



Mobilising for Change in Policing Learning and Development Outcome Report, Part 2 of 2 – The change environment

Change in police learning and development functions: Running marathons with the red queen in straight-jackets and high heels

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Executive Summary

Background

- This research project was developed to extend earlier research into police learning and development functions in the context of the contemporary emphasis on education and learning within policing in England and Wales. The earlier project, the Implementing the Transformation of Police Learning and Development Programme (ITPLD) (2017-2019) developed a detailed overview of the attitudes and working practices of Learning and Development (L&D) departments and of the challenges of meeting the Policing Vision 2025 strategy (College of Policing, 2016) across policing organizations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The programme co-developed a range of models, tools and products to support strategic and operational leaders and practitioners and to help them think about and configure their organizational and L&D functions to meet their future challenges. Outcomes and products were made freely available to policing organizations within the UK. More details on these and other products developed during the ITPLD can be obtained here: [Outputs | Centre for Policing Research and Learning \(open.ac.uk\)](#).
- The research questions explored are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1 - Research questions⁴

RQ	Description
1	Are the products of the ITPLD project being used by policing organizations and if so, how?
2	What is the experience of practitioners in using the ITPLD Project products?
3	How do the uses of the products align and differ between organizations and what are the macro and micro contexts that affect this alignment?
4	In what ways are the products of the ITPLD supporting or inhibiting the process of organizational change both within L&D functions and more widely?
5	What are the key influences (barriers and enablers) on the change plans of L&D functions in policing organizations?

⁴ This report sets out findings on exploring the nature of the change environments in police L&D functions (RQ5), whilst a companion report focuses on the use and influence of the ITPLD products (RQ1,2,3 &4).

- The ITPLD products focussed on in this research are set out below:

Table 2 - ITPLD products

Product	Description	Intended audience
Strategic Narrative	Sets out a theory of change for police L&D to meet the challenges set out in Vision 2025 drawing on the learning from the programme that was co-produced between the academic research team and policing practitioners.	Strategic and political leadership
For more information see	https://www.open.ac.uk/centres/policing/sites/www.open.ac.uk.centres.policing/files/files/MOPAC/Strategic%20Narrative%20Final%20Version%20Final%20V1_2.pdf	
Destination Map	Provides a model of how L&D functions might be configured (a destination) to meet the challenges facing policing and its L&D functions, both from Vision 2025 and their complex strategic and operational landscapes. It also provides practitioners with details of the conditions considered necessary to achieve the necessary organizational changes.	Strategic and operational leadership
For more information see	Destination Map and Tools Techniques & Resources Centre for Policing Research and Learning (open.ac.uk)	
Tools, Techniques and Resources	An online resource developed to support L&D professionals to engage the changing landscape of policing and engage and implement the model set out in the Destination Map	Strategic and operational leadership, practitioners
For more information see	https://www.open.ac.uk/centres/policing/sites/www.open.ac.uk.centres.policing/files/files/Tools%2C%20Techniques%20and%20Resources%20for%20Learning%20and%20Development%20in%20Policing%20%20%20Production%20V1_1.pdf	

- L&D functions are in potentially pivotal positions to influence wider organizational change, the questions examined in these reports seek to better understand their potential to undertake and support change within their wider organizations.

- Research was conducted within the L&D functions of five policing organisations across England and Wales, four of which had been participants in the earlier ITPLD programme and one of which had subsequently engaged with the research and its outcomes.
- Given that the ITPLD products had been co-produced between academics and practitioners and that the organizations in this study had either participated or subsequently engaged in the use of its outcomes they might be considered to be optimally positioned to translate this knowledge from implicit to explicit and to disseminate, embed, and use it to effect change.

Key Findings

- In the companion report, which examines findings in relation to the use of knowledge, it was noted that the ability of organizational actors to use the knowledge created by the ITPLD products and their ability to successfully plan and enact change appeared to be mediated through the actions and interactions of factors that shaped the change environments of their policing organizations and L&D functions. This research suggests that whilst these change environments have common elements, they appear to be influenced by contextual and contingent factors and thus differ in appearance and effect between organizations. They appear to be key factors that influence and shape the use of knowledge and the planning and delivery of change within L&D functions and their wider organizations.
- The resultant change environments act to both inhibit and support the ability of organizational actors, and through them their functions and organizations, to effectively engage and use externally generated, or co-produced knowledge, and to enact and understand planned change to functional or learning systems and approaches.
- A number of change factors are identified which contingently act alone or in combination to inhibit or support change, and in some cases, to both inhibit and support change simultaneously.
 - Key enablers and inhibitors of change identified by this research include:
 - Technology
 - Failures in the delivery of critical supporting projects
 - Finances and financial arrangements
 - Resource and knowledge fragility
 - Leadership
 - Culture

- The findings of this research suggest that these change environments are created and shaped by interactions between internal and external drivers of change, and these enablers and inhibitors of change.
- Key features of these change environments include:
 - They are often characterised by complex change occurring simultaneously on multiple scales, and timescales, frequently punctuated by the response to externally or internally constituted change drivers and/or events constituted as crises. This creates an environment of near constant change across a range of scales within L&D functions and their wider organizations.
 - The frequent need to focus on and reorientate activity towards short term tactical activity drivers which are often constituted as crises. The imperatives of crisis response tend to focus attention and resource and may support change activity directed at crisis resolution. However, at the same time they tend to disrupt the planning and delivery of extant change planning and delivery elsewhere in the medium to longer term. They also have the effect of inhibiting the use of knowledge, and the planning and enactment of planned change, particularly, but not exclusively, that directed towards longer term goals and the delivery of sustained strategic change.
 - A lack of resource and human capital (the people, knowledge and skill resources available) within L&D functions with which to plan and enact change on both functional and learning systems and approaches.
 - A lack of planning for and assessment of the efficacy, effect and affect of change in and to functional and learning systems and approaches. This appears to arise from a range of factors including environmental (the change environment makes such longer focussed activity challenging), systemic (effective systems and processes to undertake such activity appear largely absent and there appear to be limited incentives to instigate and/or sustain them), and cultural (cultural learning and inclination amongst organizational actors does not appear to value or recognize such activity). This combines with challenges to effectively leverage externally generated, or co-produced knowledge to inhibit L&D functions' abilities to understand, plan and sustain change.
 - Functional and organizational level knowledge management systems and processes appear to be largely absent and therefore knowledge tends to reside with individuals. They, and their knowledge and skills, are susceptible to loss from functions and organizations, rendering

knowledge fragile within L&D and wider organizational settings. In the absence of more effective 'corporate memories' knowledge and human capital are repeatedly lost which disrupts change planning and delivery.

- Respondents identified that often cyclical nature of the problems that change was initiated to address and of the solutions enacted to address them. They saw the same classes and types of problems encountered repeatedly and solutions which have been tried before, or permutations on them, re-applied. Here the knowledge of the previous 'solution' and its effect may be unavailable to the contemporary problem solvers as there may be no corporate memory of them. This suggests that the solutions applied were not effective in the longer-term, since the issue has recurred. This situation may be a product of a combination of the contested and wicked nature of the fundamental problems that policing grapples (there may be no long term optimal solution, only temporary relief), the lack of corporate memory with which to recall what problems had been encountered and which solutions had been implemented on previous occasions, and the lack of evaluation of the effects of previous solutions to understand their efficacy against the problem they were deployed to resolve.
- Organizational actors are often operating at capacity or beyond capacity to manage change and demand.
- Organizational actors, but especially those in positions which held responsibility for leading or instigating change, often appeared to find change deeply professionally and personally challenging to plan, initiate and in particular to sustain.
- Contrary to the expectations organizational actors at all levels in L&D do not appear resistant to change but to broadly, and enthusiastically, embrace it. It is considered that the frequency with which they encounter change drives some of the necessity of this positive engagement.

1 Introduction

This research project was developed to extend earlier research into police learning and development functions in the context of the contemporary emphasis on education and learning within policing in England and Wales. The earlier project, the Implementing the Transformation of Police Learning and Development Programme (ITPLD) (2017-2019) developed a detailed overview of the attitudes and working practices of Learning and Development (L&D) departments and of the challenges of meeting the Policing Vision 2025 strategy (College of Policing, 2016) across policing organizations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The programme co-developed a range of models, tools and products to support strategic and operational leaders and practitioners and to help them think about and configure their organizational and L&D functions to meet their future challenges. Outcomes and products were made freely available to policing organizations within the UK. More details on these and other products developed during the ITPLD can be obtained here: [Outputs | Centre for Policing Research and Learning \(open.ac.uk\)](https://open.ac.uk).

This research project sought to explore how the models, tools, and products developed in the earlier research were being used or were influencing change and delivery activity in policing, and to explore the nature of the change landscape in police learning and development (L&D) functions.

The research questions explored are set out below:

Table 3 - Research questions

RQ	Description
1	Are the products of the ITPLD project being used by policing organizations and if so how?
2	What is the experience of practitioners in using the ITPLD Project products?
3	How do the uses of the products align and differ between organizations and what are the macro and micro contexts that affect this alignment?
4	In what ways are the products of the ITPLD supporting or inhibiting the process of organizational change both within L&D functions and more widely?

5 ⁵	What are the key influences (barriers and enablers) on the change plans of L&D functions in policing organizations?
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To examine these questions, we conducted research within the L&D functions of five policing organizations across England and Wales, four of whom had been participants in the earlier ITPLD programme.

Whilst these questions guided our research approaches, the data and insights obtained from the research shed light on them and wider issues. This report therefore seeks to reflect both the specific and wider inferences derived from the research.

Where we use the term ‘change’ in this report it is used to refer to organizational change (to systems, functions, approaches, etc) and to change to learning approaches and delivery (course content, pedagogical approach, etc). Where there is a divergence between organizational and learning change in a particular circumstance this is highlighted.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The primary aims of this research were to understand the use of the ITPLD products by policing L&D functions and the strategic change landscape in which they were implemented. It was recognised that the answers to these questions were likely to be influenced by internal and external contextual differences over a range of scales, from the micro to the macro. To meet these challenges the research design drew on three different influences:

- **Realist evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997)** which suggests approaches that are sensitive to contextual and contingent influences
- **Learning from action research approaches** as the research was conducted collaboratively with practice partners and the intention was to provide iterative support to their practice and planning (see for instance: Lewin, 1997; Coughlan and Coughlan, 2002; Reason and Bradbury, 2008).

⁵ This report sets out findings on exploring the nature of the change environments in police L&D functions (RQ5), whilst a companion report focuses on the use and influence of the ITPLD products (RQ1,2,3 &4).

- **Implementation Science approaches**, specifically the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) which draws together a number of theories of organizational change from the implementation science literature into a single overarching theory to provide a ‘practical guide for systematically assessing potential barriers and facilitators in preparation for implementing an innovation’ (cfirguide.org), in this case the use of the ITPLD products. The CFIR helped to differentiate between internal and external factors that might impact on change.

These frameworks shaped the development of research approach and the design of the semi-structured interview questions, which were used to gather the data. To accommodate the breadth of questions a two-interview protocol was developed for all participants with the exception of senior executive team members (NPCC member or civilian equivalent), who for reasons of availability and access were interviewed once using a modified interview protocol focussing on their strategic role. Interview protocol one focused on the use of the ITPLD products and internal change drivers and inhibitors whilst interview protocol two focussed on external change drivers and inhibitors. The senior executive teams interview tool drew on the content of the two protocols to create a single interview tool which focussed on internal and external change from a strategic perspective. Due to COVID 19 restrictions all interviews were conducted remotely using MS Teams. The research was granted ethical approval and all participants appropriately consented.

2.2 Sample

Policing organizations operating in areas in England and Wales who had previously participated in or indicated their desire to adopt the models, tools, and products developed under the ITPLD were the focus of this research. The sample derived from this consisted of five policing organizations, varying in size and complexity from small to large, and operating with both local and national remits across rural and urban areas across England and Wales. These represented a range of organizational histories, sizes, structures, and approaches generally and in relation to L&D. Two of these organizations shared a single collaborated L&D function but differences in organizational approach to L&D and change were discernible between the partnered organizations. As noted, four of these organizations had participated in the earlier ITPLD research project and one had subsequently engaged with CPRL regarding the use of the ITPLD research products. Since exploring the use of the ITPLD products was a primary aim the project a purposeful sampling strategy was employed to recruit organizational and individual participants from specific organizations and functions (L&D) across a range of hierarchical roles. In total N61 valid interviews were conducted with n31 participants. Data was obtained from police officers and staff across roles and ranks reflecting tactical and strategic positions within or having responsibility for L&D functions in each participating organization as detailed in Table 3 below.

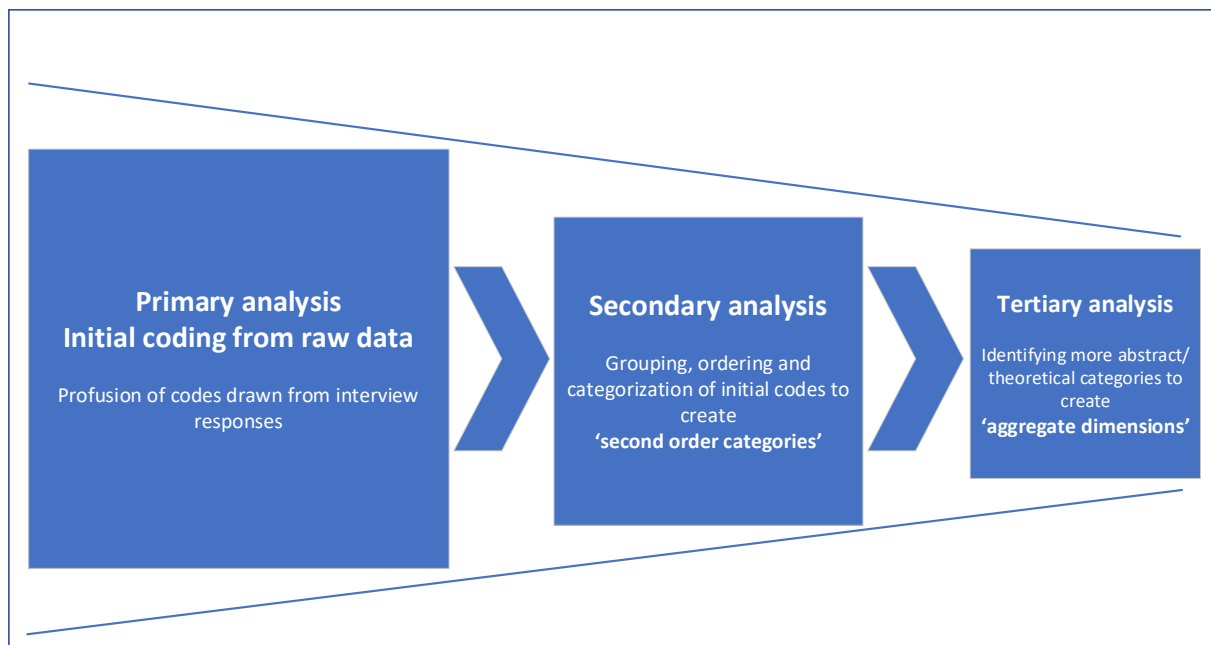
Table 4- Study Participants

Participant	n
Senior executive team members	4
Strategic leaders	4
Senior managers within L&D	5
Mangers and practitioners within L&D	18

2.3 Analysis

Interview data was pseudo-anonymised, transcribed and thematically analysed using NVIVO (a data analysis software package). Thematic analysis followed a recognised approach developed by Gioia *et al.* (2013). This methodology starts with the analysis of respondents' perspectives which are then used to underpin and inform the development of categorical and then more abstract theoretical aggregate dimensions (Gioia *et al.*, 2013), see figure 1. Both the thematic analysis of respondent data and the aggregate dimensions which were developed are used to inform the results of this research.

Figure 1- Data analysis following Gioia *et al.* (2013)



3 Findings

3.1 Overview

In this section we provide an overview of findings in relation to the research question 5; What are the key influences (barriers and enablers) on the change plans of L&D functions in policing organizations? For reasons of brevity and relevance the focus of this reporting is the outcome of the entire analytical cycle (the tertiary analysis stage) since this provides the reader with the final product of the analysis, rather than details of the intermediary stages.

Overall, it was noted that the ability of organizational actors to use the knowledge created by the ITPLD products and to successfully plan and enact change appeared to be mediated through the actions and interactions of factors that shaped the change environments of their policing organizations and L&D functions. This research suggests that whilst these change environments have common elements their exact dynamics and effects appear to be influenced by contextual and contingent factors and thus differed between the organizations examined.

The change environments of the L&D functions (and their wider organizations) examined in this study were often characterised by complex change occurring simultaneously on multiple scales, and timescales, both within the L&D functions and their wider organizational settings (which often had implications for L&D functions). The change environment appeared to be frequently punctuated by the response to potentially unanticipated external or internal change drivers and/or events constituted as crises. This suggested that L&D functions experienced an environment of near constant change across a range of scales within L&D functions and their wider organizations.

Within the organizations examined the frequent requirement to focus on and reorientate activity towards short term, often tactical, activity, particularly, but not exclusively, in responding to perceived crises was noted. This appeared to skew attention, energy and resource allocation towards these types of activities and given their repetitive nature they are considered likely to re-enforce sense making and cultural learning that focussed on short term, quick fix approaches. Whilst some of this reactive activity might instigate change within systems, approaches or activities given its spontaneous nature it appeared to rarely be aligned to a cohesive overall strategy or direction. The predominance of reactive activity also tended to disrupt organizational actor's abilities to use knowledge, and to plan and enact planned change, particularly, but not exclusively, that directed towards longer term goals and the delivery of sustained strategic, or more transformative, change.

Change activity often appeared to be constrained both in scope and type, or at least subject to prioritisation, due to a lack of resource and human capital (the people, knowledge and skill resources available) within L&D functions with which to plan and enact change to both functional and learning systems and approaches. Organizational actors reported that they were often operating at capacity or beyond capacity to manage change and demand within their functions.

One of the key factors identified that appeared to influence organizational actors' ability to successfully plan and deliver change was the apparent lack of systems, processes and often time and capacity to plan for and undertake the assessment of the efficacy, effects and affects of change in and to functional and learning systems and approaches. This situation appears to arise from a range of factors including environmental (the turbulent change environment makes such longer term focussed activity challenging), systemic (effective systems and processes to undertake such activity appear largely absent and there appear to be limited incentives to instigate and/or sustain them), and cultural (cultural learning and inclination amongst organizational actors does not appear to value or recognize such activity). These factors combine with challenges to effectively leverage externally generated, or co-produced knowledge, to inhibit actors within L&D functions' abilities to understand the change that they have enacted (be it planned or unplanned) and thus to apply that understanding to future change planning.

Relatedly functional and organizational level knowledge management systems and processes appeared to be largely absent and therefore knowledge tended to reside with individuals. They, and their knowledge (and skills), were susceptible to loss from functions and organizations (through functional or organizational exit), rendering knowledge fragile within L&D and wider organizational settings. In the absence of more effective 'corporate memories' knowledge and human capital are repeatedly lost which tends to disrupt change planning and delivery.

The nature of the problems that change was initiated to address and of the solutions enacted to address them were often perceived to be repetitive or cyclical. Here the same classes and types of problems appeared to be encountered repeatedly and solutions which had been tried before, or permutations on them, re-applied. This suggests that the solutions applied previously were not effective in the longer-term, since the issue has recurred. Knowledge of the previous problems, the 'solutions' applied, and their effects often appeared to be unavailable to the contemporary problem solvers as corporate memory systems appeared to be largely absent. As a consequence, rather than *déjà vu* (seen this before) those engaging in change or problem-solving activities often appeared to experience *vu jà dé* (never seen this before).

Given the nature of the change environment organizational actors, but especially those in positions which held responsibility for leading or instigating change, often appeared to find change deeply professionally

and personally challenging to plan, initiate and in particular to sustain. However, organizational actors at all levels in L&D did not appear resistant to change but to broadly, and enthusiastically, embrace it. It is considered that the frequency with which they encounter change drives some of the necessity of this positive engagement.

The analysis of the data identified a number of key factors that appear to influence and shape the use of knowledge and the planning and delivery of change within L&D functions examined and their wider organizations. The change environments that result from the interaction of these factors act to both inhibit and support the ability of organizational actors, and through them their functions and organizations, to effectively engage and use externally generated, or co-produced knowledge, and to enact and understand planned change to functional or learning systems and approaches. The findings in relation to the effects of these key factors and the change environments that they create are set out below.

3.2 The Change Environment

This section proceeds by firstly setting out a model that describes the change environment that was developed as a result of data analysis, this is followed by an overview of the findings that supported its development.

Analysis identified that the overarching '*change environment*' in which the planning and/or enactment of change to functional or learning systems in police L&D functions occurs appears to be underpinned and mediated by eight key '*change factors*'. Interactions within and between these '*change factors*' act to create two elements within the wider '*change environment*'; the '*change Landscape*' and '*change knowledge*'.

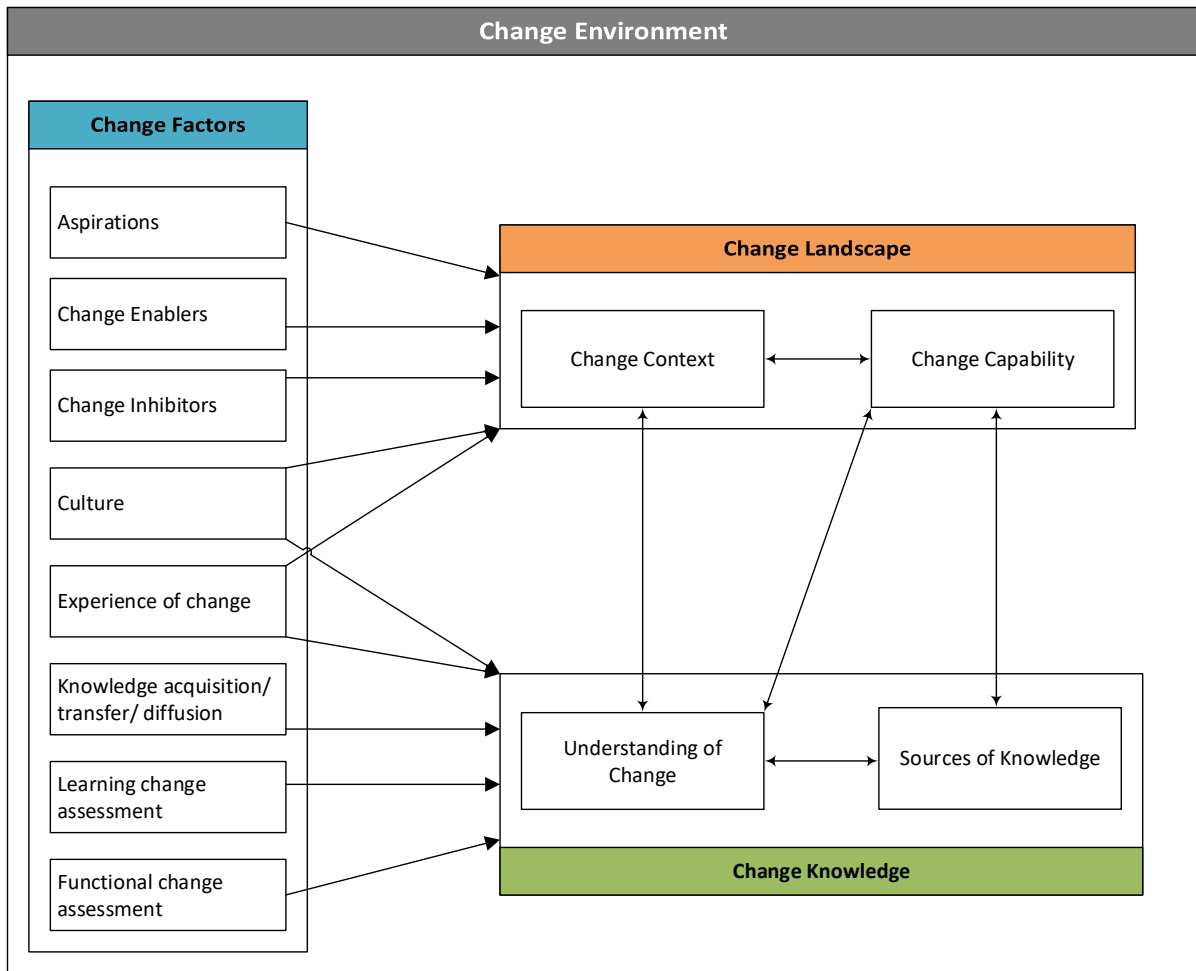
The '*change landscape*' represents the sum total of the forces that positively or negatively influence the desire, willingness, and ability of organizational actors (singly or in aggregate) to plan and/or enact change to organizational systems or learning approaches. It is shaped by organizational actors understanding of the context in which change is occurring (*change context*) and their individual and wider capacity and capability (perceived and/or actual) to successfully engage change (*change capability*). Both of these elements are influenced by change actors' aspirations (their desire/drive to achieve change); factors which support or inhibit change in the context they seek to enact it in; cultural influences, such as accepted ways of doing and thinking; and their previous experience of change, which influences factors such as what they perceive as possible and what approaches might be appropriate. These two elements

are inter-related, since change actors' understanding of context appears to be influenced by their perceptions of capacity and capability, and vice versa.

'*Change knowledge*' represents the sum total of the knowledge and understanding that positively or negatively influences the desire, willingness, ability and approaches of organizational actors (singly or in aggregate) to plan and/or enact change to organizational systems or learning approaches. It appears to be shaped by two elements; what knowledge change actors have access to, choose to access and/or can leverage ('*sources of knowledge*') and their ability to conceptualise, plan and enact change in a given circumstance ('*understanding of change*'). Both of these elements are influenced by change actors' abilities to access and understand the outcomes of previous change activities to functional or learning systems (the functional and learning change assessment); the knowledge that they have access to or preferentially choose to access, use and share to inform and support the planning and enactment of change; and in common with the change landscape, cultural influences and previous experience of change. Again, these two elements appear to be inter-related since what sources of knowledge they can access, choose to use or can successfully leverage influences their ability to understand the context and thus their approach to change and vice versa. The change landscape and change knowledge interact to shape the overall change environment.

The model at Figure 2 has been developed to illustrate the relationships and interactions that were identified, and which appear to shape the overarching '*change environment*'. The aggregate effect of the interactions of the elements of the '*change environment*' appeared to be temporally and situationally contingent, in that they varied between time and place, and thus whilst the '*change environment*' and its features described here appeared to be consistent across organizational settings the effects of the change environment operating within and on individual L&D functions were not. Many of the change pressures and features of these change environments appeared to be derived from L&D functions wider organization settings rather than situated solely within those functions themselves. In this way, and perhaps not unexpectedly, the change environment in L&D functions appeared to be intrinsically linked to that of their wider organizational ones.

Figure 2- The change environment in police L&D functions



Tables 5 and 6 provide more details of the elements of this model.

Table 5 – Change factors & their influence

Change Factor	Explanation	Notes	Shape/ influence	
Aspirations	The current and future plans for and attitudes towards change of organizational actors	Held by individuals; aggregate effect may exert influence at group and organizational levels. Increased authority to initiate/sustain change activities = increased influence, and ability to enact aspirations particularly at group, function and/or organizational levels	Change Context	Change Landscape
Change enablers	Factors that support a particular change initiative or initiatives			
Change inhibitors	Factors that inhibit a particular change initiative or initiatives			
Culture	The way things are understood and done around here	May be different from officially sanctioned practice and policy and between strategic and tactical level actors	Change Capability	Change Landscape & Knowledge
Experience of change	Organizational actors experience of current and past change	Informs and shapes views on current and future change, its possibility, viability and approaches to it	Understanding of Change	Change Knowledge
Knowledge acquisition/ transfer/ diffusion	Knowledge that organizational actors have access to or preferentially choose to access, use and share to inform and support the planning and enactment of change			
Learning change assessment	Processes and systems to assess the effect and affect of and knowledge derived from assessing the outcomes of learning and teaching interventions and activities		Sources of Knowledge	Change Knowledge
Change assessment	Processes and systems to assess the effect and affect of and knowledge derived from assessing the outcomes of functional change activities			

Table 6 – Further explanation of elements of change environment model

	Explanation	Notes	Shape/ Influence	Definition
Change Context	The environmental, cultural and functional conditions pertaining at a given time and place in which change is contemplated, planned or attempted.	Influences and is influenced by change capability and understanding of change	Change Landscape	The sum total of the forces that positively or negatively influence the desire, willingness, and ability of organizational actors, singly or in aggregate, to plan and/or enact change to organizational systems or learning approaches
Change Capability	The personal and organizational capacity and capability that organizational actors can bring to bear to plan, engage and enact change at a given time and place.	Influences and is influenced by change context and understanding of change		
Understanding of Change	The cognitive, conceptual, cultural and perceptual understandings of change that organizational actors possess and can bring to bear to plan, engage and enact change at a given time and place.	Influences sources of knowledge, change context and change capability	Change Knowledge	The sum total of the knowledge and understanding that positively or negatively influences the desire, willingness, ability and approaches of organizational actors (singly or in aggregate) to plan and/or enact change to organizational systems or learning approaches
Sources of knowledge	The sources of knowledge that organizational actors have access to, have the capability and/or capacity to leverage, or preferentially choose to access and can bring to bear to plan, engage and enact change at a given time and place.	Influenced by understanding of change and change capability		

Below we provide a more detailed explanation of the change factors that were identified and influenced the creation of this model⁶, in doing so we provide a view on the factors that speak to RQ5.

3.3 Change Factors – An overview

3.3.1 Aspirations

One of the key factors influencing the change environment identified appeared to be the attitudes and orientations of the organizational actors within L&D who planned, led or participated in change. These were labelled ‘aspirations’, since on balance respondents across differing functions and ranks spoke positively and, in some instances passionately, of their desires to improve L&D capability, capacity and delivery, not only for their learners and organizations but also to improve service delivery to the communities their organizations ultimately served. The label ‘aspirations’ is intended to encompass not only attitudinal and orientational perspectives on change but also the willingness to engage in it, or otherwise.

Overall actors in more senior roles who had greater authority and autonomy to instigate and shape change tended to speak in more specific, positive and engaged terms about change and their experience of it, whilst those in roles which provided less authority and autonomy around change tended to be less engaged and enthusiastic.

‘I think it depends on the personnel that you are dealing with within the organization..... I would say from the bottom level sometimes there's a resistance to change because I think almost they'll feel if it is not broke why change things? but if we're dealing with more senior managers, then I think they can see a greater overall picture that sometimes a change is as good as the rest, so they're more receptive to that change and more open and willing to change’ (628)

The ambition, enthusiasm and support for change apparent amongst middle and senior managers noted in this study appears at odds with the existing literature on change in policing which suggests that police practitioners, across function and hierarchy, have a strong ‘cultural’ resistance to change (e.g., Chan, 1997; Skogan,2008). However, factors such as the length of service (of police officers in particular), the impact of ‘change fatigue’, a perception of loss or threat to status or certainty (amongst

⁶ One of the premises of conducting this research was the undertaking that neither individuals nor organizations would be identifiable in any reporting. This means that here high-level findings are reported, supported where appropriate by the voices of practitioner participants, but only where this does not conflict with that undertaking. Where quotes are used, they are indicative of trends seen within the data, and identifying elements are redacted.

other potential factors), workload and lack of obvious change relevance were identified by respondents as making some organizational actors more resistant to change than others.

'No one seemed to me to be resistant to change for changes sake. It was more about their fear and their working environment. They already were struggling to manage, and it would make it worse.' (660)

'An example of potential resistance that we're still overcoming is [Name] wanted to change the title for our trainers to learner facilitators because the role is so much bigger than a trainer, but some of the team have taken real umbrage to that because that's their profession, and they see themselves as a trainer.' (642)

This suggests that whilst resistance to change does manifest in the change environment it appears to be more organizationally and situationally contingent than suggested in the literature in the case of the L&D functions studied here.

In addition to the change programmes planned or underway to meet specific internal or external change drivers, the majority of senior leaders and managers spoke of their more general ongoing or planned transformations of their organization's L&D functions. Indeed, all of the L&D functions examined had recently been or were actively in the throes of review, reform or transformation, sometimes precipitated by a change in senior leadership and sometimes by incumbent leaders. In this context it was noted that one of the L&D functions studied had had multiple changes of senior leader over the preceding five-year period, another was undergoing a change of senior leadership at the time of the study, whilst others were more stable. Such reviews and leadership changes often appeared to precipitate change, as new leaders often arrived with different mandates or perspectives. However, such events were often perceived as creating barriers to the planning and/or delivery of existing change by those within L&D functions, since extant or planned change might be put on hold pending the outcome of reviews, or no-longer aligned with the new leaders strategic or tactical direction.

'We can't carry any recruitment until the internal review is completed..... However, we are unable to perform our functions to the best of our ability at the moment because we need extra staff, our workload is so high, but I think there's a lack of appreciation of that.' (628)

There was a consistent recognition across study participants across roles and ranks that their change ambitions were impacted by factors that acted to both inhibit and enable their, their team's and their organization's change planning and delivery, many of which were beyond their immediate ability to influence. As a result, senior leaders in L&D often appeared to employ 'flexible' approaches to articulating and planning their change ambitions to fit changing circumstances.

Yes, I kept it [the plan to transform L&D] very flexible and I wrote it so just from very first so it wasn't really really tight, but I kept it as a very wide open transformation of L&D business case. But what that does is every time I go back and read the original aims and objectives and my desired outcomes, whatever it is I'm doing kind of fits under it, which is why I keep it open and running. (949)

'There's no plan [for major change in the L&D approach], but it is written down that [we are] moving the learning culture, that is our objectives for 2021/22. It's written down that it will happen, but we just don't have loads of plans behind as to how. Our overarching objective and our six deliverables, that's what we work to. But our plans are light.' (915)

These flexible approaches to change planning and delivery appear to be an adaptive response to managing change in the complex and often shifting change landscapes that L&D functions operate within. In the next section we outline the inhibitors and enablers that influence change and help create this imperative for 'flexible' change planning.

3.3.2 Change Inhibitors and Enablers

Whilst enthusiasm and aspiration to change was common across study participants, they identified a consistent range of factors that were considered to act as enablers or inhibitors to change within L&D and their wider organizational change environments. Whilst personnel closer to the operational delivery of L&D effect tended to focus on more 'tactical' factors, there was broad agreement across functions and ranks.

Whether factors acted as inhibitors or enablers appeared to be contingent and often influenced by circumstances and perspective (framing). COVID⁷ for example, was viewed as both an enabler and/or an inhibitor depending on circumstance and framing.

Change enablers were often discussed in a more abstract ways, as in 'if we had this or more of that' we would be better at change. Conversely, inhibitors were highlighted more often and described in more concrete, experience-based ways, as in 'this happened, and it had this negative effect'. It is difficult to determine whether this is due to attention bias, L&D actors' tendency to notice inhibitors more and therefore remember them better, or because inhibitors actually operate more often on their change plans than supporters, however, the more concrete example-based recall of inhibitors

⁷ COVID created a sudden existential crisis which required a radical change in the way learning was delivered in policing organizations. It lowered the usual organizational inhibitors to change, and it precipitated the adoption of approaches and technology, such as online learning, more rapidly than would otherwise have been the case and thus supported change aspirations. However, at the same time focussing on this crisis negatively impacted other change plans, the health restrictions imposed created practical restraints on change activity and the future likelihood of further austerity which would adversely impact L&D functions was anticipated and these factors were anticipated to inhibitors to change both now and potentially into the future.

suggests they may be more often encountered. Noting that the strength of influence of a factor rather than mere numbers is the important calculus, here we saw that factor's inhibitory influence was often stronger than their supporting one, although, as noted, in combination the overall change environment acted in situationally contingent ways. Below we highlight those inhibitors and enablers with the strongest signal in our data.

3.3.2.1.1 Technology

Whilst some of the participant organizations had or were planning to increase IT provision to support L&D functions, and the national roll out of Microsoft Office 365 was noted in this regard, organizational actors at all levels highlighted the challenges and barriers technology created to delivering change. In particular, participants highlighted the complexity and slowness of procurement and change in the policing technology space (at local, regional and national levels), that the often aging and fragmented police IT systems were not compatible with newer software and technology solutions, and the lack of functionality created by the application of security policies.

'The biggest inhibitor would be technology. You know if we had technology and finances in the sense that if we could buy a really good LMS [learning management system] and a couple of other software design packages I think we could really progress, and that's not to say we won't, but it's an inhibitor in the fact it that takes a lot of time to make that happen.' (949)

3.3.2.1.2 Technology Policies

IT physical and information security policies were highlighted as significant inhibitors to change and delivery. Organizational security policies and their implementation prohibited and/or disabled certain types of IT connectivity or functionality. These impacted the adoption of both new ways of working, such as using online meeting platforms (e.g., Zoom or MS Teams), and the ability to use the existing capabilities of available technology effectively or in new ways. L&D practitioners spoke of the need to use workarounds to get what was expected of them done, often using personal IT, in contravention of the same organizational security policies.

'We can't connect to Bluetooth for security reasons and so I get given a mobile printer, but my mobile printer is Bluetooth, Bluetooth is disabled on it. The laptop has Bluetooth disabled on it because they claim security. So, everything Wi-Fi turned off, so we have a fairly dumb laptop and a printer that I have to use my own laptop.' (512)

It was clear that such practices were tacitly accepted within policing organizations in order for work to get done, however they placed organizational actors forced to operate in this manner in jeopardy of sanction if the tacit were ever made explicit.

'I've alluded to the fact that the officers use their own laptops and devices all the time, even though that's a breach of security or would be deemed a breach of security, it's let go because it's officers trying to make it work.' (512)

3.3.2.1.3 Project Delivery and Failure

The negative impacts of the failures of projects to deliver supporting technologies were also highlighted by study participants across role and rank. These failures were reported to arise from a range of factors from outright project failure, to anticipated L&D related capabilities being deprioritised from wider projects during their lifetime or in one case after successfully delivering a multi-year project it was discovered that the planned technology intended to support L&D transformation wasn't compatible with the organization's wider IT infrastructure. This perhaps speaks to the wider challenges policing appears to have with delivering IT or infrastructure projects across a range of scales but also, and more specifically perhaps, to the priority placed upon L&D functions when decisions are made regarding change and project scope narrowing.

'We were supposed to be getting a new training platform, all singing, all dancing, did everything, training, like an online learning platform. It would handle reviews, it would do duties, it would have calendars in it there's been a project going for over five years, most definitely, and it's a massive project..... So, we've had this it's coming, it's coming, it's coming for a good two to three years. And now, they've had to go, do you know what? Yes, it's not going to work, is it? And we must have invested millions into it.' (716)

More generally study participants felt that those effected by change were not engaged or consulted effectively enough in the planning or delivery of those changes.

'HR sits in the ivory tower, and it will develop a policy and just send it out there and everyone's just gotta deal with it. But you just know it's gonna fall flat on its arse, it's just not gonna work. So I think that applies with anything that we do in terms of you know policing in general' (002)

Despite the challenges associated with IT related projects some of the organizations in our study had successfully made technology investments to support their L&D units/department's functional and learning change aspirations, such as the purchase of Virtual Reality systems or more modern IT equipment. L&D practitioners welcomed these and saw them as supportive to their change plans and aspirations. However, it was not always clear how the procurement and implementation of particular technology solutions linked to clear and consistent functional or learning related change plans. They often appeared to originate from particular technology/solution-led changes rather than to the provision of technologies identified to resolve an identified functional or pedagogical challenge or requirement. Moreover, slow procurement cycles and the rapid redundancy of technology solutions,

either alone or in combination, meant that the risk that systems might sometimes not be fit for purpose on delivery, did not meet the anticipated requirement or rapidly became outdated, was often present.

'So, we've got virtual reality capability within force. And even though that was implemented back in [Year], there's only been a couple of scenarios built on it and whilst it's good, it saves the cost on actors and scenario-based training..... the officers who came and had learning on it still don't think it's realistic enough because the graphics aren't realistic, so they're expecting a PlayStation experience So, they then feel they're not getting the best experience out of it because the graphics aren't up to their expectations. Even though the learning is there behind it, and they all hit the learning objectives behind the virtual reality scenarios I think the learning experience is taken away and is reduced by the learner experience with our virtual reality capability.' (628)

Given the challenges of IT integration new systems were also often delivered as stand-alone systems, which limited numbers were trained to use. These factors have the potential to add to the accretion and complexity of the IT provision within their organizations, and the risk of redundancy if actors with knowledge of how to use the systems leave the function or organization.

3.3.2.1.4 Finance

The effects of finance arrangements and provision also featured prominently in study participants' views on supporters and inhibitors to change. Respondents saw finance as a critical factor since appropriate/adequate funding supported their change aspirations, e.g., by supporting the provision of adequate resourcing, technology provision and training to upskill L&D actors. However, respondents predominantly spoke of finance as a barrier to change planning and delivery, both in absolute terms, they often felt they didn't have the funds to enact the change they were required to, needed to or wanted to do, but also as a disrupter to planned or ongoing change, due to unpredictability and challenges in the arrangements for financial settlement and allocation within policing organizations in England and Wales.

The ongoing impacts of financial constraints resulting from austerity measures implemented across public spending following the financial crash of 2008/9 were repeatedly highlighted in relation to L&D's capacity and capability to engage change. The perception was that in financially constrained operating environments, where resource allocation needed to be prioritised to what were perceived, within their wider organizations, as critical or essential activities, L&D functions were often not prioritised. This effect was reported to have significantly impacted L&D functions over the period of austerity. Whilst there was a sense that the impacts of austerity were lessening it was anticipated that

the legacy of COVID and financial impacts of the uplift in police numbers would lead to a return to a more financially constrained environment in the near future.

As noted, whilst the absolute amount of funding was identified as a key barrier or enabler of change another critical area were the funding mechanisms that operated in policing. Senior and strategic leaders in particular highlighted the impact of police funding arrangements at a national, organizational, and functional level. Funding allocations from central government and local stipend were reportedly only settled on a yearly basis and the actual final settlement was often only settled close to, or even after, the start of any given financial year. This appeared to have a number of effects; firstly, at an organizational level it created financial uncertainty both to timing and adequacy (the actual amount of settlements was often difficult to predict); secondly, at a functional level, financial certainty inevitably arrived even later than at an organizational level and thus planning for and financial planning for change within L&D functions was often further delayed, which inhibited financial expenditure early in a financial year; thirdly, because money is not spent earlier in a given financial year underspends often accumulated towards their end; and fourthly, because budgets rarely rolled over and tended to operate on a 'use it or lose it' principle there is often a rush to reduce any underspend, which precipitated the authorisation of a profusion of largely unplanned change and other activities towards the end of financial years in order to not 'lose it'. In short even where there was enough money, which it was felt there often wasn't, the structural and functional finance arrangements within policing appear to limit the ability of its actors to leverage it effectively and create 'famine and feast' annual cycles of change activity that potentially incentivise short termism which appears disruptive to longer-term change planning and delivery.

'I think we breathed a big sigh of relief, [we] thought we're getting investment back in policing, we can sensibly take the lessons that we've had to employ during austerity and make prudent investments to really maximise the benefit we get. And then I think that's probably hit a bit of a brick wall. And some of the plans that we're looking at, potentially, might have to be put on hold, or done in a different way. So, I think that uncertainty, and bear in mind we're getting, for as long as I can remember, we've had one-year settlements which actually mitigates against you doing some longer-term prudent investment and construction. Because you're going year to year, which makes it difficult to do proper strategic planning.' (522)

3.3.2.1.5 Human Capital

Organizational actors within L&D cited a range of factors, particularly the impacts of financial constraint, the rapid changes in experience levels within policing created by the Uplift Programme and retirement cycles, and the relative prioritisation and perceptions of the value of L&D that impacted upon the absolute levels of people, and the amount of knowledge, experiential and skill resources,

collectively 'human capital', available within and to L&D functions. The availability and mix of this human capital were seen as creating inhibitors and enablers to change. Study participants across strategic and tactical roles largely viewed the human capital effects on their change planning and delivery, in both functional and learning spheres as negative.

'We had all our resources stripped by Chief Officer Team just a couple of years ago, literally emptied the Department shy of people' (766)

'So we think that with the new police degree programme, within three years probably 30% of our workforce is going to have less than three years' experience. Which is quite frightening when you think about it.' (522)

The lack of availability of human capital was seen as constraining and/or restricting individual and organizational capacity to engage and enact new change and meet demand, since any planning and delivery of change required the 'right' blend of human capital to deliver it successfully.

3.3.2.1.6 Structural Fragility

Reductions of or restrictions on human capital were seen as leaving L&D functions structurally fragile. Here structural fragility is seen as arising not only from a lack of resources in absolute terms, but also from the paucity of organizational actors with the necessary knowledge, skills, experience and capacity to meet demand and change planning and delivery requirements. This effect impacted change to both functional and learning systems, processes and approaches. This fragility extends to the leadership of change, where with some exceptions, the change programmes, and initiatives being undertaken by the participating L&D functions were largely conceived and driven by individuals rather than being embedded in the wider organizational infrastructure, processes or approaches. Here a difference in effect between police officer and police staff role holders was noted. Study participants identify that police officers tended not to stay in any one post for protracted periods. This arises from the interplay of various factors, including personal career progression and development as well as organizational requirements. The impact of this difference was particularly felt in L&D functions which are considered non-operational, and therefore not as potentially 'useful' to police officer career aspirations as more 'operationally' focused roles. Police staff however were found to be more functionally specialist and to generally lack the opportunities or organizational imperatives to move roles as regularly. This implies that fragility of both knowledge and skills and of leadership may be particularly salient where police officers are in key roles. However, this should not be understood to suggest police officers should not hold roles in L&D functions since they contribute operational knowledge and experience which supports the development of change and learning approaches better aligned to operational requirements.

'It is fine at the moment because of me doing the role I'm doing, if I was not there tomorrow, I would be concerned that that structure can be quite an inhibitor for the department.' (949)

'I said to my boss, when I leave next year.....there will be no one who has any corporate memory of how we made all these decisions, and how we sorted that out, and how we did this.' (716)

3.3.2.1.7 Leadership

Leadership at all levels exerts both direct and more subtle influences over the change environment of L&D functions. Firstly, in order to be able to enact change study participants generally considered it important to gain the support of leadership, to allow change plans to be authorised, resourced and enacted and to signal organizational legitimacy. The more significant the change proposed, the more important the securing of senior buy-in and support was considered. Accordingly, the explicit support and permission of leaders (above the level of the change proposer) to contemplate and engage in change was seen as an important supporter of change ambitions.

'I have found we've had incredible support from our current senior leadership and we really have been supported to do really whatever we proposed and recommended.' (489)

However here the structural fragility described above could create instability in the change environment as senior sponsors moved roles and new incumbents with differing perspectives arrived. The paradigm of seeking senior support was on occasion subverted, at all levels, where 'leadership' was perceived as a blocker or would be likely opposed to a proposed change or action. In these circumstances change might be initiated without asking permission on the premise that it would either not be noticed or that 'it was better to ask forgiveness than permission.'

'We've just gone ahead and made those changes But yes, that's tricky. That's probably not the best way of doing things but it's that kind of thing is it's easier to ask for forgiveness later.' (663)

Leadership and its application are not however fixed quantities. They involve contextual and contingent interactions between organizational actors, often from different ranks within a hierarchy, and thus these interactions involve the exertion of organizational authority and power. Here intent and effect may or may not be aligned; one person's clear and appropriate leadership was another's micro-management and disempowerment and we saw that leaders' leadership preferences and choices of style had effect and affect on those they led both generally and in relation to planning and enacting change, as the observations of one senior manager illustrate:

'There is an overall feeling of micromanagement or severe micromanagement so that empowerment is being taken away from you, for me to make a decision and trying to

implement the change..... I wouldn't necessarily feel empowered to do my day-to-day work, let alone implement a change.' (628)

This effect might be amplified in policing through the impact of its constitution as a 'disciplined' service where actors can be required to take particular actions if lawfully directed by those of higher rank. However not all apparently comparable positions of authority appeared to be equal. Power disparities between police officers and police staff of equivalent rank were identified in the organizations studied, with senior police staff recognising that their ability to make things happen was (sometimes significantly) more constrained than their police officer colleagues.

'I always engage with the force lead for that, because ultimately because we're in a hierarchical organization, I'm a police staff member and if a police officer with lots of pips on their shoulders puts the same message out, probably that gives it a bit more oomph. Whether it should or not, that's just a fact of life.' (949)

The availability of human capital in L&D functions and the wider ability of actors within L&D to engage and enact change also appeared to be affected by the views of senior leaders on the relative merits and worth of L&D as a function. Their differing perspectives and decisions and their resultant strategic and tactical impacts drive increases or reductions in L&D resource and human capital over both longer and shorter time periods. Our data suggested one manifestation of this effect was longer term and cyclical, with decisions to insert and remove police officers from L&D functions repeated over time based on senior leadership perspective and preference.

'I think it was our [Member of executive leadership team] decided, all police officers, out of L&D, get rid of [them] all, it's not a real job, go back on the streets. And we get this every ten years or so, And then they go, well, why hasn't this been done, why hasn't that been done, and why doesn't anybody know about that? And that's because there's no knowledge in that department anymore.' (716)

The effect of leadership attitudes and decisions also appeared to operate over much shorter time periods, particularly in times of perceived crisis when resources, particularly police officers, might be redeployed from L&D functions, often at short notice, to bolster activities perceived as more organizationally critical. Whilst the 'crisis' itself might operate over relatively short time scales, the effects on functional and learning change delivery in L&D functions could operate over longer timescales.

'It's all very short term, isn't it? who's here over the next couple of days to answer the calls, let's just rip everybody out..... And then long term you know we're not delivering on our HMIC

key performance indicators, and everything just falls by the wayside so, we're going to rip all the staff out of L&D to fix their drama, and then they'll move on to the next one. Whereas us in L&D are still picking the pieces up.' (766)

Whilst the effects of the actions and attitudes of leaders may be more or less subtle, their impact may be powerful in terms of creating environments where individuals can, or are willing to, engage in or sustain change. In addition, this analysis suggests that leadership decisions can create cues that impact on the sense making of organizational actors of what activities and behaviours are appropriate and praiseworthy. Given the nature of the interaction between leaders and those they lead, a leader's intent may not always land as intended or may have unintended consequences.

3.3.2.1.8 Crisis - An Inhibitor and Enabler of Change

The impact on change planning or enactment of operating in or reacting to crises was a common theme highlighted by study participants across role and rank. They consistently reported that crises, of varying scales and levels of complexity, occurred frequently. COVID, was cited as a clear and externally constituted crisis that effected policing as well as many other sectors and aspects of daily life. It was seen as a strong enabler and inhibitor of change in L&D. Policing is functionally and culturally well orientated at mobilising itself to meet such challenges, and in the case of COVID it significantly lowered organizational barriers to some types of change and provided access to resources seen as critical to the response, particularly, in the case of L&D, the move to online learning and access to mobile technology solutions with which to access it. It was also seen as having driven and delivered change that might otherwise, and with less certainty, have taken years to achieve over much shorter timescales.

'What it [covid] did if I'm honest is give IT department and tech, you know, it pushed them into supporting us to do what frankly we'd wanted to do for quite a while, but covid kind of made them do it quicker than they would otherwise have done. (949)

However, at the same time, as noted in the discussion on human capital above, the response to the crisis caused resources to be redistributed away from L&D functions and increased the barriers to change not considered relevant to crisis resolution. It also directly and indirectly interrupted ongoing change and the planning of future change as organizational attention, and particularly that within L&D, switched to deal with the imperatives of the situation.

'It's a bit difficult because recently we've obviously, the focus is changing where we can for covid essentially, it takes you on a bit of a diversion route, doesn't it?' (464)

The disruptive effects of responding to crisis were clearly understood to last beyond the immediate

resolution of the immediate circumstances constituting the crisis, as systems and resources took time to adjust back to their normal operating states, assuming that the post crisis 'normal' was similar to the pre-crisis one and priorities and strategy remained stable. Crises therefore appear to have potentially significant effects on the change environment in both the short and medium to longer term. These effects may be particularly salient since the disruptions to the planning and delivery of change they create are perceived as occurring with relative frequency by organizational actors. In these circumstances even if there are periods of relative stability in the change environment the drivers and direction of change may be different post crisis and previous planning assumptions and activities may no longer be fit for purpose. This creates periods of change effort that may not be strongly aligned to extant change plans or to those needed to meet the next crisis, thus changes enacted in response to crisis may be less coherent over the longer term.

'I think the trickiness we've always got is policing is often very short term and reactive We might have a good three-to-four-year plan, but something will happen that actually then pushes that plan, sometimes very quickly, and so you have to probably change your plans and that's some of the issue with policing, always has been, and I fear always will be.' (331)

These effects appeared to be compounded by the need to manage return to normal activities, particularly in the L&D context, where backlogs of learning delivery, created by the non-availability of L&D personnel, their students or both as a result of the crisis response continued to require effort and resource beyond the crisis phase that might otherwise have been engaged in other change planning or delivery efforts.

'My big challenge over the next year is going to be how do we deliver the huge number of training sessions that we have had to cancel [due to Covid] in the past 12 months, so we've done a bit of an analysis and actually in the past 12 months we have cancelled probably three years' worth of training in the past 12 months because of Covid and I have to find a way to get some of that back on.' (949)

Another potential effect of frequently operating in a state of crisis was its impact on the resilience of the actors within L&D and the wider organization.

'Everything has to be now. Irrespective of the impact of individuals, on teams, their mental wellbeing. We're very good at talking the talk about mental health and wellbeing and we'll put some things in place but actually, if we slowed down a little bit and gave people time to get used to one thing before going onto the next, that would relieve the pressure on a lot of people. But that doesn't even really feel as if it comes into the equation sometimes.' (663)

From a practical perspective repeated response to crisis may have the effect of lowering

organizational actors' willingness, capacity and capability to engaging in further bouts of change. It might also inform cultural sense making that reinforces short term perspectives since thinking about the future requires both the energy to do so and a sense that it is a worthwhile pursuit that is valued and rewarded within organizational and occupational cultures.

3.3.2.1.9 Bureaucracy

Outside of crisis response in more steady state operating modes study participants perceived their wider policing organizations to be highly bureaucratic in their approaches to change. The impact of these organizational systems and processes to manage change were widely seen as inhibitors to change at all scales both within L&D and more widely.

'There is still quite a strong level of bureaucracy around change in general. Whenever you want to do anything, it has to go through a whole raft of governance boards and sign-off boards, that just seems to create this inertia that really does slow everything.' (672)

It is perhaps worthy of note that the inhibiting effect of organizational bureaucracies' contrasts with the potentially liberating effect of 'crisis' which tended to lower bureaucratic barriers and, narrowly in respect of dealing with elements of the perceived crisis, tended to allow much more freedom to operate and to 'get things done'. This view that change is on the one hand very slow and overly bureaucratic whilst on the other it can be incredibly rapid and reactive appears to be accepted as what is 'normal' within L&D and their wider policing settings.

3.3.2.1.10 Hierarchy, Command and Control

Senior leaders in L&D often differentiated between their leadership approaches within L&D and those they encountered or perceived in their wider organizations when they were planning or enacting change. They, and others in L&D functions, spoke of the strongly preferential use of hierarchical 'command and control' approaches to leadership and management that they perceived as operating in their wider policing organizations. This had a range of effects on the change environments in L&D functions, for instance they impacted on their desire, motivation and perceived ability to think about and engender change. These approaches were also viewed as stifling innovation and willingness to engage in self-initiated change as they tended to create a cultural expectation that someone higher up would direct activity, particularly amongst frontline practitioners. At the same time, they were seen as removing the autonomy of those who might want to engage in innovation and change, thus potentially reinforcing the cultural learning of waiting to be directed.

'I would say our organizational culture is one of mixed messaging. So we say that we want to be an open and inclusive culture. Yet the reality is command control and a feeling of blame. Uhm? And. That is a bit stifling for innovation.' (915)

3.3.2.1.11 Unpredictability in the operating and change environment

As noted above the change environments of L&D functions were subject to the impact of both internally and externally constituted drivers for change and activity. These arise for a number of reasons, but study participants view one of the principal causes being that they (L&D), or rather 'more training', is often seen as the solution to functional or delivery failures which instigate crises or unforeseen activity requirements. Since the occurrence of such change drivers is unpredictable in timing and scale the demand and requirements placed upon L&D functions are also unpredictable, which creates disruptions to, and inhibits, longer term planning and drives more reactive operating approaches.

'We can put a training plan in place. We can have an idea of as to how we can map out some of the next 3, 6, 9 months and then it pops up on the back of a HMIC Report or a critical incident in the organization. Sometimes their kneejerk reactions will knock that planning out, and we have to, we have to respond and change.' (766)

Unpredictability was also perceived to be created by (seemingly frequent) changes of leadership from chief officer teams to line managers. These changes of leadership, at all levels, within L&D functions and their wider organizations were often associated with disruptions to both change planning and change delivery, largely because new leaders often took a different view of what the change priorities were or even where these were agreed they might differ on how to achieve them.

'As new managers come in, they will have a different take on maybe what that end goal might look like' (006)

A further cause of unpredictability in the change environment appeared to be created by internal processes and drivers. One cause highlighted in particular was perceived to arise from promotion and development approaches within policing. Applicants for vertical or horizontal progression appeared to be required to demonstrate that they have either managed change or to have created outcomes that had in some way improved or resolved a perceived problem. This was seen as creating incentives for organizational actors to engage in, often short term, change exercises which may serve no wider organizational purpose other than providing evidence to support their career ambitions. This in turn created change that was largely unplanned, uncoordinated, unassessed, whose effects were unpredictable and where once the goal of evidence generation has been achieved attention to

sustaining the change activity was uncertain. These factors create 'churn' in the change environment and inevitably use human capital without clearly beneficial outcomes from an organizational perspective.

'I think unfortunately we see [some change] fall in line with periods of promotion boards, we quite often see a new initiatives that will come up just as there's the inspectors board or chief inspectors board, because somebody wants to develop themselves, and perhaps once they've developed themselves then the initiative doesn't seem to really go much further than that.' (660)

Whilst not all of these effects and the change activity they generate has a direct effect on L&D functions some of it undoubtedly does, either through those change initiatives driven by actors external to L&D requiring the involvement of L&D resource and human capital or where actors within L&D engage lateral or vertical development processes. It also speaks to a wider functional and cultural environment where change activity is endemic and a constant; and one that might also tend to predispose those taking up new posts, particularly in leadership positions, to view their role as changing what had gone before to the detriment of in-flight change planning or delivery. Thus, ironically whilst the drivers of unpredictability appear to be sufficiently regular to be entirely predictable, their effects and impacts on change to functional and learning systems and approaches are not.

3.3.3 Culture

Culture is seen as acting as a significant enabler and inhibitor of change; however, it also appears to play a wider and more fundamental role in shaping the change environment. The effects of the organizational and occupational cultures⁸ operating in police L&D functions and their wider organizational settings emerged from the analysis as strong influencers and shapers of the change environment of police L&D functions. Organizational actors make sense of and engage their change and wider environments through the lenses of their cultural understandings and perspectives. All of the factors identified under the discussion of inhibitors/supporters of change create not only immediate material effects on particular change initiatives but also influence the formation of attitudes and orientations towards change amongst organizational actors through their contribution

⁸ We adopt Schein's definition of culture as "a pattern of shared tacit assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" which is both widely accepted and encompasses both the occupational and organizational elements of culture. (Schein EH. (2009) *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide: New and Revised Edition*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.)

to wider cultural learning and sense making. Here culture represents the innate, and often unquestioned, understandings and influences that shape organizational actors' thinking, attitudes and behaviours, in short, their perspectives on 'the way we think and do things around here.'

More specifically the cultures of L&D and their wider policing organizations appeared to exert strong influences on both the change knowledge and change landscape elements of the model at Figure 2. They appear to act to shape organizational actors' sense making around what knowledge is practicable, useful or valuable to gather, from both internal and external sources, and to subsequently use in shaping thinking and doing around change, their 'change knowledge'.

Reacting to crises, particularly in times of human capital or other resource constraint, appeared to be a significant element informing sense making in both L&D functions and their wider organizations.

'I said that's policing, as if we should accept it, but that is how they operate generally from one crisis to the next' (766)

The impact of frequent switches of attention and direction created by changes of leadership or the engagement with crisis or other change or demand drivers appears to shape perspectives and sense making to incentivise reactivity and short-termism. In addition, these factors also appear to inform organizational actors perceptions of the utility of and approaches to planning and to assessing the effect and affect of changes to functional or learning systems.

'Policing is so much about crisis now, it's really hard to have a three-to-five-year conversation. I mean, we've tried and it's like it's like uuurgh, literally..... I don't know what's 'gonna' happen next month, let alone in three years' time.' (573)

Whilst the theoretical need to understand the effects of change was accepted by organizational actors in this study, this analysis suggests that they often perceived such activities as impracticable, since there was rarely time to undertake them before another change was initiated. In addition, there were often limited or no organizational incentives to assess change effectively, and even where it was attempted wider cultural perspectives and structural inhibitors often constrained attempts to gathering information that might be considered culturally valuable (often outputs, e.g., how many, for how long type data) but which might not be what would actually be informative in the circumstances (outcomes, e.g., improved victim engagement, the development of more effective investigative strategies). Again, these factors appeared to shape sense making and behaviours and here the cultural and environmental/functional aspects of the change environment combine to create sense making and understanding that is potentially self-re-enforcing.

At the same time cultural orientations, learning and effects also appeared to shape organizational

actors' sense making of their change context and what change they could or might achieve individually or collectively.

The cultures that exist within L&D functions do not exist in isolation, but rather within and alongside those of their wider organizational settings. One area that study participants highlighted was in relation to the wider cultural perceptions of education in police settings. Whilst the analysis suggest that these varied across the participating organizations two elements appeared frequently. Firstly, that wider organizations cultural perspectives on training (and it is often referred to as 'training'), were very much situated in traditional face to face 'chalk and talk' (didactic) learning approaches.

'There's a cultural element around that as well in that, unless people are in a classroom, they do not perceive that they've undertaken any form of learning.' (006)

Secondly that, outside of L&D, the solution to any given problem was often seen as the application of more 'training'.

'If you look at any inspection report, uhm, any performance meeting I go to where the performance may well be not as good as we would want it to be, I can bet my mortgage that one of the recommendations will involve the word training' (331)

It is notoriously difficult to disentangle the aspects of organizational existence that shape culture and those aspects of organizational existence that are shaped by culture. Ultimately the two are intimately intertwined as organizational actors make sense of, learn and share their knowledge on how to survive within their organizations. However how actors in L&D and their wider organizations experience change appears to inform and sustain both their cultures and their understandings of their broader change environments and what they can achieve within them.

3.3.4 Experience of Change

Organizational actors experience of change represents their functional, technical, historical, emotive and cognitive experience and engagement of and with change; how they have experienced and currently experience it, feel about it and think about it, what practical and technical knowledge and experience they possess and how these elements, in turn, affect each other and the actor's perspectives and attitudes towards change. Whilst 'experience of change' is created, shaped and influenced by many of the factors described above conceptually it was identified within the change environment model (Figure 2) as a distinct element.

Organizational actors described their experience of change as often challenging, with new change layered on top of existing change, often before the previous change had been fully implemented.

Change was experienced as being unpredictable, challenging, continuous, often sudden and divergent, and occasionally inexplicable.

In these circumstances the enthusiasm of organizational actors for change to functional and/or learning systems and approaches seen in this research might seem contradictory but is interpreted as a strong indicator of their positive emotional, motivational and cognitive engagement with change. However, the impact of their experiences of change produced an equally strong signal in the analysis which indicated that generally organizational actors, but in particular those in positions which held responsibility for leading or instigating change, often appeared to find change deeply challenging to plan, initiate and sustain, and therefore their experiential, cognitive and emotive reactions spoke to less positive engagement.

'it's frustrating for everyone in most departments with resourcing levels, I think people sort of just accept that that we are in difficult times and we've got to make it work ultimately, for the reason why we've joined the job in the first place. even if things are personally very challenging, overwhelming. We've gotta make it work' (660)

'I describe it [planning and enacting change] as being asked to run a marathon in a straight jacket and high heels' (915)

This dissonance of experience highlighted by participants of this study, of positivism and enthusiasm and often simultaneously of deep personal and professional challenge was marked. A clue to how this dichotomy was resolved by them can perhaps be seen in quotes above, organizational actors appeared to know initiating, executing and sustaining change was often very challenging, and often so at a personal level, but their strong sense of mission and understanding that regardless of circumstance they still had to make it work appeared to shape their thinking and actions.

Experience of change appeared to be an important factor that linked organizational actors sense making around what knowledge existed inside and outside their organizations and could be brought to bear and how it might be effectively applied (change knowledge) and their understandings of context and possibility (change landscape). The analysis suggests that organizational actor's experience of change differed at different levels within the organizational hierarchy, with more senior actors feeling that, within limits, they had greater experience and freedom to influence, instigate and enact change.

3.3.5 Knowledge acquisition, transfer, and diffusion

The subjects of knowledge transfer, diffusion and use have extensive literatures associated with each of them. Here we use the terms to refer to the experiential, technical and other knowledge resources organizational actors within L&D functions can or chose to acquire or access from external or internal sources to inform their planning and delivery of change, and which they deem worthy of or are capable of sharing more widely within their organizations. What knowledge they could and importantly chose to or were capable of acquiring or accessing appeared to shape their understanding of their change environment.

3.3.5.1 External knowledge

Understanding of the effect and affect of organizational learning approaches and change on external 'service' recipients is a potentially valuable source of knowledge to inform change planning and delivery. This was of particular interest in this study since the model set out in the Destination Map (ITPLD product) explicitly highlighted the need to link internal change to external effect and affect, and to create feedback loops between the internal and external environments to continually monitor the alignment of these elements. However, across the organizations studied the effective capture, dissemination and use of feedback from the communities served by policing organizations or from other external sources of knowledge to inform change in L&D functions appeared to be limited. As a result, L&D functions' ability to integrate knowledge from these sources in learning or functional change planning, design, or delivery to better align inputs with outputs and outcomes appeared limited.

When asked about engaging or using the communities served by their organizations as a source of knowledge to inform change to functional or learning approaches, a number of participants, particularly those in more tactical roles, were often unaware of any such data, activity to capture it or its integration into change planning or delivery.

'The community needs are not necessarily taken into consideration when people are implementing change.' (628)

It appeared that internal sources of knowledge were often preferred when thinking about 'what works' or 'what might work' when considering change. Many respondents could only conceive of external sources of knowledge as being situated outside L&D but within their wider policing organizations, or in other policing organizations.

'I think that's one area that our change never really considered, the impact on the community. The community we were looking at was our customers internally and our officers rather than the external impacts.' (642)

In one organization however we saw evidence of more systematic attempts to engage bodies such as Independent Advisory Groups (IAG) or other consultative bodies by giving them access to police learning materials and delivery approaches to seek feedback on their design and delivery.

'We've engaged with our [communities] through our police and Crime Commissioner in terms of how we see things moving forward and some of the opportunities that we've got. Public engagement in learning development in [Organization], it has been quite a challenge to get to get that engagement, actually. So, where we started is via independent advisory groups.' (489)

However, it was evident that achieving engagement to get community feedback was challenging, suggesting that the pathways and mechanisms for doing so were not yet well developed:

'I think really that the challenge I mean it's the same old, same old, isn't it? You know, just because you want people to engage with you or to talk about something or be interested, to give you feedback on a certain thing that doesn't necessarily correspond with what they want to engage with you about and talk to you about.' (489)

It therefore appeared that in general there were limited incentives or mechanisms within L&D functions to gather effective feedback and knowledge from the external communities served by their organizations to inform or understand the effect and affect of current or planned learning approaches or functional change. What constituted external feedback and knowledge was often seen as external to the function rather than the organization or filtered through the lenses of internal actors and was individual and sporadic rather than institutional and systematic. Even where the intent to gather and use external knowledge existed, these were limited across our sample, in the early stages of development and had yet to find the right audience with which to effectively engage.

3.3.5.2 Academic knowledge

A fuller review of the findings relevant to this element of the model is set out in the companion report (Mobilising for Change in Policing Learning and Development Outcome Report, Part 1 of 2 – Use of knowledge from previous collaborative research) which also addresses research questions 1,2,3, and 4. A brief summary of is therefore set out below.

Knowledge might be acquired or transferred into policing from external sources, such as academia. However, there are a number of challenges to the successful translation and use of academic knowledge in both general and policing organizations. In this research setting the majority of the organizations participating had actively participated in the previous research which had created the ITPLD models, tools and products, whilst the remaining organization had adopted them as a model to inform their change approaches. In these circumstances the participating organizations, and those actors within them who had been involved in the previous research over its 2-year lifecycle, or had subsequently engaged with it, might be considered optimally positioned to be aware of, understand, access and utilise the outcomes from the ITPLD programme.

Despite this 'optimal' knowledge of the previous research and its products appeared to be vested in a limited number of organizational actors who had had close engagement with the previous project either during or after its lifetime (n=9). These individuals almost exclusively occupied organizational positions as strategic leaders or senior managers within L&D, operating between senior strategic leadership/ executive and managerial/practitioner level within their organizations. Strong evidence that knowledge of the ITPLD programme and its products had moved from the personal knowledge of those individuals into more organizational knowledge, institutionalised in systems, policies or practices was identified in only one case. Outside of this limited group of knowledgeable group respondents, at both senior executive team or functional levels, displayed no knowledge of the ITPLD programme or its products.

'Truthfully, no, but that may be because I see them branded as something differently. But truthfully, no.' (830)

'Well, I'll be honest, that's the first time I've first time I heard those terms.' (921)

The fact that knowledge (of the ITPLD products), that were generally considered to be practical and useful in respect of transforming L&D functions to be more fit for their future challenges, was so little disseminated or used is an interesting finding.

Key factors that inhibited use and dissemination of academic knowledge were identified as:

- 1) The requirement to frequently switch attention to react to externally generated demand and crises which limited capacity to use and communicate knowledge.
- 2) Knowledge fragility; knowledge was often vested in few organizational actors and vulnerable to loss through their exit or movement.
- 3) Lack of effective systems, processes and approaches to transferring individual implicit knowledge to explicit 'organizational memory'.

4) Individual knowledge holders lacked capacity to use knowledge due to demand.

5) Individual knowledge holder applied relevancy tests to knowledge which informed who they shared particular knowledge with.

Here the engagement with the ITPLD programme products is seen as representative of the issues encountered by organizational actors in their attempts to use academic knowledge to inform, plan and enact change to functional and learning approaches.

3.3.6 Organizational and learning change assessment

Another area where L&D functions might acquire knowledge to inform existing or the planning of future change to organizational systems and processes and learning systems and approaches is through assessing the outcomes, effects and affects of both the delivery of and change to activities in those areas and integrating the resultant learning on what works and what doesn't into current or future activity.

Here organizational change relates to changes to practice, policy, systems or processes (e.g., the restructuring of an L&D unit or the introduction of a new form or way of working) and learning change to changes associated with the practice and theory of education employed by police L&D functions (e.g., changes to course content, the use of blended learning, the introduction of a course to teach users how to use a newly introduced form).

3.3.6.1 Organizational change assessment

Analysis of the data from the L&D organizations in this study suggests that there was limited structured activity to understand the efficacy, effects and affects of organizational change within L&D functions, wider organizational settings or externally to the policing organizations instigating change. As noted, organizational actors' experiences of change and their cultural learning from it appears to both shape and constrain their perspectives on and capacity to engage in evaluation activities. These circumstances appeared to present limited opportunities to develop effective evaluation strategies or activities particularly since the limited resource and human capital available to deliver change was frequently required to switch focus to engage new change priorities, rather than consider the effect of what they had done previously.

These conditions also appear to act to inform and shape actor's perspectives, orientations and behaviours and manifested broadly as the adoption of short-term planning and evaluation perspectives. Where evaluation was attempted, it was often constrained to 'in change' evaluation of

change delivery (e.g., project milestones, numbers trained etc) rather than post change evaluation of efficacy, effects and affects.

Organizational actors appeared to be aware that they could, and indeed should, undertake better evaluation of the changes that they or others had instigated, however where this occurred the measures that they considered were often anecdotal, internally logical (they related to police orientated perspectives) or employed proxy measures and correlations, some of which had unclear relationships to the learning delivery or change being considered.

'And I don't think that's just for us, I think that's for the wider organisation as well. Things go full circle. So, I think if I'm honest I don't think we learn as well as we could, and I think that comes down to that evaluation thing that I said that we just don't spend enough time on that.'
(663)

A strong preference for quantitative measurement was identified (e.g., how many for how long), rather than more qualitative measures (e.g., what was the effect and effect of the change, did the outputs translate into the anticipated outcomes) to evaluate or understand change.

'Policing tends to flop between either what might be considered as really quite clear cut performance and regimes, which are numerical, and then at the other side of the spectrum, people seem to completely let go of performance.' (522)

3.3.6.2 Learning change assessment

As with the assessment of functional change the levels of demand and change experienced by organizational actors and their resultant cultural learning appeared to shape their capacity to be curious about the effects of learning delivery and change.

'I'm absolutely knackered most of the time. Thinking about how we could improve, I can just about cope with everything that I've got to deal with and just keep on top of it all. To be able to just go, right, let's review, and we've got to, we've got to review our courses, it's something we need to do, but when, and where, and how are we going to find the time to take a step back and stop dealing with the constant questions, and doing this, and writing that. It's going to be a big ask, put it that way, but I do recognise it needs to be done.' (716)

The need for evaluation and approaches to it was perhaps better understood in the area of learning since organizational actors within L&D were more or less aware of educational models for learning

evaluation (often the Kirkpatrick model⁹). However, it was clear that they often found undertaking evaluation beyond immediate student feedback logistically and functionally challenging, in part due to their complex operating, demand and change environments and lack of human capital.

'I think that's a weakness if I'm honest there's been various models, hasn't there over the years; the happy sheets there was level 2 and then level 3 evaluations, well, you had to employ a whole army of people to administer that and then it didn't become worth it and it fell into disrepute.' (331)

As noted, these factors had a tendency to constrain individual and organizational curiosity and thus the measures employed to assess the outcomes of existing or new learning approaches. Often the evaluation approach within L&D functions was whether learning outcomes had been met, or how the students perceived the learning inputs, rather than understanding the efficacy, effect and affect of the learning itself.

'We rely more on secondary indicators. We revisit learning outcomes at the end of every program obviously, and go back with the students on the Friday or whatever.... Do I take those learning outcomes to look and see if they have specifically been met in 4, 6, 12 months down the line, no.' (949)?

'So, the normal happy sheets Yeah, you finish an event. You know it was either fantastic or it was rubbish.' (373)

As with functional change, measures employed often appeared to be focussed on easily obtainable quantitative measures that spoke largely to compliance rather than learning and delivery effect and whose power to provide evidence of the efficacy, and effects of specific learning inputs or changes were unclear. This approach would appear to be culturally embedded as the data obtained is often requested, used and valued to inform strategic thinking, as illustrated below by the types of data that was considered valuable to inform senior officers in one force:

'We have to report on how many officers are in ticket, how many officers are out of ticket for all the courses we deliver for officer safety, for driver, for taser. How many officers are out of ticket for job related fitness tests. How many have deferred, failed..... it gives the dep [Deputy Chief Constable] an understanding of which districts aren't [compliant].' (486)

⁹ <https://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/Our-Philosophy/The-New-World-Kirkpatrick-Model>

A number of the participant organizations were noted to have quality assurance functions under various guises. Whilst there appeared to be little consistency across organizations as to what the function or remit of these units were, that they existed suggested an awareness of the need and efforts to understand factors related to organizational performance and change. Whilst these were not specifically examined in this research our findings suggest that the modes and measures of enquiry appeared to broadly mirror those we saw more explicitly in L&D functions. Where they existed, these functions were often recently constituted having previously been subject to removal as a result of austerity related resource rationalisations.

'So, I lobbied really heavily that we've set up a governance arm within learning and development. Historically, I know, across the UK, those kinds of activities, such as quality assurance and evaluation, had always been stripped to the bone, if not taken away completely. We've never done that kind of stuff properly, even when we had the resources to do it, I don't feel, as a police service, certainly, within our own [Omitted] force, I don't think we have' (672)

Study participants did not consider the evaluation of the fidelity of learning delivery against intent (did individual trainers/learning delivers deliver the content intended, in the ways intended, to deliver the anticipated learning outcomes) to be well developed or effective in their organizations. In one example external/ independent evaluation of trainer's approaches to learning delivery to provide reflective and development opportunities was actively resisted by those subject to evaluation who perceived it as threatening.

'Trainers are quite anti us going in and having a look. They don't want to be criticised, and it's not about criticising people. It's about developing people. But you've got to be honest, as well. There is no point keep telling someone they're good when they're not.' (716)

A distinct difference was noted between the evaluation approaches being employed in in-house learning delivery and of PEQF delivery. This difference appeared to be driven by three main factors: College of Policing mandate, working with established higher education institutions and the necessity of engaging external education evaluation and regulation bodies such as OFSTED. It was noted that some respondents welcomed the imposition of greater rigour that adoption of the PEQF occasioned.

'Only [doing evaluation] in PEQF at the moment because we're doing mandatory questionnaires for a specific period after each stage of their journey, that's probably the only real evaluation we're doing at the moment, and that's Just to see how the skills we've given them at each stage has equipped them as they've moved on to the next one.' (766)

However, echoing findings elsewhere in this study around knowledge transfer and diffusion the learning and evaluation approaches derived from engaging the PEQF appeared siloed within function, and did not appear to be widely understood or applied to learning activities outside of the delivery of PEQF. In addition, the PEQF delivery and evaluative approaches were being undertaken in the same change environment as other learning delivery and change. Here the PEQF's mandatory, more holistic, evaluation approaches might, given limited human capital and resources, perversely further constrain effective evaluation activity outside this arena, since the human capital and knowledge to do so was not available to the wider L&D function due to the need to resource the PEQF approaches.

4 Discussion and conclusions

This research highlights that the L&D functions within the policing organizations examined have, are, and indeed seem likely to continue to exist within complex and contextually sensitive change environments that both support and impede organizational actors' abilities to plan and undertake change to organizational and/or learning systems at a range of scales from the routine to the transformational. The model proposed in this report seeks to describe the major elements and interactions that form and shape the space in which change is planned, enacted and (often not) sustained in and around these functions, the change environment. In doing so it speaks to the question set out in research question 5; 'what are the key influences (barriers and enablers) on the change plans of L&D functions in policing organizations.'

The change situation identified here is perhaps not unique, and mirrors the challenge faced by most (if not all) public services operating in intrinsically contested and often wicked societal operating environments. The effects may however be particularly acute for policing given its complex societal role which brings with it particular expectations. At a high level many of the challenges policing faces remain the same or at least similar over the long term (e.g., crime management, social inequality, maintaining public order), whilst at an operational level policing encounters them again and again as they rise and fall in societal, political and policing interest and thus focus and priority. Policing therefore continually attempts to balance its delivery to support its societal functions whilst ensuring that the approaches and solutions it develops align with shifting public and political opinion and thus support. The sheer amount of change activity observed in this study might be seen as the response to this effect from individual organizational actors, their functions and organizations.

At a high level the action of the constant change drivers, and the largely irreconcilable nature of the societal problems policing grapples with, appears to create a paradoxical situation. Here organizational actors within L&D engage seemingly constant demand and change on a range of scales and frequencies and are, out of both practice and necessity, extremely adept at doing meeting the

challenges presented. However, at the same time there appear to be significant inhibitors to successfully delivering planned change. Perhaps ironically one of the potentially most significant of those inhibitors appears to be being in the state of near constant change they operate under. Another appears to be the lack of systems and approaches to create and sustain corporate memory which tends to render problems more often as *vu jà dé* (never seen this before) rather than *déjà vu* (seen this before) for those engaging in change or problem-solving activities.

This study suggests that these factors work to inhibit individual and collective ability to bring the appropriate resource and human capital to bear (compounded by the fragility of these elements) and to constrain organizational actors' inclination, capacity and capability to be curious about or understand the efficacy, effect and affect of the changes they do enact.

It is clear that the organizational actors in this study recognised the challenges they face in planning, delivering and sustaining change in their functions and more widely. Many of them, from across the organizations studied, spoke of the frustrations and the personal, and professional challenges that undertaking and sustaining change creates. However, they also spoke to their sense of mission and pragmatic engagement with the realities of their change environments, and broadly a determination to press on regardless, all be it being often diverted or stalled as they did so.

The criminological literature suggests that police practitioners, across function and hierarchy, have a strong 'cultural' resistance to change and seek to frustrate attempts at innovation and organizational change (Chan, 1997; Skogan, 2008); this was not reflected in our findings, rather we saw that they appeared to broadly, and often enthusiastically, embrace change and work hard to enact it. In many cases, change appeared to be frustrated not primarily because of organizational actors attempts to derail it but because organizational systems, processes and cultures made success significantly less likely. Where resistance to change was discussed, it was largely in circumstances where the change recipients perceived the outcomes as a loss to them (be it of status, certainty or some other measure); for instance, the attempt in one organization to rebrand 'trainers' as 'learning facilitators' which was resisted as it was perceived as diminishing their professional standing. In these circumstances resistance appears to be more closely aligned with loss aversion (Kahneman *et al.*, 1991) than resistance per se.

This study supports the view that the drivers of change in policing were often 'top-down and outside-in' (Hoggett *et al.*, 2013: 8), originating outside policing organisations. However, it was also seen that change drivers originating within policing organizations contributed to shaping their change environments, notably the frequent changes in management and leadership at functional or organizational levels. New incumbents in positions of authority often embarked on reviews of current

activity and change (both extant and planned), which tended to stall change planning and delivery. These changes might be more or less disruptive to pre-arrival change and delivery activity dependent upon the level of discontinuity they created. In addition, there appeared to be deeply embedded procedural, cultural and fiscal incentives for organizational actors at all levels of policing to embark on short term change initiatives to support their personal developmental or career ambitions or manage budgets. This suggests that the picture is more complex than has been suggested and change is also driven from the 'top-down and bottom-up inside-in'. Whilst policing is in many ways a hostage to external fortune it also appears effective at creating its own challenges and imperatives in respect of the complexity of its change environment.

Police culture is often cited in the literature as a considerable barrier to change due to the application of traditional, command and control, hierarchical approaches and being risk averse. Whilst it is recognised that police culture(s) are complex, fluid and not static (Cockcroft, 2014), in respect of change to organizational and/or learning systems or approaches the findings here suggest L&D functions and their wider policing organizations operate in two broad modes, 'bureaucratic' and 'crisis management'. Whilst this binary description is of necessity a generalisation the two concepts were strong signals in the data and appeared to have significant effect on the change environment. They often appeared to operate simultaneously across different change and organizational activities.

In crisis management mode bureaucratic barriers to change were often significantly reduced and the use of command-and-control, hierarchical approaches allowed policing to rapidly mobilise and deliver change, so in this respect these facets of police culture acted as strong supporters of change. However, operating in crisis mode appeared to create a potentially narrow ranges of focus amongst organizational actors, largely concentrated on the resolution of the crisis. It also tended to draw resource from elsewhere in the organization to support the crisis resolution efforts. This latter reallocation of resource acts to disrupt change planning and delivery directly, since the organizational actors engaged in change are repurposed, or indirectly, as those engaged in change may not be able to engage essential functions or actors to progress change, or because the organization was sufficiently disrupted to make change more challenging. This effect was particularly relevant given the resource and human capital constrained operating environments that were observed across all the L&D functions within the participating organizations as it meant that there was little spare capacity to absorb such demands. In either case it is clear that returning to a state where change could be planned or progressed effectively takes some time after the resolution of the crisis event. Operating in crisis mode appeared to have a longer-term impact on change planning and delivery since it often created rapid change in one part of an organization, its functions, policies or approaches that might

have unintended consequences or render the logic of previous change planning or activity in another redundant.

The challenges faced by policing in general to effectively deliver larger enabling technology projects, particularly in respect of L&D functions learning management systems, appears to place an absolute limit on the amount and range of information and knowledge that L&D functions can gather and leverage in understanding their change environments. It is worthy of note that no organization participating in our research had a functional LMS system, despite a number attempting or aspiring to do so. This effect appears to be compounded by the application of security policies which were seen as inhibiting the exploitation of existing technologies to support change.

Communication within the participant organisations often appeared 'siloes' which acted to impede the understanding of change efforts by practitioners. A key example of this effect is the differing approaches seen between areas of activity within L&D functions, with learning and practice developed as a result of engaging higher education institutes and educational regulatory regimes for PEQF not being evident in other areas of L&D activity. Whilst this effect may be a result of the hierarchical culture (Fyfe, 2018; Abrahamson and Goodman-Delahunty, 2014; Kalyal, 2019), in this study the effect appeared also, and potentially largely, related to the lack of time and capacity organizational actors had to communicate effectively as a result of the change and demand pressures they operated under. This reduced their overall communication bandwidth and meant they often had to prioritise what to communicate and to whom.

The apparently limited extent of clear knowledge management (KM) strategies or policies in the L&D functions studied and their wider policing organizations also appeared to negatively impact change, since they had limited means, beyond individual memory, to retain what knowledge they did possess of previous change and its effects (good or bad) and leverage it in the future.

Arguably policing's L&D functions are central to developing and supporting effective policing organizations since they not only provide mandatory training for safety, conduct and knowledge of legal requirements, to their organizational actors but they also teach new and continuing policing professionals how to 'become' police officers (Heslop, 2011). Increasingly, policing's L&D functions emphasise education that develops police professionals as critical thinkers and reflective practitioners (Blakemore and Simpson, 2010; Heslop, 2011; Christopher, 2015; Rantatalo and Karp, 2016; Wood, 2020) which reflects the wider 'professionalisation' agenda within UK policing. As such they sit at potentially critical organizational positions when it comes to delivering not only the technical aspects of change but also the critical cultural and normative elements of it as well. L&D functions therefore have the potential to be significant engines of functional and cultural change within policing

organizations. To fulfil this potential, they are likely to have to reconfigure their own capabilities and approaches at both functional and pedagogical levels, in short to undergo change themselves, in order to support the wider change ambitions of their organizations. These findings have significant implications for L&D functions abilities to fulfil this promise since they suggest that delivering and understanding long term, effective change that does what was intended is extremely challenging.

Despite the challenges noted it would be remiss not to reflect upon the determination and desire expressed by organizational actors within L&D to effectively use external knowledge to inform and enact effective change to improve their students and organizations capacity and capability and the effect and affect delivered to the communities they serve; this was a strong signal in our data. Against the challenges of the uncertain change environments described in this report they do 'successfully' enact organizational change, as evidenced by their frequent resolution of the myriad of change requirements thrust upon them. That this change is often reactive and focussed on immediate problem solving rather than longer term, strategic and evidence informed change is perhaps the critical point and suggests that the definition of 'successful' might usefully be considered. In these circumstances organizational actor's planned longer term change efforts might be likened to a small vessel in a storm trying to head for port, they are tossed and turned by the turbulent environment they find themselves navigating, it may be impossible to steer a direct course, and in some cases they may end up at another destination altogether or might be dashed on rocks or swamped. The determination and enthusiasm to enact effective change, despite the often-clear understanding of the challenges seen in this study suggests that in different circumstances the delta between L&D actor's desire to enact effective longer term planned change might be lower than is currently suggested by this research.

The cumulative effect of the multi-layered, continuous, and largely unexamined change that this study highlights is unclear, but since some theorists (Fagan, 2021) suggest that errors resulting from such change accumulate over time and thus increase levels of organizational risk, there is perhaps some incentive to think about change differently, and in particular to better understand its effects, affects and implications.

Lastly it is worth observing that change does not necessarily equal improvement or indeed progress, yet a lot of energy and effort appears to be being expended in police L&D functions, and their wider organizations, on delivering change. However, without a better ability to understand what this change is doing it is often wholly unclear what effect, good, bad or indifferent, is being achieved by this expenditure of effort. It is uncertain whether progress is being made and organizational actors often appear (and indeed feel), like Alice and the Red Queen, to be running as fast as they can just to stay

still¹⁰, or as one senior respondent described it '*running marathons in a straight-jacket and high heels*' (915).

¹⁰ "Well, in our country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else—if you run very fast for a long time, as we've been doing." "A slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!" (Carroll L, 1872: *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, Chapter 2)

5 Provocations

Based on the findings of this research we pose the following questions with the intent that they stimulate reflection, debate and, hopefully, action to improve knowledge translation and use and change planning and delivery in policing L&D functions, and perhaps more widely in their organizations:

1. How might you better understand the factors that shape the change environment operating within police L&D functions and develop systems, strategies and processes for working effectively within it?
2. How might you develop ways of more effectively understanding the efficacy, effect and affect of change to organizational and learning systems, processes and approaches in three key areas: For 1) learners, 2) the organization and 3) external service recipients and partners?
3. How might you identify outcomes (rather than outputs) and appropriate measures by which to measure their delivery and build these into change processes from the start of change planning and initiation to allow more effective assessment of effect and affect of change over time?
4. How might you better recognise the potential value of L&D as a critical organizational function and capacity and capability enabler?
5. Knowing that financial settlement arrangements disrupt change planning and delivery how might you create systems, strategies and processes that mitigate this effect?
6. How might you implement systems, processes, strategies, and models that supports a better understanding of change failure to encourage improvement through innovation and controlled experimentation?
7. How might you leverage organizational actors' engagement, enthusiasm, and experience of change to greater effect.

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