

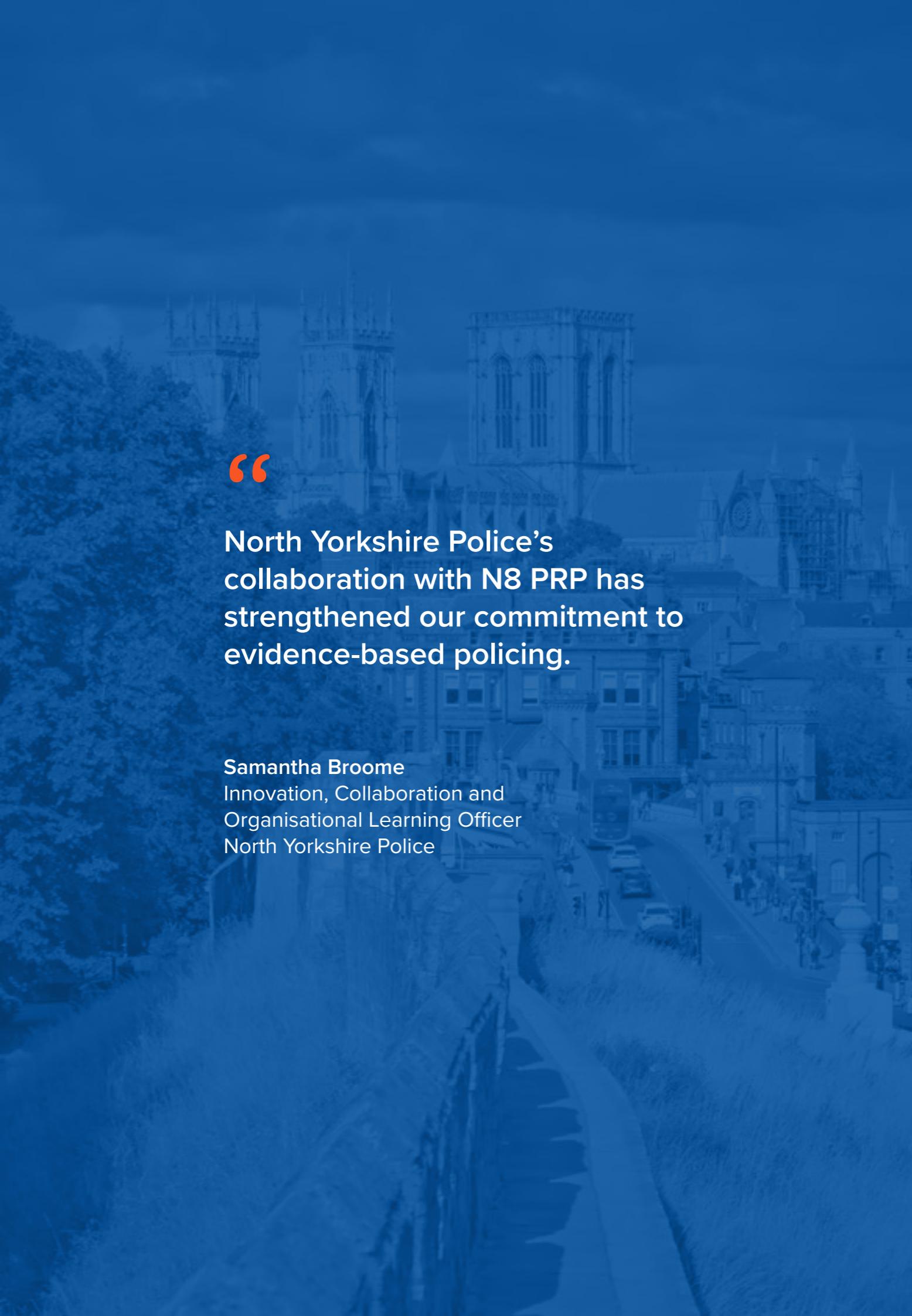


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# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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**North Yorkshire Police’s collaboration with N8 PRP has strengthened our commitment to evidence-based policing.**

**Samantha Broome**  
Innovation, Collaboration and Organisational Learning Officer  
North Yorkshire Police

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### Professor Ruth Lamont

UKRI Thematic Research Lead in the UK Parliament for Crime and Justice

Professor of Law and Justice Policy  
The University of Manchester

**“Good policy results from evidence-based data and analysis, being made available to decision-makers.”**

**It is a pleasure to contribute to the annual report of the N8 Policing-Research Partnership, to reflect on the importance of research and policing practice collaboration in developing policy for policing across the country.**

I am currently the academic UKRI Thematic Research Lead in the UK Parliament for Crime and Justice, joining eight other researchers with policy experience in different fields to support the use of research in scrutiny and policy development. My remit covers the business relating to home affairs, including policing, where the government has indicated that it intends to introduce significant changes in this Parliamentary session. Having the ability to participate in N8 Policing Research Partnership meetings over the past academic year has been valuable to understanding the key practice issues from cutting edge research.

Already, since the 2024 election, the government has introduced the Crime and Policing Bill which currently contains new offences of criminal exploitation of a child and controlling another's home for criminal purposes,

or 'cuckooing', both areas where the PRP has previously conducted research. It also seeks to further regulate protest, and the policing of protests, creating new offences relating to hiding identity during a protest, and the use of pyrotechnics. This is a controversial and rapidly developing area of policing policy.

We are still waiting for the government's planned strategy on combatting violence against women and girls, but police forces and researchers have already explored significant areas of policing practice in this context. We recently held an event with stakeholders in Parliament in anticipation of the strategy, identifying for MPs the difficulties of getting different aspects of the justice system, particularly family and criminal, to work more coherently for victims. There is greater awareness of technology-facilitated domestic abuse and coercive control, but responding to victims and intervening with perpetrators remains an intractable challenge for police and other essential services.

Research into policing practice and scrutiny from the north of England, and particularly the devolved authority over policing held by the

Mayoralty in Greater Manchester, will be important given the forthcoming changes to policing oversight. Police and Crime Commissioners look set to be abolished in 2028, to be replaced by oversight by Mayoralty areas, where they exist, and local authorities. Further changes can be expected from the planned Policing White Paper from the Home Office, slated for 2026, where research will be used to inform Parliamentary scrutiny of proposed changes.

The N8 Policing Research Partnership model of collaborative policing and research activity has been adopted in the creation of the National Centres of Policing Excellence, which will enable further collaboration between academics, practitioners, and police staff and officers. Good policy results from evidence-based data and analysis, being made available to decision-makers. In my experience, the Policing Research Partnership provides the opportunity for on the ground improvements in policing practice, but also analysis essential to effective policing policy. I look forward to working with the Partnership into 2026 and to another successful year of collaboration.

## N8 PRP CO-DIRECTORS' MESSAGE



### Professor Layla Skinn斯

Professor of Law and Justice Policy,  
University of Sheffield

N8 PRP Academic Co-Director (interim)

*Layla is a leading academic in the field of police detention, and has led large and impactful police custody projects funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, the British Academy, the Howard League for Penal Reform and more recently the STAR Fund. A key project is the 'good' police custody study, which sought to 'robustly' examine what is meant by 'good' police custody and to instigate changes to police custody policies and practices in England and Wales. Her key recent publications include Police Powers and Citizens' Rights (Routledge, 2019) and Criminal Justice (Oxford University Press, 2021) and an award-winning journal article on the use of appreciative inquiry in policing research.*



### Chief Superintendent Phil Hutchinson

Chief Superintendent, Operational Training, People Branch, Greater Manchester Police

N8 PRP Academic Co-Director (interim)

*Chief Superintendent Phil Hutchinson began his policing career in 1997 with Cheshire Constabulary before transferring to Lancashire Constabulary. He moved to Greater Manchester Police (GMP) in 2021 and in 2025 was appointed Branch Commander for Training Delivery at GMP. Ch Supt Hutchinson has extensive operational experience and a strong track record of partnership working. He has nearly a decade of experience as a Tactical Firearms Commander, Public Order Commander, and Tactical Commander for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) incidents.*

Welcome to the N8 Policing Research Partnership Annual Report for 2025. This year saw significant developments for N8 PRP, with new events, new funding grants, a new NRiPN Director, and new (interim) Co-Directors.

### Overview of 2025

The N8 PRP programme in 2025 covered an exceptionally wide range of topics, from AI and neurodiversity to missing people and police well-being. This was driven by the N8 PRP Policing Research Priorities, developed by the N8 PRP Steering Group, to identify urgent and emergent challenges for applied policing research.

The year also demonstrated the longer-term impact of N8 PRP's work, with a wealth of new publications and funded projects developed from research supported by N8 PRP, and the New Researchers in Policing Network (NRiPN) continuing to provide valuable support for postgraduate and early career researchers.

2025 also saw major developments in the policing research landscape, with the announcement of 9 Policing Academic Centres of Excellence. All

3 P-ACE applications supported by N8 PRP were successful, and the Lancaster, Manchester, and Yorkshire P-ACEs launched in October 2025. N8 PRP is working closely with the Centres as they develop.

### Changes in Leadership

Closer to home, there were significant changes at the start and end of the year. In January, Dr Ellen Reeves (University of Liverpool) became Director of the New Researchers in Policing Network (NRiPN). She has kept up the momentum of the network, with 8 webinars and a Research Away Day held in 2025.

In September, Professor Layla Skinn斯 took on the role of interim Academic Co-Director of N8 PRP. She will be in post until September 2026, when Professor Geoff Pearson returns from research leave. Layla has been involved in N8 PRP since its inception and is enjoying the challenge of providing leadership for the partnership.

Layla was joined in December 2025 by Chief Superintendent Phil Hutchinson, Branch Commander for Training Delivery at GMP. As Co-Director, Phil aims to bring a strategic vision that is grounded in knowledge, methods and perspectives from frontline

policing, and continue to foster strong academic-practitioner relationships.

### New Research Funding

The beginning of the year saw the funding of the first two Police Priority Grants on the well-being of police call handlers and the experience of neurodivergence in custody. The award, which replaces the Small Grant fund, supports academics and police to work collaboratively on key challenges identified by the N8 PRP Policing Research Priorities Statement.

Further funding was announced in August with the first two Agile Evidence Reviews. This new initiative aims to increase the use of existing research in policing, looking at what the evidence says for key questions and identify gaps in the literature. The projects, on suicide prevention for people under investigation for sexual offences and measuring police culture, will report in early 2026.

### Knowledge Exchange

It's been a lively year for knowledge exchange events from N8 PRP, beginning in January with the first Northern Evidence Based Policing (NEBP) Hub event. The Hub was established to provide a forum for N8 PRP organisations to advance

understanding on an N8 PRP Policing Research Priority. The first event, on Missing People, was highly successful, with productive discussions helping to define the key challenges for policing that can be supported by applied research.

In June we held the ninth Policing Innovation Forum, bringing together a wide range of practitioners, researchers and stakeholders on the theme Neurodiversity in the Criminal Justice System. The diversity of views and experience shared created valuable discussion, pointing to how we can build on the positive work already underway in this area.

Throughout the year, N8 PRP supported a number of collaborative events, including a workshop on Nightlife: Safety, Security and Policing with the University of Liverpool's Criminal Justice Network, Police Misconduct in the UK Symposium with the Universities of Sheffield, Northumbria and Salford, and the AI and Policing: Trust, Identity, Privacy and Security Innovation Forum with SPRITE+.

The range of topics covered this year illustrate the strength of the N8 PRP as a partnership, able to draw on expertise and experience to support the breadth of policing research.

### Looking Ahead

As 2026 gets underway, we have plenty to look forward to. In September, the N8 PRP Steering Group identified 5 new priorities for the year, on Investigations and Outcomes, VAWG and Domestic Abuse, Police Workloads, Neighbourhood Policing, and Policing and Health. These topics will inform our programme for the year, with new Police Priority Grants, Agile Evidence Reviews, and knowledge exchange events.

There is also important work to do as we look forward to the end of the agreed funding for N8 PRP in September 2027. We will be working with the N8 PRP Steering Group and other stakeholders to consider the future direction of the partnership, finding sustainable ways to maintain the collaborative, productive relationships that are key to producing vital work that creates meaningful change in policing.

# TIMELINE 2025-2026

- | Knowledge Exchange Event
- | NRiPN Event
- | Calls and Awards

2025

JANUARY

**21st | Northern Evidence Based Policing Hub**  
Understanding and preventing missing from home incidents *page 22*

**Police Priority Grant Awards Announced** *page 15*

MARCH

**13th | NRiPN Webinar**  
Navigating Ethics Approvals *page 32*

APRIL

**1st | NRiPN Webinar**  
Bridging Impact *page 32*

MAY

**21st | Workshop**  
Nightlife: Safety, Security and Policing *page 24*

**23rd | NRiPN Webinar**  
Policing Research Methods: Collaborative Projects *page 32*

**Policing Academic Centres of Excellence Announced** *page 34*

JUNE

**11th | Symposium**  
Police Misconduct in the UK: Co-creating a research agenda for the future *page 25*

**26th | N8 PRP Policing Innovation Forum**  
Neurodiversity in the Criminal Justice System *page 23*

JULY

**14th | NRiPN Webinar**  
Policing Research Methods: Ethnography *page 33*

**Agile Evidence Review Call Opened** *page 19*

AUGUST

**Agile Evidence Review Awards Announced** *page 19*

SEPTEMBER

**25th | Forum**  
AI and Policing: Trust, Identity, Privacy and Security Innovation *page 26*

**16th | NRiPN Research Away Day** *page 33*

OCTOBER

**2025 - 2026 Research Policing Priorities announced** *page 12*

**Police Priority Grant Call Opened**

NOVEMBER

**7th | NRiPN Webinar**  
Policing Research Methods: Focus groups and interviews *page 33*

DECEMBER

**2nd | NRiPN Webinar**  
Policing Research Methods: Creative Methods *page 32*

2026

JANUARY

**21st | Northern Evidence Based Policing Hub**  
What Makes a 'Good' Investigation? Evidence, Victims, Specialism, and the Realities of Policing

**Police Priority Awards Announcement**

FEBRUARY

MARCH

**NRiPN Webinar**  
Hotspot Policing

JUNE

**21st | N8 PRP Policing Innovation Forum**  
Health and Policing

# RESEARCH PRIORITIES

N8PRP activity is informed by an annual Statement of Research Priorities identified by the N8 PRP Policing Partners. Co-ordinated communication from police partners on their priorities for N8 PRP-supported activity will enable more effective use of existing and ongoing research, and prompt innovative, socially significant research that would not otherwise have been generated or prioritised.

## 2024-2025 Priorities & activities in response

### 1. The experience of neurodivergent people in the Criminal Justice System

**Policing Innovation Forum** | Neurodivergence in the Criminal Justice System - page 23

**Policing Priority Project** | Neurodivergence in Custody - page 16

### 2. What are the drivers for missing from home and how can police work with partners to reduce them?

**NEBP Hub** | Missing from Home - page 22

### 3. What do we know about public confidence in policing, and how can we measure it?

**Agile Evidence Review** | Measuring, Tracking, and Assessing Cultural Change - page 21

### 4. Understanding and managing professional conduct within policing

**Misconduct Symposium** - page 25

### 5. Workforce planning, staff retention and police mental health

**Policing Priority Project** | Call Handlers - page 17

### 6. What are the threats and opportunities from AI?

**AI and Policing: Trust, Identity, Privacy, and Security Innovation Forum with SPRITE+** - page 26

### 7. Understanding the causes of prosecution withdrawals and improving outcomes for victims

**Small Grant** | Racially Minoritised Women's Experience of Outcome 16

**Agile Evidence Review** | Suicide Prevention Measures for People Arrested or Under Investigation for Sexual Offences - page 20

### 8. Reducing harassment and serious violence in the night time economy

**Collaborative KE Event** | Nightlife: Safety, Security & Policing, with Uo Liverpool Criminal Research Unit - page 24

## 2025-2026 Priorities

### 1. Investigations and Outcomes

In 2025, HMICFRS published 'An inspection into how effectively the police investigate crime', with 11 recommendations to help forces improve the standard of their crime investigations and achieve better outcomes for victims. In the 2023-25 PEEL Assessments, 'Investigating crime' emerged as a key area for improvement.

### 2. VAWG and Domestic abuse: Demand and Victimisation

Violence Against Women and Girls has been called a 'national emergency' by the NPCC and College of Policing, accounting for 20% of all recorded crime 2022/2023, while 1 in 6 murders related to domestic abuse, and incident reports are increasing in number and complexity. In December 2025, the government announced a new strategy to halve VAWG in 10 years.

### 3. Workforce: How can police officer workloads be managed effectively?

There has long been a challenge in understanding the nature of police workloads and how to ensure they are manageable, from the number of crimes to incidents attended, suspects arrested, detained and investigated.

### 4. Neighbourhood Policing: Understanding neighbourhood and hotspot policing

The UK Government has launched a National Neighbourhood Policing Programme, including a Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee and in January announcing £200 million funding for neighbourhood policing. These developments raise questions for the relevance and role of Hotspot Policing. In 2023, a Home Office Evaluation found that Hotspot Policing required commitment to building the right analytical and technological capability to implement successfully.

### 5. Policing and Health

The police and healthcare providers have long worked in partnership with each other, given the vulnerable nature of those they encounter in their everyday interactions.

“

Grants funded by N8 PRP enable us to undertake valuable work establishing a much-needed evidence base in key areas of policing.

**Annabel Straw**  
Strategy & Policy Officer  
Greater Manchester Police

## POLICING PRIORITY RESEARCH GRANTS



The Policing Priority Grants are research awards providing pump-priming funds for collaborative, targeted research into high-priority areas, new challenges, and pressing concerns in policing.

This is a seedcorn fund intended to enable N8 researchers to develop ideas, preliminary evidence and collaborative relationships with police stakeholders, so they can bid for external funding awards. The grants are also intended to be of mutual benefit to police stakeholders, especially those in the N8 PRP, in terms of potential changes to policy, practice and its impact on wider society.

N8 PRP funded 2 Policing Priority Projects in 2025. Both projects respond to 2024-25 Policing Research Priorities:

- **Illuminating the experiences of autistic people during arrest and custody: Assessing needs and vulnerabilities, evaluating support structures**
- **Investigating the link between emotional demands and resources, sickness absence and turnover intention amongst call handlers in a Force Control Room**

Data collection has begun and the final reports are expected in October 2026.



## **Illuminating the experiences of autistic people during arrest and custody: Assessing needs and vulnerabilities, evaluating support structures**

Studies indicate that appropriate, role-specific training and practical measures that factor in autistic people's voices and experiences are sparse (Holloway et al., 2022; Railey et al., 2022) and police staff struggle with responding adequately to autistic people during arrest and custody due to institutional constraints (Crane et al., 2016). Further research is urgently required to make policy recommendations as to how best to support autistic people during arrest and in custody.

This project reviews existing mechanisms of support for autistic detainees, explores possibilities for enhancing platforms for dialogue between the police service and ASD advocacy groups and provides practical and sustainable recommendations for adapting and augmenting support structures for neurodivergent people under arrest or in custody.

### **2024-2025 Research Priority**

**The experience of neurodivergent people in the Criminal Justice System**

**Dr Laura Naegler**

University of Liverpool

**Professor Gabe Mythen**

University of Liverpool

**Annabel Straw**

Greater Manchester Police

**Dr Laura Zahra McDonald**

ConnectFutures



## **Investigating the link between emotional demands and resources, sickness absence and turnover intention amongst call handlers in a Force Control Room**

The National Contact Management Strategic Plan (2023-2028) emphasises the value of emergency call handling teams for protecting the public and increasing confidence in policing. However, high sickness absence rates and high turnover rates make management of force control rooms difficult, unpredictable and costly (College of Policing, 2024).

The distressing nature of the calls taken by call handlers has been found to put call handlers at significant risk of mental health problems including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety and alcohol abuse (Osorio et al., 2024).

This project has three aims. Firstly, to explore how the emotional demands of emergency calls contribute to sickness absence and turnover intention. Secondly, to explore ways to address the emotional demands leading to sickness absence and turnover. Third, to create, through a process of co-production, two prioritisation matrices which will enable better identification and management of emotional demands and resources.

### **2024-2025 Research Priority**

**Workforce planning, staff retention and police mental health experience**

**Dr Sarah Brooks**

University of Sheffield

**Superintendent Richard Hammond**

South Yorkshire Police

**Chief Insp. Paul Hodgson**

Cleveland Police

“

Working with Emma on this Agile Evidence Review has been a really positive experience and will create a significant resource as we work to improve our response to suicide risk among people under investigation for sexual offences.

**Katy Turner**  
Suicide Prevention Coordinator  
Northumbria Police and North-East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

## AGILE EVIDENCE REVIEWS



Agile Evidence Reviews (AERs) were introduced by N8 PRP in 2025. They are 3-4 month projects that fund members of the New Researchers in Policing Network (NRiPN) to conduct a systemic review of a topic related to the N8 PRP Policing Research Priorities.

The aims of the AERs are to increase police access to and use of existing research, and to support NRIpN members to establish positive working relationships with research partners.

N8 PRP funded 2 Agile Evidence Reviews in 2025.

- **Suicide Prevention Measures for People Arrested or Under Investigation for Sexual Offences**
- **Measuring, Tracking, and Assessing Cultural Change**

Both projects are underway, and the final reports are expected to be published to the N8 PRP website in March 2026.



## Suicide Prevention Measures for People Arrested or Under Investigation for Sexual Offences

The aim of this project is to provide a brief high-level summary of the current understanding about suicide prevention in relation to individuals arrested or under investigation for sexual offences. This group is considered particularly vulnerable with an elevated risk of suicide.

The proposed review aims to draw together information about risk factors. Findings will help to inform future officer training plans and the development of support services, as well as informing future research.

### 2024-2025 Research Priority

Understanding the causes of prosecution withdrawals and improving outcomes for victims

**Emma Tuschick**  
Teesside University

**Katy Turner**  
Northumbria Police



## Measuring, Tracking, and Assessing Cultural Change

The release of the National Policing Culture and Inclusion Strategy by the College of Policing will see an increasing focus by Forces on workplace 'culture' and more specifically culture change. A key aspect of this is to better understand how and when shifts in culture have been achieved. Forces also typically have annual staff surveys and seek to use measures within these to determine progress or otherwise with staff in respect of culture but some would argue questions to an individual about their perceptions, as well as the question sets themselves are not an effective means or methodology for measuring culture.

This review will look for evidence on the different ways organisational culture is measured, whether measures of culture provide effective ways of informing and tracking cultural change, and identify qualitative ways of assessing cultural change. This will inform organisational practice in measuring and assessing culture and inform future research on cultural change in policing.

### 2024-2025 Research Priority

What do we know about public confidence in policing, and how can we measure it?

**Dr Naomi Davis-Crane**  
Liverpool John Moores University

**Chief Superintendent Darren Adams**  
Northumbria Police

## Northern Evidence-Based Policing Hub

### Understanding and Preventing Missing from Home Incidents

21 January 2026, Leeds

The NEBP Hub was established to provide a new platform for knowledge exchange across N8 PRP focused on the Policing Research Priorities. The Hub brings together specialist practitioners and N8 researchers to share best practice and new research, discuss current challenges, and identify knowledge gaps and collaboration opportunities.

In January, 48 delegates gathered in Leeds at the first meeting of the Northern Evidence Based Policing (NEBP) Hub on 'Understanding and Preventing Missing from Home Incidents'.

Professor Geoff Pearson, N8 PRP Co-Director, welcomed delegates and introduced the keynote speaker, DCC Catherine Hankinson, NPCC Lead for Missing Persons. Delegates then joined sessions on Repeat Missing Children and Relocation; Missing Adults: Mental Health Vulnerabilities; and Right Care Right Person and Levels of Intervention. At each session, delegates were invited to share their work in research and practice on the topic, then discuss the challenges in these areas.

### Risk, Harm and Partnership

Key themes that emerged were the challenges of risk assessment, the damage of over-policing children in care and the higher risk to

adults of harm while missing. The practicalities of interagency work were discussed, including the need for better partnerships with providers of residential care for children. Incidents of adults going missing from hospital were noted as especially challenging and poorly understood.

Delegates shared key research and innovative practical resources, including the Missing Persons Information Hub and Safe and Found Online.

### Identifying Evidence Gaps

Following the event, Josie Allan and Jane Hunter (Missing People) wrote a blog post for N8 PRP outlining their key research questions for missing persons.

Karen Shalev, Susan Giles, Craig Collie and Freya O'Brien have produced a systemic assessment on People that Go Missing from Hospitals and Healthcare Settings (HaHS) in England (2026).

### Feedback

Delegates shared positive feedback on the event, highlighting the value of collaborative police-academic discussions for contextualising current challenges, learning about different approaches, and identifying new questions for research.

[n8prp.org.uk/home/events/catalyst-events/nebp-jan-2025/](https://n8prp.org.uk/home/events/catalyst-events/nebp-jan-2025/)

## Policing Innovation Forum

### Neurodiversity in the Criminal Justice System

26 June 2025, York

70 delegates gathered at the York Hilton for the ninth N8 PRP Policing Innovation Forum, Neurodiversity in the Criminal Justice System.

Professor Geoff Pearson, N8 PRP Academic Director, and Forum Chair Dr Geoff Page (University of York), welcomed delegates and highlighted key themes of diversity, effective participation, engagement, and adaptations.

### The Value and Challenge of Neurodiversity

ACC Matt Welsted, NPCC Lead for Neurodiversity, emphasised the potential, achievements, and value of neurodiverse people to society and policing. In contrast, Sean James Campbell (User Voice) presented research showing neurodiverse inmates had significant levels of early-life adversity and faced significant challenges in navigating the criminal justice system.

Dr Tom Smith (University of Western England) chaired a panel of effective participation of neurodiverse victims, suspects, and the wider community. Panellists Dr Alison Jobe (Durham University), Dr John Taggart (Queen's University Belfast), and Dr Alice Siberry (Creased Puddle) discussed changes they wanted to see including in-house Criminal Justice Intermediaries, triage suites, and a realistic training schedule.

### Routledge NRiPN Research Poster Exhibition

Darhy Lewis was awarded the prize for best poster for A Toolkit to Support Neurodivergent Individuals Navigating the Criminal Justice System.

### Roundtables

Delegates joined roundtables to discuss innovative practice and new research. There were sessions on Youth Justice (Dr Anne-Marie Day, Manchester Metropolitan University), The Custody Toolkit (Chloe Holloway-George, Nottingham University, Supporting Neurodivergent Staff, Jake Harrison, South Yorkshire Police, and Jack Fitzpatrick, LJMU), and The Custody Screening Pilot (Leesa Edwards and Peter Aiston, Cumbria Constabulary).

### Wrap Up

Dr Geoff Page thanked the delegates for their contributions to the day, reflecting on the value of a practitioner-led event focused on improving the experience of neurodiverse people in the criminal justice system.

Feedback on the event was very positive, with delegates remarking that they found the content and speakers very interesting and informative.

[n8prp.org.uk/home/events/policing-innovation-forum/neurodiversity-in-the-criminal-justice-system](https://n8prp.org.uk/home/events/policing-innovation-forum/neurodiversity-in-the-criminal-justice-system)

## Collaborative Event

### Nightlife: Safety, Security and Policing

21 May 2025, Liverpool

The N8 PRP co-hosted with the University of Liverpool's Criminal Justice Unit an all day workshop titled Nightlife: Safety, Security and Policing. The event was attended by over 20 academics, third sector workers, advocates, police and council representatives.

#### Zero Tolerance?

Attendees were welcomed to the event by Professor Fiona Measham, Chair in Criminology at the University of Liverpool, N8 PRP institution lead and founder of The Loop Drug Checking Service. The first panel was chaired by Katy Porter, CEO of The Loop DCS and featured talks from Carly Heath (Bristol City Council NTE Advisor & Chair of Bristol Nights), Jason Harwin (Consultant & Senior Advisor/former Police Chief Officer), Dr Carly Lightowler (School of Law and Social Justice, Uni of Liverpool) and Jon Drape (Event Director, Engine No. 4, Warehouse Project and Parklife). This session encouraged the audience to think about the consequences of zero tolerance policies that undermine harm reduction approaches to drugs, alcohol and violence.

The role of police was also discussed, with an emphasis placed on 'more partnerships, less police' in nightlife spaces. Speakers also critiqued the siloing of NTE challenges from the broader context in which they sit beyond nightlife spaces. Dr Lightowler's presentation, 'Alcohol, Policing, and Nightlife: A Complex Relationship', is available online.

#### Local Initiatives

The second session sought to showcase local initiatives. Dr Ellen Reeves (School of Law and Social Justice, Uni of Liverpool and N8 PRP ECR lead) sat down with Dr Mathew Flynn (Uni of Liverpool), Andi Herring (Director, Journey Event Mgmt and Co-Founder & Former CEO, LCR Pride Foundation), Paul Fielder (Chester City Centre Manager and leader of Chester's Purple Flag Working group) and Dawn Dines (CEO Stamp Out Spiking) to discuss a range of innovative approaches to NTE challenges. This panel saw a fruitful discussion about the value of legal and local responses to key gendered harms such as spiking. The panel and attendees also spoke about some of the opportunities presented by the Covid-19 lockdown, leading to a reassessment of how cities 'do' nightlife. This conversation focused specifically on the importance of public transport availability in ensuring safety.

#### Building the Evidence

After lunch, attendees came together for the final session of the day, which focused on three key themes: private and public securitisation; drugs, alcohol and nightlife; and gender and victimisation. A core theme in this session was how best to communicate harm reduction messages in the NTE and the importance of 'building the evidence' base to support innovative responses to key challenges.

## Collaborative Event

### Police Misconduct in the UK: Co-creating a research agenda for the future

11 June 2025, Salford

In June 2025, the N8 PRP helped to support a highly successful police-academic symposium, entitled 'Police Misconduct in the UK: Co-creating a research agenda for the future'. This event was organised by Dr Sara Grace and Professors Denise Martin and Layla Skinnis, funded by the University of Salford and co-hosted by the Universities of Sheffield, Northumbria and Salford. The N8 PRP/NRiPN supported the pre-symposium dinner attended by the speakers and discussants.

The event was attended by 36 people, half of whom were academics – at all career stages, from PhD student to Professor – and the remaining half were practitioners, working in the police, including in N8 PRP police forces, IOPC and HMICFRS. Police speakers included Chief Constable Lauren Poultnay (South Yorkshire Police), the National Police Chiefs Council lead for anti-corruption and Chief Constable Chris Todd from Humberside Police. Academic papers presented at the symposium are currently being compiled into a special issue for Policing and Society due for publication in 2026.

#### [Join the Police Misconduct Forum](#)

We have also established the Police Misconduct Forum (under the auspices of the British Society of Criminology's Policing Network), bringing together academics, practitioners and policy makers with an interest in police misconduct.

Sign up to join the Police Misconduct Forum at

<https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/websm?SUBED1=POLICEMISCONDUCTFORUM&A=1>

#### [Attend our upcoming seminar](#)

We are also holding a seminar in April 2026, co-hosted by the Centre for Criminological Research at the University of Sheffield:

#### Corruption and powerful perpetrators

29 April 2026, 2pm-5pm  
Hybrid: University of Sheffield & online

[bscpolicingnetwork.wordpress.com/police-misconduct-forum/2025-26-events/](http://bscpolicingnetwork.wordpress.com/police-misconduct-forum/2025-26-events/)

## Collaborative Event

### AI and Policing: Trust, Identity, Privacy and Security Innovation Forum

25 September 2025, Manchester

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The second session sought to showcase local initiatives. Dr Ellen Reeves (School of Law and Social Justice, Uni of Liverpool and N8 PRP ECR lead) sat down with Dr Mathew Flynn (Uni of Liverpool), Andi Herring (Director, Journey Event Mgmt and Co-Founder & Former CEO, LCR Pride Foundation), Paul Fielder (Chester City Centre Manager and leader of Chester's Purple Flag Working group) and Dawn Dines (CEO Stamp Out Spiking) to discuss a range of innovative approaches to NTE challenges. This panel saw a fruitful discussion about the value of legal and local responses to key gendered harms such as spiking. The panel and attendees also spoke about some of the opportunities presented by the Covid-19 lockdown, leading to a reassessment of how cities 'do' nightlife. This conversation focused specifically on the importance of public transport availability in ensuring safety.

#### Building the Evidence

After lunch, attendees came together for the final session of the day, which focused on three key themes: private and public securitisation; drugs, alcohol and nightlife; and gender and victimisation. A core theme in this session was how best to communicate harm reduction messages in the NTE and the importance of 'building the evidence' base to support innovative responses to key challenges.

<https://www.spritehub.org/innovation-fora/ai-and-policing-trust-identity-privacy-and-security>

“

**The 2025 Policing Innovation Forum was a great opportunity to listen to some powerful and insightful experiences and research.**

**Sergeant Bruce Yacomeni**  
Strategic Delivery Unit  
South Yorkshire Police

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We were proud to assist in hosting the NRiPN Research Away Day in Sheffield and we took a lot from this having spent the day with people from a number of other areas we might not usually come into frequent contact with.

**Inspector Ross Greenwood**  
Strategic Delivery Unit  
South Yorkshire Police

## NEW RESEARCHERS IN POLICING NETWORK (NRiPN)



The New Researchers in Policing Network (NRiPN) is a community of Post Graduate and Early Career Researchers in the N8 PRP region that supports research, bids, events, collaboration, and impact.

NRiPN is free to join and open to all postgraduate and early career researchers at a university on the N8 PRP footprint.

More information about NRIPN and how to join can be found on the N8 PRP website Support pages at:

[n8prp.org.uk/home/support/new-researchers-in-policing-network](http://n8prp.org.uk/home/support/new-researchers-in-policing-network)



Dr Ellen Reeves

Lecturer in Sociology, Social Policy  
and Criminology,  
University of Liverpool

## Director of the New Researchers in Policing Network (NRiPN)

Back in January 2025, I was thrilled to step into the role of Director for the N8 PRP's New Researchers in Policing Network (NRiPN), taking the reins from Dr. Eon Kim after her move to the Home Office.

Since then, we've welcomed over 60 new postgraduate and early career researchers into the NRiPN and hosted a series of skills-building events designed specifically for those of us doing and/or interested in policing research.

## Navigating Ethics and Bridging Impact

Our Excellence in Policing Research Webinar series kicked off in March with an insightful session on navigating ethics when conducting research with the police. We had a fantastic panel featuring policing academics Professor Geoff Pearson (N8 PRP/ University of Manchester), Associate Professor Charlotte Barlow (University of Leeds), and Professor Geetanjali Gangoli (Durham University) sharing their expertise. In April, we shifted gears to focus on impact. How do we bridge the conceptual gap between what academics consider 'impact' and what police partners need? This conversation featured Associate Professor Laura Bainbridge (University of Leeds), Dr. Antoinette Huber (University of Liverpool), and her police partner, DS Danny Gavin from Merseyside Police.

We wrapped up the series in May by exploring the power of police-academic collaboration. Andrew Stafford (Office of the Chief Scientific Advisor), Dr. Matthew Bacon (University of Sheffield), and Ashley Rogers (South Yorkshire Police) gave attendees the insight into the value, challenges, and solutions for truly successful partnership research.

## Spotlight on Neurodivergence

In June, NRiPN members were able to share their research at the N8 PRP Policing Innovation Forum, which was themed around neurodiversity and criminal justice. Our members presented some brilliant work in the poster session, and I'd like to offer congratulations to Darhyl Lewis who won first prize for her project 'A toolkit to support neurodivergent young adults in the criminal justice system', and Tiegan Blackhurst who received an honourable mention for 'More than meets the eye: Deceptive gaze in autistic and non-autistic adulthood'.

## The ‘How-To’ of Policing Research

In July, we launched a new webinar series dedicated to diving deep into the how-to of policing research, the Policing Research Methodologies series. Our first session was all about police ethnography, offering members a chance to hear invaluable wisdom from two scholars with extensive experience in the field:

Professor Geoff Pearson (N8 PRP/University of Manchester) and Dr. Bethan Loftus (Bangor University). This was followed by events on focus groups and interviews (7 November) and creative methods (2 December). The final webinar in the series, on analysing police data, will take place on 19 February.

## New Funding Awards

In August two NRiPN members were funded through the N8 PRP's Agile Evidence Review programme to conduct systematic reviews that will directly inform future research for police forces. These vital reviews will focus on 'measuring, tracking, and assessing cultural change' and 'suicide prevention measures for people arrested or under investigation for sexual offences'.

## Building Collaboration

Finally, September saw us host a Research Away Day at the University of Sheffield. Co-hosted with North and South Yorkshire Police, this event was a chance for NRiPN members to get invaluable, practical advice straight from police representatives about the realities of conducting research with the police. You can read all about the key takeaways and how the event went [here](#).

I'm looking forward to another year in the role, with plenty more great events in store for NRiPN members.



13  
March  
2025

### Webinar | Navigating Ethics Approvals

A discussion about how to navigate complex ethics applications in policing research, and the barriers researchers encounter.

Panel:

- Professor Geoff Pearson, The University of Manchester
- Dr Charlotte Barlow, University of Central Lancashire
- Professor Geetanjali Gangoli, Durham University



17  
July  
2025

### Webinar | Policing Research Methods: Ethnography

This webinar explored the benefits and challenges of using ethnography, with guidance on how best to utilise these methodologies.

Panel:

- Professor Geoff Pearson, N8 PRP Academic Co-Director, The University of Manchester
- Dr Bethan Loftus, Bangor University



1  
April  
2025

### Webinar | Bridging Impact

A discussion on navigating differing meanings of 'impact' in projects to produce research that is important and meaningful to both academics and police.

Panel:

- Dr Antoinette Huber, University of Liverpool
- Dr Laura Bainbridge, University of Leeds,
- DS Danny Gavin, Merseyside Police



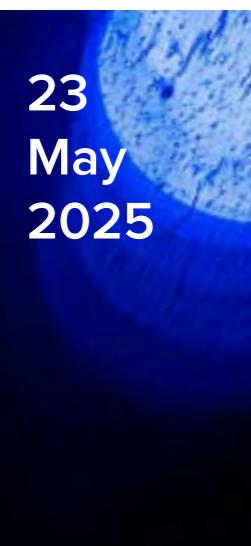
7  
Nov  
2025

### Webinar | Policing Research Methods: Focus groups and interviews

A discussion on how best to embed creative methods in research with police.

Panel:

- Dr Sarah-Jane Lennie, Anglia Ruskin University
- Professor Kate Brown, University of York
- Dr Rachel Lewis, University of Warwick
- Professor Jacqueline Hodason, University of Warwick



23  
May  
2025

### Webinar | Policing Research Methods: Collaborative Projects

A discussion on embedding collaboration across projects to maximise impacts; the benefits of collaborative work with police; and how to build this into projects and/or fundings applications.

Panel:

- Andrew Stafford, Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser
- Dr Matthew Bacon, University of Sheffield
- Ashley Rogers, South Yorkshire Police



16  
Sept  
2025

### NRIPN Research Away Day

Hosted by South Yorkshire Police and North Yorkshire Police at the University of Sheffield, the away day explored: how Evidence Based Policing works; NRIPN member research; and how to turn police priorities into research questions that has value for the researcher, significance for academia, and impact for police partners.

### Policing Academic Centres of Excellence



Four universities within the N8 Policing Research Partnership (N8 PRP) have been awarded funding by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) for three Policing Academic Centres of Excellence (P-ACEs) launched in October 2025.

The objective of the P-ACEs is closely aligned to the existing aims of the N8 PRP, with the programme focusing on driving collaboration between academia and policing.

#### **The two key functions of the P-ACEs are to:**

- mobilise, showcase and make accessible to policing key insights, findings and outputs from their work
- respond to the evidence needs, questions and problems raised by policing and work with policing to co-develop new research and knowledge exchange activities

**The following N8 universities have been selected to be P-ACEs:**

#### **Lancaster University**

The team will comprise Professor Mark Levine, Dr David Neequaye, Dr Heather Shaw, Dr Richard Philpot, Dr Sophie Nightingale, Dr John McDaniel, Dr Lena Podoletz and Dr Camilla De Camargo.

#### **University of Leeds and University of York**

Led by Professors Dan Birks and Adam Crawford, this P-ACE will include Dr Anna Barker (Leeds), Dr Toby Davies (Leeds), Dr Nadia Jessop (York) and Dr Ali Malik (Leeds).

#### **The University of Manchester (in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University)**

Professor Jon Bannister (MMU) will head up the team including Dr Réka Solymosi (Manchester), Dr David Buil Gil (Manchester), Dr Thiago Oliveira (Manchester), and Professor Geoff Pearson (Manchester).

The links between the new P-ACEs and the N8 Policing Research Partnership will further enable the N8 PRP to ensure that policing is shaped by the latest and best scientific expertise, and that leading researchers are able to challenge and innovate in partnership with police forces with the ultimate aim of improving public safety.

Each P-ACE will be promoted across the policing sector as an accessible source of leading academic experts aligned with Policing's Areas of Research Interest (ARIs) and evidence needs. The P-ACEs will support policing with adopting new technologies, developing new tools and techniques and improving training and skills.

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These centres of excellence will play a pivotal role in shaping evidence-based policing strategies that enhance public safety and trust. The selection of four N8 PRP universities to host the centres reflects the strength and impact of our existing collaborative, interdisciplinary research, and the concentration of policing expertise within the North of England.

**Dr Geoff Pearson**

Academic Director of the N8 Policing Research Partnership

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Academia and policing have a long history of collaborative working on issues as diverse as forensic science, crime prevention, and analytical technologies. The P-ACEs will fortify this connection, providing a focal point for research and knowledge exchange. I'm particularly excited about what the P-ACEs can bring to early career scientists who are interested in tackling the complex challenge of keeping the UK public safe.

**Professor Paul Taylor**

Police Chief Scientific Adviser

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By bringing experts in policing practice together with social scientists and data scientists across the country, the centres will provide knowledge and insights to drive service improvement. These centres of excellence demonstrate our commitment to reducing crime and making Britain a safer place.

**Stian Westlake**

Executive Chair of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)



### Dr Donna Marie Brown

Associate Professor in Sociology

### Dr Michelle Addison

Associate Professor in Sociology

Durham University continues to demonstrate strong leadership in research on policing, vulnerability and health through a range of interdisciplinary initiatives. Professor Nicole Westmarland plays a central role in the Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre, which examines how different forms of vulnerability shape demand for policing and how integrated public service partnerships can prevent harm. The Centre is developing a substantial knowledge base with relevance across the UK and internationally, influencing policy and practice through collaborations, practitioner exchanges, comparative research and the training of future scholars in co-producing research with service providers, service users and the public.

Durham's wider strengths in health and social sciences are anchored within the Wolfson Institute for Health and Wellbeing. Dr Michelle Addison contributes to a major ESRC-funded project with Newcastle, Manchester and Northumbria universities exploring how integrated health and criminal justice systems affect individuals and services. Durham also plays a key role in the Equivalence in Custody

Healthcare project, which is beginning to yield national-level impact and strengthening regional academic partnerships.

The Wolfson Institute houses CRiVA, the Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse, which leads a significant programme of work. Recent projects include the Desist forensic marking intervention for domestic abuse, an evaluation of an accountability programme, research into neurodiversity in perpetrator interventions, domestic homicide learning, and work on image-based sexual abuse.

Neurodiversity is an important and growing theme across Durham's research. Professors Steve Macdonald and Kate Tudor are leading a Youth Endowment Fund-supported study examining policing responses to children's involvement in drug markets, with early findings highlighting the disproportionate criminalisation of neurodivergent children. Dr Nicole Renehan's work investigates how domestic abuse perpetrator programmes respond to neurodivergent men, identifying barriers in communication, assessment and delivery. Her ESRC-funded research and partnerships with neurodivergent-led organisations have shaped national and international discussions and led to a co-designed practitioner toolkit now being piloted across the UK and Australia, with strong practitioner engagement already evident.



### Professor Fiona Measham

Chair in Criminology

A series of research initiatives at the University of Liverpool are advancing understanding and improving practice across key areas of policing, criminal justice, and vulnerability.

### Autism in Custody

Dr Laura Naegler is leading an N8 PRP Police Priority Grant, "Illuminating the experiences of autistic people during arrest and custody". In partnership with Greater Manchester Police, North Yorkshire Police, and ConnectFutures, the study examines the specific needs, vulnerabilities and challenges faced by autistic people during arrest and detention. By focusing on experiences within police custody, the research aims to inform better support structures and shape future policing policy.

### Changing Digitally Enabled Coercive Control

An N8 PRP-funded study led by Dr Antoinette Huber (PI) and Barry Godfrey which carried out research on digitally-enabled coercive control is developing significant impact. Following research carried out last year, the team developed a training package in collaboration with the Centre for Innovation in Education and several police forces. The training aims to improve officers' immediate responses to victims and enhance capabilities for digital evidence gathering. Police forces in Cheshire, Cumbria, Durham and

Merseyside are currently trialling this approach, with expectations of wider rollout as demand for improved digital safeguarding continues to grow.

### Criminal Justice Unit

The University's Criminal Justice Unit (CJU), launched in January 2025, has quickly become a multidisciplinary hub for research, engagement and knowledge exchange. The CJU brings together academics, practitioners and external stakeholders through talks, workshops and collaborative events.

Highlights from 2025 include a lecture by Professor Vanessa Munro on improving CPS responses to rape, and an N8 PRP workshop on nightlife safety and policing attended by representatives from academia, policing, public health and the voluntary sector. The CJU also held its first internal conference, providing opportunities for postgraduate researchers to present work and receive feedback.

Throughout the year, the CJU has hosted regular "Works in Progress" sessions and welcomed visiting scholars. Notably, Dr Justin Ellis from the University of Newcastle (Australia) delivered a seminar on policing and LGBTQ+ communities and led a publication workshop for postgraduate researchers.

Anyone interested in attending these events or who would like to be added to the mailing list for future events can contact [Ellen.Reeves@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Ellen.Reeves@liverpool.ac.uk).

**Dr Sophie Nightingale**  
Senior Lecturer in Psychology

At Lancaster University we continue to demonstrate strength in policing research through a range of activities.

## L-PACE

In 2025, Lancaster University became one of nine Policing Academic Centres of Excellence (P-ACEs). L-PACE draws from Lancaster University's world leading reputation for the application of social and behavioural sciences to five key policing Areas of Research Interest: building and maintaining public trust, crime prevention, personal safety, identification and tracing, and surveillance and sensing. Led by Professor Mark Levine, L-PACE brings together Lancaster's multidisciplinary excellence in computational social science, psychology, linguistics, law, criminology and sociology, in the analysis of visual, linguistic and sensor data.

More details can be found at: [lancaster.ac.uk/policing-academic-centre-of-excellence/](https://lancaster.ac.uk/policing-academic-centre-of-excellence/)

## The 2024 National Police Uniform & Equipment Survey

Led by Dr Camilla De Camargo in collaboration the Police Federation of England and Wales, the survey gathered nearly 21,000 responses and 43,000 comments across all 43 forces,

revealing major issues with fit, comfort, safety, health and professional identity. The findings expose a postcode lottery in uniform provision and significant gendered inequalities. Camilla recently spoke in Parliament on the health impacts of ill-fitting PPE, with policymakers noting the research is reshaping thinking on officer safety and uniform design. A letter from Minister Sarah Jones MP confirming the findings' national importance shows the work is now influencing policy at the highest level.

Read more about Camilla's work in her latest publication in the British Journal of Criminology: [academic.oup.com/bjc/advance-article/doi/10.1093/bjc/azaf065/8223615](https://academic.oup.com/bjc/advance-article/doi/10.1093/bjc/azaf065/8223615)

## FinFraudSIM

In 2025 Lena Podoletz (PI), carried out the EPSRC-funded project FinFraudSIM with Co-Is including Yongyu Zeng (Lancaster University). FinFraudSIM focused on creating the blueprint for the 'Financial Fraud Simulative Analytic Research Platform' which will simulate and visualise interactions between fraudsters and victims, allowing experts to develop strategies to disrupt fraud at various stages.

Lena also published a paper examining the benefits and potential issues with using virtual and extended reality (VR/XR) paradigms in police training, read more at: [doi.org/10.1145/3641825.3687707](https://doi.org/10.1145/3641825.3687707)

**Dr Graham Farrell**  
School of Law

The ESRC Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre, co-hosted by the Universities of Leeds and York, undertook a broad range of engagement and research detailed in its 2025 Report. The Centre has 19 staff including 12 postdoctoral researchers, working on 47 projects.

A team from the Universities of Leeds and York, led by Prof. Dan Birks and Prof. Adam Crawford, were awarded the Yorkshire Policing-Academic Centre of Excellence (TYP-ACE). It will strengthen academic and policing collaboration on crime prevention, public trust in policing, data analytics, and climate change.

Two projects on women and girls' safety in parks on training for park staff and utilising open space were completed by Dr. Anna Barker. Dr Barker received UKRI Safer Streets funding for

a project to create a data dashboard for safety in parks, and Prof Birks, Dr Toby Davies and Dr Andrew Smith received Safer Streets funding to study crime concentration. Professor Emeritus Clive Walker is senior adviser to the Home Office's Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, and has the 4th edition of The Anti Terrorism Legislation forthcoming. Graham Farrell served on the academic reference group for His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and received ESRC Impact Acceleration Award funding to host the Knife Harm Reduction Conference. Various doctoral students studying policing include Nugroho Setyawan, a senior police officer in Indonesia, who is completing research on policing corruption in Indonesia, and Fern Porter researching the impact of police work on the adult children of police officers.

### Professor Catherine Robinson

Professor of Social Care Research and  
Director Social Care and Society

I stepped into the role of N8 PRP Lead for the University of Manchester in September, whilst Professor Geoff Pearson is on research leave. As a Professor of Social Care Research and Director Social Care and Society in the School of Health, I'm delighted to have the opportunity to build stronger cross-faculty links in policing research.

Manchester has a robust range of policing research across the university. In the schools of social sciences, law, and business research centres and collaborative networks include Sprite+ (Security, Privacy, Identity, Trust in the Digital Economy), the Centre for Digital Trust and Security, the Alliance Manchester Business School's National Consortium for Societal Resilience, the Health and Justice Research Network and Social Care and Society.

Vulnerability, exploitation and gendered violence continue to be major themes, with new publications from Professors Rose Broad and David Gadd on modern slavery and human trafficking. Professor Broad and Dr Caroline Miles have developed their N8 PRP-funded work on harassment of female runners, with a publication and new funding awarded for Research into Intervention, Safety and Empowerment (RISE).

Dr Katrina Forsyth, colleagues and I are undertaking significant collaborative work about social care needs in prison and on release. We have funded research on dementia, perinatal care, and co-ordinated social care in this context.

My research has been building international links. Work in India in collaboration with the Rajasthan Police Academy is focused on the experiences and perceptions of police personnel to suicide and workforce wellbeing. Work on self-harm and interpersonal violence registries will continue in 2026.



### Dr Jenny Johnstone

Newcastle Law School

After 10 years in the role Professor Jill Clark stepped down and Jenny Johnstone has taken on the role of Newcastle University Academic. Jill has provided great support to colleagues at Newcastle University throughout those 10 years and has been actively involved in the N8 PRP, so we'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you. Newcastle University continues to develop our expertise around the delivery of healthcare to detained persons, identifying a number of colleagues whose work focuses on Health and the Criminal Justice System.

The ESRC Standard Grant that Gethin Rees leads on "What is equivalence in police custody healthcare?" came to an end in 2025 with the report now published. A book is planned, with a contract being finalised with Routledge: Care Detained: A critical analysis of healthcare delivery in police custody suites.

The team at Newcastle is diverse and we draw upon colleagues in various disciplines across the University, bringing together colleagues who have an interest in Health and the Criminal Justice System. Given the expertise of Newcastle University colleagues in this area, the Policing Innovation Forum will be held at Newcastle University in 2026 which will focus on Health and Policing.

### **Professor Layla Skinns**

Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice

The Sheffield University Policing Research Group (SUPRG), established in 2014, continues to expand as a key hub for collaboration between University of Sheffield researchers and policing practitioners in South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and the Office of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner. Co-directed by Dr Lindsey Rice and Dr Matthew Bacon, the network now includes around 90 members and plays a vital role in facilitating knowledge exchange across the University. SUPRG hosts annual in-person working lunch events, alternating between the School of Law and SYP Headquarters, where academics and police discuss shared challenges and emerging themes. In 2025, Maria Sklavou presented on preventative policymaking regarding paedophilia and child sexual abuse. The group also produces a quarterly newsletter featuring publications, funding calls, and events, and offers engagement opportunities for PGT and PGR students.

### **Police Custody**

Professor Layla Skinns and Lexine Smyth successfully concluded their project developing accessible information guides for adult suspects in Norfolk and Suffolk Police, and the guides are being adopted by five additional police forces, including three within the N8 PRP. Skinns, Smyth and Katie Weir have also

begun a STAR-funded project with West Yorkshire Police examining police custody as a gendered space, building on findings from the Baird Inquiry into Greater Manchester Police, with results expected in June 2026.

### **Drugs Policing**

Drs Matthew Bacon and Xavier L'Hoiry have partnered with South Yorkshire Police and the social enterprise Lived Expert to deliver an innovative continuing professional development course on contemporary drug-related issues, policing strategies and harm reduction. Relatedly, Professor Alex Stevens, Dr Bacon and Dr Rivka Smith are concluding a Cabinet Office-funded evaluation of police-led drug diversion, exploring effectiveness and mechanisms of diversion programmes.

### **Further Work**

Additional research include a naloxone conference co-hosted by Stevens and Bacon with local partners, ongoing work by L'Hoiry on commercial sexual exploitation and the development of the Sexual Trafficking Identification Matrix, and ESRC-funded research on criminality and vulnerability within the private rented sector, resulting in newly published grey reports. L'Hoiry also leads a Leverhulme-funded project examining how citizens use digital technologies to perform policing and surveillance functions.

### **Dr Geoff Page**

School for Business and Society

This year has seen significant developments in policing research at York. The Centre for Vulnerabilities and Policing Futures [vulnerabilitypolicing.org.uk], delivered in partnership with Leeds, continues to be our leading centre for policing research. The Centre has seen several key developments this year, including the announcement in May that Professors Adam Crawford and Dan Birks will lead a new Policing–Academic Centre of Excellence, funded by UKRI and the NPCC, to drive forward an evidence-based policing agenda.

The Centre has also funded three new one-year projects led by early career researchers, exploring interactions between police and victim-survivors with disabilities, mental health responses in policing, and child-first principles in high-risk multi-agency arrangements. Other ongoing projects include place-based and online research into young people's vulnerability and experiences of policing, as well as work exploring the policing of homeless populations and victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Outside the Centre, Understanding Criminality in the Private Rented Sector, a major ESRC-funded research project, concluded its work and held its launch event in December. The project is led by Dr Julie Rugg in collaboration with colleagues from Sheffield and Northumbria, and its website [criminalityintheprs.org] hosts dedicated reports on criminal landlordism, enforcement against slum landlords, landlord-perpetrated abuse, and the efficacy of civil and criminal remedies for tenant harassment and illegal eviction. The project has broken new ground in defining and categorising the distinct criminogenic opportunities within the private rented sector, and in examining how these enable the criminal exploitation of hidden spaces and vulnerable tenants, often facilitated by relationships between tenants, agents, and landlords that obscure criminal accountability.

Finally, within forensic linguistics, several projects are ongoing, including significant work aimed at improving audio transcription within the criminal justice system, and research focused on identifying deepfakes involving second-language and regional-accent English speakers.

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We look forward to continuing our role as a police partner in N8 PRP projects as we move into 2026.

**Samantha Broome**  
Innovation, Collaboration and Organisational Learning Officer  
North Yorkshire Police



N8 PRP is an academic-police collaboration that champions, enables, and supports research taking on the challenges of 21st century policing.

N8 PRP was established by the N8 Research Partnership. It is a collaboration between 8 research intensive universities and 11 police forces in the North of England who work together to champion, enable, and support policing research and its impact.

To find out more about our work, visit:



[n8research.org.uk](http://n8research.org.uk)



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