Police-Academic Partnerships: From Contesting to Co-Producing and Connecting Evidence.

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Excellence in Policing Conference
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Outline

• Contesting evidence-based approaches: understanding better the barriers to evidence use;

• Co-producing evidence: the role of police-academic partnerships;

• Connecting evidence to practice: implementing models of evidence-based practice
The challenge for all of us in the knowledge business...

“Yes, it’s quite a noise - but are we having any impact?”
Evidence-Based Policing

“Police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best.”

Lawrence Sherman, 1998
Paradox: police science as a successful failure?

‘there is no discernible, sustained and consistent effort within policing to make the basic premise that ‘knowledge informs practice’ a routine part of policing’ Goldstein (2003):

‘the notion that science should matter is often trumped by the reality that public opinion, political will, or consensus-based opinions about best practices are what should underpin and drive police practices. Lum et al (2012)
Framing the knowledge exchange challenge as ‘two communities’

• **Divergent**
  – interests, priorities, incentives, language, dynamics
  – conceptions of knowledge and time-scales
  – status and power

• **Leading to**
  – communication difficulties
  – mismatch between supply and demand
  – rejection and implementation failure

• (from Nutley, 2013)
‘A Dialogue of the Deaf’?

Academic: Why do the police ignore research findings?

Police: Why don’t researchers produce usable knowledge?

Academic: Why do the police always reject any study that is critical of what they do?

Police: Why do researchers always show the police in a bad light?

Academic: Why don’t police officers even read research reports?

Police: Why can’t researchers write in plain English?
The challenges at the level of the profession…

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<tr>
<th>Experience based (thick professionalism)</th>
<th>Standardised (thin professionalism)</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Gut feeling</td>
<td>• Formal competence</td>
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<td>• Sudden impulses</td>
<td>• Standards</td>
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<td>• Intuition</td>
<td>• Use of technology</td>
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<td>• Loyalty to colleagues</td>
<td>• Loyalty to truth and science</td>
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<td>• Normative affinity with crime control</td>
<td>• Principles of due process</td>
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Ununderstanding the barriers to evidence use

- **The policy context** - is evidence use aligned with organisational values and culture?
- **The practice context** – do practitioners have the skills and autonomy to implement findings? What support is there for evidence-based change?
- **The research context** – what value do academics place on supporting evidence use?
Co-producing evidence: the role of police-academic partnerships

• Academics and practitioners ‘have to learn to work together in kind of intellectual and practical partnerships to solve problems as best they can – not compete with each other over whose knowledge is more authoritative’ (Moore, 2010)
The Scottish Institute for Policing Research
Origins: context and rationale of SIPR

- **Demand-driven**: Initiated by research ‘users’ rather than research ‘providers’....
- The need for ‘knowledge creation’ and to understand ‘policing in Scotland’ and ‘Scottish policing’ in an international context...
- Improving ‘knowledge exchange’, integration and mobilization to facilitate evidence-based contributions to policing policy and practice ...
Why this shared infra-structure matters I: it supports co-production by:

- A framework for routine and sustained interaction;
- Building a long-term culture of engagement;
- Engaging high level champions and enthusiasts.
- Developing social capital (trust/networks/reciprocity);
- Supports co-identification of issues, and co-design and co-delivery of research.
Why this shared infra-structure matters II

Support interdisciplinary research with the police
Supporting the development of different types of knowledge about policing

- Awareness
- Knowledge and understanding
- Attitudes, perceptions, ideas
- Practice and policy change

More conceptual uses: Tackling gang violence
More instrumental uses: Hot Spots Policing
Connecting evidence and practice

Tailored dissemination - e.g. EMMIE, the evidence-based policing matrix

Social influence strategies - e.g. ‘evidence champions’

Incentives – e.g. reward evidence use through promotion
Connecting evidence and practice:

Models for developing evidence-based practice through police-academic partnerships

- Research-based practitioner model
- Embedded research model
- Organisational excellence model

(from Nutley, Walter and Davies 2008)
Research-based practitioner model

- Role and responsibility of individual practitioners to keep up-to-date with and apply research
- Assumes professional autonomy
- Emphasises professional education and training
Research-based practitioner model

- Practitioner Fellowships;
- Secondments to SIPR;
- Graduate Programme in Policing;
- Professional doctorates
Embedded research model

- Research is embedded systems, standards, programmes and practice tools
- Responsibility for research use lies with policy makers and managers
- Performance management, funding and regulatory regimes encourage the use of research-based programmes and tools
Embedded research model

• Procedural justice and new recruit training;
• Protocols for police interviews with children;
• Guidance on searching for, and supporting families of, missing persons.
Organisational excellence model

- Leadership and organisation of policing is key;
- Collecting and analysing local data, and testing out research findings from elsewhere;
- A learning organisation culture;
- Partnerships with local universities.
SIPR and Organisational Excellence: supporting ‘research mindedness’ in Scottish policing

The Scottish Institute for Policing Research

POLICE SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe

The Scottish Institute for Policing Research

HMICS

SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY
## Connecting evidence and practice: REF 2013 Impact Case studies

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<td>Robert Gordon</td>
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<td>Strathclyde</td>
<td>Global drug crime involving the illicit production of synthetic drugs and the emergence of new legal highs</td>
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<td>West of Scotland</td>
<td>Gang culture and youth offending in the West of Scotland</td>
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Continuing need to address research supply, demand, and that in between

**Improving stocks or reservoirs of research knowledge**

Research translation, research brokering and boundary spanning, secondments and role cycling, co-production and partnerships of all kinds, sustained interaction...

**Increasing demand in political and professional worlds, and wider society**
Thank You

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