Evidence Based Policing: ‘What’s all this then?’

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What we’ll cover...

• Evidence Based Policing - What it is...
• Why does it matter?
• What does good evidence look like?
• How evidence can bust common myths
• How the College can support your team
A golden opportunity...

‘It is in the public interest to show that what the police are doing is working ......’
Home Secretary, Superintendents Conference, 11 Sept 2012

‘to identify, share and enable officers and staff to use evidence of what works and best practice’
College objective no.3, from 1st Dec 2012
What does Evidence Based Policing really mean?

‘Using the best available evidence to inform decisions about practices and polices’

ASK
- Reflect on practice, build hypotheses

TEST
- Seek to answer the question through testing (e.g. experimental trials, systematic reviews)

LEARN
- Learn about ‘what works?’ (or doesn’t…)

ADAPT
- Adapt policy/practice to reflect findings

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Why does it matter?

- £8.8bn to protect the public from harm

Home Sec expects service to continue to reduce crime with 20% budget cuts.

- How do we know what activity is effective?

- What are the risks if we don’t have any robust evidence about what works?

- Some well-meaning interventions may have zero impact or worse – may cause harm
What does ‘good’ or ‘robust’ evidence look like?

Statements about ‘what works’

5 Systematic Reviews
(Based on level 3-5 studies)

4 Randomised controlled trials

3 Before/after measures
Multiple site comparisons

2 Before/after measures
Two site comparisons

1 Before/after measures
No comparison site

Statements about ‘what’s promising’

5 Randomised controlled trials

4 Before/after measures
Multiple site comparisons

3 Before/after measures
Two site comparisons

2 Before/after measures
No comparison site

1 One-off measure
No comparison site

Statements about possible impact

Study designs increasingly rule out potential alternative causes

Study designs cannot rule out potential alternative causes

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To make ‘What Works’ statements you’ll need....a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT)
Or …..a systematic review or Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA)

- Exhaustive and systematic searching for relevant studies
- Explicit criteria to sift the wheat from the chaff
- Sums up the best available research
- Can pool datasets to increase statistical power – giving greater accuracy (aka meta analysis)
- Is replicable – easily updated
Evidence to bust myths...

Which of these headlines are correct?

1. ‘Contact with the police reduces public confidence’
2. ‘Police crackdown on crime hotspots moves the problem round the corner’
3. ‘Detections key to victim satisfaction’
Where are we now re trials?
Where are we now re systematic reviews?

Cochrane Collaboration
- Medicine/ Healthcare
- Over 5,000 systematic reviews
- Focus on specific interventions for specific illnesses

Campbell Collaboration
- Crime and Justice area
- Only 58 systematic reviews
- Focus on broad intervention strategies (hot spots, problem solving), not specific tactics

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How can we (rapidly) build this evidence base?

- Collaborative work with forces and academics
  - RCTs
  - Quasi-experiments
  - Evidence reviews

Evidence Base Camp
17/18 October 2013
12 Nov 2013
17/18 Feb 2014
What are we trying to achieve – police doing it for themselves?

Surveys show officers rely on and prefer professional experience rather than research

BUT

The more they know about research the less they believe the police alone have enough information about crime and what to do about it AND

The more they are exposed to research the more likely they are to be willing to do experiments SO

When research is part of their professional experience - they will be much more likely to use it!

Palmer (2011) Survey of inspectors and chief inspectors in Greater Manchester Police
Lum et al (2012) Receptivity to research in Policing
Where we’re heading... What Works Centre

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College offer to date… (work in progress)

- Evidence Base Camp (first sweep 17/18 Oct 2013)
- Funded secondments (2013/14)
- Master classes on EBP…ongoing
- National Police Library – searching support
- POLKA – knowledge bank and bespoke communities
- Research Fairs (proof of concept held in W.Mids)
- Evidence Services mini-site – v.1 Sept 2014 will include Research Map & trials register
- QA on design
- What Works Centre tools – published 2014/2015
- Fellowship scheme under development
• ‘WWW’......

• ‘EBI’.....