

Areas of Research Interest





Introduction

Good data and research evidence underpin effective policing, and the Metropolitan Police Service is fortunate to be able to draw on a wide range of high quality evidence, produced by both internal and external experts. We value the important work carried out by the academic and wider research community, and the role it plays in our knowledge base.

The Met would like to build on the evidence available and, through this publication, highlight more explicitly the areas where we would like to improve our knowledge and strengthen our existing evidence base. There is a huge appetite within our organisation for even more and even better analysis, using the most up-to-date methods. We want to be clear as to where our knowledge gaps lie.

The Met is keen to work in partnership to strengthen our approach to research in policing and criminal justice. We want to maintain and build on existing networks with external research communities and funders working in all areas of policing. We would also appreciate the opportunity to develop new networks, particularly with entrepreneurs and businesses who want to contribute to public safety in London.

Being more open about our areas of research interest will, we hope, contribute to filling knowledge gaps, as well as building upon what we already know. This document is not an exhaustive list of our research needs. It is intentionally high-level, summative and is intended to open conversation rather than constrain it. It is worth highlighting here that the Home Office also publishes its [areas of research interest](#) and that this is an excellent source of insight for those interested in police research.

We welcome feedback on the content of this document and details of any work you are doing or planning that is relevant to the Metropolitan Police Service. If you would like to discuss the ARI, or collaborating on research more generally, then please contact us at research@met.police.uk. We will disseminate our ARI throughout 2019 and beyond to raise awareness of the Met's research. We will also regularly review and refresh this document in light with our commitments set out above.

The purpose of the document

The purpose of this document is to involve more people in research which relates to the Met's strategic knowledge gaps and interests. The focus is on long-term priorities, concentrating on operational policing outcomes, but also with reference to areas which support and enable those outcomes.

Access: Through this document we want to make doing research with the Met as easy as possible. We are investing heavily to improve data access and quality and this we hope will make external research easier too. We will do our best to ensure that research focused on the areas of strategic interest in this document can result in quicker access to the data we hold.

Impact: The Met supports researchers publishing their findings in peer reviewed journals and will never seek to influence the content of any publication (other than where confidentiality concerns are apparent). We would naturally be grateful for the opportunity to review publications early in order to be able to most effectively learn and respond if appropriate. We also want to do more to showcase and raise the profile of research in policing. We will work with you to provide the right platform for your research and to maximise its application in operational terms.

Context: The priorities highlighted in this document link logically to our long-term vision and strategy, the [Met Direction](#). The Met Direction sets out our vision for the Met in terms of the key features, capabilities and behaviours that we need to develop over the next seven years. It outlines what we want to excel in operationally, but also how the Met should look and feel in order to give us the best chance of delivering a quality service. It covers seven key priorities: three operational priorities and four enabling priorities. This research plan is also structured along these lines.

Not the purpose of the document

This document is not about trying to limit, curtail or unduly funnel research into a small number of areas. The Met is committed to being an open-minded, curious organisation with a desire to learn. We therefore continue to encourage and support research in a host of different areas and welcome contact from individuals and organisations to discuss research proposals of any nature. We also support innovative product and service development in the public and private sectors. Sometimes we don't appreciate the opportunities that exist until they are presented to us.

Research funding, setting research questions and developing research methods

Whilst the majority of this document is concerned with setting out our most strategically important knowledge gaps and interests, it is worth highlighting here the importance of securing funding for research, as well as thinking critically about how to approach it. We encourage people to think about the purpose of their research, the research questions they choose and the appropriateness of the methods they employ. When evaluating the impact of existing police initiatives it is really important to consider the types of measures which will be used to assess that impact.

The purpose of high quality research is to tangibly improve the service we deliver to the public. As such we actively seek the highest standard of research with the methodology accurately fitting the research question posed. Empirical research is particularly encouraged, but we are also interested in ethnographic and qualitative approaches which take into account the experience and the attitudes of those working within the police service.

Current research priorities for 2019/20

Operational priorities

We are particularly interested in research which helps to develop our knowledge in the following areas:

Focus on what matters most to Londoners



Violent crime is a major public concern and tackling it is our top priority. This includes terrorism, knife and gun crime, sexual offending, domestic abuse and safeguarding vulnerable people from predatory behaviour.

- Effectively safeguarding those vulnerable to radicalisation
- Reducing victimisation and repeat victimisation in relation to domestic abuse
- Effectively managing violent offenders who pose a risk to the public
- Understanding the links between drug markets, county lines and gang violence
- Understanding effective police-led opportunities for crime prevention, with a particular focus on violent crime
- Understanding the drivers of homicide and serious violence
- Understanding the effects of mainstream and social media on violence
- Measuring the impact of disruption of organised criminal networks

Mobilise partners and the public



We know that safety requires action and intervention beyond the police service. We will work with partners and communities to help keep them safe, increase trust and support them in preventing crime.

- Supporting partners and communities to reduce crime and vulnerability
- Improving the quality of interactions between the police and members of the public
- Reducing the gap in confidence in the police which exists between different communities in London
- Understanding the impact of social media on public confidence and perceptions of police legitimacy
- Understanding what the public need to know in relation to local policing activity
- Improving the flow of community intelligence to the police
- Making volunteering opportunities in policing more attractive and maximising the role of citizens in policing
- Maximising the efficiency of partnership working in relation to issues concerning mental health

Achieve the best outcomes in the pursuit of justice and in support of victims



We have a fundamental responsibility to uphold the rule of law and to ensure that victims receive the best possible outcome. We will do this by catching offenders and by ensuring victims of crime receive both justice and the support they need from us and our partners.

- Improving victim and witness interactions with the police service, particularly in relation to violent crime and serious sexual offences
- Supporting officers to adapt to an investigative processes where they have ownership from initial contact through to resolution
- Understanding how to most effectively operationalise restorative justice approaches
- Understanding differences in victim satisfaction across London
- Improving our understanding of criminal justice approaches which are most effective in reducing re-offending
- Improving investigative outcomes and detection rates, particularly in relation to crime with a digital footprint
- Maximising opportunities from digital forensics in relation to crime prevention and detection

Enabling priorities

We are particularly interested in research which helps to develop our knowledge in the following areas:

Seize the opportunities of data and digital tech



We want to harness data and use advanced technologies to our advantage, rising to the challenge of a fast-moving data-driven digital age. We will make information and insight more accessible internally, and externally, to support evidence-based decisions and promote public confidence. We will strive to enhance our global reputation for excellence and expertise in policing.

- Using digital channels to prevent and disrupt crime more effectively
- Making best use of big data to predict events and trends that impact on policing
- Preventing offenders from inciting violence and promoting their actions through online channels
- Improving our ability to adopt digital innovations in policing
- Trust and accountability in using AI and machine learning within policing
- Public expectations and trust in relation to the capture and use of data within law enforcement
- The ongoing role for ethics in relation to the police application of technological advances
- Better understanding the end-to-end value of investment in policing technology

Care for each other, work as a team, and be an attractive place to work

This means ensuring our officers and staff are well-led, well-equipped and well-supported. We will champion difference and diversity of thought so that we are an organisation people of all backgrounds want to work for, and one where they thrive. We will ensure officers and staff are clear about their role and can make a real impact; we will entrust them to make decisions, implement them and deliver their best.

- Increasing the attractiveness of the Met as a 21st century employer
- Increasing the recruitment, retention and progression of high quality staff, particularly those with protected characteristics
- Improving workforce wellbeing and reducing sickness
- Preventing incidents of violence against officers and staff
- Developing team leaders at all levels, who are inspiring, confident and drive performance
- Reducing bureaucracy to lighten demand on front line officers
- Understanding perceptions of organisational justice and fairness in relation to promotion and selection procedures

Learn from experience, from others, and constantly strive to improve



We want to be better at learning from other forces and organisations, listening to feedback but also empowering officers and staff to test new ideas, learn, train and share insight so we all excel in our roles. By promoting a creative, open and reflective culture, by experimenting more and innovating, we will, with input from colleagues, partners and the public, improve our service to Londoners.

- Improving how we identify and communicate best practice approaches across law enforcement
- Promoting a learning culture and maximising learning from challenging experiences
- Improving how innovation is elicited from officers and staff within the service
- Better meeting the learning and development needs of officers and staff
- Creating a dynamic link between formal training, continuous professional development and informal sharing of practitioner knowledge
- Delivering digitally enabled training with high levels of user satisfaction
- Increasing the use of analytics within policing

Be recognised as a responsible, exemplary and ethical organisation

We want to be effective, efficient and offer value for money, and to attract national and regional funding because partners know we make a difference. We also want to be recognised for our ethics, integrity, transparency and professionalism; and contribute to the sustainability of London and its communities.

- Understanding what demand for policing services might look like in five and ten years from now
- How effective policing contributes to a city's economy and business/investment confidence in a city
- Better understanding productivity in policing, and how to improve the link between budget spend and policing outcomes
- Understanding the cost of crime in London to communities and the public sector
- Understanding what alternative service delivery models are being used elsewhere that contribute to greater financial efficiency and improved policing outcomes
- Improving how public complaints and misconduct referrals are dealt with
- Developing and maintaining an ethical culture in policing
- Reducing policing's environmental impact



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