



Background

This research collects knowledge around the notion of professionalism in policing.

The introduction of new educational directives in police organisations in England and Wales, make this research dynamic. This research emphasises the police-officer 'voice' and the experiences they encounter when embedding 'evidence-informed practice'. This research also explores how the knowledge gained from police officers obtaining police-specific degree qualifications, is utilised at work, both in the short-term and the long-term to identify barriers and enablers to influence police organisations and decision-making at the operational level.

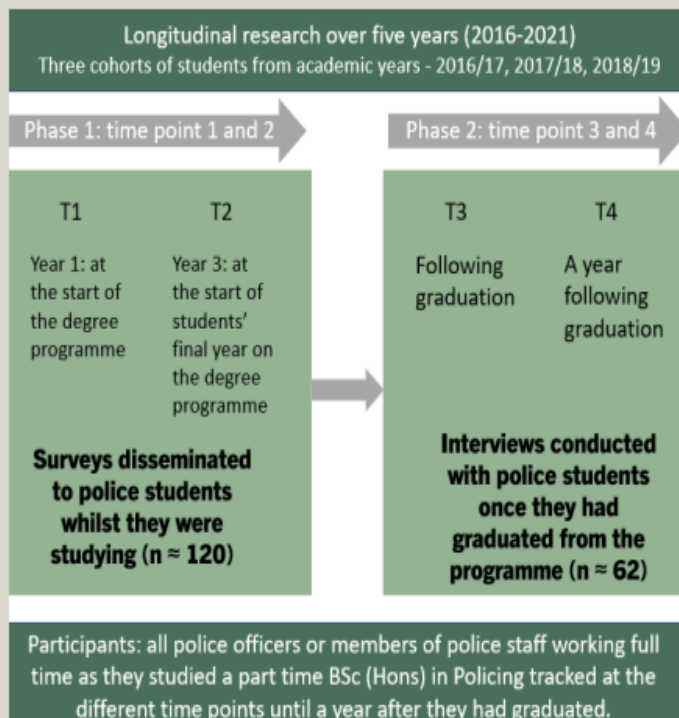
Therefore, this research contributes to the professionalisation agenda within policing being developed by the College of Policing, with a specific focus on the role of education in policing.

Research aims

Understand the motivations for police students to engage in degree level study and their aspirations of using their qualification

Explore how 'knowledge and skills' gained from police students studying a degree is utilised within police organisations in the short-term and the long-term

Methods



Perceived benefits:

Enhanced transferable skills, critical thinking and applying theory to decision making
Increased confidence and sense of professionalism
... the degree equips me to critically analyse stuff and ask those questions with a bit of confidence knowing that I can back up my statement with research or theory... Rather than just giving an opinion... it gives what I am saying a bit of weight (Inspector)

Utilising knowledge in practice:

Organisational value placed on learning was inconsistent
Most were unable to use their learning, knowledge and skills in practice. This was rank dependent
Participants were cynical about the overarching educational reform given the lack of value around their ability to embed their skills and knowledge from their degree,
... I've really enjoyed doing the degree, enjoyed the people I met, being exposed to that environment. But it's wasted in the context of supporting the organisation I work for. It's good for me, but the organisation don't really give a toss. What I've done, how I've done it... (Sergeant)

Impact

Impact on practice: Provides an evidence base of integrating degree level knowledge and skills into practice (enablers and inhibitors) / Research influenced the establishment of the Police Education Research Hub / Links to professional development of officers and staff to feed into the College of Policing

Impact on academia: Contributes to the body of knowledge around police education and professionalisation through academic papers and conferences.

Findings



Motivations for study:

- To attain a degree level qualification.
- To bolster professional development.
- To acquire new skills and specialised police knowledge to link to practice
- To aid promotion or to future proof for employment outside of policing