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Research and Evidence Forum

Thursday 20th June 3.30pm to 5pm

WEBEX MEETING

Attendees:

Scottish Police Authority

Tom Halpin QPM - Chair
Amanda Coulthard (SPA)
Scott Ross (SPA)
Martin Smith (SPA)
Matthew Kirk (SPA)
Zoe McCarthy (SPA)

Police Scotland

Tom McMahon
Davina Fereday

Additional Members

Professor Liz Aston (SIPR)
David Smith (Scottish Government)
Stuart Lewis (Scottish Government)

Invitees

Professor Susan McVie (University of Edinburgh)
Dr Alison Kurpiel (University of Edinburgh)

Agenda

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed all, including new staff joining from SPA and Dr Allison Kurpiel from the University of Edinburgh.

2. Apologies

The following apologies were noted:

- Barry Sillers (SPA)
- Fiona Douglas (SPA Forensic Services)
- Nerys Thomas (College of Policing)
- CS Patrick Campbell (Police Scotland CJSD)
- Claire Addis (Police Scotland CJSD)
- Wendy Middleton (PS - ACC Criminal Justice)
- Lesley Weber (COSLA)

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3. Minutes of Previous Meeting and Action Log

All actions in the action log declared to be in order, with action 1212-04 to be covered off at the meeting later on the agenda (Item 5c).

4. Emerging Legislation / Horizon Scanning Update

Scott Ross presented an update on horizon scanning, noting that the third edition remains largely unchanged compared with the version presented at JREF in March 2024. It is currently being reviewed by partners prior to it being finalised, and will then be submitted to SPA's SLT at end of June, whereafter it will be published on SPA's website at the end of the month. Scott Ross confirmed that he is keen to set up some time with Tom McMahon to discuss product development, now that staffing levels across teams are stabilising.

Interpol has invited the SPA to its Innovation Spotters group on innovation in policing across world, to participate in global horizon scanning. The outputs from this will help shape the developing JREF horizon scanning product.

Police Scotland renewed their commitment to this work, with time to be prioritised to support multi-branded publication.

The SPA is open to receiving feedback on the SPA-focussed product, and expressed a keenness to work with Police Scotland and JREF partners on wider work in future.

Scott Ross noted that discussions around emerging legislation have been through previous Resources Committees in 2023 and March 2024. The SPA and Scottish Government meet monthly to discuss future legislation. The potential value of Police Scotland attending groups to feed in on future legislation and impact assessment was noted.

5. Strategic Research Priorities

a. College of Policing Research Strategy update

This update on this is to be carried forward to the next JREF meeting.

b. JREF work plan

Minor updates have been made to the work plan.

Amanda Coulthard highlighted that she will be in touch with partners to help with developing the work plan, with a specific focus on incorporating knowledge exchange events.

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ACTION 2006-01 - SPA to follow up with partners before the next meeting to establish suggestions for events/topics over the next 12 months.

SIPR is currently working with Police Scotland to create academic challenge sessions on custody, including a custody and dignity session which was held recently. Liz Aston can connect the team with others who are working on the topic of police custody.

Police Scotland also working with SIPR on further sessions - 31st July is the date of the next session. Tom McMahon also stated that Police Scotland is developing a long-term vision for policing (2030 vision), out of which should fall clear strategic priorities for the service around which research priorities can align.

c. Data Linkage Project Update

Conversations have been taking place between JREF meetings regarding a lack of access to data. An action has already been agreed with Professor Susan McVie to progress internally.

Professor McVie stated that formal police permission is still required and is happy to work with Police Scotland on anything arising due to the nature of the data, and gave a commitment that any limitations of data used will be reflected in any publications.

Professor Aston expressed her disappointment that there has been a delay, especially given that it is a JREF-led piece of work with senior-level endorsement granted, which should have given gravitas to responsive data access.

Tom McMahon agreed to speak with Professor McVie to progress action regarding the delay.

ACTION 2006-02 Tom McMahon to make enquiries within Police Scotland regarding data access for the Data Linkage Project and liaise with Professor McVie as appropriate.

Scott Ross sought clarification on what mechanisms are in place for sharing data, as data has been shared externally in the past and securely.

Additionally, Professor McVie stated that the Scottish Centre for Administrative Data Research will be putting forward a funding bid in the next few months. Police Scotland said that they would be keen to be part of any discussions relating to this.

ACTION 2006-03 - Amanda Coulthard to set up a meeting to discuss the data linkage project and capture experiences as part of the Project's "Lessons Learned".

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6. Research Methodology Assessment

Martin Smith presented a short document outlining good practice regarding polling surveys and focus groups, based on recent work undertaken at SPA on reviewing research that had used such methods. The intention is to incorporate the material into a revised JREF document on research methodologies, thus updating the JREF-approved document from 2022-23. It was suggested that the document could be expanded thereafter to incorporate other methodologies at a future point.

The purpose of the main document will be for use by SPA/Police Scotland and SPA Forensic Services in developing research proposals and appraising published research according to the methods that have been used.

Professor Aston stated that she would be happy to link in with the academic network to provide feedback on the work and shape its development.

ACTION 2006-04 Martin Smith to incorporate the focus groups / polling piece into a revised version of the existing document and liaise with Professor Aston regarding academic contributions.

7. JREF Annual Review and Terms of Reference Review

Members of the group declared they were satisfied with the review process and the minor amendments to the terms of reference. Amanda Coulthard stated that any further feedback can be taken over next few days.

ACTION 2006-05 Martin Smith to ensure that the updated Terms of Reference is published on the SPA's website, and bring any further matters from the annual review to the next JREF if appropriate.

8. Member Updates

a. SPA Corporate

SPA's Policing Performance Committee in June 2024 was provided with a deep-dive analysis of aggregated public polling data, with the focus being the view of women in Scotland.

Research findings from the Community Confidence Action Research Project were also shared this week at the North-South Criminology Conference in Belfast. The SPA is also expecting to be presenting at this year's SOLACE Scotland event in September and at the national SOLACE Summit in Manchester in October.

The Biometrics in Criminal Justice Conference was successfully held on June 19th in Edinburgh – feedback on the event is to be received. The SPA Chair committed to a national conversation on facial recognition. An article on the

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event is to be published on the SPA's website. VoxPop style interviews were also held at the event and are to be published on the SPA's website.

b. SPA Forensic Services

N/A

c. Police Scotland

Police Scotland has circulated the latest version of its research dashboard, including live academic police research. The online evidence bank is continuing to be updated with research priorities. Academic challenge sessions are also ongoing.

d. SIPR

SIPR has continued to apply successfully for grants and organising events, including the Interact Conference in June and an upcoming conference in London. SIPR annual plan to be discussed with Executive Committee on Monday 24th June.

e. College of Policing

N/A

f. Scottish Government

The Scottish Government has published prison population projections and associated work on early release schemes. It is publishing the 2023-24 recorded crime statistics on Tuesday 25th June.

There is also ongoing work in the areas of fraud and victimisation.

Stuart Lewis highlighted the value of retail crime work, and the Scottish Government has been working alongside Police Scotland to disrupt this.

Amanda Coulthard stated that ongoing work and liaison with Justice Analytical Services is proving helpful.

9. AOB

N/A

10. Date of the next meeting

Mid to Late September TBC

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