

Review of Learning and Development and Officer Wellbeing in the Context of RASSO- Work strand 4 Project Bluestone

**Dr Emma Williams, Director of Research & Strategic
Partnerships (CPRL)**

Jenny Norman, Senior Lecturer

Dr Rachel Ward, Lecturer

Richard Harding, Senior Research Fellow

Dr Nicky Miller, Director of Knowledge into Practice

Avon and Somerset Police lead – DCI Larisa Hunt

Aims & Objectives

1: This work strand explored the learning and development resources and approaches for RASSO in Avon and Somerset Police. The research team considered whether the process is iterative, evidence informed and inclusive of current knowledge on the policing of rape and sexual offences – including the College of Policing curriculum.

2: The work considered local support and supervision processes for officer wellbeing and burn out and where officer competency and development had linkages with wellbeing and perceived capability.

Methodology

Force learning and development materials aimed at specialist rape investigators reviewed to consider the effectiveness of the current local approaches. This material compared against relevant College of Policing material to identify gaps in the local learning provision against the expected standards required by the professional body for policing.

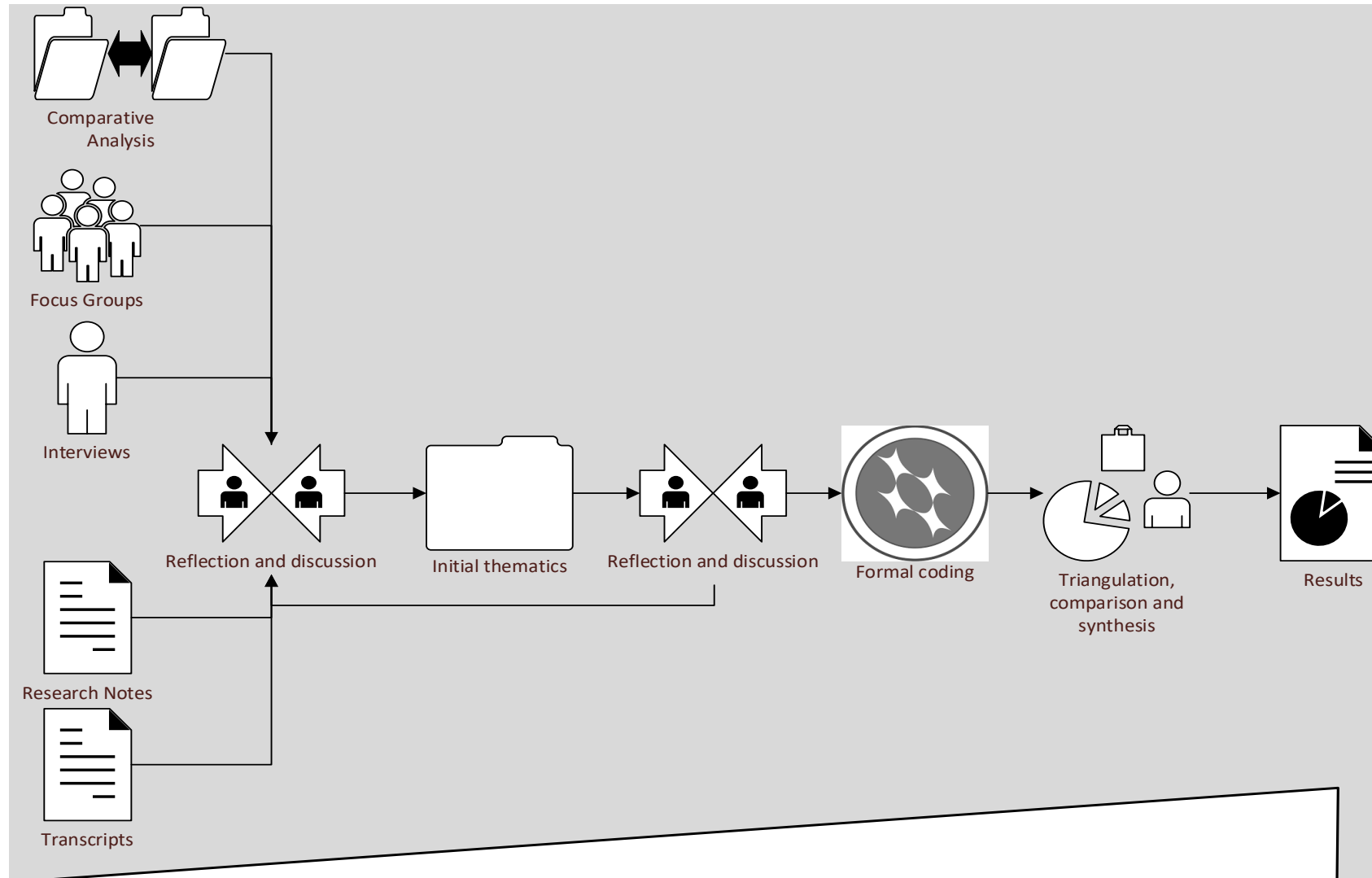
Review of local policies and procedures focused on officer wellbeing. National evidence call for examples of promising practice in the context of RASSO and wellbeing and consideration of applicability to A and S context. This was compared to the published evidence base available on this area of police work.

Focus groups with:

- Police investigators to explore their perceptions of police training materials and how their development needs are built into the development of the approaches at Avon and Somerset.
- Force learning and development officers/staff to explore the process for developing the materials, what they draw on for this material and the process of review internally.
- First response officers to explore their learning input and their perceptions of its' effectiveness in practice.

Two semi-structured interviews held with the force well-being leads to understand their experiences of referral processes and local support provision. These interviews will add value to the focus groups by providing additional information/perspectives on well-being and where there might be links to development needs.

Study Overview



Review of Learning and Development

The research for Project Bluestone was a team effort. Lead researchers are: Kari Davies, Katrin Hohl, Miranda Horvath, Jo Lovett, Betsy Stanko and Emma Williams April 2021 v1

Learning & Development: emerging themes from SWOT analysis of SSAIDP material

Pedagogy

Content

Organisational Setting

Assessment

Evaluation & Review of training

Strengths of SSAIDP material

Pedagogy

- Combination of taught (course) and experiential learning (CPD & portfolio) approaches combined in overall learning package
- Multi-faceted approaches reflected in classroom-based training – Lecture, Q&A, Group Discussion, Scenarios, Case Studies, use of SMEs, Handouts
- Knowledge check to establish baseline knowledge & understanding at start of each course element

Content

- Attempt at mapping CoP learning outcomes & content with SSAI course objectives but not always clear how align
- Wellbeing & resilience training included in the course
- Legislation, processes & procedure covered but also content on victim vulnerabilities, understanding offender behaviour, impact on victim & victim support.

Organisational Setting

- Genuine commitment from leadership to improve this training
- New Chronical resource management system will provide improved oversight of skills distribution

Weaknesses of SSAIDP material

Content:

- Lack of strong linkages between COP outcomes and learning delivery makes ability to be confident in fidelity of learning less certain
- Dual nature of the role regarding investigation versus burden of evidential proof not clear
- Depth of content not clear from material supplied for review; observation required
- Not clear the extent to which the content is evidence-informed with current academic evidence
- Softer skills for dealing with victim appears limited (behaviours)
- Experience of trainers in RASSO unknown
- Challenges of identifying and integrating changes in law and practice

Organisational setting:

- Does not acknowledge the dual nature of the early career investigator role and that of a learner
- The investigative landscape for RASSO offences is potentially complex with cases passing between first responders, Project Bluestone personnel and main CID resources. The learning pathways do not appear to integrate a holistic view of how these resources work cohesively within a single understood learning pathway to provide capacity and capability for investigations
- Potential tension between portfolio completion and investigative workloads, exacerbated by under-resourcing in investigative teams
- Inconsistent tutor/supervisor training which leads to inconsistent standard of support for trainee investigators
- Lack of mentoring between classroom and application into practice
- New Chronical resource management system lacks functionality of full learning management systems
- Balance of value of craft and evidence based knowledge

Assessment:

- Examples of formative & summative assessment could not be readily identified (with exception of a 20 question knowledge quiz)
- Unclear if assessments paced throughout the course so officer can learn from them
- Unclear if multiple feedback points exist to help build student understanding
- Assessment of effectiveness against CoP Learning Objectives is not clear
- Assessor training is only a two hour overview which may impact on assessor capacity, capability & confidence
- Little read across from PEQF assessment learning visible in sample provided

Evaluation & Review:

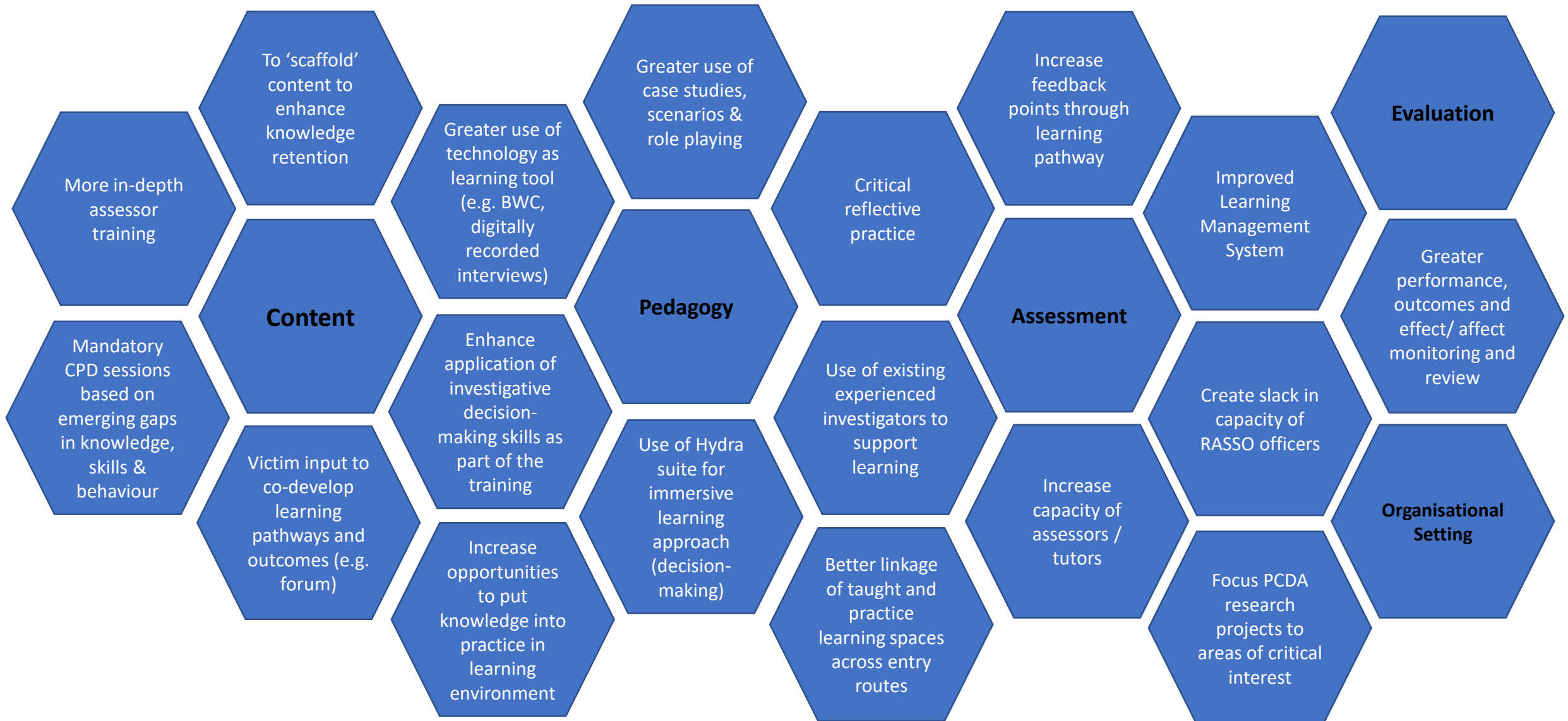
- Unclear if the taught component is pass or fail or based on attendance only
- Limited course evaluation (level 1 Kirkpatrick – happy sheets) appears to be undertaken
- Lack of evaluation of learning pathways to determine if learning has had desired effect makes it challenging to understand if learners are effectively equipped with required knowledge, skills and abilities
- Extent to which learning material updated with current and best available evidence is unknown
- Evidence of reluctance to listen to and integrate into learning ‘uncomfortable’ feedback from ISVAs
- Not apparent where victim/ survivor voice/ experience informs learning development

Voices of officers and staff



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Opportunities from review of SSAIDP material



Threats

- Lack of trained assessors for practice elements of learning likely to impact on quality of assessment
- Potential conflict of interest between the management of volume of investigative workload and the management of quality of learning experience and outcomes for learners, supervisors & mentors
- Switch from single investigator entry route to multiple routes has potential to create confusion regarding student experience & capability across entry pathways
- Tutor and supervisor training & competency may not be a consistent standard of support for trainee investigators
- Lack of investigative resources, and operational demands/investigative load has potential to place additional stressors on inexperienced investigators trying to manage complex, emotive & serious crime investigations beyond their capability & capacity, resulting in investigator attrition



Considerations

Limited workforce planning and relative balance of new investigators to more experienced investigators likely to impact on capacity and capability. Makes experience scarce and the impact of that experience potentially higher.

Lack of safe space for trainee investigators to voice concerns may create a disincentive for them to raise concerns over learning, competency or conflicts

The lack of more qualitative and outcome-based assessment of the learning outcomes means that it is difficult to determine whether what was taught was what was intended and inhibits evidence informed approaches to course adjustment and improvement

Balance of reliance on investigator experience versus curriculum defined approaches unclear and may lead to deviation from intended learning outcomes and inconsistencies in learning

Review of Wellbeing

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Officer Wellbeing: emerging themes from SWOT analysis of local material

Screening

Supervision

Organisational Context

Psychological support

Organisational Learning

Local strengths

Psychological Support:

- Thorough commitment and understanding of the issues from the Psychological Support Team (PST)
- Option for officers to see the PST twice a year officially and other times should an officer feel they require it

Psychological Screening:

- Recognition of the importance of reactive support (TRIM) and proactive support through regular screening

Organisational Learning:

- Desire to identify key themes from meetings with officers within the same teams and hold regular meetings with local departments to facilitate organisational learning and change based on these issues
- There is clear good practice to be recognised and learnt from within other specialist teams such as Ruby and Topaz

Supervision:

- The PST offer training to supervisors about how to recognise trauma and wellbeing issues should they require it
- The development of the Investigation Professional Development Unit (IPDU) offers opportunities to identify issues

Weaknesses

Psychological Support:

- By not mandating PST support there is a risk that officers will not access it due to prioritising work and in some cases, other officers, over their own self care (Jackman et al, 2020)
- First Response Officers (FROs) are overlooked in the PST process despite clear recognition that the cumulative effects of dealing regularly with traumatised victims is detrimental to their wellbeing (vicarious trauma) (Terani and Hesketh, 2019; Cartwright and Roach, 2020)

Psychological Screening:

- There is currently no PST pre screening for officers joining RASSO related roles, including First Response Officers (FROs). The development of a baseline understanding of officers' mental wellbeing is crucial for ongoing supervisor management (Terani and Hesketh, 2019)
- The Employee Self-Assessment Form for Stress Management is long and too detailed. For someone feeling stressed and anxious it might be counter-productive.

Organisational Learning:

- By not mandating PST support there is a risk that officers will not access it due to prioritising work over self care
- With no formal learning cycle to share promising local practice opportunities are currently missed

Supervision:

- The extent to which the learning is used by local management is unclear. There is no oversight to ensure this is developed into a monitored action plan
- Regular one to ones are limited and inconsistent within and between teams. They are linked to individuals rather than a consistent process (

Voices of officers and staff



Opportunities for wellbeing



Threats

- Officer retention and leavism
- Uplift and link to new 'inexperienced' officers and effective supervision (NPCC, forthcoming)
- Risk to service delivery to victims (FROs and investigators) if officers suffer from compassion fatigue linked to wellbeing
- Links to further attrition and failed investigations
- Organisational health risk more broadly and, further, productivity at a strategic level (Terani and Hesketh, 2020)



Conclusions - Interlinking well-being, learning and professional practice



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Conclusion

- Building on this research Workstream 4 has developed the following products
 - New processes for wellbeing 'Pause Point' checks (developed from promising practice in other forces)
 - Case review process with dedicated reflective practice points for learning, critical evaluation and well being considerations
 - A reflective practice supervisor guidance document
 - A learning and development guidance document
 - 10 minute power point highlighted key findings and ways forward
 - Evidence based International Trauma Questionnaire for initial screening of RASSO personnel