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Police Scotland and Scottish Police Authority Research and Evidence Forum

MS Teams Meeting

Monday 11th March 4pm to 5.30pm

Agenda

Chair – Tom Halpin (SPA)

Present

DCC Alan Spiers (Police Scotland)
ACC Wendy Middleton (Police Scotland)
Director Tom McMahon (Police Scotland)
Amanda Coulthard (SPA)
Victoria Morton (SPA Forensic Services)
Amy Wilson (Scottish Government)
Nerys Thomas (College of Policing)
Prof Liz Aston (SIPR)

Prof Susan McVie (University of Edinburgh)
Dr Allison Kurpiel (University of Edinburgh)
Aidan Curran (SPA)
Matthew Kirk (SPA)
Rachael Nicolson (SPA)
Davina Fereday (Police Scotland)
Heather McDonald (Police Scotland)
Clare Noblett (Police Scotland)
Anna Saunders (Scottish Government)
David Smith (Scottish Government)

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all attendees.

2. Apologies

Barry Sillers (SPA)
Fiona Douglas (SPA Forensic Services)
Scott Ross (SPA)
Martin Smith (SPA)

All were represented by colleagues.

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3. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Action Log

The minutes of previous meeting were accepted without amendment.

The action log was reviewed. It was agreed that Actions 121204 and 121201 will remain open. Action 170801 was proposed for closing. Nerys Thomas (NT) agreed to provide an update on the College of Policing Research Strategy at the next meeting.

4. Horizon Scanning

(a) Horizon Scanning Product

Claire Noblett (CN), Rachael Nicolson (RN) and Heather McDonald (HM) each presented progress of ongoing Horizon Scanning work. CN noted that an academic session was being facilitated with academic partners for later in the week on "policing in the digital world".

Amanda Coulthard (AC) highlighted the remit of the forum, and asked how we bring discussion points to the forum, including research questions, to direct own research and commissioning. Liz Aston (LA) asked if any help is needed from SIPR or other to engage with academics, or if this will be required when documents are produced. NT stated that the Office of the Police Chief Scientific Adviser is progressing work on the development of science and technology as profession in policing, and that the Authorised Professional Practice at the College of Policing is also developing work on data driven technology.

In relation to a new operating model / new model of policing, Tom McMahon (TM) stated that further academic input will be beneficial – including at UK context – to help with Police Scotland's design work. AC stated that the strategic priorities for this group inform future work, noting the need for a longlist of topics, assessed by impact on policing delivery, in the context of the revised models work.

Amy Wilson (AW) enquired about the possibility of engaging with Data Lab, and enquired what the short, medium- and long-term issues are and how they engage with this group? CN stated that it would be a good opportunity to link in with the Data Lab. CN also advised that topics such as the future of elections and democracy have also been examined, and will share this work with TM.

DCC Alan Spiers (AS) highlighted that in England and Wales there has been thematic horizon scanning from particular perspectives (e.g. Mental Health), and that this highlights an opportunity for this forum to contribute to that space. AC noted that this is one of the areas of work with SIPR research fund and is a significant priority. A work plan is refined and includes partner input, however a bit more work is needed between now and the next meeting on team capacities.

(b) Emerging Legislation

ACC Wendy Middleton (WM) summarised Police Scotland work on emerging legislation, and highlighted that the Authority has been invited to the next legislative oversight group.

5. Strategic Research Priorities

(a) Data Linkage Project Update

Susan McVie (SMcV) outlined progress on the project plan as circulated to members, including a refined set of research questions as discussed at JREF subgroup and noted scope to add further questions, and proposing to link data with public health and census data.

A meeting was held with the Mental Health Commission and detention records data was offered to be shared. Research has been presented to the Scottish Government's Scotland Talks Data panel. Project timescales have also been circulated, and Police Scotland is in the process of formulating a DPIA.

TM noted that there has been significant public discussion taking place on Police Scotland's involvement and position regarding the policing of mental health, and will adjust the position into 2025 in tandem with the developing evidence base / insights from the work, and therefore enquired if insights will be available.

SMcV noted that these will be available next year, but hopefully later this year. Allison Kurpiel (AK) has drafted an ethics review which will be submitted to the University's Ethics Committee, but noted that they may need to ensure other groups move at a quicker pace. Any updates on timescales and changes will be communicated.

AC highlighted the need to get groups together, potentially under a regular subgroup, to help all actions get done timeously and not stretch SMcVs resources. SMcV noted that this was a question for the wider JREF group members.

Davina Fereday (DF) stated that a mapping exercise might be helpful. SMcV noted that formal permission from Police Scotland is required on steer of process. DF is going to engage with James Crane and Claire Thomson on this. SMcV has been asked by Research Data Scotland to test the protected characteristics dataset on the policing and the pandemic project. TM noted that DF and TM will engage with SMcV after session.

6. JREF Year-End Review / Continuous Improvement

AC requested the forum's endorsement of the model for end-of-year review. This was agreed by members.

7. Member Update

a. Scottish Government

David Smith (DS) highlighted work considering the impact of UNIFY on recorded crime statistics and administrative crime data and that there is an open invite for collaborations. New research on retail crime with Police Scotland will be available in June 2024.

b. Police Scotland

DF noted work on the development of a police-crime dashboard, pathways to impact, new projects on VAWG, public protection, and cyber-crime. Work is also ongoing with SIPR on pathways to impact.

TM stated that JREF has helped in agreeing priorities.

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AC highlights benefits of Pathways to Impact and should consider a future substantive item for JREF when ready.

c. SPA Forensic Services

Victoria Morton (VM) noted that new members of staff are in place. Strategy development is to be progressed.

d. College of Policing

NT stated that a gap map is to be produced in spring. A first draft of the Research Control Strategy, in consultation with national policing leads, is due in autumn.

e. SIPR

LA noted ongoing activities on JREF workplan, including pathways to impact.

f. SPA Corporate

AC noted that successful knowledge exchange events have been held. Public polling data is being pulled together for deeper dive work, with insights/research questions to be brought to JREF for group engagement.

8. AOB

N/A

9. Date of the next meeting

Mid- to late-June but this is TBC.