

# N8 PRP Policing Research Priorities Statement 2025-2026

## Introduction

From October 2024-September 2025, N8 Policing Research Partnership (N8 PRP) activity will be informed by an annual Statement of research priorities for N8 PRP activity 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.

N8 PRP activity will seek to advance shared understanding and action on the priorities below through the *Northern Evidence Based Policing Hub (NEBP Hub)*, which will allocate resources for *Policing Priority Projects* (12-month research awards), *Agile Evidence Reviews* (3-month review grants), and *Knowledge Exchange Events* (the *Policing Innovation Forum* and *NEBP Hub meeting*).

## 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. Proposals are sought in response to this call for improvement.

- What does a 'good' investigation look like and a 'good' outcome for victims and the wider community?
- What are the benefits of having omni-competent vs. specialist investigator roles? Do omni-competent or specialist teams improve investigation outcomes? What is the right balance and what is the impact on workforce development and skills?
- What makes for a 'good' investigator? How should response officers understand their investigative role? What are the relative roles and advantages of police vs. civilian investigators vs. direct entry investigators?
- What makes for 'good' interview practice with suspects, victims and witnesses?

### 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 2025, the government has announced a new strategy to [halve VAWG in 10 years](#) (publication due autumn 2025). This is a vast and complex topic with significant existing literature; proposals are sought focusing on specific types of crime within VAWG and Domestic Abuse that examine the following:

- Demand: Understanding the rise in recorded domestic abuse and VAWG incidents - is this a product of increased crime or changes in reporting behaviour? Over what time period has this increase occurred? Is this a sustained increase pre- during and post the COVID pandemic?
- Case continuation: How does the reporting and investigation process impact victims? What is the relevance of initial contact with the police and the recording of these interactions? What are the reasons for victims continuing or not with the criminal justice process and, in particular, for Outcome 16 i.e. cases when a suspect has been identified but the victim does not support further police action.
- Victim satisfaction: To what extent are victims satisfied with their experiences of the police and the outcome of their case?

### 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. Proposals are sought that focus on specific areas of police business (e.g. response, neighbourhood policing, custody, investigation) that investigate the following:

- How can policing understand better the links between workload, officer wellbeing, retention and effectiveness, efficiency and supervision?
  - Understanding the impact of higher proportions of early-in-service officers in the workforce
- Understanding police officer workloads
  - How can policing better use data to improve understanding and practice?
  - Do officers think current data accurately captures their workload?

### 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. Within this context, proposals are sought to investigate how neighbourhood policing is understood and examine the role of Hotspot Policing in the future of neighbourhood policing.

- How relevant is the practice of Hot Spot Policing today?
- How can analytics and data improve the practice of hot spot policing and be applied to increase public confidence and reduce crime?
- How can hotspot policing be translated into practice in the UK context and in specific police force areas, taking into account the conclusions and recommendations in the 2023 Home Office evaluation and the neighbourhood policing uplift programme?
- How have definitions and applications of neighbourhood policing shifted since 2005 and its role and value relative to other policing functions?

### 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. Proposals are sought on the following topics:

- Healthcare in police custody, including Health Care Professionals and Liaison & Diversion teams
- Police responses to mental health, including 'Right Care, Right Person'
- Drugs policing, drug diversion and harm reduction
- Suicide prevention and policing
- Violence reduction units
- Policing and public health
- Officer wellbeing
- Inter-agency relationships between the police and health professionals