



## Research and Evidence Forum

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1pm to 2.30pm

MS TEAMS MEETING

### Attendees:

#### Scottish Police Authority

Tom Halpin QPM - Chair  
Deputy CE Barry Sillers (SPA)  
Amanda Coulthard (SPA)  
Rachael Nicolson (SPA)  
Martin Smith (SPA)

#### Police Scotland

DCC Alan Speirs  
ACC Catriona Paton  
Director Tom McMahon  
Davina Fereday  
Ch. Sup't Pat Campbell

#### SPA Forensic Services

Joanne Tierney (Forensic Services)

#### Additional Members

Professor Liz Aston (SIPR)

#### Invitees

Professor Susan McVie (University of Edinburgh)  
Dr Alison Kurpiel (University of Edinburgh)  
Dr Ana Morales-Gomez (University of Edinburgh)

### Agenda

#### 1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all, extending the welcome to Forensic Services colleagues attending for the first time.

#### 2. Apologies

The following apologies were noted:

- Matthew Kirk (SPA) – Martin Smith acting as Secretariat
- Director Fiona Douglas (SPA Forensic Services) – Joanne Tierney representing
- Nerys Thomas (College of Policing)
- Stuart Lewis (Scottish Government Police Division)
- David Smith (Scottish Government Justice Analytical Services)
- ACC Wendy Middleton (Police Scotland Criminal Justice)

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- Lesley Weber (COSLA)
- Scott Ross (SPA)

### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Action Log**

Professor McVie suggested two minor corrections to the draft minutes which were accepted, and members were content to agree the Minutes of the June 20<sup>th</sup> 2024 meeting.

Tom McMahon provided an update regarding Action 2006-02 and it was agreed that the information provided closes that particular action, with the action log to be updated accordingly.

Otherwise all actions in the action log were declared to be in order, with those proposed for closure accepted by the Forum.

### **4. Emerging Legislation / Horizon Scanning Update**

Rachael Nicolson described the ongoing development of horizon scanning at the Authority and its six-monthly product, as well as ongoing engagement with Police Scotland's team members from Strategy, Insight and Engagement.

CS Campbell provided an update with regard to emerging legislation, explaining that bi-monthly reviews of a long list (72 pieces of legislation) are overseen in a group chaired by ACC Middleton, with impact assessments being prepared for each. Notable legislation under review includes assisted dying, the circular economy and victims and witnesses, with one area of focus being cost-implications. A new governance structure for assessing new and emerging legislation is currently being developed. The tactical lead for this business area is Sup't Richard Thomas, and it was suggested that Sup't Thomas would be best placed to be the point of contact for JREF.

The Chair raised the point that the impacts of new and emerging legislation will, where relevant, already be under discussion at various SPA Committees as appropriate, and therefore emphasised that the focus of discussion at JREF should be early-stage, considering the research/evidence angle (knowledge gaps and opportunities).

**ACTION 0310-01:** SPA staff to link in with Ch. Sup't Campbell and Sup't Thomas to devise a model for how JREF considers the subject of new and emerging legislation, and how Police Scotland reports in.

**ACTION 0310-02:** Sup't Richard Thomas to be invited to future JREF meetings to speak to the standing item on new and emerging legislation.

## 5. Strategic Research Priorities

### a. College of Policing Research Strategy update

Nerys Thomas was not able to attend the meeting, however a written update had been provided on College of Policing activity, making reference to the College's development of a Research Control Strategy and upcoming plans for publication.

In discussing the update this, Professor McVie noted that in Scotland a number of IAGs (Stop and Search, Technology, Policing of the Pandemic) have produced evidence-based good practice that could be included on the College of Policing's Practice Bank and felt there had been a missed opportunity.

### b. Data Linkage Project

Professor McVie provided an update on the project, confirming that approval has been granted by the Risk and Harm group for the iVPD access required.

An extract of iVPD data has also been prepared for data linkage purposes and agreement has been secured that this can be used for any follow-up research exercises, rather than requiring new data to be extracted (albeit subject to securing Police Scotland's permission for it to be used for additional research purposes).

Obtaining a DPIA is a work in progress. Professor McVie highlighted that once formal approval has been given and the DPIA completed, she will require formal written documentation confirming this so that discussions can take place with Public Health Scotland, and therefore is currently querying what the sign-off process looks like.

Additional data sources will be also be added to inform the vulnerability angle: police negotiator call-out data and missing persons data.

Timescales for the whole project delivery are still to be confirmed, based on the current picture of moving parts.

The Chair thanked Professor McVie and colleagues from Edinburgh University for the update and the work being taken forward, and opened the topic for discussion.

Amanda Coulthard stated this Project is an important Proof of Concept for Data Linkage, which might illustrate the benefits of different ways of working and sharing and using data.

The Chair agreed with this position, noting that there is likely to be high demand around data access to support such work in the future, and therefore effective governance will be required to manage high demand.

**c. Strategic Research Priorities / SIPR RRF**

Martin Smith introduced a paper that has collated current strategic research ideas and questions picked up in recent months from across the JREF membership through various mechanisms, including via SIPR's engagement with policing partners.

Professor Aston stated that she would welcome a discussion about selection/prioritisation today, given the proximity to the next SIPR Executive Committee later in the month, where options for the Responsive Research Fund (RRF) 2024-25 will be agreed.

Tom McMahon had made a point earlier in the agenda that the Chief Constable's confirmation of a new vision for the Service should inform the ask from policing partners and would welcome more time to consider the suggestions through that lens. Amanda Coulthard explained that the four categories of strategic research priority in the paper are purposefully broad and suggested that feedback on the options could be considered via correspondence. Tom McMahon welcome further off-table discussion and thanked Professor Aston for the work undertaken to date.

Professor Aston explained the value of having a long list of suggested areas for progression by SIPR, recognising that there are other funding streams besides the RRF. Professor Aston also had questions regarding some of the topics, particularly proposed work on data linkage and roads policing matters.

Davina Fereday added that it would be useful to cross-reference suggestions against Police Scotland's Academic Research Team's existing Research and Insights database to sense check whether suggestions may already have been supported through research activity.

The Chair welcomed the proposal around further discussion to take place between Police Scotland, the SPA and SIPR prior to the October SIPR Executive Committee.

**ACTION 0310-03 Arrangements to be made for Police Scotland, the SPA and SIPR to meet and review/prioritise RRF proposals ahead of the SIPR Executive Committee meeting on 22 October 2024.**

**6. JREF Work Plan**

Martin Smith introduced a paper, contained an updated Work Plan for the JREF, including content relating to forthcoming Knowledge Exchange Events and opportunities for expanding the network reach of the JREF.

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Amanda Coulthard asked JREF Members to express interest relating to the proposed events, inviting assistance with planning and design of events.

Joanne Tierney committed to linking in with the SPA after the meeting to discuss Forensic Services' Research and Innovation Strategy to establish how content there can be incorporated into the JREF Work Plan.

Professor Aston enquired about the aims relating to the proposed event on Recorded Police Warnings and Direct Measures. Barry Sillers explained that the topic has been an ask for some time, however guidelines from the Lord Advocated had been awaited, and also explained that the purpose of the event is to promote public understanding around the issue. Chief Superintendent Pat Campbell added further context, noting that there has been media interest in the subject, referencing 'soft justice' and the purpose of the event is to put information and data into the public domain. It was clarified that the event will be livestreamed, and is set to take place later in November.

Professor Aston enquired about the Best Practice in Policing event. Amanda Coulthard explained that this event will look at identified areas of good practice in policing from across the UK, drawing on work undertaken to review HMICFRS PEEL Reports. The idea is that event will be two-way knowledge exchange, bringing together externals to share good practice on topics of strategic interest, and share good practice from Scotland. Professor Aston suggested that the event could tie in with a scheduled visit to Scotland in February by Mark Evans from New Zealand Police, and agreed to share details with SPA.

### **7. JREF Terms of Reference**

Martin Smith advised Forum members of a suggestion to update the Terms of Reference to include the British Transport Police (BTP) in the list of ad hoc contributors to JREF.

The Chair explained that he has a seat at the Railways Policing Committee, the purpose of which is to maximise interoperability, and he would welcome BTP's contribution at JREF.

Amanda Coulthard also added that she had recently met with the Divisional Commander for D Division (Scotland) who was keen to be involved in the JREF.

The Forum accepted this amendment to the Terms of Reference.

<p><b>DECISION 03/10-01D</b> Decision taken to adopt British Transport Police as contributors to meetings on an ad hoc, invitational basis.</p>
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## 8. Member Updates

### a. Police Scotland

Davina Fereday spoke to the Police Scotland update paper, highlighting the annexed report contains a detailed list of ongoing medium- to long-term research projects.

The Chair enquired about how visible to findings are in terms of publishing the completed studies, recognising that many of the studies may produce findings that can be safely shared externally. The Chair suggested that a publication framework is drawn up for JREF.

**ACTION 0310-04 Police Scotland to work with the SPA to develop a publication framework for the JREF.**

### b. College of Policing

The Forum noted the contents of the pre-submitted report.

### c. SIPR

Professor Aston summarised the main points contained in SIPR's member Update report, highlighting the recent completion of the SIPR Annual Report. Professor also highlighted that the next Scottish International Policing Conference is likely to take place at the end of May, with Technology as the overarching theme, and is seeking assistance with developing the programme for the event. Professor Aston also highlighted the continuing support SIPR is giving, with the SCCJR (Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research) to the Scottish Government's work on Race and Ethnicity Data and Evidence in the justice sector.

### d. Scottish Government

Not applicable.

### e. SPA Corporate

Amanda Coulthard summarised recent work taking place at the Authority, referencing presentations to SOLACE on community confidence, and a forthcoming knowledge exchange visit with West Midlands OPCC.

### f. SPA Forensic Services

Joanne Tierney explained that a key focus within Forensic Services is focussed on evidencing the value of forensic science and services. Joanne committed to discussing with Director Fiona Douglas on how to best work with and inform the Forum of relevant developments going forward.

**9. AOB**

There was no AOB.

**10. Date of the next meeting**

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation, noting the value of coming together and sharing information with one another in the way that we do, given the volume of activity in train.

It was confirmed that the next meeting is likely to be held in late December. SPA Secretariat agreed to canvas availability.

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