowment Foundation. These adopt the position that research methods should be dictated by the nature of the research question, and that research needs to be combined with professional experience and judgment to yield evidence. In other words, methodological pluralism is sensible, and professional judgement about research has to be added into the mix. This implies that any research synthesising body needs to work closely with its users both to establish the evidential needs, and to test out positions on ‘what works’. However, it is obviously for the College – in consultation with the NPCC – to provide a public lead on this.

There are questions that need settling about terminology. Should people within the justice field be talking about ‘evidence-based policy’, and ‘evidence-based policing’, or should they refer to ‘evidence-informed’ policy and policing? The introduction of this report raised the issue, and we opted for the former approach, reflecting common usage within policing. It probably still makes sense to do so, but the term ‘evidence-based’ somewhat misrepresents the role of research evidence in decision-making. It is probably a mistake to claim – even by implication – that research evidence will eventually displace professional judgement. Having raised this question, we leave others to answer it, as decisions are best made by those more centrally located within the policing world.

#### *The best ways of structuring research synthesis*

Regardless of decisions about the scope of topics covered by the WWCCR, there is a separate set of important decisions about the structuring of any research synthesis tool. There are two basic approaches: it is possible to gather together research evidence grouped by intervention type – such as ‘alley-gating’, CCTV and cognitive behaviour therapy. Or else research can be grouped under type of problem – such as residential burglary, street robbery or child sexual abuse. The Crime Reduction Toolkit and that of the Education Endowment Foundation organises research evidence according to intervention. NICE, by contrast, organises its evidence according to type of problem; so too does the US Department of Justice COPS Resource Center<sup>80</sup>. The granularity inherent in the first approach may emerge as a weakness – as policy usually involves *comparison* of different approaches to a specific problem. Certainly some members of the Consortium felt that in hindsight, organising evidence according to

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<sup>80</sup> <https://ric-zai-inc.com/>

problem rather than intervention might have been preferable; they regarded it as more consistent with the development of a professional understanding of the problems the police face, and more compatible with a problem-solving approach to policing. On the other hand, when the evidence base is – as in crime reduction – at an early stage of development, structuring by intervention may make sense. It might be premature to go down the alternative route, when many problems lack even basic research evidence to guide decision-making.

Though this may seem a somewhat abstruse and second-order issue, it may have big implications for the development of the WWCCR. The ideal solution is to synthesise evidence in ways that allow its presentation both by intervention and by problem – though this carries obvious resource implications, as the synthesising process needs to be done in two parallel processes.

#### *The location of the WWC within the College*

As we have described, the WWCCR was originally set up as a loosely defined organisational entity that sat within the College. Over time, the College has decided to erase any clear organisational boundaries between the WWCCR and other aspects of the College's work, on the basis that evidence-based practice infuses the entire work programme of the College. The College is becoming the entity that represents crime reduction in the Cabinet Office's What Works Network. This leaves the College with a significant decision about whether its evidence synthesising functions should continue to be outsourced, whether to universities or other external research organisations. The alternative would be to develop an in-house capability, which might be extensive (as is that of the EEF, including the commissioning of primary research) or limited to the synthesis and dissemination of research carried out by others.

This decision is not straightforward, because there are clear advantages and disadvantages to locating the WWCCR in its entirety within the College. The main advantage is that doing so maximizes the synergy between the professionalisation agenda and the advocacy of EBP. The WWCCR is the only one within the Cabinet Office network which is located in a professional body – and it is the only one of these centres that is servicing an institution in a process of transition towards professional status. There is clearly a case for close linkage between the two functions.

The main disadvantage is that – at least in the eyes of many of our interviewees – the College can *sometimes* be seen as distant, associated with central government, and thus simultaneously controlling and cautious about any issue that is seen as politically sensitive. This perception represents a serious challenge to the College's ambition of becoming a

professional body that carries the full trust of its workforce. The more that the development of an evidence base is a collaborative venture between the professional body and the workforce, the more that this perception may prove an obstacle for the WWCCR. There are additional issues about organisational capacity: research synthesis and its management is a core competence amongst academics, less so within the College.

It may be that the choice between outsourcing or developing an in-house capability turns on the importance attached to feeding professional judgement into the products of the WWC. The more priority that is attached to ensuring that user voices are heard in the development of its products (in the way that NICE does, for example), and to the development of national guidance and standards, the more desirable it may be to retain the WWC function as a central part of the College's purpose.

#### *The WWC's relationship to other WW centres*

An issue that is becoming increasingly clear is that the various WW centres have in varying degrees some relevance to each other. Sometimes, research that can be located on one web-tool will be directly relevant to another public service, such as appropriate treatment for vulnerable people. Equally there are some general policy implications that are applicable across sector<sup>81</sup>. Clearly there would be some value in the Cabinet Office network collectively examining the most effective ways of cross-referencing the products of each other's products. If a What Works Centre for Justice is established, there will obviously need to be a correspondingly greater need to avoid duplication in providing evidence about what works in reducing reoffending.

A similar set of issues relates to institutions serving a WW function in other jurisdictions. Research evidence usually has at least some degree of international relevance. Thus there is a risk of needless duplication of effort when bodies such as the WWCCR, the US National Institute for Justice COPS Resource Center, the George Mason University Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy, the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Campbell Collaboration all provide internationally relevant summaries about the value of various crime reduction strategies. The more tightly that the function of these WW centres is tied to local investment decisions, the less problematic is any such overlap. For example, NICE's decisions on the affordability of different types of treatment are clearly specific to the UK.

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<sup>81</sup> E.g. the EEF's work on the value of teaching assistants shows that using them to replace tasks done by qualified teaching staff is a poor investment, but using them to do ancillary tasks is very cost effective. This has clear relevance to decisions about the use of Police Community Support Officers.

*The relationship between the WWC and local evidence hubs.*

Somewhat similar issues arise about the relationship between the WWC and the emerging local evidence hubs that consortia of police forces have established. Clearly some of the larger of these – such as the N8 consortium, the East Midlands Policing Academic Collaboration and West Yorkshire for Innovation to name a few – have the capacity to service the evidence needs of the collaborating forces in a way that could challenge or duplicate a national capability. We do not have any recommendations on how these relationships should be managed, but it is clear to us that some greater coordination with local or regional hubs would be worthwhile.

This also links to the request from our interviewees for the College to develop and publicise to practitioners a structure for how the products of the research collaborations and other primary research that is happening across force areas is fed back into the knowledge base. This comes from concerns raised by interviewees that a) they often do not know what is happening elsewhere; b) they are not always clear about how to disseminate the research they are involved in (e.g. through peer review and publication) and; c) how the results of their local efforts can be fed into national policy and practice.

*The key target audiences for EBP within policing*

There are still unanswered questions about the key audiences that the WWC are intended to serve. The College's position has been that the WWC is there for anyone who has a need to access evidence on the best ways of reducing crime. In practice, the consumers of research evidence are middle and senior police managers. Front-line officers rarely concern themselves with WW products, and nor do the workforces of organisations in other parts of the criminal justice system. The latter groups may well be catered for by a WW Centre for Justice, but should the rank-and-file within the police service be considered an important WWC constituency?

Some might think that it makes most sense for the WWC to focus on providing a good service to those middle and senior officers who are currently the primary users. That would probably be a sensible decision if it were taken in isolation from considerations about the professionalisation agenda. Professionalisation implies a form of decentralisation whereby discretion for complex decisions is passed down the hierarchy to front-line staff as much as possible. It involves equipping front-line staff with the knowledge and skills to make these complex decisions without tight supervision or management. Drawing an analogy from the health service, as front-line staff, general practitioners make a large range of treatment decisions drawing on the body of professional knowledge that actually characterises them as

professionals. Their decisions are constrained both by NICE's guidance and by their practice management policies, but clearly the GPs are primary decision-makers. The more that there is a serious policy commitment with the College and the Government to move towards a genuinely professionalised police service, the more that the College can justify its current position, in viewing the WWC as a resource intended to be used throughout the police hierarchy.

### *Sustainability*

Finally the College urgently needs to address challenging investment decisions relating to sustainability of evidence-based practice and the WWCCR. On the one hand it is essential to continue the work of the Academic Consortium: commissioning new systematic reviews, and locating new reviews done elsewhere, that draw together relevant evidence; and using these reviews to update and extend the Crime Reduction Toolkit. Failure to invest in this basic maintenance task will send out negative messages about evidence-based practice, and will seriously threaten the professionalisation agenda. On the other hand, there remains a need for primary research about police effectiveness not only in crime reduction but across the range of police functions, without which EBP cannot develop and thrive. The College cannot be expected to foot the – potentially large – bill for such research, but it is in a good position to play an important part in stimulating the necessary investment – whether from within forces, from the Home Office, the research councils and charitable foundations.

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## Appendix A: Methods

Our original, overall approach to the evaluation consisted of a straightforward 'before and after' design, supplemented in the hiatus between 'before' and 'after' with research that explored 'consumer' reactions to the products of the WWCCR. The methods are described below. We also highlight problems encountered with recruitment, limitations of design and implications of these for findings.

The evaluation comprised the following:

- Qualitative, in-depth interviews and quantitative web-based survey with the main stakeholder groups, conducted in year 1 (2014) and year 3 (2016/17) of the evaluation;
- In-depth interviews in year 2 of the evaluation (2015) with 'end users' of What Works products (Evidence Champions<sup>82</sup> and HPDS<sup>83</sup> officers) and with members of the Consortium and the College, who were responsible for the development of the WWCCR to discuss process and challenges;
- A mapping of the 'mechanisms' for evidence promotion and dissemination and a review of their progress in years 2 and 3;
- Collation of routine data used by the College to monitor internet traffic to the WWCCR microsite and key products in years 2 and 3;
- A case study of the ways in which research evidence was being promoted, disseminated and embedded in a Police Force in year 3.

### Depth interviews and survey

#### Sampling and recruitment strategies

*Baseline and follow-up:* A target was set of 50 in-depth interviews with three main stakeholder groups targeted by the College and WWCCR (chief police officers, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Community Safety Partnership (CSP) managers). A sampling frame was created for each group. For chief officers this included information from biographies on force websites on age, rank, years of service, academic qualifications, including whether part of an accelerated promotion scheme, whether holding a position as National Policing

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<sup>82</sup> Officers recruited (mostly voluntarily) by their forces on behalf of the College to act as promoters or champions of research and evidence-based practice within their force.

<sup>83</sup> The HPDS is a five-year programme designed to provide officers with academic learning and the opportunity to embed this learning into practice.

Lead or any other relevant specialist area or secondment. For PCCs this included information on political affiliation, professional background, academic qualifications, age and gender. For CSPs we gathered information on geographical region and type of authority only as no other information was readily available.

Based on this information, a first selection of interviewees was informed by the need to include: geographic spread; mix of urban and rural areas; those with and without previous academic qualifications (chief officers and PCCs); range of professional backgrounds (PCC); Those with a specialist area or position as National Policing Lead (chief officers); A mix of political affiliation/independent (PCC); range in terms of years served (chief officers); and a gender and age mix.

Each potential interviewee was emailed a letter explaining the aims of the research and inviting them to participate in an interview. This email request was followed up with a telephone call. Where there was a refusal or an inability to participate, another interviewee was selected to meet as far as possible the selection criteria used for the original interviewee (e.g. in terms of specialism or academic qualifications). Permission was sought to re-contact interviewees in 2016 to discuss progress and developments.

In year 3, those interviewees who were still in post were re-interviewed or if no longer in post, an alternate chief officer or PCC was interviewed from the same force to provide both an individual and organisational perspective on the status of evidence-based practice (see Table A1.1). Because of difficulties in recruiting CSP managers in year 1 (see below for details) this group was not included in the year 3 sample.

The make-up of the final interview samples is described in Table A1.1 and comprised: 59 chief officers, senior police managers and senior corporate staff from 28 police forces; 20 PCCs across 18 areas and 10 CSP managers drawn from the 10 regions of England and Wales.

We struggled to recruit CSPs in year 1: Three tranches of interview invitations, reaching 26 CSPs over four months were despatched before we reached our target sample of 10. We suspect that these interviewees are unrepresentative of CSP managers nationally, their high awareness and use of research being factors that inclined them to agree to be interviewed. A total of 18 PCCs were contacted to get our final sample of 20; only 2 original PCCs were re-interviewed in 2016, in part due to a change in post after the re-election of PCCs in 2015. Whilst there was a heavy bias towards Conservative Party nominees in 2014, this was not the case in 2016/17 (see Table A1.1). This bias in 2014 was due to a consistently poor response rate from those of other political affiliations, which also hindered our attempts to redress the balance.

In-depth interviews in year 1 were conducted either face-to-face or by telephone (if preferred by interviewees) between May and September 2014 and in year 3, between September 2016 and February 2017. Twelve of the 30 chief officers were interviewed in both years.

**Table A1.1: Job title of interview sample (N=89)**

<b>Job title/role</b>	<b>N = 49 2014</b>	<b>N = 40 2016</b>
Chief Constable	11	9
Deputy Chief Constable	8	5
Assistant Chief Constable	6	9
Assistance Commissioner	1	1
Commander	1	0
Senior Corporate Personnel	2	3
Chief Superintendents/Inspectors		3
<b>Police and Crime Commissioner</b>		
Conservative	6	4
Labour	1	6
Independent	3	-
<b>Community Safety Partnership Manager</b>		
Unitary Authority	4	-
Metropolitan District	3	-
County Council	2	-
Inner London Borough	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>40</b>

*Champions and HPDS officers:* The College provided a contact list of 168 police officers and staff from 38 Forces, the NPCC and the College of Policing who had the role of Evidence or Frontline Champion. This list also provided an indication of whether or not the named person had been 'active' over the recent past - largely defined as having attended meetings or events or having had some contact regarding evidence-based practice or research activity with the then coordinator of the Evidence Champion network. We contacted 26 champions from 23 forces, ensuring a geographic spread and the inclusion of those from large metropolitan forces and smaller forces, encompassing rural areas. We selected mainly interviewees who were defined as 'active' although several were included who were not so defined. A similar sampling frame was created for HPDS officers (based on contact list from the College). This included information on gender, force. Final selection was based on the need to include different forces and a gender and cohort mix.

Nineteen champions were interviewed (Table A1.2) from 15 forces and from the NPCC between May and August 2015 (seven officers either declined or did not respond to our repeated interview requests). While these interviews did not cover the work of all champions in all forces, they gave a sense of the kind of work that was being undertaken to promote, or embed evidence-based practice and the outputs of the WWCCR. Six HPDS officers and one HPDS trainer were interviewed, drawn from seven forces and from cohorts 1 and 2 (Table A1.3) between June and September 2015. Findings from these groups are reported in detail in Hunter et al, (2016).

*Consortium, College and Stakeholders:* Interviewees from the Consortium and from senior stakeholder groups were selected on the basis of their involvement in developing the WWCCR and related activities. Each potential interviewee was invited by email to take part in an interview. Replacements were not sought for the Consortium, College or senior stakeholder groups due to our interest in speaking to the specific individuals approached. This did not present any problems as only two of the 19 individuals targeted were unable to participate (due to time capacity issues). The sample comprised seven members of the Consortium involved in work packages one to eight; six College staff; and four senior stakeholders, drawn from the Cabinet Office and the College. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or by telephone between April and December 2015. Findings from these groups are reported in detail in Hunter et al, (2016).

**Table A1.2: Evidence Champions**

	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Dept.</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
C1	Inspector – Police Lead for EBP	Organisational Learning	Diploma in Public Sector Leadership
C2	Acting Sergeant, Knowledge Exchange Manager	Corporate Development	Mphil
C3	Police Constable	Problem-Solving Team	Degree in Psychology
C4	Staff Officer	National Police Chiefs Council	BA; Masters in Policing
C5	Academic Field Research Manager (Civilian)	Organisational Learning Team	BA; Masters in Criminology
C6	Sergeant	Control Room	Degree in Policing
C7	Crime Prevention Officer	Crime Prevention Unit	A Levels
C8	Police and Community Support Officer		Certificate in Business Management
C9	Detective Inspector	CID	Masters; studying for a PhD (policing related)
C10	Strategic Planning	Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office	Not noted
C11	Chief Inspector	Specialist Firearms/counter terrorism	No formal academic qualifications
C12	Manager of Corporate Development	Corporate Development	Degree and Post graduate (unspecified)
C13	Planning and Performance Manager	Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office	Degree (unspecified subject)
C14	Civilian	Analytical Team	Skills courses linked to job
C15	Civilian	Performance and Analysis Team	Law; Masters in Policing
C16	Inspector	Community Engagement	PhD
C17	Police Staff employee	Intelligence analyst	Studying for Masters in research
C18	Researcher	Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office	Masters in Psychology
C19	Civilian	Counter-Crime	Masters in Criminology

**Table A1.3: High Potential Development Scheme Officers**

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Length of service</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Pre joining educational quals</b>
HPDS 1	Male	14 years	Detective Inspector	BA
HPDS 2	Female	13 years	Chief Inspector	GCSEs and A' levels
HPDS 3	Male	11 years	Chief Inspector	GCSEs and A' levels
HPDS 4	Male	13 years	Detective Inspector	BA
HPDS 5	Male	8 years	Detective Inspector	BSc
HPDS 6	Male	9 years	Superintendent	BA

*Surveys:* These were hosted online, on the WWCCR microsite at the College using ClassApps. In year 1, the survey was available and targeted to PCCs, CSPs and police officers or staff equivalent of chief inspector and above. In year 3, in an attempt to examine attitudes to research and evidence-based practice across organisations, the survey was open to PCCs, CSPs and all police and staff, irrespective of rank.

The first online survey ran for a six-week period from 16th June to 1st August 2014. The second survey, because of low uptake in the initial six weeks, ran for over 13 weeks from October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016 to January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017. Alerts providing details about the surveys were distributed by the following organisations to their members:

- Association of Police and Crime Commissioners;
- National Police Chief Council;
- Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales;
- The Association of Scottish Police Superintendents;
- The Superintendents' Association of Northern Ireland;
- Police Federation of England and Wales; and
- Scottish Police Federation (chief inspectors only).

Alerts about the survey were also circulated through the College - on the Police Online Knowledge Area (POLKA) and on the What Works microsite, and promoted within local forces via various College networks, including via the Evidence Champions Network. In addition, Chief Constables/Commissioners for each of the UK forces were contacted by email and those chief officers who participated in in-depth interviews were also asked to promote completion of the survey in their force. CSP chairs and managers were contacted in England and Wales using a directory maintained by the Home Office ( $N=699$ )<sup>84</sup>, although this had not been updated since 2010, making email contact with this group less successful in year 3. In addition, in year 3, the survey was promoted through tweets from the Police Foundation, academics

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<sup>84</sup> 65 of these emails could not be delivered to the intended recipient.

involved in teaching degree courses to serving police officers and through the N8 Policing and Research Partnership.

Each source was asked for assistance in raising awareness of the survey throughout their respective organisations and contacts. For those representing police personnel, in year 1 they were informed that the survey targeted officers ranked chief inspector and above (including civilian staff equivalents). They were also informed in both phases that the survey was confidential and securely located on the College website, and provided with a link to access it.

In year 1 reminders were sent to each source one week prior to the closure of the survey, with tailored feedback on the number of responses received, and a further request for assistance in raising awareness of the survey, and encouraging any non-completers to participate. In year 3 this was an ongoing process, with repeated requests for assistance and feedback on low response rates where applicable.

*In year 1* 993 responses<sup>85</sup> were received. Of the 993 responders, 157 (16%) started but failed to complete the survey. Of the 836 that completed, 90 (11%) did not provide any details of their rank or role, and there were responses from police and community support officers (PCSOs) (2), constables (22), sergeants (15) and inspectors (39).

Analysis in year 1 focused on the 655 respondents who completed the entire survey and belonged to one of the groups targeted by the research: PCCs, CSP managers, and senior police officers ranked chief inspector or above (including civilian staff equivalents). As described in Table A1.4, most survey respondents were chief inspectors (49%), superintendents (24%) and chief superintendents (9%), or civilian staff equivalents. Responses were received from 46 police force areas<sup>86</sup>.

*In year 3* 856 responses<sup>87</sup> were received. Of the 856 responders, 190 (22%) started but failed to provide any usable data. Rather more respondents (261 or 30%) responded to attitudinal questions but did not provide any details of their rank or role. 67 respondents were above the rank of inspector, or staff equivalents. Inspectors or staff equivalents made up 11% of the 595 respondents who provided their rank, sergeants or staff equivalents 20%, constables or staff equivalents 35%, and PCSOs 3%.

Two sorts of analysis were mounted for Year 3 analysis. First, we examined whether there were changes in attitudes and practice in relation to evidence-based practice amongst senior officers, comparing the 655 respondents in year 1 with the 67 respondents in year 3. Readers' attention to the limitations of this analysis is discussed in Chapter 3. Secondly, some limited multivariate analysis was carried out on the full (usable) sample, to identify the predictors of evidence use. Responses in year 3 were received from 41 police force areas.

Some main findings from both surveys are set out in Appendix B.

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<sup>85</sup> Our original bid to the ESRC had set a target of 800 respondents.

<sup>86</sup> Thirteen (2%) respondents did not indicate in which force area they worked and 32 (5%) stated "other" in response to this question.

**Table A1.4: Job title of survey respondents**

<b>Job title/role</b>	<b>2014 % (N=655)</b>	<b>2016 % (N=595)</b>
PCSO		3 (19)
Police Constable/staff equivalent		35 (207)
Police sergeant/staff equivalent		20 (121)
Inspector/staff equivalent)		11 (64)
Chief Inspector/staff equivalent	49 (322)	6 (37)
Superintendent/staff equivalent	24 (154)	2 (13)
Chief Superintendent/staff equivalent	9 (61)	1 (8)
Other	5 (33)	19 (113)
Other senior police staff equivalent (e.g. staff officer)	5 (33)	1 (4)
Community Safety Partnership Manager	4 (26)	1 (4)
Community Safety Partnership Chair	1 (7)	-
Assistant Chief Constable/Commissioner	1 (4)	1 (3)
Chief Constable/Commissioner	0.5 (3)	-
Commander	0.5 (3)	-
Deputy Chief Constable/Commissioner	0.5 (3)	-
Police and Crime Commissioner	0.5 (3)	0.3 (2)
Police and Crime Commissioner's Office	0.5 (3)	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>595</b>

Poor and slower rates of completion for the second survey may have been compounded by the fact that this was directly preceded by a number of surveys targeting police officers (e.g. The College Membership Survey, although we had been allowed to have questions in that survey) or were running alongside this survey (e.g. wellbeing surveys were being conducted in several forces). The sheer level of demand on potential respondents probably created 'survey fatigue'. In addition, removing rank criteria resulted in far fewer senior officers completing the survey, seriously limiting meaningful trend data. Whilst the same senior ranks were targeted as in year 1, this may reflect a tendency for senior officers to ask more junior staff to participate without first completing the survey themselves.

## Survey and interviews schedules

*Baseline and follow-up:* In year 1 the survey covered five themes (mapped against the evaluation plan): (i) factors influencing decision-making; (ii) extent to which research evidence meets practitioners' needs; (iii) organisational culture and the use of research evidence; (iv) familiarity with and use of research evidence; and (v) College services and resources. The depth interviews covered similar ground, but also dealt with experience of commissioning or undertaking research, perception of competency in assessing the quality of research, and ideas about how the College could better promote the use of research evidence.

The online survey was revised in year 3 with input from the College to ensure its usefulness as a monitoring tool beyond the commissioned evaluation. This involved reducing, refining and updating some of the questions (for example to include the range of WWCCR products developed since 2013), while ensuring there were sufficient repeated questions for comparison with year 1. The depth interviews in year 3 sought to revisit the topics outlined above but also to discuss progress on any issues, plans or developments regarding use of research evidence that had been mentioned in baseline interviews.

*Evidence* was defined as any published research (including 'grey' literature such as internal reports, working papers, technical reports, conference proceedings, student dissertations and theses) on the effectiveness of a particular policy, intervention, tactic or approach which aims to reduce or prevent crime.

*Depth interviews with champions* focused on circumstances surrounding their taking up the role, their perception of its aims, activities undertaken, the extent of their contact with the College and other champions and views on successes and challenges thus far. Depth Interviews with *HPDS officers*, examined motivations for participation, views on the quality and benefits of the scheme, especially instruction on use of research and the scheme's impact on policing practice.

Depth interviews with College staff, members of the consortium and stakeholders focused on process issues, including the various challenges in setting up the WWCCR and delivering the commissioned programme, views on aims and achievements and perception of timescale and organisational readiness for the shift towards routine use of research to inform practice.

*Piloting survey and schedules:* Feedback on the proposed approach to sampling and early drafts of the various interview schedules and surveys were provided by the Commissioned Programme's Academic Board and the Knowledge, Research and Practice Unit (Formerly the Research, Analysis and Information Unit) at the College. The first interview schedule was piloted with two senior police officers and an online version of the 2014 survey was piloted with a small number of uniformed officers ( $N=6$ ) from three force areas prior to its launch in 2014.

## **Analysis**

The in-depth interviews were recorded and fully transcribed, with analysis undertaken using Nvivo v10. A primary coding frame was developed, based on the key areas or themes covered by each interview schedule. This was refined by further 'sub-coding' within each of these main categories. Coding was undertaken by a number of team members simultaneously with discussion and agreement of a final list of codes and sub-codes.

The survey data were analysed using SPSS. The results presented here comprise largely of descriptive statistics, though multivariate analysis was used to identify the predictors of evidence use, and as a necessary precursor to this, techniques of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis were also used to identify the constructs used by survey respondents in thinking about research evidence.

## **Case Study**

The case-study was conducted in one police force in England between December 2016 and March 2017. The aim was to look at the ways in which research and evidence-based practice were being promoted and embedded into the activity and planning of a force. Interviewees were selected on the basis of their involvement in the evidence hub as staff, management or funder. In total five face-to-face interviews and three telephone interviews were conducted. The interviewees comprised of one PCC, two senior command officers, two operational officers, an academic, an administrator and a senior analyst. All of the interviewees we approached agreed to be interviewed. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using Nvivo. Information covered in the interviews included:

- description of role and involvement with the evidence hub;
- work currently being conducted by the hub;
- views on the strengths and weaknesses of the hub;
- barriers to embedding evidence across the force;
- dissemination channels for research/evidence;
- opportunities available for officers to study for academic qualifications;
- policy changes (resulting from research).

In addition further information was collected on:

- Evidence Based Policing Tiered Research Strategy;
- Evidence Based Policing Research Panel;
- Evidence Cafes;
- literature reviews;
- published articles relevant to the work of the hub;
- European grants and collaborations.

## Mapping

Our mapping activities have been three-fold:

- Understanding and defining the boundaries of the WWCCR for the purposes of the evaluation;
- Tracking the outputs of the Consortium; and
- Attempting to collect data on internet traffic to the WWCCR microsite and associated evidence structures.

We were able to track the outputs of the Consortium through regularly updating a spreadsheet of reports, articles, books, online content and conference presentations flowing from the project. We learnt of these outputs through checking the WWCCR microsite and through interactions with the university leading the Consortium (including an output log that the university regularly updated and circulated to Consortium members). College staff also provided detail about the various dissemination and capability-building activities they had undertaken.

## Appendix B: SELECTED FREQUENCIES FROM YEAR 1 and 3 ON-LINE SURVEYS<sup>88</sup>

### YEAR 1:

Thinking about the last 12 months, which of these do you routinely use to inform your day-to-day decision-making?)

Sources of information to inform decision-making	Yes
Conferences/seminars	50
Newspapers	46
Academic journals/books	32
Professional journals (e.g. Police Professional, Police Oracle)	47
Social media (e.g. Twitter; LinkedIn; Facebook)	33
Home Office website	36
Ministry of Justice website	11
College of Policing	49
POLKA (Police Online Knowledge Area)	41
APP (Authorised Professional Practice)	41
ACPO guidance/publications	62
Local force guidance/publications	80
In-force Problem Profiles	48
Practice-based experience/professional judgement	81
Resident surveys/consultations	27
Input from local colleagues/staff	77
Website blogs	11
Local Police and Crime Plan	60
Other	15

<sup>88</sup> All figures are percentages. Figures do not always sum to 100%, due to rounding. Open-ended questions are not summarised. Personal information on respondents, including job-title, age, length of service and force, is not presented.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements. We define research evidence as any published research (including internal reports, working papers, technical reports, conference proceedings, systematic reviews, journal articles, student dissertations and theses) on policies, interventions, tactics or approaches which aim to reduce or prevent crime, or improve policing.

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
Research evidence plays an important role in my day-to-day decision-making	3	16	23	47	11
During the last 12 months, I can think of at least one occasion where research evidence has affected how I allocate resources	3	12	13	50	22
During the last 12 months, I have used research evidence to help me understand a crime problem	5	16	17	47	16
Research evidence has changed or influenced my working practices	2	10	19	53	16
During the last 12 months, I have used research evidence to justify existing practice	3	16	20	48	13
During the last 12 months, I have used research evidence to develop new practice	3	13	14	53	17
During the last 12 months, I have used research evidence to help think about ways that I might assess the impact of practice	2	12	19	52	14

### Extent to which research evidence meets your needs

This section looks more generally at how well published research evidence meets your needs. Again, by evidence we mean any published research (including internal reports, working papers, technical reports, conference proceedings, systematic reviews, journal articles, student dissertations and theses) on policies, interventions, tactics or approaches which aim to reduce or prevent crime, or improve policing.

**Please consider the statements below about research evidence and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with them.**

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
I lack the time to be able to seek research evidence out	2	26	19	42	12
Research findings are too often unclear and full of jargon	2	24	27	42	6
We should use research evidence more in allocating our resources	0	4	21	57	18
Research evidence is important, but it is not as important as judgement and experience in making decisions	2	17	38	36	7
Academics are producing research that is relevant to practice	1	12	46	40	2
Research evidence doesn't have clear enough messages for us to make it usable	1	27	38	31	3
Investment in crime reduction and prevention is driven by politics rather than research evidence	1	17	26	40	16
During the last 12 months, I have received training and/or support around the use of research evidence	33	48	5	11	3
I am not well enough informed about research to be able to tell the difference between good and bad research studies	6	34	27	28	5

## Organisational culture & use of research evidence

This next set of statements and questions look at how your Force or organisation supports the use of published research evidence more generally. Please consider the statements below and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with them.

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
Organisational priorities are the real factors that affect our decision-making	0	5	6	62	27
Decisions often have to be made quickly which makes it difficult to consider research evidence	1	14	14	56	16
There is no organisational emphasis on the use of research evidence to inform decision-making	2	27	20	42	10
I do not have access to academic journals through work	3	38	17	34	9
I am encouraged by my organisation to collaborate with different research institutes in tackling crime reduction problems	12	35	29	22	3
My organisation provides sufficient support and resources to implement evidence-based practice	6	36	32	25	1
My organisation encourages and supports its workforce to gain knowledge and understanding from research evidence	7	33	30	29	2
When new policies and procedures are introduced, I am made aware of the research evidence which supports them	12	52	20	16	0
Evidence-based approaches are promoted by influential figures or leaders in my organisation	5	25	27	39	5
	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
A lot of what we do to tackle crime has no research evidence to justify it	3	25	32	35	6
I keep up-to-date with research evidence on policing and crime reduction	4	31	32	31	3
We ignore some ways of tackling crime, despite them being supported by research evidence	1	13	39	42	4

### Familiarity with and use of research evidence

The next few questions look at how you might access and use published research evidence. Again, when referring to evidence we mean any published research (including internal reports, working papers, technical reports, conference proceedings, systematic reviews, journal articles, student dissertations and theses) on policies, interventions, tactics or approaches which aim to reduce or prevent crime, or improve policing.

**How do you find out about research evidence? Please indicate how frequently you obtain or find out about research evidence from the following sources.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often	Always
An in-house expert/colleague at work	4	14	52	26	3
An external expert (e.g. academic, consultant, other policy advisor)	10	33	45	12	0
In-house force reports or bulletins	5	19	49	25	2
External reports or bulletins produced by HMIC, ACPO or College of Policing	3	14	53	29	3
Reports or bulletins from central government (e.g. Home Office, MoJ)	6	28	48	17	2
General web search (e.g. Google or Google Scholar)	4	11	41	38	6
Professional journals (e.g. Police Professional)	7	26	45	21	2
Conference/workshop presentations	5	28	49	18	1
Cochrane/Campbell Collaboration website	84	10	5	2	0
Academic journal articles	31	39	24	6	1
Society of Evidence-Based Policing	64	19	12	4	1
Research databases (e.g. Proquest)	71	20	9	1	0
Community safety websites/blogs	41	29	23	7	1
Social media (e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn)	36	26	29	8	1
Newspapers	12	23	49	16	2

**Have there been occasions where you have sought research evidence to inform policy or operations, but have been unable to find it?**

Yes (45%)      No (37%)      Don't know (18%)

## College of Policing services and resources

The College of Policing provides a range of resources that seek to promote evidence-based practice. This section looks at your awareness of these resources and how useful you may have found them.

**Thinking specifically about the following resources provided by the College of Policing, please indicate whether you have ever used this resource before, and for those that you have used please state how useful you found them to be in promoting evidence-based good practice.**

	<b>I have never used this resource</b>	<b>Not at all useful</b>	<b>Not very useful</b>	<b>Somewhat useful</b>	<b>Very useful</b>
What Works Briefings	81	0.2	3	14	2
What Works Centre for Crime Reduction (WWCCR)	88	0.3	3	9	1
Policing and Crime Reduction Research Map	80	1	7	11	1
College of Policing published research	43	1	4	48	4
National Police Library	53	2	5	29	11
POLKA (Police Online Knowledge Area)	21	4	9	50	17
Knowledge Bank in POLKA	33	3	10	41	13
Practice Bank in POLKA	44	3	9	33	11
Authorised Professional Practice (APP)	35	2	5	39	19
Masterclasses (e.g. Evidence Base Camp)	81	11	3	13	3
Research Fairs	89	1	4	5	1

**What effect do you think these College of Policing resources have had on encouraging the use of evidence-based good practice in your day-to-day work?**

No effect	13
Minor effect	38
Moderate effect	33
Major effect	5
Don't know	12
	101%

**What effect do you think the College of Policing has had on stimulating the development of a policing culture that values evidence and research?**

No effect	13
Minor effect	37
Moderate effect	33
Major effect	6
Don't know	12
	101%

## About you

### What is your highest level of educational attainment?

Highest level of educational attainment	
First degree level qualification	39
University Higher Degree (e.g.PhD, MSc)	27
A Level	9
GCSE/O Level	7
Vocational or professional qualification	7
Diploma in Higher Education	5
Higher Grade/Advanced Higher (Scotland)	1
Teaching qualification (excluding PGCE)	1
Standard/Ordinary (O) Grade/Lower (Scotland)	1
CSE	1
Nursing or other medical qualification not yet mentioned	1
AS Level	0.2
None of the above	0.2
Other school (including school leaving exam certificate or matriculation)	0.2
Total	100

### Are you currently studying for a qualification?

Are you currently studying?	
I am not currently studying	86
I am studying for a first degree (e.g. BA, BSc)	2
I am studying for a higher degree (e.g. MPhil, PhD)	2
I am studying for a postgraduate degree (e.g. MA, MSc)	4
I am studying for some other qualification	7
Total	101%

## YEAR 3

### Factors influencing decision-making

The first set of questions ask about the range of different sources of information that you might draw upon or refer to in order to inform the decisions you make as part of your job.

**Thinking about the last 12 months, which of these do you routinely use to inform your day-to-day decision-making?)**

Sources of information to inform decision-making	Yes
Conferences/seminars	32
Newspapers (including online)	36
Academic journals/books/articles	31
Professional journals (e.g. Police Professional, Police Oracle)	35
Social media (e.g. Twitter; LinkedIn; Facebook)	29
Home Office website	31
Ministry of Justice website	14
College of Policing website	37
What Works Centre for Crime Reduction website	11
Crime Reduction Toolkit	15
What Work Briefings	8
POLKA (Police Online Knowledge Area)	29
APP (Authorised Professional Practice)	26
NPCC guidance/publications	22
Local force guidance/publications	72
In-force Problem Profiles/intelligence/analysis	55
Practice-based experience/professional judgement	67
Resident surveys/consultations	13
Input from local colleagues/staff	64
Website blogs	8
Local Police and Crime Plan /PCCs	37

**Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements. We define research evidence as any published research (including internal reports, working papers, technical reports, conference proceedings, systematic reviews, research summaries, journal articles, student dissertations and theses) on policies, interventions, tactics or approaches which aim to reduce or prevent crime, or improve policing.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Research evidence plays an important role in my day-to-day decision-making.	9	16	25	36	14
During the last 12 months, I have used research evidence to help me understand a crime problem.	11	17	16	41	15
Research evidence has changed or influenced my working practices.	9	14	25	37	14

### Extent to which research evidence meets your needs

This section looks more generally at how well published research evidence meets your needs. Again, by evidence we mean any published research (including internal reports, working papers, technical reports, conference proceedings, systematic reviews, research summaries, journal articles, student dissertations and theses) on policies, interventions, tactics or approaches which aim to reduce or prevent crime, or improve policing.

**Please consider the statements below about research evidence and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with them.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I lack the time to be able to seek out research evidence.	4	21	21	36	19
I try to keep up-to-date with research evidence on policing and crime reduction.	5	17	21	49	8
If I need to refer to research evidence, I know where to find it.	9	26	18	38	9
Academics are producing research that is relevant to practice.	7	15	47	27	4
Research evidence doesn't have clear enough messages for us to make it usable.	2	20	44	27	7
I am not well enough informed about research evidence to be able to tell the difference between good and bad research studies.	9	26	24	32	9

## Organisational culture & use of research evidence

This next set of statements and questions look at how your Force or organisation supports the use of published research evidence more generally.

Please consider the statements below and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with them.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Decisions often have to be made quickly which makes it difficult to consider research evidence.	1	13	14	50	22
There is no organisational emphasis on the use of research evidence to inform decision-making.	3	19	21	39	19
My organisation promotes collaboration with research institutions, such as universities, in order to generate and share evidence based learning.	11	19	30	32	9
My organisation provides sufficient support and resources to implement evidence based practice.	13	32	32	21	3
My organisation encourages and supports its workforce to gain knowledge and understanding from research evidence.	13	32	28	23	4
When new policies and procedures are introduced, I am made aware of the research evidence which supports them.	23	46	19	11	1
Research evidence based approaches are promoted by influential figures or leaders in my organisation	15	27	32	22	5
My organisation makes little or no investment in providing training or developing capability around research evidence based approaches.	6	21	32	28	15
There is resistance to adopting evidence-based approaches across all levels of my organisation.	6	23	50	16	5
There is a general lack of understanding in my organisation about the relevance of research evidence to everyday policing.	3	14	31	36	16

**How do you find out about research evidence? Please indicate how frequently you obtain or find out about research evidence from the following sources.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very often	Always
An in-house expert/colleague at work	16	20	41	20	2
An external expert (e.g. academic, consultant, other policy advisor)	29	35	27	9	1
In-house force reports or bulletins	11	21	47	19	2
External reports or bulletins produced by HMIC, NPCC or College of Policing	12	19	45	21	3
Reports or bulletins from central government (e.g. Home Office, MoJ)	18	29	37	14	2
General web search (e.g. Google or Google Scholar)	11	11	36	34	9
Professional journals (e.g. Police Professional)	21	30	31	16	2
Conference/workshop presentations	24	26	36	13	1
Cochrane/Campbell Collaboration website	83	10	5	2	0.4
Academic journal articles	49	24	17	9	2
Society of Evidence-Based Policing	62	18	13	5	1
Research databases (e.g. Proquest)	72	16	7	4	1
Community safety websites/blogs	46	25	22	7	1
Social media (e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn)	41	21	25	11	2
Newspapers	22	23	40	13	3
What Works Centre for Crime Reduction microsite/website?	61	18	15	5	1
Crime Reduction Toolkit	46	23	24	7	1

**Have there been occasions where you have sought research evidence to inform policy or operations, but have been unable to find it?**

Yes 20%      No 80%

**Please consider the statements below about research evidence and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with them.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Evidence based practice is likely to be a fleeting fad, and things will eventually return to normal.	17	36	31	12	4
Using of research evidence should be key to policing practice and decision-making.	3	8	24	44	21

Collaboration with researchers is necessary for a police force to improve their ability to reduce crime.	4	8	21	49	19
Research evidence is important, but it is not as important as judgement and experience in making decisions.	3	16	35	32	14
Investment in crime reduction and prevention is driven by politics rather than research evidence.	1	8	20	38	34

### College of Policing services and resources

The College of Policing provides a range of resources that seek to promote evidence-based practice. This section looks at your awareness of these resources and how useful you may have found them.

**Thinking about the following resources provided by the College of Policing, please indicate whether you are aware of, or have ever used this resource, and if so, how useful you found it.**

	Not aware	Aware but not used	Used and very useful	Used and fairly useful	Used and not useful
What Works Briefings	58	21	3	14	4
What Works Centre for Crime Reduction (WWCCR) microsite/website	60	18	3	14	5
The Crime Reduction Toolkit	33	35	4	22	7
Policing and Crime Reduction Research Map	56	23	2	13	6
College of Policing published research	28	30	5	30	8
National Police Library	43	32	8	14	3
Knowledge Bank in POLKA	24	22	10	33	12
Authorised Professional Practice (APP)	38	19	11	25	6
Masterclasses (e.g. Evidence Base Camp)	72	18	2	6	2
Research Fairs	79	15	0.2	4	2
Research surgeries	82	14	0.3	2	2
Research Cafes	80	15	1	2	2

**What effect do you think these College of Policing resources have had on encouraging the use of evidence-based good practice in your day-to-day work?**

No effect	23
Minor effect	34
Moderate effect	26
Major effect	5
Don't know	12
	100%

**What effect do you think the College of Policing has had on stimulating the development of a policing culture that values evidence and research?**

No effect	19
Minor effect	32
Moderate effect	29
Major effect	7
Don't know	14
	101%

**About you**

**What is your highest level of educational attainment?**

Highest level of educational attainment	
First degree level qualification	34
University Higher Degree (e.g.PhD, MSc)	18
A Level/AS level	14
GCSE/O Level	15
Vocational or professional qualification	9
Diploma in Higher Education	7
Higher Grade/Advanced Higher (Scotland)	1
None of the above	2
TOTAL	100%

**Are you currently studying for a qualification?**

I am not currently studying	80
I am studying for a first degree (e.g. BA, BSc)	2
I am studying for a higher degree (e.g. MPhil, PhD)	2
I am studying for a postgraduate degree (e.g. MA, MSc)	7
I am studying for some other qualification	10
TOTAL	101%

## APPENDIX C: THE POLICE KNOWLEDGE FUND PARTNERSHIPS<sup>89</sup>

Lead institution	Collaborating Partners	Project Title
University of Bedfordshire	<b>Police:</b> Norfolk Constabulary; North Wales Police; National Network of Child Exploitation; National Policing Leads for Violence and Public Protection; Missing People and Neglect <b>Other:</b> College of Social Work; Public Health England; NSPCC; Barnardos; Victim Support	Enhancing police responses to child exploitation, through collaboration working between academic and policing at both national and regional levels
University of Cambridge	<b>Police:</b> Bedfordshire Police; British Transport Police; City of London Police; Cheshire Constabulary; Cleveland Police; Dorset Police; Durham Constabulary; Essex Police; Greater Manchester Police; Hampshire Constabulary; Hertfordshire Constabulary; Kent Police; Lancashire Constabulary; Leicestershire Police; Thames Valley Police; South Yorkshire Police; Surrey Police; Warwickshire Police; West Mercia Police; West Midlands Police; West Yorkshire Police	Promoting tipping points for evidence-based policing: An international centre of excellence in post-graduate police education and research
City University London	<b>Police:</b> Metropolitan Police Service; Sussex Police	Memory evidence in the investigation of rape and serious sexual offences (including child abuse)
University of Exeter	<b>Police:</b> Devon and Cornwall Police	ExPERT: The Exeter Policing Evidence and Research Translation project
Keele University	<b>Police:</b> Staffordshire Police <b>Universities:</b> Staffordshire	Action Learning plus: Developing an action/work based learning system for improved knowledge exchange, development and implementation through partnership working
Leeds Beckett University	<b>Police:</b> West Yorkshire Police <b>Universities:</b> Sheffield Hallam; Canterbury Christchurch <b>Other:</b> CENTRIC	An evidence-based approach to fighting cybercrime from the frontline: Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of investigating cyber-enabled crime
Liverpool John Moores University	<b>Police:</b> Merseyside Police; Office of the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner	Embedding evidence-based practice in public protection and crime prevention. A multi-disciplinary partnership

<sup>89</sup> This table has been taken directly from the College of Policing website:  
<http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Partnerships/Knowledge-Fund/Pages/Police-Knowledge-Fund.aspx>

University of Northampton	<p><b>Police:</b> Derbyshire Constabulary; Leicestershire Police; Lincolnshire Police; Northamptonshire Police Nottinghamshire Police</p> <p><b>Universities:</b> De-Montford; Loughborough; Nottingham Trent; Derby; Lincoln; University of Dundee</p> <p><b>Other:</b> East Midlands Collaborative HR Services; Scottish Institute for Policing Research</p>	East Midlands Policing Academic Collaboration (EMPAC)
University of Nottingham	<p><b>Police:</b> Dorset Police; Gwent Police; Hertfordshire Constabulary; Kent Police; Lancashire Constabulary; Merseyside Police; Norfolk Constabulary; Staffordshire Police; Suffolk Constabulary; Sussex Police; Warwickshire Police; West Mercia Police; West Midlands Police</p> <p><b>Universities:</b> Birmingham; Derby; Liverpool; University Campus Suffolk</p> <p><b>Others:</b> Skills for Health and Justice; Crest Analytics</p>	Better Policing Collaborative
The Open University	<p><b>Police:</b> Avon and Somerset Police; Dorset Police; Gloucestershire Police; Greater Manchester Police; Gwent Police; Humberside Police; Lancashire Constabulary; Metropolitan Police Service; Thames Valley Police; Police Service Northern Ireland</p> <p><b>Other:</b> national Crime Agency</p>	Centre for Policing and Learning
University of Sheffield	<p><b>Police:</b> South Yorkshire Police and PCC; West Yorkshire Police and PCC; Humberside Police and PCC</p> <p><b>Universities:</b> University of Leeds</p> <p><b>Other:</b> REMEDI</p>	Developing restorative policing: using the evidence base to inform the delivery of restorative justice and improving engagement with victims
University of Sussex	<p><b>Police:</b> Metropolitan Police Service</p> <p><b>Other:</b> Demos; Palantir Technologies; CASM Consulting</p>	Policing Hate Crime: Modernising the craft, an evidence-based approach
Universities Police Science Institute, Cardiff University	<p><b>Police:</b> national Counter terrorism Functions Command; South Wales Police; West Midlands Police; Surrey Police; Sussex Police</p> <p><b>Other:</b> Cardiff Council; Safer Sutton Partnership</p>	OSCAR Development centre: Open Source Communications, Analytics and Research
University of York	<p><b>Police:</b> North Yorkshire Police</p> <p><b>Other:</b> City of York Council; Selby District Council; North Yorkshire County Council; Public Health in North Yorkshire; North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service; North Yorkshire and York Forum; York Teaching Hospital</p>	Co-production of policing evidence, research and training: Focus on mental health