



# **An Evaluation of the 'What Works Centre for Crime Reduction' Year 2: Progress**

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## SUMMARY

In March 2013 the Cabinet Office launched the 'What Works Network', a nationally co-ordinated initiative which aims to "improve the way government and other organisations create, share and use high quality evidence for decision-making"<sup>1</sup>. The What Works philosophy is that good decision making should be informed by the best available evidence. If relevant or adequate evidence is unavailable, decision-makers should be encouraged to use high quality methods to find out 'what works'.

The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction (WWCCR) was launched in September 2013, led by a team from the College of Policing with input and support from an Academic Consortium<sup>2</sup>. The Consortium has been jointly funded by The College and the Economic and Social Research Council, and its work (the Commissioned Programme) involves:

- Mapping and building the evidence base by reviewing research on practices and interventions to reduce crime;
- Summarising the evidence on interventions in terms of quality, cost, impact, mechanisms (why it works), context (where it works) and implementation issues;
- Providing Police, Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and other crime reduction stakeholders with the knowledge, tools and guidance to help them target their resources more effectively.

### **Aims of the evaluation**

Our three year evaluation – conducted alongside the work of the Consortium, but autonomously of it – is the only independent evaluation of a What Works Centre. It aims to:

- Assess the impact of the WWCCR to determine whether it has appropriately engaged key stakeholders, produced tools and guidance that stakeholders find clear and easy to use, and improved stakeholder understanding and application of research evidence;
- Chart outputs, modes of dissemination and user reactions over the course of the evaluation;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network>

<sup>2</sup> Led by the Jill Dando Institute (JDI) for Crime Science at University College London. The JDI is further supported by: The Institute of Education (IoE), the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Birkbeck College, and Cardiff, Dundee, Glasgow, Surrey and Southampton universities

- Identify changes over time in the use of research evidence, especially in strategic decision-making and resource allocation;
- Use an *action research* model to provide feedback to the College and the academic partners over the course of the project.

In 2014, we conducted depth interviews and a survey with Police officers, Police and Crime Commissioners and Community Safety Partnership managers, to establish and describe a baseline from which to measure change over the three-year programme in the understanding, use and application of research evidence in crime reduction. These interviews will be repeated in 2016/17 in order to gauge change. This second report reviews the processes and development of the WWCCR.

The WWCCR is a broadly conceived entity, which includes the commissioned programme as well as various evidence products and activities that predate it<sup>3</sup>, and there is considerable overlap with wider College activities (e.g. the Police Knowledge Fund)<sup>4</sup>. We do not claim to have conducted a process evaluation of all the activities that fall under the auspices of the WWCCR. Instead our main attention has been on progress of the work of the commissioned programme.

## Methods

To review progress made in mapping and building the evidence base and to assess the mechanisms through which this evidence is being disseminated, promoted and embedded within the police service, we conducted:

- Depth interviews with those responsible for producing and developing the research products as well as a range of end users;
- Case studies of Evidence Champions<sup>5</sup> and High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) officers<sup>6</sup>; and
- A mapping exercise of the products and activities of the WWCCR and related hubs of evidence dissemination (e.g. POLKA, Knowledge Bank, Crime Reduction Toolkit<sup>7</sup>).

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<sup>3</sup> These activities are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>4</sup> These activities are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>5</sup> Evidence champions are individuals within a police force who act as mediators between the researcher and other practitioners, helping to promote and filter evidence into viable policy and practice.

<sup>6</sup> HPDS officers are those who have demonstrated that they have the potential to be future leaders.

<sup>7</sup> <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx>

## Findings

### *Mapping the progress of the WWCCR and evidence structures*

Over the last two years, the Consortium has undertaken a range of research and training activities to support the development of the WWCCR. At the time of writing the main outputs from the Consortium included:

- The identification of existing systematic reviews in the crime reduction field;
- The identification, systematic mapping and synthesis of 12 new specified priority areas in the crime reduction field of which one had been published at time of writing;
- An evaluation framework to standardise, rate and rank the effectiveness of interventions and overall cost savings;
- The production of narrative summaries of research to accompany the Toolkit; 39 had been delivered at the time of writing (April 2016);
- A focus group conducted as part of an Evidence Champions Day organised by the College in March 2014 to discuss how champions perceived their role and the kinds of challenges they foresaw in advocating for greater use of research in practice;
- The development of a costing tool to help practitioners calculate the costs and benefits of particular interventions;
- The development of practical instructions ('a training package') on how to understand evidence-based approaches and the delivery of this training with evidence and police practitioners;
- Four primary research projects were, at the time of writing, underway, chosen to address knowledge gaps.

### *Mapping user activity on the What Works Microsite and POLKA*

Only basic, headline usage figures derived from Google Analytics were available on traffic to the What Works microsite. The microsite was launched in February 2015, with a peak of 7,316 users in March 2015. Following this, the number of users dipped but then peaked again in May 2015, when there was a Police Foundation conference. College staff report that these peaks, in what appears to be an overall decline in user traffic to the microsite, usually coincided with the launch of a new intervention on the Toolkit and the related press releases which direct stakeholders to the site.

The Knowledge Bank<sup>8</sup> is an important mechanism for sharing evidence and pre-dates the launch of the WWCCR. Around 10 people every day join the Knowledge Bank community. It provides a space to champion What Works products and signpost community members to further evidence resources.

Numbers accessing the Knowledge Bank on POLKA each month have remained relatively consistent. This is also true for the number of new members joining the Knowledge Bank each month (an average of 2183 new members joined the Knowledge Bank in the period May 2015 to Feb 2016). Data on the number of users from 10 forces during February 2016<sup>9</sup> suggests that between 1 to 3% of officers per force had accessed the Knowledge Bank during that month.

#### *EMMIE and the Crime Reduction Toolkit*

Completion of the mapping of existing systematic reviews, the EMMIE<sup>10</sup> system through which findings are framed and filtered for practitioner use, and the online Toolkit featuring EMMIE results, was in the opinion of the academic and College staff that we interviewed, the most significant achievement of the WWCCR. Positive comments on the Toolkit focused on its comprehensiveness and various incidences were reported by interviewees of how the Toolkit had been used to inform practice decisions, most commonly about CCTV.

The difficulties highlighted by some interviewees of both EMMIE and the Toolkit, were associated with the obstacles to presenting definitive research findings in the domain of crime reduction and the resultant barriers to providing practitioners with an easy-to-apply research-evidenced solution to a particular crime problem. By contrast, other interviewees were concerned with the risks of over-simplification of research findings using the EMMIE, framework and that this might stifle rather than encourage more 'sophisticated' thinking or reflexivity about evidence-infused practice. Other issues raised by interviewees included:

- Whether the organisation of information was able to be usefully searched and extracted to fit specific policing problems;

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<sup>8</sup> One of over 300 POLKA communities, and of interest to our evaluation because of its focus on research evidence.

<sup>9</sup> These were the most up-to-date figures available

<sup>10</sup> EMMIE stands for: Effect, Mechanism, Moderator, Implementation and Economic Cost and combines the meta-analytic findings of randomised control trials with consideration of intervention context.

- Whether the content of the Toolkit and the relevance of the interventions it covered was useful to its target audiences;
- That the research was largely conducted in America and/or completed some years ago and that the findings presented were ‘old hat’ and already well-known, raising questions about user understanding of the EMMIE format; and
- The lack of specific detail available on cost-benefit information about interventions.

Comments tended to reflect the current ‘content’ of the evidence base - rather than the Toolkit itself. However, these kinds of issues were thought to possibly inhibit interest in the Toolkit among practitioners, and thus fail to win *‘the hearts and minds’* of its target audience.

*Case Studies: Evidence Champions and High Potential Development Scheme Officers*

Evidence champions are individuals within a police force who act as mediators between the researcher and other practitioners, helping to promote and filter evidence into viable policy and practice. HPDS officers are those who have demonstrated that they have the potential to be future leaders. Both groups of officers are well-placed within their organisations to promote and disseminate research knowledge. Our interviews with these groups found that:

- Champions had been actively engaged in many activities which were contributing to the groundwork and providing a framework to embed evidence-informed practice;
- This was being done alongside many other work responsibilities, often because of personal enthusiasm for research;
- Most were keen to have more regular contact with the College and other Champions;
- Champions needed to be better integrated into the strategic development of forces with formal links to the senior command team to be more effective at disseminating and promoting research;
- Whilst all the HPDS officers felt that they had benefitted academically and all had excelled at course work and assignments, none had engaged with the Toolkit in any more than a superficial way; and
- The skills they had learned appeared to enhance their career progression prospects but had not been exploited. HPDS officers were not universally viewed by their forces as an invaluable conduit for evidence-informed practice to reach operational ranks. There appeared to be disconnect between the scheme, individual learning and dissemination at force level.



### *Progress in context*

There was a consensus amongst our interviewees that progress has been slower than expected due to a combination of factors. First, there were arguably unrealistic expectations about the ability of the WWCCR and the Consortium to make rapid progress. Second, the scope of the WWCCR enterprise only became clear in Year Two as linkages to other College ambitions emerged (e.g. revision and development of the Police Entry Qualification Framework (PEQF), and this has underlined the long-term and large-scale nature of the change required. Third, interviewees identified a range of factors that were seen to have hindered progress, including: an insufficiently developed strategy by the College to bringing about change; the structure, funding and relationships between the WWCCR, the College and the Consortium; the culture of policing; and the location of evidence-informed practice within the agenda to professionalise the police.

### *The Future*

Our headline finding is that progress has been slow. However, this ‘front-page news’ masks a substantial amount of work undertaken by the WWCCR over the past two years, including the review of systematic reviews of crime reduction interventions and their translation into a format suitable for practitioners, the design of the EMMIE system and the Toolkit, and bespoke training for officers in appraising the research evidence. Furthermore, there have been additional developments, for example to police training or professional practice, initiated or managed by the College which may fall outside any exacting remit of the WWCCR but which all contribute to the solid base on which to build and sustain the What Works Centre.

A central and ambitious aim of the WWCCR, however, is to change the organisational culture of police and other crime reduction practitioners, to increase their use of evidence for policy and strategic decision-making and, to make evidence use a ‘professional norm’. In achieving this change, we suggest that there would be some real value in the College articulating in greater detail (a) the rationale for moving to an ‘evidence-informed’ style of decision-making, (b) the key groups whose decision-making style is being targeted, (c) the mix of strategies that is being deployed to achieve this change in decision-making style, and (d) how these are linked or coordinated.

There is emerging evidence about the best mix of strategies to achieve a shift in the direction of evidence-informed decision-making. This supports evolution from ‘push’ strategies - making evidence available and accessible - to ‘pull’ strategies - embedding incentives for the organisation to use evidence. In examining the scope for broadening the range of strategies

for stimulating evidence use, we have used the categories of *evidence-use mechanisms* defined by Langer et al. (2016) as our framework for assessing the progress of the WWCCR.

*Awareness – building awareness and positive attitudes towards evidence use*

This is a main aim of the WWCCR and while the evidence is available in a format that is intended not to alienate the time-poor officer, there was limited engagement with the Crime Reduction Toolkit, in particular, there appeared to be little engagement from those who should be part of the ‘push’ agenda to embed evidence, such as Evidence Champions and HPDS officers. Feedback highlighted concerns about the relevance for police of the evidence provided through the Toolkit. There would appear to be a strong argument for ensuring an outlet for other, non-experimental research, especially in areas of emerging interest for the police as a way of creating curiosity in the research process.

*Agree - building a mutual understanding and agreement on policy relevant questions*

We have noted the limitations of the current evidence base. However, at force level and through the work of the Evidence Champions for example, there is conversation about the kinds of research questions that the police service need answered and how to support officers who are undertaking academic study to match dissertation or doctorate research to knowledge gaps. The co-production of research and building sustainable partnerships between police forces and academic institutions in England and Wales is the aim of the Police Knowledge Fund, the process and outcomes of those collaborations will be important in cementing future relationships and matching research to knowledge needs.

*Access and Communication - providing communication of, and access to evidence*

A great deal of work went into the ‘packaging’ of evidence for crime reduction practitioners. One area of difficulty was communicating the uncertainty of the research evidence on crime reduction interventions. An important task for the College will be to build capacity within the crime reduction professions to be able to critically appraise research findings in a way that is meaningful at a local level; “*a cocktail of communication strategies*” is recommended.

*Interact – facilitating interactions between decision-makers and researchers*

As noted, the Police Knowledge Fund is a key mechanism for bringing together the police and academic researchers. The network of Evidence Champions is another structure through which researchers and decision-makers are intended to interact and there is considerable scope to develop the current network. Such roles naturally attract the research enthusiasts within forces, with some clarity of purpose and a more defined place within the force strategic

organisation, one can envisage how their positive attitude towards research could be 'infectious'.

*Skills – supporting decision-makers to develop skills to access and make sense of evidence*

To enhance the research skills of officers specific activities are being run by the College and Consortium, the aim of which is to increase engagement with the evidence (and Toolkit), such as Evidence Base Camp or Toolkit training but there are also wider curriculum changes to embed an understanding of research into basic recruitment training for police constables and in the National Policing Curriculum. Consistency in content and aims and some clear framework for continuous development of skills in this area will be important across these various curriculum and training initiatives.

## **Recommendations**

In drawing together the findings, we make the following recommendations. These are made in recognition of the wider activities taking place within the WWCCR and the College, which have not been dealt with in any detail here, but which all contribute to the promotion and embedding of research evidence into practice.

Recommendations include:

- *Development of the theory of change*

In the early stages of the evaluation we found that there was no well-developed 'road-map' setting out the processes that would embed evidence more fully in policing. Our Year Two evaluation has found some agreement about the underlying principles guiding the programme of work undertaken as part of the WWCCR. At this stage, there would be value in the College articulating more clearly a broad theory of change that located ambitions for introducing research evidence into policing within the broader framework of the professionalization agenda. As noted, this might include the rationale for moving to 'evidence-informed' decision-making, the groups whose decision-making style is being targeted, the mix of strategies that is being deployed to achieve change and how these strategies are linked or coordinated. Our view is that these issues will need to be addressed if dissemination/marketing is to be effectively deployed.

- *Making greater use of evidence champions and HDPS officers as advocates*

The network of champions has thus far undertaken an impressive range of activities, often with little time and fuelled by personal enthusiasm and interest. Champions can play an

important role in raising knowledge and awareness of the WWCCR and increasing research awareness and expertise locally. There may be opportunities to develop this network, to increase membership or to replace officers who have moved on. The College should coordinate the network – even if this is at a minimal level - and provide a central point of contact for champion activities. Keeping an inventory of the various activities being undertaken by champions would also be useful, including collaboration of champions across police forces, in order to share information and expertise.

- *Better monitoring of website traffic and downloads*

There is currently a lack of in-house analysis of WWCCR use and a clear need to improve the College facility to routinely monitor website traffic to the WWCCR micro-site and to the Crime Reduction Toolkit. Currently data allow only blunt measurement of numbers landing on the site and views to toolkit interventions. Data on total numbers and returning visitors, where in the country they are from, or more detail about what products are being viewed and downloaded, would be a useful routine indicator of research awareness and interest.

- *Greater promotion of the Toolkit*

Although our fieldwork was conducted in the five months after the launch of the Toolkit, continuing promotion and training in its use will be important. The Toolkit is a central component of the WWCCR and good user understanding of this resource is crucial to the What Works project. This could include further promotion within the police, but also work with relevant organisations and entities, such as Police and Crime Commissioners, and local authority commissioners, to raise awareness and understanding of how to apply the Toolkit to policy and procurement decisions. In addition, showing how it *has* been used by forces or others to influence strategic or financial decision-making will help to increase its credibility among sceptics.

The relevance of the Toolkit interventions has been raised as a barrier to interest. Thus, investing more in primary research on issues that are highly relevant to policing can help to demonstrate the value of research to the profession. The Police Knowledge Fund will go some way towards addressing this as well as increasing collaboration between academics and the policing profession.

- *Continuing to build capability*

We have detailed a range of activities undertaken by the WWCCR and the College aimed at building capability and increasing skills in understanding and applying research evidence and

these should be continued. The current development of the PEQF will also ensure research competencies are integrated into entry requirements and training.

- *Ensuring consistency of message across activities and evidence mechanisms*

As we hope this report makes clear, there is considerable activity by the WWCCR and the College to generate, revise, embed and increase skills and expertise in appraising the evidence base. This highlights the need for some consistency in message across these various evidence mechanisms. We are aware this is already happening with the ongoing amendments being made to Authorised Professional Practice to reflect current evidence but we raise this point as an adjunct to what has been said above about the coordination of strategies, and highlight the importance of evidence-informed practice as being the common thread throughout.

- *Working with other What Works centres*

It is important to share lessons about 'what works' in increasing research utilisation. This is in fact already happening with collaboration with the Education Endowment Foundation<sup>11</sup> to launch an early intervention academy for police leaders to share their ideas about early intervention and develop practical and implementable plans.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Aims of the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction (WWCCR)

In March 2013 the Cabinet Office launched the ‘What Works Network’, a nationally co-ordinated initiative which aims to “improve the way government and other organisations create, share and use high quality evidence for decision-making”<sup>12</sup>. The purpose of the network is to “support more effective and efficient services across the public sector at national and local levels”<sup>13</sup>. There are currently seven What Works centres<sup>14</sup> and two affiliates (in Wales and Scotland), focusing on six areas of public policy, including health, education, early intervention, well-being, ageing, local economic growth and crime reduction. The What Works philosophy is that good decision making should be informed by the best available evidence; and that if relevant or adequate evidence is unavailable, decision-makers should be encouraged to use high quality methods to find out ‘what works’. The What Works centres were intended not to act as centres of research excellence but to help policy makers, commissioners and practitioners to make decisions based on the evidence of what works, what is cost-efficient and what is useful.

The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction (WWCCR) was launched in September 2013, led by a team from the College of Policing<sup>15</sup> (hereafter The College) with input and support from an Academic Consortium<sup>16</sup> (hereafter the Consortium). The Consortium has been jointly funded by The College and the Economic and Social Research Council, and its work (the commissioned programme) involves:

- Building and refining the evidence base by reviewing research on practices and interventions to reduce crime;
- Summarising the evidence on interventions in terms of quality, cost, impact, mechanisms (why it works), context (where it works) and implementation issues;

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network>

<sup>14</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Sutton Trust/Educational Endowment Foundation, College of Policing What Works Centre for Crime Reduction, Early Intervention Foundation, What Works for Local Economic Growth, the Centre for Ageing Better, and the What Works Centre for Wellbeing.

<sup>15</sup> College of Policing is the professional body for policing. Further details about the aims of the College are provided in Chapter 2 of this report <http://www.college.police.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

<sup>16</sup> Led by the Jill Dando Institute (JDI) for Crime Science at University College London. The JDI is further supported by: The Institute of Education (IoE), the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Birkbeck College, and Cardiff, Dundee, Glasgow, Surrey and Southampton Universities

- Providing police, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and other crime reduction stakeholders with the knowledge, tools and guidance to help them target their resources more effectively.

## 1.2. Aims of the evaluation

Our three year evaluation – conducted alongside the work of the Consortium, but autonomously of it – is the only independent evaluation of a What Works Centre.

It aims to:

- Assess the impact of the WWCCR to determine whether it has appropriately engaged key stakeholders, produced tools and guidance that stakeholders find clear and easy to use, and improved stakeholder understanding and application of research evidence;
- Chart outputs, modes of dissemination and user reactions over the course of the evaluation;
- Identify changes over time in the use of research evidence, especially in strategic decision-making and resource allocation;
- Use an *action research* model to provide feedback to the College and the academic partners over the course of the project.

In the first year of the evaluation (Hunter et al, 2015) we sought to establish and describe a baseline from which to measure change over the three-year programme in the understanding, use and application of research evidence in crime reduction. During 2014, in-depth interviews were conducted with stakeholder groups targeted by the College and the WWCCR, including senior and middle management police officers, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), and Community Safety Partnership managers (CSPs). In addition, a quantitative web-based survey was undertaken with officers of chief inspector rank and above (including civilian staff equivalents), PCCs and CSP managers. These interviews and the survey will be repeated during the summer and autumn of 2016 (Year Three of the evaluation) to gauge any change since 2014 in the above.

It was originally intended that the evaluation would include an assessment of both the impact and the process of the activities of the WWCCR. However, the first two years of the evaluation have shown – as is explored in this report – that the business of increasing the use and application of research evidence in crime reduction is a long game (and certainly longer than expected at the outset of the project), of which the full impact is unlikely to be seen for some

years. Therefore, given the three-year timescale of the evaluation, this second report will mainly be an appraisal of the processes and development of the WWCCR.

An important related issue is that the parameters of the WWCCR – and thus the focus of the evaluation – were unclear from the outset of the project. What is evident is that the WWCCR is a broadly conceived entity, which includes the commissioned programme as well as various evidence products and activities that predate it (described in Chapter 3) and there is now considerable overlap with wider College activities (e.g. the Police Knowledge Fund)<sup>17</sup>. We do not claim to have conducted a process evaluation of all the activities that fall under the auspices of the WWCCR. Instead our main attention has been on progress of the work of the commissioned programme.

### **1.3 Methods**

We reviewed the progress made in mapping and building the evidence base and assessed various mechanisms through which this evidence is being disseminated, promoted and embedded within the police service. To this end we sought to conduct:

- Depth interviews with those responsible for producing and developing the key research products as well as a range of end users;
- Case studies of Evidence Champions<sup>18</sup> and High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS)<sup>19</sup> officers (as representing mechanisms through which research will be promoted and embedded); and
- Mapping of the wider range of products and activities of the WWCCR and the College and related hubs of evidence dissemination.

A detailed description of the research methods is provided in Appendix 1. In brief, depth interviews were conducted either face-to-face or by telephone between April and December 2015 with 43 interviewees, including: Champions (19), HPDS officers (6) and HPDS trainer (1); members of the Consortium (7); College staff involved in the WWCCR (3); and senior stakeholders, drawn from the Cabinet Office and the College (6).

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<sup>17</sup> These activities are described in more detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>18</sup> Officers recruited (mostly voluntarily) to act as promoters or champions of research and evidence informed practice within their force.

<sup>19</sup> The HPDS is a five year programme designed to provide officers with academic learning and the opportunity to embed this learning into practice.



### *Mapping*

Our mapping activities have been three-fold: Understanding and defining the boundaries of the WWCCR for the purposes of the evaluation; tracking the outputs of the Consortium; and collection of data on internet traffic to the WWCCR microsite and associated evidence structures.

### *Limitations*

We cannot make any claims about the representativeness of our interview sample of Champions or HPDS officers. Those who had higher levels of awareness and use of research may have been most inclined to take part in an interview about research. We contacted a total of 17 HPDS officers to achieve our sample of 7 interviewees and from contact details of over 100 Champions across 38 police forces, we contacted 26 and achieved 19 interviews with Champions from 15 different forces.

In addition, our producer and stakeholder interviewees were selected on the basis of their close involvement in developing the WWCCR and producing the knowledge on which it is based. It should be recognised that whilst these respondents are well-informed, they are unlikely to be disinterested.

### *Analysis*

Interviews were recorded and fully transcribed, with analysis facilitated by NVivo 10<sup>20</sup>. A comprehensive coding framework was developed through research team discussions of themes identified through the initial manual coding of approximately one quarter of the interviews. The framework was then added to and refined during the formal coding process using NVivo.

## **1.4 Report structure**

In the following chapters we set the WWCCR in context by describing the trajectory towards professionalism for the police service. Chapter 2 focuses on the importance of evidence and knowledge in establishing professional status and highlights some of the ways in which the police – as an organisation – differ from those professions targeted by the other WW centres and the implications of this for knowledge mobilisation. Chapter 3 maps the evidence

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<sup>20</sup> Computer package for the analysis of qualitative data

structures provided by the College and available to the policing profession more generally, discussing some of the boundaries around what falls inside and outside of the WWCCR, as well as charting uptake and interest as measured by website traffic and downloads. Chapter 4 focuses on progress made by the WWCCR and challenges encountered as well as the views of some key 'end users' and those whose role it is to promote and embed research in everyday policing practice. In Chapter 5 we outline the implications of our findings for the future of the WWCCR.

## 2. EVIDENCE AND THE PROFESSIONS: THE CONTEXT

Evidence and knowledge are tightly bound up with the status of professions. These are usually defined as vocations founded upon specialized training and education, providing services to others in a disinterested and objective way, with no commercial incentive beyond a fee. Medicine and the law were historically the main professions, but the growing list now includes dentists, nurses, engineers, architects and accountants. The defining features of professions are usually taken to be:

- Extensive training, usually at degree level, in the profession's body of knowledge;
- The requirement of a specified qualification before practice is permitted;
- The establishment of a professional body at national level to regulate members;
- The establishment of codes of ethics;
- All of the above being embedded in law or royal charter.

The structures of professional bodies emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a specific mode of regulation<sup>21</sup> for occupations requiring skill, judgement and integrity, where incompetence carries high social costs, involving geographically dispersed and autonomous, generalist practitioners. This mode of regulation is distinctively different from others, such as military hierarchy, Taylorian scientific management systems and Weberian administrative bureaucracies. These all place more emphasis on authority structures, and the latter two also involve well-defined divisions of labour. The burden of *knowledge* in these more hierarchical forms of accountability fall upon senior commanders or managers, with the requirements of *obedience* falling upon less skilled front-line staff.

Many professions are now overlaid with bureaucratic features (job descriptions, line managers, performance review etc.) and many bureaucracies have features of professional occupations. Most professions have some degree of job-specialisation, accompanied by managerial oversight, making the ideal-type of professional regulation now a rarity. This has clear implications for the design of systems that systematise and make accessible professional knowledge and evidence: different occupations will require different sorts of knowledge, at different levels within the organisation; those with dispersed, autonomous practitioners will need a large amount of substantive professional knowledge, and those that rely on authority

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<sup>21</sup> There is, of course, an alternative and more critical account of professions as self-serving organisations designed to exclude competition and to maintain the benefits of their members.

or hierarchy will require much more evidence – at least for senior staff – about organisational management, and how to make people comply with organisational requirements.

The police have not traditionally been regarded as one of the professions (Kennedy, 2015), and indeed for most of their existence the ‘modern’ police<sup>22</sup> had para-military structures with a strong emphasis on respect for authority and compliance with superiors’ commands<sup>23</sup>. The establishment of the College of Policing in 2012 pushed the police more firmly down a pre-existing trajectory towards professionalism – where this meant much more than simply improving the quality of police performance. The College provides some of the structures that can make the police meet the criteria of a profession: it is expected to become a membership body; it has oversight of training standards; it specifies professional practice standards; and it sets standards of police ethics. Graduate entry is now firmly under consideration with a programme of work to design a Policing Entry Qualification Framework (PEQF) underway. References are often made by politicians and police leaders about the increasing complexity of policing (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). The implications here are that traditional forms of hierarchical accountability have become outdated; that to function effectively, police systems now require greater autonomy of front-line workers, and greater exercise of judgement and knowledge; and that this makes the professional mode of accountability more appropriate.

## **2.1 The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction in context**

Of the seven What Works centres and the two affiliates that are members of the Cabinet Office’s What Works network, the WWCCR is the only one that is actually located within a professional body. Moreover, it is the only centre whose main customer organisations – police forces – are on a path towards professionalization which is being created, in large part, by their professional body. Given how tightly professional knowledge is interrelated with other features of the professionalization process, the boundaries of the WWCCR within and beyond the College are inevitably porous. Various ‘products’ of the College are directly associated with the WWCCR and evidence-based policing support (detailed in Chapter 3 of this report).

To these activities can be added work relating to training, and to staff selection and promotion procedures, designed to stimulate creation and use of evidence. These features of the WWCCR make it structurally quite different to the other What Works centres, which are free-

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<sup>22</sup> In most industrialised societies, these police forces were established in the early mid nineteenth century.

<sup>23</sup> With the exception of the doctrine of constables’ ‘original powers’

standing bodies with clear functions and clear boundaries, and simply supply their audiences with a new evidence resource. It is only the WWCCR that forms part of a broader strategy of professionalization; the other centres serve simply as a resource to organisations, without being part of a broader policy thrust to reform systems of management and accountability<sup>24</sup>.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), as the prototype What Works centre, provided the paradigm for the newer centres. Before its extension to embrace social care, it serviced a single profession (medicine), with audiences largely comprising consultants and general practitioners who were organised into hospital and practice groups, without any significant management oversight<sup>25</sup>. These front-line users of NICE typically make a large number of small treatment decisions on a daily basis. The decisions are usually conceptually simple, but they require the marshalling of a large amount of complex evidence, mainly about what works best in addressing a specific medical problem.

Teachers, by contrast, form a profession which lacks some of the defining aspects of professional structure<sup>26</sup>. They have the hierarchical structure of an administrative bureaucracy (albeit a flatter one than the police), with decisions about curriculum content, staff recruitment, staff numbers, class sizes, the use of teaching assistants and the use of technology all being made at head teacher or governor level or above<sup>27</sup>. Decisions about personal teaching styles and teaching craft are, however, largely made by front-line staff. Like NICE, the Education Endowment Foundation faces, primarily, a single professional group, but in contrast to NICE a large proportion of the professionals that it targets do not work at the front-line but in managerial positions as head teachers, in local education authorities and in oversight bodies. Some of the other What Works centres, such as What Works Well-being and the Early Intervention Foundation do not service – largely or wholly – a single professional group, but provide a wide range of decision-makers across the public sector with information that could improve their decision making. Typically, the consumers of these What Works products will be managers of local authority and third sector services, though some will also be front-line staff.

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<sup>24</sup> The introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in 2012 is an additional and potentially significant development, with ambiguous implications for the professionalization agenda.

<sup>25</sup> Excepting, of course, financial management. Whilst consultants and GPs may seek the advice of their colleagues, or even have formal systems of peer review, they do not typically have line managers in the conventional sense of the term.

<sup>26</sup> They lack a membership body (though their unions perform some of these functions); there is not a specific single qualification that permits practice (though most teachers need Qualified Teacher Status or the Teaching Qualification); and there is not a national code of ethics (though union members are subject to their unions's codes).

<sup>27</sup> Local Education Authorities, The Department for Education and Ofsted all have significant roles, of course.

An important question that posed itself from the start of this evaluation concerned the primary audiences of the WWCCR. It was clear from the outset that the police were the primary audience, though staff from other parts of the justice system, such as the prison and probation services, and from local authority community safety partnerships, might be, or become, secondary audiences. However, it was never clearly articulated by the College whether the primary audiences were at PCC/chief officer level, middle managers or front line staff and their immediate supervisors. The reasons for this reticence are probably bound up with the ambitions of professionalization: if the aim is to transform frontline staff over time into more autonomous professionals, designing a What Works system targeting their managers would clearly be counterproductive.

Another significant difference between the WWCCR and the other centres concerns the substantive focus of evidence Toolkits. NICE focuses on what works in improving health and dealing with sickness. The EEF deals with what works in improving education, and the WWCCR deals with crime reduction. This neat symmetry does not actually match the functions performed by the three professions. Doctors cure illness and teachers teach, and that is largely what they do. Police officers by contrast perform a much wider set of functions than reducing crime. They provide an emergency service that responds to any event that needs immediate intervention, where there is a potential need to deploy coercive force. A subset of these emergencies involve conflicts between individuals and a further (overlapping) subset involves breaches of the criminal law. Only a minority of emergencies to which patrol officers respond involve crimes.

The implications of this are clear: whilst doctors' decisions are precisely about how best to deal with ill health, and whilst teachers have to decide how best to teach, police patrol officers are – paradoxically – often unconcerned with decisions about how best to reduce crime. Certainly they have to wield their authority effectively, and they need to know how best to secure the compliance of citizens – which are skills of a high order (Hough, 2013; Bradford *et al.*, 2013; May *et al.*, 2010; Reisig, 2007; Bowling, 2007). However, the idea that the core of their job involves addressing crime problems is misplaced<sup>28</sup>, as evidenced by a large body of policing sociology (McLaughlin, 2007; Millie, 2013; Reiner, 2010; 2012, to name but a few). It was understandable that the WWCCR should begin its life focussing on evidence about what works in reducing crime, as crime reduction is one of the most politically sensitive functions that the police discharge. However, there may be some scope for broadening the remit of the

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<sup>28</sup> Placing political priority on this function may make sense.

centre over time, so that it maps more precisely onto the realities of police work, and the range of decisions that would benefit from research evidence.

### **3. MAPPING THE WHAT WORKS CENTRE FOR CRIME REDUCTION**

#### **3.1 The WWCCR and associated evidence mechanisms**

Here we attempt to map the various evidence ‘mechanisms’ provided by the WWCCR and the College more generally. As noted, increasingly these lines are blurred. Indeed some of the interviewees envisaged the two bodies becoming synonymous. The key mechanisms through which research evidence is being promoted and shared are detailed in Table 3.1. This also provides an indication of timing and whether the product or activity pre-dated the launch of the WWCCR in September 2013.

In Figure 3.1 below we have attempted to show which activities fall within the remit of the WWCCR. The work of the commissioned programme is detailed as a ‘sub-set’ of the WWCCR. Some of these mechanisms, such as the POLKA or Authorised Professional Practice are part of wider College activities but are noted here because of their focus on evidence dissemination and application.



**Table 3.1: Key evidence mechanisms of the WWCCR and College**

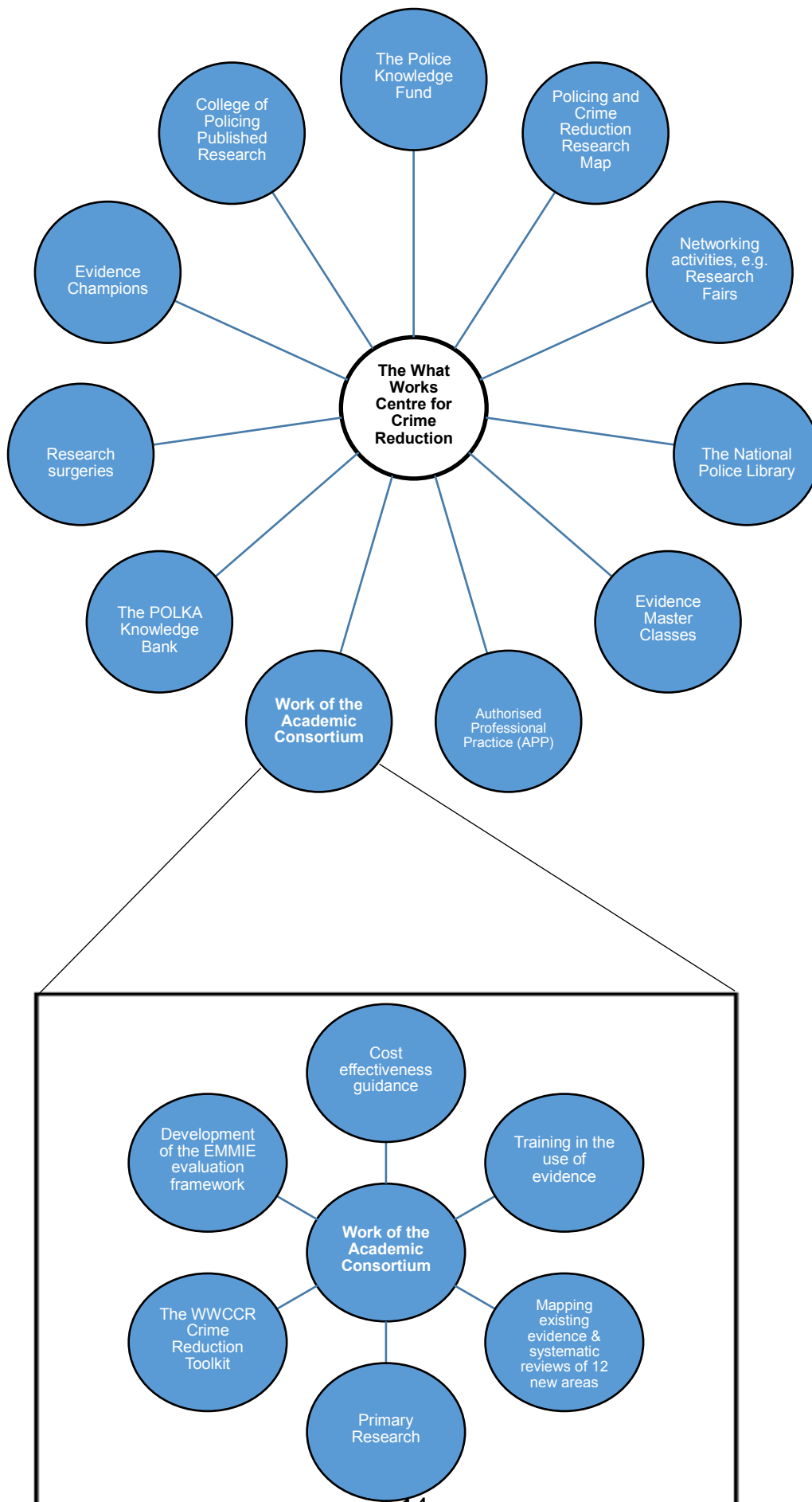
Structure	Date introduced	
<b>What Works Centre's Microsite</b>	Feb 2015	The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction Microsite ( <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Pages/default.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Pages/default.aspx</a> ) This showcases the work that the Centre is involved in and hosts the products of the WWCCR, such as the Crime Reduction Toolkit. It is an ancillary site to main College of Policing website ( <a href="http://www.college.police.uk/Pages/Home.aspx">http://www.college.police.uk/Pages/Home.aspx</a> ). The Microsite provides access to most other key evidence mechanisms (discussed below).
<b>WWCCR Crime Reduction Toolkit</b>	Mar 2015	The Toolkit is an online resource that aims to make the crime reduction evidence base easily accessible to practitioners and decision makers, through rating the impact, cost and implementation of a range of interventions. The Toolkit was developed by the Academic Consortium and launched in March 2015. It is a main output of the commissioned programme: <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx</a>
<b>EMMIE Framework</b>	2015	EMMIE is the framework through which findings are framed and filtered for practitioner use and the online Toolkit. EMMIE was developed as part of the work of the Academic Consortium and stands for: Effect, Mechanism, Moderator, Implementation and Economic Cost and combines findings of randomised control trials with consideration of intervention context.
<b>The WWCCR systematic reviews</b>	From late 2013 Ongoing	The identification, systematic mapping and synthesis of 12 new specified priority areas in the crime reduction field.
<b>What Works Briefings</b>	2013 (prior to launch of WWCCR)	What Works Briefings summarise Campbell Collaboration Systematic Reviews and were written by researchers at the College of Policing. The briefings pre-date the academic Consortium. The briefings can be accessed here: <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Briefings/Pages/default.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Briefings/Pages/default.aspx</a>
<b>The Police Knowledge Fund</b>	July 2015	The Police Knowledge Fund is a £10 million fund. It was launched in March 2015 by the College, Home Office and Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). It aims to support the development of sustainable education and research collaborations between police forces and academic institutions in England and Wales. A total of 14 bids involving 39 forces and the British Transport Police were awarded funding in July 2015. Further details are available here: <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Partnerships/Knowledge-Fund/Pages/Police-Knowledge-Fund.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Partnerships/Knowledge-Fund/Pages/Police-Knowledge-Fund.aspx</a>
<b>Policing and Crime Research Map</b>	Revamped Jan 2015 ongoing	The interactive Research Map is hosted by the College and provides details of ongoing research at Master's level and above across England and Wales. It can be viewed here: <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Research-Map/Pages/Research-Map.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Research-Map/Pages/Research-Map.aspx</a>
<b>Networking activities, e.g. Research Fairs</b>	Ongoing	A research fair is a "marketplace", hosted by a police force or a partnership of regional forces to match policing-related research requirements with resources. Universities, further education colleges and research institutes are invited to these fairs and have the opportunity to express interest in undertaking research projects (usually at a Masters level or above), and to apply to match a research knowledge gap with a student or employee

		who may undertake the research at no additional cost to the police force. The College has facilitated various events. More information is available here: <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Partnerships/Pages/Research-fairs.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Partnerships/Pages/Research-fairs.aspx</a>
<b>The Police Online Knowledge Area (POLKA) Knowledge Bank</b>	POLKA (Dec 2009) Knowledge Bank (Aug 2010)	POLKA is a secure online collaboration tool for the policing community to network, ask questions, share insights, discuss ideas and suggest new ways of working. It can only be accessed by those who have a PNN or .gsi address. POLKA is hosted by the College. We have focused our mapping on only one of approximately 300 POLKA communities – The Knowledge Bank – as this is the community where research findings are uploaded.
<b>Authorised Professional Practice (APP)</b>	2015 - ongoing Revised in light of WWCCR	APP is authorised by the College as the official source of professional practice and standards for policing. It is developed and owned by the College. The College is currently updating APP to be evidence-informed. APP content is available here: <a href="https://www.app.college.police.uk/">https://www.app.college.police.uk/</a>
<b>The National Police Library</b>	-----	The National Police Library is located at the College of Policing site in Sunningdale. It provides book loans and an online library catalogue to serving UK police officers and police staff. More details can be found here: <a href="http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Research/Library/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Research/Library/Pages/default.aspx</a>
<b>Training in research use, generation &amp; application; critical appraisal skills</b>	Ongoing	For example a module on evidence-based policing has recently been introduced to the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP). This is a two-year programme for police constables. <sup>29</sup> Such modules are also included in the National Policing Curriculum <sup>30</sup> and the High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS). ‘Master-classes’ for officers in developing skills in research appraisal have also taken place.
<b>Evidence Champions</b>	Network launched in Sept 2013	Officers recruited (mostly voluntarily) to act as promoters or champions of research and evidence informed practice within their force.
<b>College Published Research</b>	Ongoing	The College contributes to the evidence base through managing primary research which is disseminated via a range of peer-reviewed research publications, on areas including ethics and values, community engagement and crime prevention and intelligence and counter-terrorism.
<b>WWCCR primary research studies</b>	2014 ongoing	Primary research chosen to address the gaps in knowledge, including on dealing with victims of domestic abuse.
<b>Research surgeries/cafes</b>	Started in 2015 Ongoing	The Research Surgeries are scheduled events that offer ‘drop-in’ practical help and guidance to police forces involved in or planning research projects and activities: <a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Support/Pages/Research-Surgeries.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Support/Pages/Research-Surgeries.aspx</a>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.college.police.uk/what-we-do/learning/curriculum/initial-learning/pages/initial-learning.aspx>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Curriculum/Pages/Core-Learning.aspx>

**Figure 3.1 Key evidence mechanisms of the WWCCR**



### 3.2 Tracking the progress of the WWCCR and evidence structures

#### *The Consortium*

Over the last two years, the WWCCR has undertaken a range of research activities to support the development of the WWCCR. As part of eight complementary 'Work Packages', the Consortium has delivered the following outputs (at time of writing):

- The identification of existing systematic reviews in the crime reduction field;
- The identification, systematic mapping and synthesis of 12 new specified priority areas in the crime reduction field; one (Gating alleys to reduce crime) of which has been so far delivered as part of the toolkit<sup>31</sup>;
- An evaluation framework to standardise, rate and rank the effectiveness of interventions and overall cost savings; this has included the development of a method for rating interventions (EMMIE system described in 4.1), explanatory guidance on 'how to' rate interventions and an online Toolkit which has been trialled with stakeholders;
- The co-production, with staff from the College, of narrative research summaries based on the systematic reviews, to accompany the Toolkit; 39 had been delivered at the time of writing (April 2016);
- A focus group conducted as part of an Evidence Champions Day organised by the College in March 2014 to discuss how champions perceived their role and the kinds of challenges they foresaw in advocating for greater use of research in practice;
- The development of a costing tool to help practitioners calculate the costs and benefits of particular interventions;
- The development of practical instructions ('a training package') on how to understand evidence-based approaches and the delivery of this training with evidence and police practitioners – this has included the delivery of training in four pilot sites;
- Four primary research projects which have been chosen to address the gaps in knowledge identified in earlier Work Packages.

A comprehensive overview of the activities and outputs of the Consortium are detailed in Appendix 1.

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<sup>31</sup> [http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/Documents/Alley\\_gating.pdf](http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/Documents/Alley_gating.pdf)

### *Mapping user activity on the 'What Works Microsite' and POLKA Knowledge Bank*

To assess interest in various research products and activities, we compiled a data 'wish list' which we put to the College; we requested data relating to user activity on the What Works microsite and on the POLKA Knowledge Bank. This sought to provide an insight into what products were being accessed via the online platforms, and by whom. After spending a day with staff at the College, to familiarise ourselves with the various online activities, a data request was compiled. The items for which we requested data included:

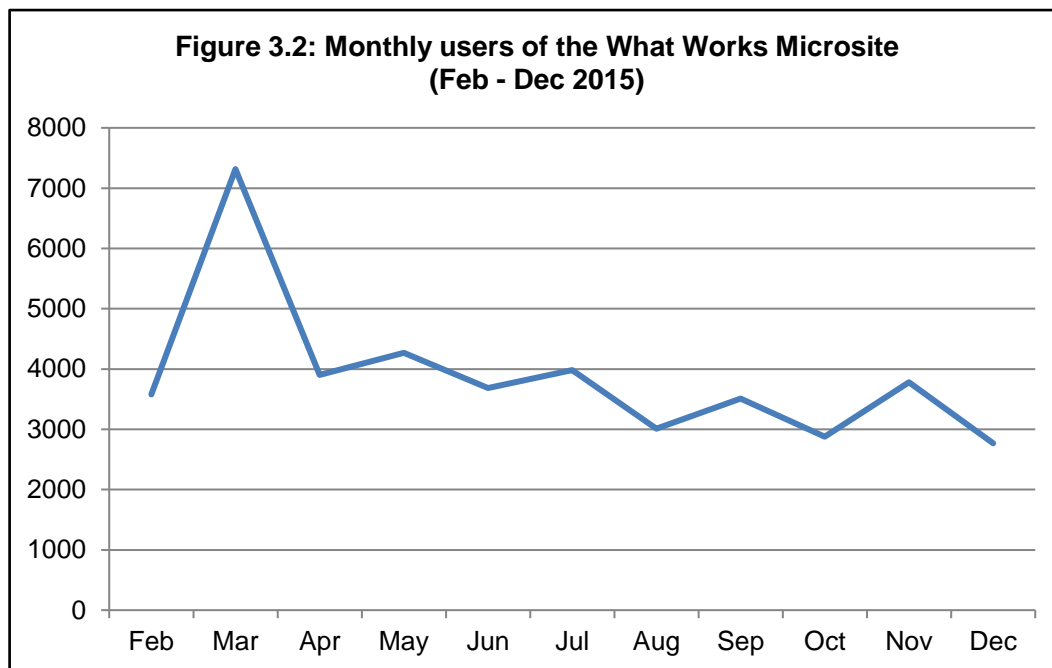
- 1) Traffic to and on the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction microsite, including:
  - The number of visitors to the microsite (e.g. new and returning)
  - Page and product views (e.g. which interventions on the Crime Reduction Toolkit are viewed most often)
  - Pre-and post-training related hits on the What Works microsite (e.g. the numbers accessing the microsite pre- and post-training events)
  
- 2) Traffic on POLKA and the Knowledge Bank community, including:
  - Access to POLKA (e.g. the number of active and inactive members; new and returning visitors; which organisations are they from – police or non-police)
  - POLKA communities (e.g. the number and range of communities)
  - Discussion threads (e.g. what discussion topics are being talked about; contributors)
  - Existing members accessing the Knowledge Bank
  - Number of visitors to the Knowledge Bank including new members joining the Knowledge Bank
  - Which organisations were accessing POLKA
  - Page views
  - Uploads, downloads and contributors
  - The interactive facilities in the Knowledge Bank (e.g. the chat functions)

The College was able to provide comprehensive data on POLKA and the Knowledge Bank, however, less information was available on the use of the What Works microsite.

### *Mapping access to the What Works Microsite*

Whilst POLKA logs user activity which is then sieved through and used to produce monthly 'community reports', there are no equivalent reporting functions on the What Works microsite. As a result, the College was only able to provide basic, headline usage figures derived from

Google Analytics and was unable to 'drill-down' further to obtain the level of detail we requested in terms of who accesses the public site and for what purpose. Figure 3.2 shows how many users visited the microsite from February 2015 to December 2015.

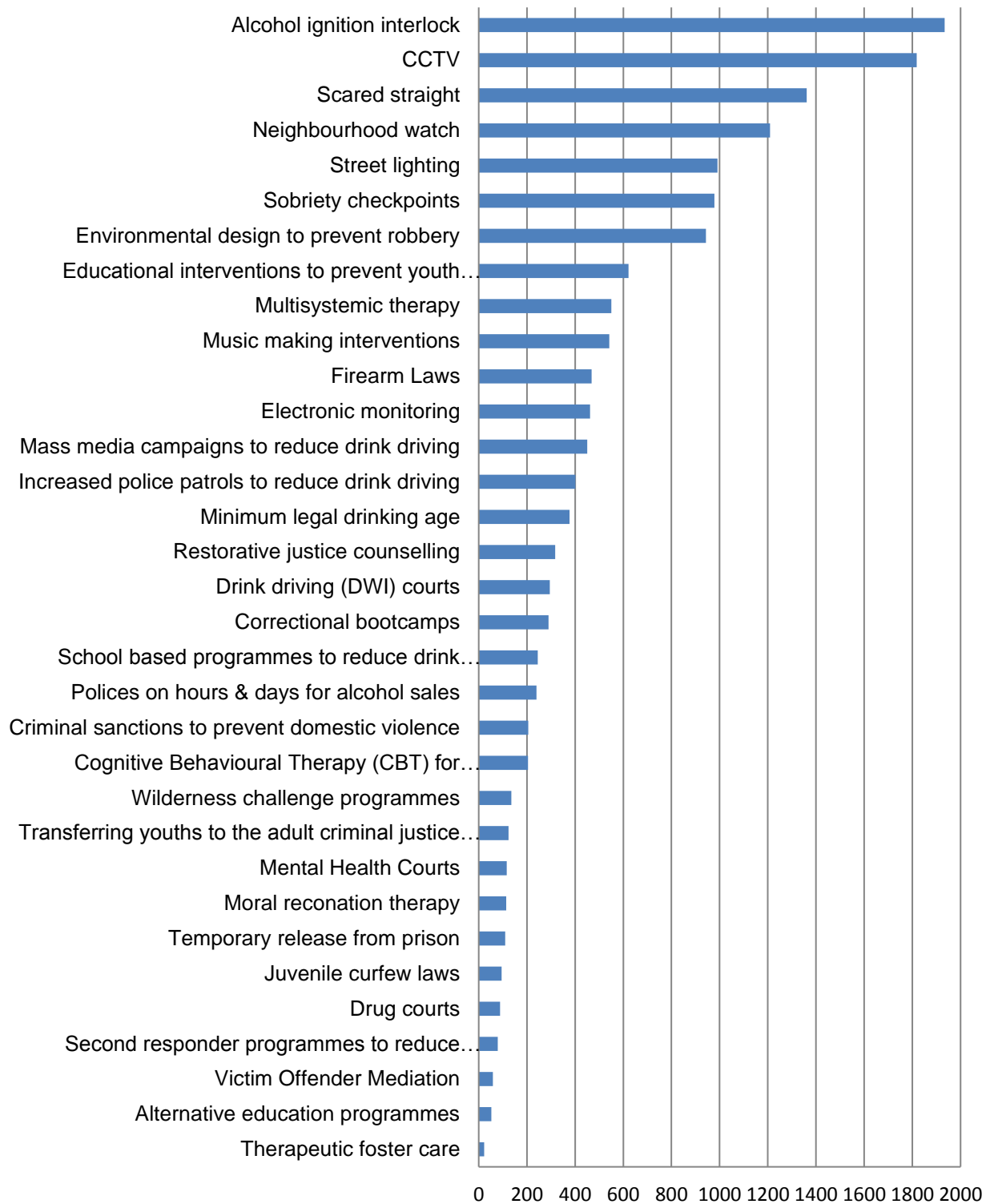


The microsite was launched in February 2015. The total number of microsite users ( $n = 7,316$ ) peaked in March 2015 with the launch of the Toolkit and the announcement of the Police Knowledge Fund the previous month. Following this, the number of users dipped but peaked again in May when there was a Police Foundation Conference. It seems that these peaks, in what appears to be an overall decline in user traffic to the microsite, usually coincided with the launch of a new intervention on the Toolkit and the related press releases which direct stakeholders to the site.

Figure 3.3 shows the interventions viewed on the Toolkit from March to December 2015 captured from Google Analytics. Thirty-five interventions were uploaded onto the Toolkit in this period. The intervention on 'Alcohol tax & price policies' (which is not included in Figure 3.3 as it presents as an outlier compared with numbers viewing other interventions) was the page most viewed during this period with 28,610 hits. This is compared to a total of 15,902 page views for all the other interventions combined. There are several reasons why this particular intervention *may* have had the highest number of page views. Firstly, the figures presented here have to take into account the different launch dates of each intervention, with only a couple being uploaded onto the WWCCR Microsite at a time, in what was described as

a policy of 'trickle feeding'. The launch of an intervention on the Toolkit was timed to coincide with associated press and publicity coverage. Secondly, a high number of page views for this particular intervention may be due to the alphabetic ordering of the interventions on the Toolkit with this intervention being one of the first a user will see when they access the Toolkit. Thirdly, this intervention was used in police training and therefore, purposefully drives traffic to the site and this particular intervention. Nonetheless, these headline statistics provide an overview of the 'behind-the-scenes' activity on the What Works microsite.

**Figure 3.3: Toolkit page views (Mar - Dec 2015)**





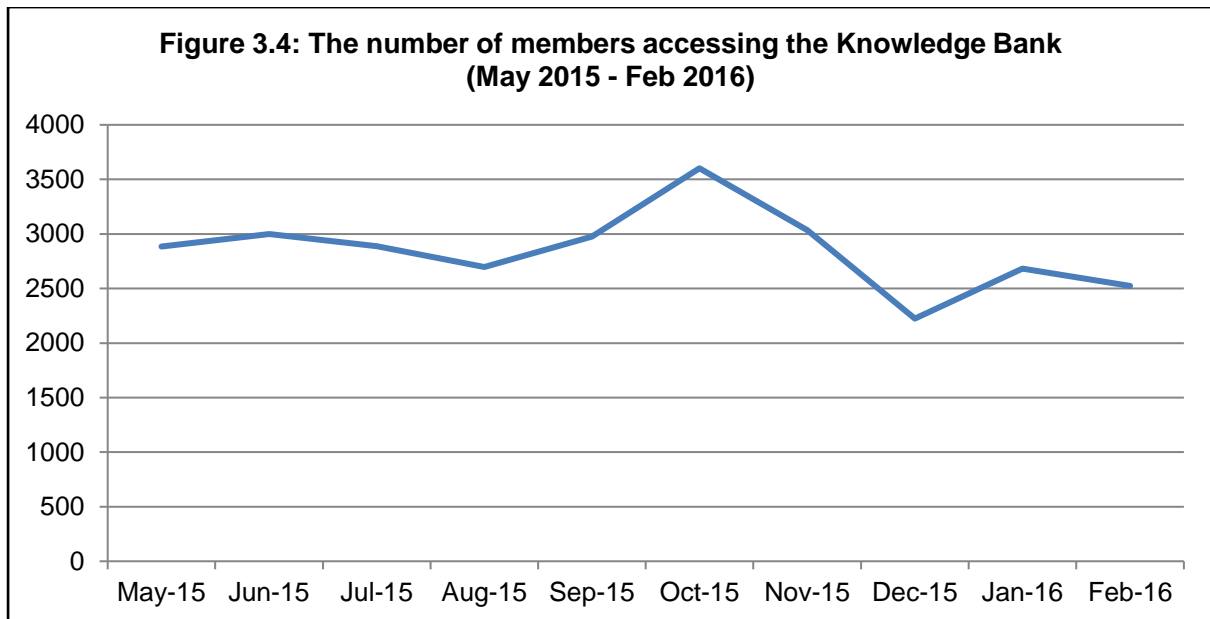
### *Mapping access to the Police Online Knowledge Area (POLKA) Knowledge Bank*

POLKA is accessed by a networked computer via a username associated with a .pnn or .gsi email account. At present, there is no remote access to the online resource. The idea behind POLKA is to encourage 'chat' across the 43 forces, with the aim of seeking national responses, sharing knowledge, evidence and best practice in policing.

With 'user profiles', 'discussions' and 'daily news feed', POLKA is described by some as 'a Facebook for policing', yet, the more it gets likened to Facebook, the less it gets used by the police as a useful resource. At any given time there are around 300 communities on POLKA. Some are short-lived and set up to address topical concerns. Each community has an 'owner' and two or three 'facilitators' who police the community, in terms of managing access. Communities can be 'open' or 'private' with users sending requests to facilitators who can choose to accept or reject the request. For example, the firearms community is one of the strictest on POLKA and has a list of approved people who can join.

The Knowledge Bank is the main focus of our mapping of POLKA as this has developed into an important mechanism for sharing evidence and pre-dates the launch of the WWCCR. Around 10 people every day join the Knowledge Bank community. It provides a space to champion What Works products and signpost community members to further evidence resources. The most active section of the community is the interactive 'discussions' feature. For example, the platform is used by police officers to post challenges they may be experiencing and to seek input or advice from others, in the form of evidence of good or innovative practice. When documents, which can range from reports, PhD and Masters' theses, event and conference flyers are uploaded onto POLKA, users tick a box stating that 'this is a knowledge product' and this becomes a 'shared knowledge document' and deposited in the Knowledge Bank. This ensures increased access to documents.

Whilst there has been an overall decline in the number of new members joining POLKA as a whole (2,255 in May 2015 to 720 in March 2016) in part explained by the emergence of newer evidence mechanisms (e.g. the launch of the WWCCR in 2015), Figure 3.4 below shows that with the exception of a dip in December 2015, the numbers accessing the Knowledge Bank on POLKA each month has remained relatively consistent. This is also true for the number of new members joining the Knowledge Bank each month (an average of 2183 new members joined the Knowledge Bank in the period May 2015 to Feb 2016).



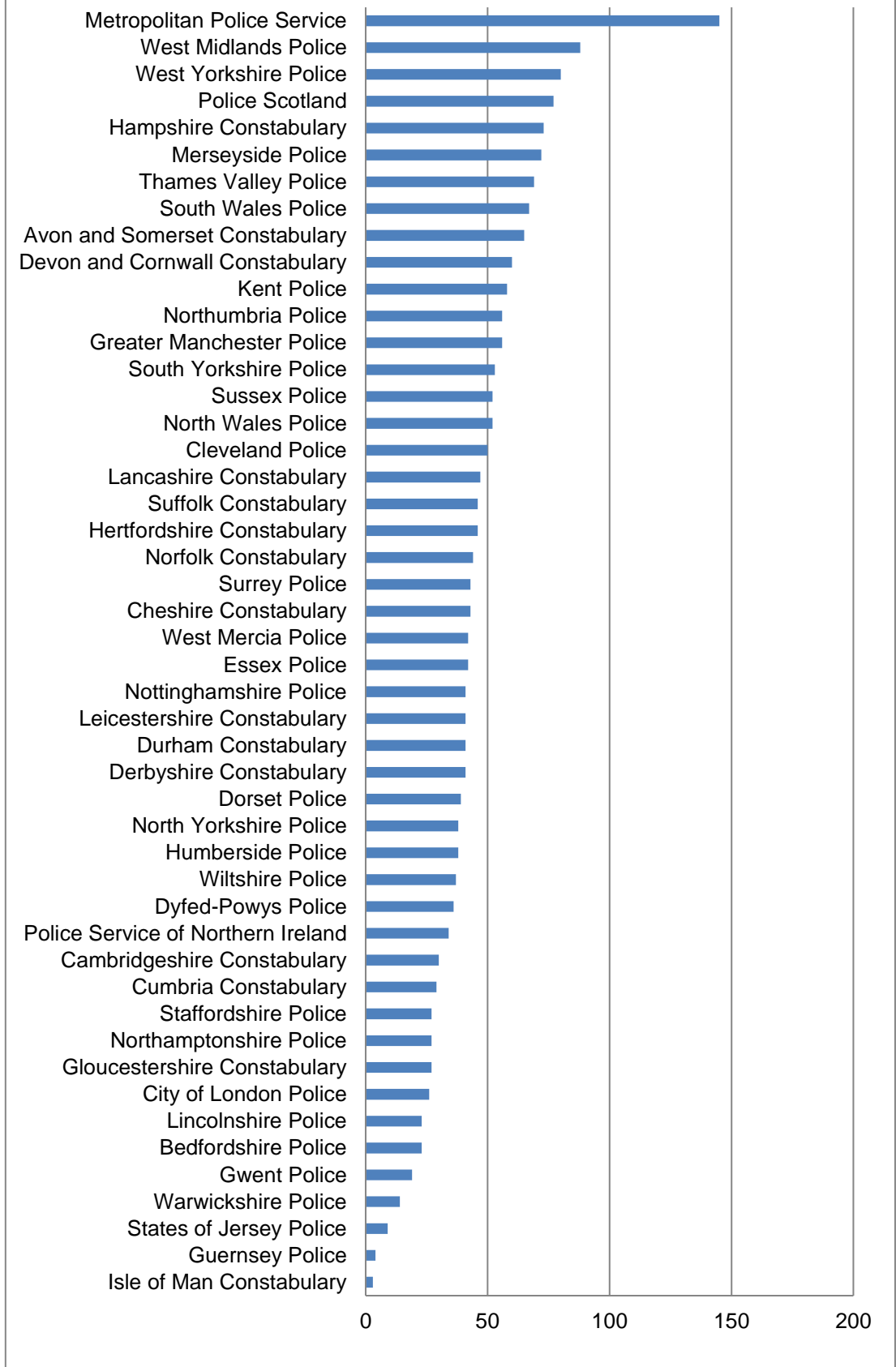
Furthermore, the number of product downloads has remained consistently above 2,000 each month in this period, although we have not yet received data on *what* is being downloaded from the Knowledge Bank.

Figure 3.5 shows a breakdown of the police forces and constabularies accessing the Knowledge Bank on POLKA in the month of February 2016<sup>32</sup>. Numbers may simply reflect the size of the force rather than providing any clarity about levels of interest in the Knowledge Bank (The Metropolitan Police, West Midlands Police and West Yorkshire Police were the three police forces with the highest number of distinct visitors to the Knowledge Bank in this month).

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<sup>32</sup> This was the most up-to-date data we received from the College.

**Figure 3.5: Police forces accessing the Knowledge Bank  
(Feb 2016)**



However, Table 3.2 presents these data as a percentage of the number of officers in the first 10 forces listed in Figure 3.5. This suggests some consistency in numbers accessing the site, at between 1% and 3% of officers.

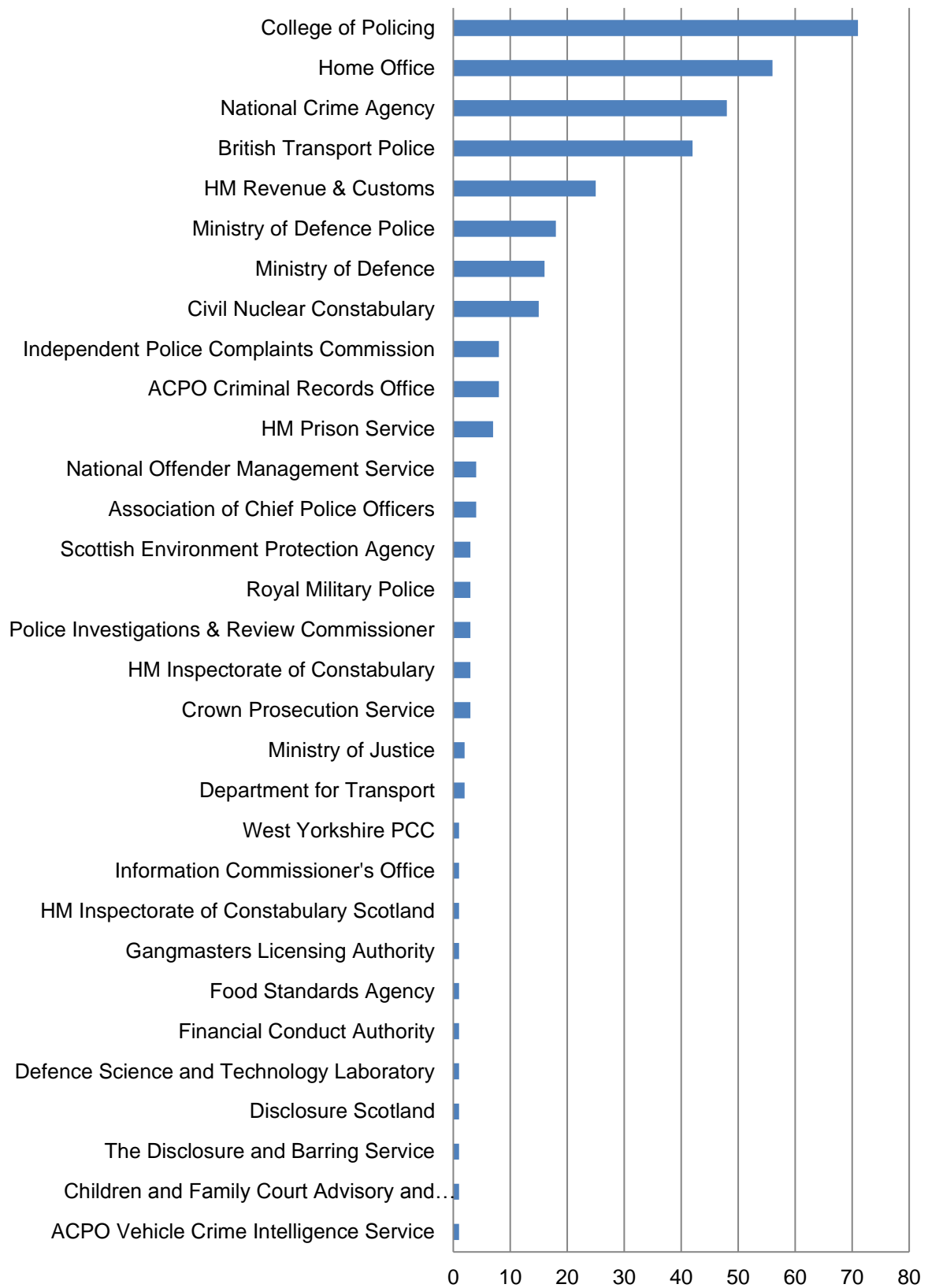
**Table 3.2: Visitors to Knowledge Bank as % of number of officers**

<b>The top 10 police forces/constabularies accessing the Knowledge Bank in relation to size of force</b>	<b>Distinct visitors to Knowledge Bank (during February 2016)</b>	<b>Officers available for duty (March 2015)*</b>	<b>Rate (%)</b>
Metropolitan Police Service	145	30,663	0.5%
West Midlands Police	88	6,838	1%
West Yorkshire Police	80	4561	2%
Police Scotland	77	Data unavailable	Data unavailable
Hampshire Constabulary	73	2869	3%
Merseyside Police	72	3660	2%
Thames Valley Police	69	4193	2%
South Wales Police	67	Data unavailable	Data unavailable
Avon and Somerset Constabulary	65	2598	3%
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary	60	2990	2%

**Notes:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-March-2013/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2013>

In terms of other organisations accessing the Knowledge Bank in the same period, the College of Policing, the Home Office and the National Crime Agency were amongst the top three (shown in Figure 3.6).

**Figure 3.6: Other organisations accessing the Knowledge Bank (Feb 2016)**



## 4. THE CENTRE'S EVOLUTION

Building the evidence base, raising awareness and creating positive attitudes towards research are central tasks for the College and the WWCCR. Alongside charting progress made in developing research 'products', our focus in year two of the evaluation has been the interface between research and practice and the mechanisms through which awareness of research evidence is to be raised and its routine adoption encouraged. To this end we interviewed officers whose role as Evidence Champions or HPDS officers is to effect such change. We also wanted to set our findings in context and initiate discussion with College staff, the Consortium and other stakeholders about experience of this process and (future) expectations of the What Works project.

### 4.1 EMMIE and the Crime Reduction Toolkit

The completion of the mapping of existing systematic reviews<sup>33</sup>, the EMMIE<sup>34</sup> system through which findings are framed and filtered for practitioner use and the online Toolkit featuring EMMIE results as visual cues and short narrative summaries of crime reduction interventions is, in the opinion of the academic and College staff we interviewed, the most significant achievement of the WWCCR. At the time of writing, the Toolkit featured 39 summaries. Here we chart its development as described in interviews with its producers as well as early responses to the Toolkit from some key end users since its launch in March 2015.

There have been various discussions between the College and the Consortium about how the reviews should be best presented on the Toolkit and linked or not to more detailed research data. The difficulties of presenting definitive research findings in the domain of crime reduction as, for example, compared to medical research, and the resultant barriers to providing practitioners with an easy-to-apply research-evidenced solution to a particular crime problem were also raised by the Consortium:

*I think [one] challenge has been meeting the College's expectations. They would like it to be possible to provide ticks and crosses by different sorts of interventions, and be able to recommend them, unequivocally, as supported by evidence or unequivocally as contradicted by the evidence [AC1]*

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<sup>33</sup>This comprises identification, mapping and coding of the 338 existing systematic reviews.

<sup>34</sup>EMMIE stands for: Effect, Mechanism, Moderator, Implementation and Economic Cost and combines findings of randomised control trials with consideration of intervention context.

Another concern was the extent to which presentation should be simplified and whether over-simplification of research findings might stifle rather than encourage more ‘sophisticated’ thinking or reflexivity about evidence-infused practice. EMMIE is based on assumptions that users will think through solutions, taking account of context, mechanism and implementation issues when considering crime reduction interventions:

*You’ve got to think what will determine whether it will work here and not there or vice versa. You know, switch your brain on. I keep [saying], it’s about evidence informed judgement...It’s not going to tell you what to do here, there or anywhere else, you’ve got to think [AC3]*

Feedback on the Toolkit was collected from Evidence Champions and officers participating in the HPDS between one and five months after the Toolkit’s launch. This was in the months directly after its introduction, when there were fewer reviews than are listed currently. These interviewees, however, are officers who will have a key role as future police leaders, strategists or opinion changers and therefore are important primary users and promoters of research evidence (see Case Studies on page26). We also interviewed members of the Consortium who provided training on evidence review and research design to police officers and asked them to relay to us the feedback about the Toolkit that they had received.

While most were certainly aware of the Toolkit, it is fair to say that a significant minority of interviewees admitted either having not looked at it by the time of our interview or having had only a cursory glance rather than any detailed review of its content. Specific comments from those who had landed on the site and spent some time there, focused on:

- The organisation of information and whether that could be usefully searched and extracted to fit specific policing problems:

*They had this notion, all of them, that it would be problem-based – that they’d type in their problem like anti-social behaviour or alcohol-related violence and up [Toolkit] would come with a suite of different things they could do and of course when they saw it, it was nothing of the sort, they were disappointed with that notion and that was quite a solid criticism [AC6]*

- The content of the Toolkit and the relevance of the interventions it covered:

*[one thing] We are getting feedback on is the fact that in terms of content, it isn’t necessarily addressing things that are particularly relevant or a high priority for policing. We have had a number of comments about the lack of stuff on things like cybercrime, which they see as being an increasingly important issue. [AC4]*

- That the research was largely conducted in America and/or completed some years ago and that the findings presented were ‘old hat’ and already well-known, raising questions about user understanding of the EMMIE format and its aim to encourage thinking about intervention context, mechanism and ‘local’ implementation.
- The lack of specific detail available on cost-benefit information about interventions was another criticism.

Although these comments tend to reflect the current ‘content’ of the evidence base - rather than the Toolkit itself - and the lack of ‘quality’ research available on more contemporary policing concerns such as tackling cybercrime or child sexual exploitation or on the cost benefit of interventions - these kinds of issues were thought to possibly inhibit interest in the Toolkit among practitioners, and thus fail to win ‘*the hearts and minds*’ of its target audience.

Other comments included unhappiness at a perceived lack of practitioner input into its content and design, although the College had in fact carried out some user consultation on the Toolkit<sup>35</sup>. There was also a view that the multiplicity of tasks undertaken by police – and the limited research available that met the evidence standard for the Toolkit - demanded a forum for dissemination of “good enough research” of observational studies or exploratory research into emerging problems:

*I know what the WWCCR funding is about, but policing is so multi-disciplinary, it's got so many tasks and bits to deal with, and partners and everything else...public order policing tactics, for example...I wouldn't say I'm underwhelmed by the Toolkit. I think it's useful. I just think we need to go beyond that...[C2]*

The simplicity of its presentation was criticised by one or two of our interviewees as less interesting for those who were both interested and knowledgeable about research. This was despite the fact that the Toolkit does provide links to the systematic reviews for each of the interventions covered.

*I like the EMMIE framework. I think that's quite good. My initial view was I like the layers of information, but I think there needs to be another layer, of more complex information...There are pockets of individuals who do understand research and have a background in research. We've got quite a number of people who are in the service doing PhDs. [C1]*

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<sup>35</sup> User Consultation on requirements of the Toolkit included discussion with Frontline Champions, PCSOs, National Crime Prevention Panel, some Third Sector criminal justice charities and a polling exercise conducted at a policing conference at the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science. Group discussion of police officers, conducted by Jenny Fleming and Nick Fyfe as part of the work of the Academic Consortium, also focused on the Toolkit.



However, there were also positive comments about its comprehensiveness:

*“It’s a big piece of kit, and it’s useful and easy to understand [C4]*

And various incidences reported by interviewees of how the Toolkit had been used to inform practice decisions, most commonly about CCTV:

*Yes certainly when it was first rolled out I had a bit of a scout around it. Since then, having been asked a specific enquiry to do with CCTV, I looked a bit more at that specific chapter, if you like. [C7]*

*I can certainly say that currently CCTV services are very much being re-evaluated within our local authority...Certainly the [Toolkit’s findings on] CCTV research has been shared with local CCTV management in order to make informed decisions...to make sure that effective use is being made of the resources and that people are aware of that. [C8]*

*we’ve had a couple of PCCs who have explicitly said that they’ve used it to help them with some of their commissioning choices and it has also been used by some journalists so far to either support or challenge local stories around investment choices. [C1]*

At the end of the Consortium’s contract, the College will take full responsibility for the Toolkit. The College commissioned further user testing of the Toolkit across police ranks (Police Constable to Chief Superintendent), local authority and third sector organisations and this report<sup>36</sup> has made a series of recommendations based on test findings. These include creating a landing page and interactive walk-through for first-time users to demonstrate how to use the Toolkit, and various suggestions about changes to visual cues and presentation to improve clarity and consistency in the presentation of information.

## **4.2 Case study 1 - Evidence Champions**

The ‘*Champion*’ as an essential component of knowledge mobilisation or knowledge to action strategy is well established in the literature (e.g. Nutley et al, 2007). Their role is variously described as ‘intermediary’, ‘broker’ ‘messenger’ ‘opinion leader’ or ‘role model’ but essentially, these are individuals (mostly practitioners) who will act as a mediator between the researcher and other practitioners, helping to promote and filter evidence into viable policy and practice (Chearney and Head, 2011). There are various examples of such roles, including the Student Champions Scheme run by NICE which recruits and trains students to

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<sup>36</sup> Orangebus, May 2016: College of Policing Crime Reduction Toolkit, Usability Testing and Recommendations

disseminate information about the organisation to fellow students, or Project Oracle Evidence Champions - commissioners and funders of programmes for young people whose role is to “promote an understanding of the significance of embedding evidence and evaluation in the commissioning process”.<sup>37</sup>

There are two types of champion endorsed by the College and interviewed as part of this case study: Frontline champions are operational officers who were recruited and paid for by the College for a period of six months to raise awareness of the College and its programmes and services and to act as a point of liaison between the College and force; this initiative preceded the WWCCR. The network of Evidence Champions<sup>38</sup> was developed as part of the WWCCR in 2013 to encourage discussion and collaboration amongst peers about evidence informed practice both within and across forces. This was a voluntary role and open to anyone with an interest in research.

A focus group conducted by Fleming and colleagues (2014), as part of an Evidence Champions Day organised by the College in March 2014, discussed how champions perceived their role and the kinds of challenges they foresaw in advocating for greater use of research in practice, including limited resources and a long-held view amongst many on the ‘frontline’ that professional judgment trumps anything that academic research has to offer. We chose to combine these two champion groups in our analysis as often Frontline champions had gone on to become Evidence Champions and/or considered promotion of EBP as a part of their role. The status of the network and progress made by force champions was a focus of the second year of the evaluation of the WWCCR.

Overall, we found a less than functioning national network but pockets of local activity, with examples of local and regional collaboration among champions and a range of in-force activities to encourage or facilitate engagement with the evidence base. Perceptions about their force’s commitment to developing the role or allowing dedicated time to undertake ‘championing’ varied but often personal interest rather than any institutional backing was integral to sustaining the work of the evidence champions.

### *Background and motivation*

Champions were of varying rank, comprising police interviewees from Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to chief inspector but also civilian staff linked to analytic or corporate

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<sup>37</sup> <http://project-oracle.com/support/for-youth-service-providers/evidence-champions/>

<sup>38</sup> This was a voluntary initiative and open to anyone with an interest in EBP.

departments and the PCCs' offices (see Appendix, Table A1 for description of interviewees). Sixteen of the 19 were educated to at least degree level and two had (or were working towards) a doctorate. A personal interest in research or academic study was often cited as a reason why they had been suggested for the role; sometimes it was considered to fit well with their existing activities and others were self-nominated rather than selected by their force or they became involved after having some contact with staff at the College.

#### *Perception of the aims of a champion*

Most described the aims of the role in terms of being a 'mediator' or 'go-between' College and Force, in the words of one champion as doing the '*PR for research*' but also to embed or normalise the use of research evidence in every-day work by identifying evidence for good practice or encouraging and developing capacity for evaluative research within their force in order to adapt or develop crime reduction initiatives:

*I understood the role to be about being the kind of face of the College, I suppose, and helping the college to get some of its learning into my organisation. But also helping to advise the college on how best to deliver some of that knowledge so that it would be better received by the service. [C15]*

*It's about providing that link, and that understanding, and demonstrating what academic research can bring to policing. Help it, make it more efficient, more effective and perhaps break down some of the myths and barriers that appear to be there between the police force and academia. [C18]*

*It's about going from doing what we think works and doing what we think is best to actually putting in place practices that we know have been proven to be effective in the past but then continually evaluating them and trying to take them on. [C19]*

But also, several interviewees mentioned austerity and spending cuts as necessitating their championing of evidence-informed practice in order to better target limited resources:

*In order to save money, and it's a shame it's austerity that has brought this to the fore...but it's about learning how to improve our service through the use of research and evidence based approaches to be able to inform policies for the future. So it's moved from an interesting thing to do into quite an integral part of business for the future. [C1]*

#### *Model of working*

We found no standard model of how a champion was deployed, although as noted, frontline champions were operationally based with an original aim of promoting the work of the College. There was sometimes a clear structure in which the champion role was positioned, for example in departments focused on *Organisational Learning* or *Evaluation and Improvement*, or within the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, with clarity about line-management

(and link to chief officer team), role and tasks to be undertaken. However, sometimes, the role was much less formalised or integrated and therefore much more influenced by an individual's personal interest and enthusiasm for research:

*It's not really [line managed] It kind of happened organically just through the work I do, the academic stuff I do and the contact with the College of Policing, you start getting invited to things. They do have an actual evidence-based policing lead in the force who is a superintendent but I don't report to them. I don't have any contact with them... [C9]*

*If I needed support, I am sure that I would be able to achieve it really, if I can put it that way. I don't have any laid down targets for what I need to do in terms of that...It is generally a culturally changing phenomenon ...a long, slow burn rather than "oh 100 people joined the EBP network" or whatever. [C8]*

*From a chief officer' viewpoint, clearly there's strong support, because they have maintained this role but sometimes it does feel like a bit of a lone soldier, and yes, that can be difficult at times. [C2]*

Additionally, the role was rarely full-time and tended to be fitted in alongside other work responsibilities. The priority it was given is illustrated, in part, by the time allowed to undertake 'champion' activity. As has been highlighted regularly during these evaluation interviews, resources were tight and this was perceived to have impeded the championing of research:

*I went from probably spending 15% of my time doing this down to about 5% at the moment, and I do a lot of my own time on it...it's very piecemeal. [C11]*

*Oh it's hard to quantify, you just try to bang the drum [C9]*

Whether or not the role would be sustained over the longer term was sometimes unclear, particularly in forces where it was deployed in a less structured way and amid budget cuts and ever reducing officer numbers.

### *Champion Activities*

Champions, despite such challenges, reported a wide range of activities with some tasks - listed below - such as overseeing academic partnerships or creating inventories of force research activity or offering information to other officers about research, more commonly mentioned. Tasks included:

- Developing or managing partnerships with universities, (e.g. coordination of student work placements, PhDs placements or officers' participation in university courses or undertaking research supported by universities);

- Reviewing knowledge gaps and the research needs of the force (e.g. in several cases this also involved matching officers' degree or masters projects with force research interests);
- Developing systems for feeding learning from research into practice, either research the force had commissioned or was involved in or research being undertaken by staff);
- Auditing or cataloguing research undertaken within force to ensure greater knowledge about what work had already been done to avoid duplication – One force, for example, had developed a *Research and Learning Register* to centralise this information;
- Coordinating force involvement in the knowledge fund bids (reviewing partnership requests or helping to develop bids);
- Raising awareness of the evidence base in strategic or leadership meetings or in particular areas (e.g. officers working with young people) or using evidence to challenge 'received wisdom';
- Developing or quality-assuring in-house evaluations for assessing force policy and practice. One force had a chief officer panel where any request for resources for initiatives was reviewed on the basis of evidence of effectiveness and officers were also assisted to develop methods to evaluate effectiveness;
- Promoting the work of the College and the WWCCR (the What Works Toolkit, POLKA, Authorised Professional Practice); and
- Organising seminars to promote research evidence for a range of ranks, including talks by College staff.

The extract below describes how one Champion introduced evidence-informed practice into the training cycle for sergeants and inspectors:

*I got Learning and Development to include an input of evidence based policing as part of one of the quarterly training periods, which has just finished actually; January to March this year, twice weekly, sergeants and inspectors have an input into what evidenced based policing is, where it came from, medical profession and some of the practical applications. The idea being, to try and get them to think about EBP as part of their problem solving. So some of them were going kicking and screaming into the room and then others were, they're voluntarily very, very interested, but it's something that we need to work on. [C11]*

Other more discrete or less formalised endeavours included:

- Setting up on force intranet a 'micro-site' dedicated to evidence-informed practice with links to College and the WWCCR;

- Designing an intranet site to publish best practice and short research summaries detailing theories of change;
- Designing a training programme in evidence-informed practice for frontline officers;
- Planning an internal Evidence Base Camp<sup>39</sup> similar to that held by the College;
- Informally disseminating research literature amongst interested peers;
- Linking colleagues with similar research interests.

### *Networking*

Networking was limited both in terms of contact with champions from other forces but also in some cases with others with a similar role in the same force.

*I wrote to someone about six months ago who is another [force] officer, because I saw his name crop up. I said, "Oh I didn't know you were an Evidence-based Champion." I said, "I am doing the same thing here." Nothing came back. [C16]*

However, our interviewees often reported using POLKA for information sharing (there is a private community on POLKA for virtual networking- the evidence support network) and there were examples of networking at a regional level or with a neighbouring force - one Frontline Champion mentioned sharing information and expertise with 'Frontline' colleagues from neighbouring forces about what was working well and what was not, which he described as "sharing without egos" and a Champion from another force discussed her efforts thus far to establish a regional network of Champions:

*I have been trying, within the region, to identify a clear point of contact in each force, who will link-in. The aim is to develop a network, to have that critical friend, discuss opportunities. Because there are a lot of similar groups as well, in terms of data availability and sharing data, comparison sites, trialling different things, doing different things, and facilitating more robust partnerships. I don't think it's working terribly effectively. The other services have basically said, "Oh, we can't give up resourcing for a quarterly meeting." I would say 60% have probably nominated a point of contact, but they have now agreed to kind of a virtual system. [C2]*

There were also instances of champions' involvement in creating wider partnerships, including with services such as health and education to facilitate data sharing and develop consistent approaches to working with different groups. Some champions mentioned having links with the Society for Evidence-Based Policing, as noted in the example below:

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<sup>39</sup> Evidence Base Camp is the name for training offered by the College in research appraisal

*We've got some activity in the force that's linked to the Evidence Based Policing Society. We're a championing force, ...planning an event in the autumn, where we'll get people together and showcase some of what has been going on in the [region]. Have all of the pieces of research that are going on, some of the evaluations we're doing... [C14]*

One officer had established contacts further afield and was using the Evidence-Based Policing Matrix from the Centre for Evidence-Based Policy at George Mason University in Washington USA. As already mentioned, cementing partnerships with universities was often a routine part of the champion's role and recent participation in the Police Knowledge Fund bids (described in Table 3.1 above) had helped that process. What was evident from interviews was that forces were expanding their academic contacts beyond their local universities and seeking partnerships further afield, based on shared research interests and evidence needs.

#### *Contact with the College*

Regular or formal contact with the College was perceived as being on the wane over recent months, after much more collaborative activity in the early days, including champion events and visits from College staff to promote the WWCCR and evidence-informed practice. The organisational restructuring of the College during 2014 and the redeployment of the network's coordinator meant any assistance from the centre had largely ceased by the time of the interviews (although after our fieldwork was complete an Evidence Matters workshop for Evidence Champions, and others, was run by the College in March 2016)<sup>40</sup>. This raises questions about whether the College's intention was to jump-start the process and transfer impetus for network development to participants or whether this task has got lost amidst the many other College priorities, either way some interviewees raised the need for clarity:

*The College of Policing might turn around and say, "We are an overarching body, it is for the Forces to be doing that, it is not our role, you should be setting up your own networks". I am not being critical but it is just that I am not clear on it and maybe that is part of my job. Maybe I should be doing more to champion it here and linking in with [The College] more. But there is no clarity on it and I guess, as with all things in life, you want to sit down with your boss or someone and say, "This is what I am doing. What is it you are after?" [C16]*

There was a clear appetite for more coordinated activity and regular contact with the College and others doing similar work elsewhere:

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<sup>40</sup> This was a national event which brought together over 100 officers who were interested in EBP to share ideas and knowledge.

*There's been a lot talked about and a lot promised and there has been some good bits... don't want to be negative because maybe I've missed communications but a bit more interaction with the forces a bit more of a formal network. [C6]*

*There are some things the College have done which have been brilliant, like Evidence Base Camp, which we sent a number of people on. Absolutely brilliant just to give people the confidence that they can do those kinds of reviews and to deliver a product within a fairly short period of time, actually. So I would definitely say more of that. [C15]*

*It's frustrating because I would love to [meet with other champions]...I would love it, it was once every couple of months that we all came together and said "what are you doing?" "This is brilliant, what are you doing down there?". [C5]*

### *Successes and challenges*

It is fair to surmise that the champions were generally cautious about discussing impacts of their role on the status of evidence-informed practice in their force, often stressing their work was a long-term rather than a short-term endeavour. The activities they have reported might be described as ranging from raising awareness to 'laying the groundwork' or setting up the framework' for promoting and embedding evidence-informed practice:

*It's certainly not embedded as a force. If you went and asked 100 Chief Inspectors about EBP, you would probably get two or three who had heard of it. I sit and wax lyrical about it quite a lot at a time and people find it really interesting. I've done lots of presentations in the force around Hot Spot and the evidence regarding it, and people generally find it quite interesting... They use me to go and promote it because I present the case quite well, I guess. I'm quite passionate about it. [C11]*

*I think I have a level of buy-in from senior people. We have a number of staff with very well developed skills; people who take on some of the research work. I've got lots of people who have done the Evidence Based Policing Master's, or are involved in the Society [of Evidence-Based Policing], who are really keen to be involved. If anything, I've got a level of enthusiasm that's almost difficult to contain, because I've got lots of people who are doing lots of things, which is brilliant. It's almost impossible to keep track of. [C15]*

*I think the main successes for us is moving the concept of evidence based policing from more of a sort of, it's a nice to do, to an integral part of the business. So I think it's part of our long term plan, forced to recognise that learning is important, and I think that the major achievement for us is taking it from that, and it hasn't just been by myself, it's with colleagues, they're taking it more to the forefront of where we now have a regular presentation and an agenda at senior leader meetings where you feature as part of the future organisational model, I'm very much involved in the design with the consultancy firm around that. [C14]*

Reduced resources continued to create challenges in terms of the time, breadth or depth of work undertaken by champions and although some initial funding had been made available by the College for Frontline Champions, this had ceased by the time we completed the



interviews. Other challenges mentioned by interviewees included an outdated IT structure that was hindering information exchange, and insufficient time or a lack of interest from senior or operational officers.

- In summary, Champions have been differently organised by force with some arguably better integrated into strategic development than others. While personal interest and enthusiasm are crucial for a champion role, the hierarchal structure of the police means that having a more formal link to the chief officer team is essential for this role to be effective, and for it to be sustained over the longer term;
- The College needs to continue to coordinate the Champion network and provide a central point of contact for champion activities. There is clear opportunity to capitalise on the interest of interviewees in having regular contact with both the College and other champions to share knowledge and practice across forces;
- Champions have been actively engaged in many activities which are contributing to the groundwork and providing a framework to embed evidence-informed practice.

#### **4.3 Case Study 2: High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) Officers**

The HPDS programme is a national scheme which has trained six cohorts of officers, the first of which started in January 2009, the final cohort started in 2014 and are due to complete their programme in 2019. As the name suggests, it aims to identify and prepare officers for future leadership roles within the police. In the current policing climate this means preparing officers who have excelled in an operational capacity, are astute, academically able and are innovative thinkers. Successful HPDS officers are expected to understand new ideas and track the development and relative merits of new initiatives. The overriding objective of HPDS is to increase the quantity and quality of future chief officers. In terms of embedding evidence-informed practice, they are crucial to future strategic development and thus constitute key opinion leaders.

The five year programme, run in partnership with Warwick University, begins with officers undertaking a Post Graduate diploma in Leadership, which they are then expected to apply in-force. For those students who excel at the coursework there is the option to convert the diploma into a Masters' degree by completing a research-based dissertation.

##### *Background and motivation*

We interviewed six HPDS officers and one civilian officer associated with the scheme. A description of our interviewees is provided in Appendix Table A2. Reasons cited for applying

to the HPDS included progressing careers and opportunity for academic development; two had applied in response to what they perceived as a 'stagnating' career. Five of the six had put themselves forward for the scheme rather than being nominated by a senior officer:

*I had a lot to offer, at the time the HPDS scheme was very well supported in XX Force. I thought it would be a win, win thing; I'd get a lot of development and I would be able to put my energy and ideas into practice in the organisation and improve services. It was about career progression but also being in a position of influence, to really make a difference. [HPDS 1]*

*I felt like I was stagnating, promotion wasn't a meritocracy it was about networking. I felt I could do a better job than my own supervisor. I went to the National Police Improvement Agency website to find out about the scheme and then decided to apply. I put myself forward I didn't discuss it with anyone in-force. [HPDS 4]*

*I just applied for it, I went from being police staff in one force to police officer in another and I just wanted to give it a go. I wanted to do it for my own personal development, I knew there was a Masters involved in the scheme, it was for my personal development that was pretty much it. [HPDS 5]*

*The reason I applied was due to working in a rural area with no line management, there was no chance of being noticed or being put forward. I was working with an inspector who thought women shouldn't be in policing, especially after they had had children. I wanted to progress. [HPDS 2]*

### *Research as part of HPDS*

As part of our assessment of the WWCCR and the 'influence' of the 'evidence agenda' more generally, we asked HPDS officers whether their course included modules on the value of evidence-informed practice, instruction on critical appraisal of research and/or research methods. Most recalled a methods course which had included an introduction to the academic world, essay writing, research methodologies, and the appropriateness of quantitative and qualitative approaches. All remembered the module on the usefulness of evidence-informed practice. Some responses on the research-focused aspects of the scheme are detailed below:

*I remember we did quite a big module on evidence based policing and spent quite a bit of time on it...We had our eyes opened to what gold standard research looks like i.e., what the medical profession looks like. We all realised that police research, so-called police research doesn't meet any standard at all because we just do an operation and something happened... Now we realise that it might have been due to the weather or a good film on telly or anything like that going on. So, yes I think we all, I mean certainly for me, because of the course, because of learning about evidence based research, because of doing the dissertation and having to do research literature reviews and back things up; facts, opinion and everything else. Yes, I think I am probably a better police officer because of that and I can do my job better and I wouldn't have known any of that if I hadn't of been on the HPDS Scheme and done about EBP. [HPDS 2]*

*The biggest thing I've learnt around evidence-based policing is, it is what it is, which doesn't get rid of professional knowledge and experience. We basically need to use our own judgement whilst implementing evidence-based policing techniques to make things better. So it's not your operational or your academic; it's having the common sense to say, "This may work. This doesn't work." I like looking at the actual studies as well to see what actually was entailed. But I know if you're trying to deliver this to a wider policing audience, it has to be written how it's written, doesn't it? [HPDS 6]*

### *Using the Toolkit*

The Toolkit (described in Table 3.1 and Section 4.1) is a first step towards assisting officers to make evidence-based decisions and a useful starting point to know 'what works'. None of the HPDS officers reported very extensive viewing of the Toolkit, although as was the case with the Champions (discussed above), our interviews with these HPDS officers took place shortly after the toolkit was introduced. One thought a Google search was easier to use and one preferred to call colleagues if he had a 'research' question. The comments below detail some of their views:

*Yes, I've been on the website, I've looked at EMMIE. I think it's basic, it's quite simple, it's straightforward to use. [HPDS 4]*

*I'm aware of it but in my current role I haven't used it a great deal. [HPDS 5]*

*It's interesting, I think the challenge is – how do we make it so that some of the What Works information is really relevant to people and actually feasible for people to start to use in their own force... I think that sometimes, if you're not careful with these things, what it does start to show is more questions than answers [HPDS 6]*

### *Valuing research and academic partnerships.*

Finding time to actively seek out, read and act upon research can be time-consuming. Senior Command Teams are increasingly being asked to do more with fewer resources. To encourage police/academic collaboration the Police Knowledge Fund (2015) was established (see Chapter 3). Two officers, whilst not personally involved, were aware of collaborations between their home force and local universities; one had previously held the position of university liaison officer and another noted his force and local university was also in receipt of a Home Office Innovation grant.

We also asked the officers how 'research friendly' they considered their home force to be. Their various responses highlighted commonly raised problems, including a perceived disconnect between having an awareness of research and its value and knowing how to apply this to strategic and operational decision making:

*It's the application, isn't it? In theory we know this is a wonderful thing but how do we really harvest the best use of that wonderful thing to make better things for us? How do we deliver the service in a different way? How do we enable and empower people to actually think differently? That's the big thing and I think it comes back to [police] culture... what you've got is not a lack of desire, that's the wrong word, but a lack of mental willingness to think differently. [HPDS 6]*

*I think we are becoming more open to it. We've got a couple of examples now where we've seen evidence-based projects, and we've actually incorporated them into our workings. That's possibly because we've now got a new chief officer team. I would say that senior officers and strategic posts maybe more research savvy, as opposed to operational. I don't think EBP has filtered down as far as operational staff. Certainly, between senior and middle management ranks, I think we're seeing more, and we're more open to that idea of, "Actually, it worked there, so rather than making something up, let's use that." [HPDS 3]*

And a perception of a wariness or cynicism among some senior staff about research which might prevent change or innovation:

*We continually do the same things over and over and over again, which aren't bad; we do deliver a really good service to members of the public, but we never really look at how we can take that next step and make things more efficient. Research would drive that, but research isn't really trusted. I'm coming over as really negative, but it just isn't really accepted at a high level within the organisation. [HPDS 1]*

When asked why, the officer stated:

*...because it's done by an academic, it's not practical, it hasn't been based in the area. The people at the top of the organisation think they know best, and the research doesn't conform to what they believe...It's about them being sceptical of what research can offer them, they are unaware. [HPDS 1]*

Another officer described her experience of trying to initiate primary research within her force:

*I went to force when I was doing my dissertation and asked if they wanted me to look at any areas, or issues, I got nothing from them, absolutely nothing, I approached ACCs, superintendents, nothing, no guidance at all. [HPDS 2]*

### *Successes and challenges*

Benefits of the scheme noted by interviewees included learning new skills and innovative ways of tackling policing problems. None of the officers regretted applying nor considered dropping-out and often spoke enthusiastically about their participation on HPDS and the effects of this on their professional confidence and their ability to contribute to the work of their home force:

*in terms of my own personal development this is something where I have massively gained and influenced other people in the Force and that would never have come about unless I had been on the HPDS Scheme because I wouldn't have had that opportunity to go... The evidence based policing and the other things I have taken away from the course, the knowledge and skills from doing an academic programme of study, they are just there with me now. And like I said before, I'm sure that they influence how I deal with things because I am just aware. I am just so aware after doing the study that what we do in policing, we do a study on but we don't do it properly, we don't evaluate it properly. [HPDS 2]*

*The biggest success for me has been around the support and influence I've given to the organisation. I would not have said that I'd have been in the position I am now with the influence I've got over senior leaders, at exec rank not just my peers and in terms of the conversations, the discussions we have around the strategic direction of the force. I think for me it's the ability to bring some of my previous work in terms of my university world, to think differently... to really try and get the organisation to think differently. So for me the success really is about having that. I think it's about me personally feeling that the work you do, the things you've done are valued, because people are listening to you and allowing you – are giving you that opportunity to try and make a change. [HPDS 6]*

Difficulties encountered included managing studying alongside full-time work and the negative reaction of colleagues to their involvement in the scheme (mentioned by all six interviewees) which had hampered their enjoyment of being an HPDS officer and was perceived as a challenge of a 'police culture' that can be suspicious of change:

*I think some of the biggest challenges of HPDS have been the cultural challenges around, who does he think he is? You've got five minutes of service and you've been promoted to this rank or that rank. I think part of this is a cultural recognition as well, that you need to have a length of service to have an opinion, to have a valid opinion and to be able to make a difference... I think - for me - one of the biggest challenges is the language you use, the way you come across, how you decide to do things, how you try and enable the things that you want to do and how you can see things happening differently, being done in a different way. [HPDS 6]*

*As soon as I got onto the HPDS, it was almost as though, and this is a reflection of police culture, it was almost as though my eight years of service had been wiped out, I had become an HPDS upstart, it was really strange...although I haven't asked for support explicitly; within an alpha-male dominated culture it's sometimes a sign of weakness if you ask, so I made a conscious decision not to. I can't say the force hasn't given me support as I've not asked for it. [HPDS 4]*

The culture of anti-intellectualism in policing is recognised and we discuss this in more detail below. Other challenges included a perceived lack of support from home forces over the five years of the course:

*Pastoral support, no. Without being highly critical of the force they should have done more to manage people on the HPDS, their management was really lacking. They had someone appointed to look after us but there was no support at all. [HPDS 2]*

*The challenge for me has been trying to work out what the point of it all was... I've loved it. It's been a really rewarding thing but I got told that certain things would happen when I put myself on the course. I've kept up my end of the bargain, and I feel very let down by the organisation. [HPDS 1]*

One officer discussed the challenges of rapid promotion and feeling ill-equipped to handle the operational matters related to her rank:

*The main challenges have been the scheme only being five years. In that time I have been rapidly promoted. When I got accepted for the scheme I had probably been a sergeant for 12 months. I finished the scheme as a chief inspector. In the five years I've done various roles but it has left me operationally short of experience and there is not a lot I can do about that. Certainly on the last promotion I would have been stupid to say, "Oh no I don't want to get promoted." But because I have only had five years to get experience and everything else, well as I say I just think it has left me really operationally short of experience. [HPDS 2]*

To sum up, whilst all the HPDS officers felt that they had benefitted academically and all had excelled at the course work and assignments, none had engaged with the Toolkit in any more than a superficial way. Their view was that the skills they had learned had enhanced their career progression prospects but had not necessarily been fully exploited by their home force. HPDS officers, like the Police Now<sup>41</sup> graduates should be viewed as an invaluable conduit for evidence-informed practice to reach operational ranks; currently there appears to be some disconnect between the scheme, individual learning and dissemination at force level.

#### **4.4 Progress in context**

There was a consensus amongst our interviewees that progress has been slower than expected or hoped for due to a combination of factors. First, there were arguably unrealistic expectations about the ability of the WWCCR and the Consortium to make rapid progress. Second, the scope of the WWCCR enterprise only became clear in Year Two as linkages to other College ambitions emerged – for example the development of the Police Entry Qualifications Framework (PEQF) – and this has underlined the long-term and large-scale nature of the change required. Third, interviewees identified a range of factors that were

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<sup>41</sup> Police Now is a programme developed within the Metropolitan Police Service to provide intensive and accelerated entry-level training for graduate recruits with high potential.

perceived to have hindered progress, including: an insufficiently developed strategy by the College to bringing about change; the structure, funding and relationships between the WWCCR, the College and the Consortium; the culture of policing; and the location of the evidence-informed practice project within the agenda to professionalise the police. These factors are explored in turn over the following pages.

### *Expectations of the Consortium*

There was a perception amongst Consortium interviewees that the initial expectations were inappropriately high, in part, because the time and complexity of putting such a large programme of work into practice had been underestimated:

*It was a big initiative. There was a lot of sorting out to do... The decision making around the grant, the timescale in the early stages was really too tight to go from decision, the kind of, "Well you've got to get it up and running..." I can't remember what the time of year it was but it seemed very short. Given that it was a large consortium, there was a lot of sorting out and people didn't know each other and we had to recruit staff and get people there, get the capacity there on the ground. So an exercise on this scale it would take a bit of time to gain momentum. And I think that is how it feels. So I think it has got better momentum as it has gone along. Yes, from a standing start it was quite hard. [AC5]*

*I think probably the initial stages were one of, I think if you like, excitement. I think some people were using phrases like game changer and that kind of thing. I think there was a huge expectation around this. [AC4]*

In particular, a range of respondents commented on the longer than expected time it had taken to establish and carry out the review of systematic reviews, which provide the basis for the Toolkit:

*The systematic reviews that they were undertaking from scratch have been challenging, I think, for them as well as for us. As I say, people have learnt quite a lot of realisation over the period that the systematic reviews generate an awful lot of research that could potentially be used. The whole process has taken longer than I think they were expecting. They're all very delayed, unfortunately, but they're still underway. [S4]*

This was reported to be so for a variety of reasons, including: the 'front-loaded' aspect of the research programme, which meant that all of the reviews had to start simultaneously; delays in agreeing research topics for the new systematic reviews; the vast number of potential research articles and studies identified and subsequent extensive screening required to map

the crime reduction evidence base<sup>42</sup>; and, conversely, the difficulty in identifying new topics for systematic reviews that were focused on a specific crime reduction intervention (rather than multiple interventions or a general crime reduction problem), and supported by research of sufficient quality.

Several interviewees noted that this had resulted in delays to later work packages. However, it was felt to be both understandable and necessary that more time had been invested in the reviews and Toolkit, given that the programme had been designed with these elements at its heart. Although some interviewees perceived there to have been a tension between developing the Toolkit to a high academic standard and publishing the available research in a timely fashion.

#### *Expectations of the WWCCR*

In a related vein, interviewees highlighted the vast scale of the overall task of embedding research use in crime reduction agencies, given their generally limited awareness and use of such evidence at present. Some interviewees felt they had grossly overestimated the ability of the WWCCR to effect rapid change at the outset of the venture.

*In the same way as we did about evidence-based healthcare and evidence-based medicine 20 years ago, there is no parallel whatsoever between evidence-based medicine and evidence-based policing. Evidence-based policing is a small group of enthusiasts. It is not embraced by large quantities of the police, and it's not understood by senior people in policing. The size of the task is way, way, way greater than that which I had thought...When I'm asked, "Has the What Works Centre met your expectations in its first two years?" my expectations were seriously inappropriate at the beginning... We have got all of these outputs that you know about. We've got 'EMMIE'. Great. We can talk about what we've done. Has it made a difference to policing? I don't believe it has yet. I don't think that should necessarily be seen as a failure, because of the scale of the task. [S1]*

As is clear from the quotes here, there was a strong consensus that the impact of the work would only become evident in the longer-term.

*It's not sensible to expect any measurable change within a three year timescale. It's ridiculous. Given the size of the tanker that they are trying to turn around, the base from which the police had started in terms of their views of research, their knowledge of What Works and their experience on just about anything to do with what we might regard as academic. So it's a huge ask and expecting it to be visibly doing things. [AC3]*

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<sup>42</sup>For example the initial searches carried out for the purposes of mapping the crime reduction evidence base – work package one – produced a list of over 15,600 research articles, and 1,500 studies. An extensive screening process was then carried out, which resulted in the identification of 337 reviews that met the inclusion criteria. (Bowers, Tompson and Johnson, 2014)



There are a multitude of evidence structures in existence (see Chapter 3), which encompass the efforts being made by the College to increase the awareness and use of research amongst the police and their partners. The scale of this enterprise – which we *broadly* term the WWCCR – only became clear in Year Two as the links with wider College ambitions and plans emerged. This has underlined the long-term and large-scale nature of the change required.

Of particular note is that plans are in hand to embed research into the police training curriculum, and the police professional guidance and standards. With regards to the latter, these are currently encapsulated in Authorised Professional Practice (APP<sup>43</sup>), which is developed on the basis of expert police opinion and provides guidance rather than measurable practice standards. The new model will see the introduction of clear standards that are explicitly evidence based, with the initial few standards being developed in 2016. As such, the evidence and ‘what works’ agenda will be interwoven throughout the policing infrastructure, as well as advanced through conventional research products (e.g. ‘What Works briefings’). This was perceived to be an extensive and lengthy exercise:

*So while we're trying to redevelop our curriculum, think about how we frame our standards that people will be measured against. What we're also trying to introduce are things like a qualifications framework. Embedding things around evidence-based policing into that is quite tricky, and it's a longer term piece of work. [CP1]*

*You are talking about a huge change to the way the infrastructure of the service has been designed. You are talking about changes in training products, selection and assessment. But you might start to see green shoots I suppose...For example there is a module in the national policing diploma that has learning outcomes that are about evidence-based policing. We are meeting the college for business planning for next year to think about how we start to get the work of the What Work's Centre embedded across the college activity more strategically...That sort of planning is starting to happen. But I can't realistically see that the scale of change that we expect will be met within the three years. [CP3]*

Another notable development in this respect was the launch of the Police Knowledge Fund, which saw £10 million awarded to 14 partnerships between police forces and universities across England and Wales in July 2015. (Further information was provided above in Chapter 3, Table 3.1). The Fund aims to “encourage collaboration between academia and police forces to increase evidence-base knowledge, skills and problem solving approaches within

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<sup>43</sup> <https://www.app.college.police.uk/about-app/>

policing".<sup>44</sup> This was viewed as another vital part of the jigsaw in embedding research awareness and use in crime reduction agencies.

Given the scale of the intended changes, there was consensus across the Consortium, the College and stakeholder interviewees that the WWCCR and overall drive towards evidence informed policing was a long journey that was still in its 'early stages'.<sup>45</sup>

*We're very much at the beginning. I think there's been pockets of it over the years...But I think really NPIA/the College of Policing has really started this going a lot more in the UK and perhaps it's given us the impetus and the levers to kind of push this through. But we are still very much at, I think, the very early stages. [CP2]*

*The What Works Centre, as a whole, if we're taking it in its broadest sense: we're going to be still on the journey, no matter what, but I think we've only got a very small way along the path in some of those areas [S4]*

*Do I see pieces of work yet that I think will be the kind of game changer in terms of what people do? I am not sure that actually that that will come within this cycle. I think people will refer to the stuff that is there and make use of it. But I don't see it necessarily being a kind of a, fundamentally it alters the way things get done. That is going to take longer [AC5]*

#### *Articulating a theory of change*

In its simplest form: 'A theory of change shows a...path from needs to activities to outcomes to impact. It describes the change you want to make and the steps involved in making that change happen' (Kail and Lumley, 2012: 3).

We asked interviewees about their understanding of the Theory of Change (ToC) on which the WWCCR is premised and the extent to which this 'path' had been clearly mapped out. Interviewees were able to communicate the underlying principles guiding the programme of work undertaken as part of the WWCCR.

*I think the theory of change goes something like this: that they're wanting to try and incentivise attention to evidence by police services and they're trying to ensure that evidence is made readily available to police officers who are motivated to make use of it. They expect that a better customer for evidence and a better product for evidence, if they're brought together, will lead to more evidence-based policy and practice. [AC1]*

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<sup>44</sup> <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Partnerships/Knowledge-Fund/Pages/Police-Knowledge-Fund.aspx>

<sup>45</sup> It should be noted that evidence champion and HPDS interviewees were not asked for their views on the progress and impact of the WWCCR

*It's about using multiple levers at multiple ranks to encourage wider understanding of, and use of, evidence-based approaches in people's professional practice. [CP1]*

*I think a lot of what the What Work Centre is about is raising awareness of evidence. Building access to it. Awareness, access and familiarity with the evidence-base. Explicitly starting to use it in decision making because you can access it and you can look things up. You can start to use that tool in decision-making [CP3]*

Descriptions shared two key components to promoting organisational change:

1) *Raising awareness of and access to research through exposure:*

Interviewees subscribed to the view that exposure to research would lead to greater research uptake and its subsequent use in decision-making. This process was to be facilitated by mechanisms, including the Toolkit, training and the use of Evidence Champions.

*... we know from survey work that the more exposed to research you are the less likely you start to think that professional expertise alone has the answers. A lot of the What Works Centre is exposure to research with the Toolkit and master classes that we do. It is about opening minds, about being exposed to it. The more exposed you are, the more willing you are to actually be involved in doing some research yourself. [CP3]*

2) *Participation, partnerships and co-production of research:*

There was the view that if police were involved in research production or trained in how to appraise research evidence they would feel more confident about embedding it in day-to-day work.

*...it's multi-layered basically...It's not one overarching theory of change. The key part of it is around getting people to use evidence. It's important to get them involved in reviewing it and do the evidence-base themselves. I would say that is probably the key ingredient that is different to the other versions of theories of change in this territory that you can see in things like Jonathan's [Shepherd] eco-system report. [S3]*

*The underdeveloped theory of change*

Critically, however, a number of academic interviewees viewed the ToC as abstract, inadequately articulated and largely absent in relation to the work of the WWCCR.

*I don't think I heard anything that I thought was adequate. [AC3]*

*I don't think there's a well-worked-out account of how these changes are going to take place, an account in any detail, or an account...which reflects an understanding of how decisions generally get made and the sorts of factors that go into making them. [AC1]*

They were of the view that 'a ToC setting out the goals and mechanisms would be helpful' (Breckon and Dodson, 2016: 28). The perceived absence of goals and explicit ways in which to achieve them has been a contentious point since the start of the project, resulting in what some described as a lack of clear steer on "how it [the WWCCR/ the College] was going to deliver the kind of change that they were expected to deliver" [AC3] but also "without that organisational buy-in, it's going nowhere and the ones who are on the ground, who are really pissed off that they haven't been a part of it, you know they're the ones implementing it, implementing just won't happen" [AC6].

One interviewee envisioned what a ToC for the WWCCR may look like:

*What I would have thought would be in the theory of change was some sort of conversation about timescales. By the end of year three, we would like to have had a two per cent penetration or something. That kind of thing. But this sort of expectation that within the three-year timescale something significant would have happened is not really sensible. [AC3]*

Further, some interviewees were sceptical about the College's 'top-down' approach to embedding research, with what was viewed by a few interviewees as little or no consultation with those on the ground, namely police constables. This approach has been elaborated elsewhere (e.g. Best and Holmes 2010; Lavis et al. 2003) as the 'linear' or 'producer-push' model, in which the dissemination of research evidence is one-directional from knowledge producer to knowledge users.

*...we do know, don't we, that the kind of top-down, give us a piece of information or take a presentation or take some training to this group of people and expect that to permeate and penetrate, that model is not an effective one. [S2]*

*...for me what is striking is how their [the College] approach doesn't seem to be based on any certain sort of thinking about a theory of change. And that a lot of their approach seems to be bombarding people with lots of information and lots of different approaches and hoping that somehow some of that sticks. [AC4]*

In the absence of a theory-driven model of change, dissemination of research evidence was perceived to be haphazard, or 'ad-hoc'. In the words of Breckon and Dodson (2016: 12): 'You can't just expect to put out a summary of research and expect it to 'land''. Sceptical of this somewhat scattergun approach, one interviewee suggested that an alternative and potentially more successful approach, in terms of making research more relevant to practitioners, would

be to have focused on 'a few key areas of policing; pinch points and future points' (Academic Consortium AW2), focusing on what people care about' to capture their interest in using evidence (Breckon and Dodson, 2016).

Herlitz (unpublished) similarly suggests:

*Moving to a more relational model could potentially improve research utilisation by actively involving practitioners in research, building trust between the centre and its users, and allowing the research agenda to be shaped by issues important to its users (Herlitz, unpublished: 18).*

However, as one interviewee explained, confronted by cultural resistance, embedding research into professional practice is inherently opportunistic.

*I think there is a lot of opportunism...so, if some representative of the sector come to you, then you leap on it, you do what you can, where you can, you work with the people who are interested. [S2]*

Another issue noted was that in comparison to other What Works Centres, the WWCCR was perceived to lack 'a coherent clear narrative' outlining its intended aims and audience.

*I am not sure that out there in the audience there is a clear idea of what the What Works Centre stands for...So is it about policing or is it about crime reduction? [AC5]*

However, it was clear in many ways that the WWCCR aimed to capture a wider target audience that went beyond the police service and included those working in Community Safety, local authority and third sector organisations.

For both sides of the theoretical battlefield, there was agreement that an explicit ToC was central to promoting and mapping organisational change.

*If there were a theory of change, you might be able to work out whose change mattered most, whose change you'd want to have occur first, and how that then may percolate through. [AC1]*

#### *Presentation and communication*

A small number of respondents were critical of the way in which the "what works agenda" had been presented by the College. In particular, the use of the terminology 'evidence-based policing' - rather than, for example, evidence-informed policing - was seen to be problematic. This was so for two reasons. First, there was concern that the terminology had conceptualised

the evidence agenda as replacing professional judgement, rather than supplementing it, which risked research being viewed as a threat. Second, such language was seen to create unrealistic expectations that research evidence can tell someone what to do in response to a specific problem; whereas the reality is more complex:

*'Evidence-based policing' as a phrase is a very simplistic and it kind of implies there is a bucket full of evidence here and all you have got to do is dip into it and you will have the answer. That's totally wrong and it always will be.*  
[AC3]

*I just think the evidence based kind of thing is misleading...They ought to take into account the evidence that is available to them but that doesn't mean that their decision should be defined on the evidence...The idea that just because you prove something in a particular context, with a particular problem that it is going to translate and generalise is just not the case.* [AC5]

In this context, it was also highlighted that there are many research gaps remaining in crime reduction, meaning that in some areas there is no evidence of 'what works'. There was consequent apprehension that the credibility of the WWCCR – and success of the wider evidence agenda – might be undermined if it was unable to meet the expectations that it had created:

*The college, the What Works Centre is heading for a massive great embarrassing crash on its face...they're going to say 'what's the evidence for that?' and most of the time the answer is going to be 'there isn't any'.* [AC3].

A related concern, expressed by one interviewee, was that the drive to embed evidence in policing had been located in the wider professionalization agenda. They felt that this risked sending the message that police would not be considered as professionals unless they utilised evidence, potentially alienating practitioners from the evidence movement:

*...this is also being hitched up to a particular view of professionalism within policing. And again in a way which can potentially alienate practitioners. It is almost kind of saying, 'You can't be a professional unless you use evidence'.*  
[AC4]

In a similar vein, several respondents were critical of the College's and the WWCCR's conception of evidence, which they perceived to lay too much emphasis on quantitative, experimental research, setting too high and narrow a bar for what counts as evidence. For two key reasons, it was felt this approach had potentially made the evidence agenda less relevant, useful and accessible to police practitioners. First, some interviewees observed that valuable qualitative and realist research had been excluded from the crime reduction toolkit, which

could have provided useful insights into how an intervention worked, in what context and how best to implement it.

Second, concern was expressed that a culture of evaluation in policing was less likely to develop if there was too much of a focus on undertaking experimental research studies and systematic reviews. This was not least because such research is time-consuming and costly, and thus greater numbers of such studies were perceived to be unsustainable. However there was also a sense that practitioners may feel discouraged from conducting research and evaluations locally if they perceived only gold standard studies, such as RCTs, to be viewed as evidence. It was felt that a more effective approach would be to encourage practitioners to start engaging in research and evaluation on, perhaps, a more tangible and accessible level (e.g. by beginning to question local interventions and how impact might be easily measured).

Notably, however, one College interviewee told us that efforts were being made in College outreach activities to make it clear that “we’re not saying that systematic reviews and RCTs are the only way to go” [CP2]. This interviewee argued that a focus on systematic reviews and RCTs was necessitated by the fact that “there is very little evidence out there on what works”, in contrast to the relatively large body of qualitative policing research.

### *Dissemination*

There was a perception amongst some research users and College staff that the College had not given sufficient attention to generating awareness of the Toolkit and other research activities.

*There’s been a lot talked about and a lot promised and there has been some good bits – the College of policing research map is excellent... I think a bit more about the what works products and coming out and talking to people would be good...I don’t want to be negative because maybe I’ve missed communications but a bit more interaction with the forces a bit more of a formal network. [C17]*

*I mean we started off with big ambitions but a real focus of the What Works Centre has been getting the access support online and coded up. It has been an enormous effort. I think now we are starting to think, “Right we have got it there. How do we get that message out so that it is actually used?” I don’t think we have done enough if I am honest. I don’t think we have done enough in that area yet in terms of getting it applied. [CP3]*

The College felt that this was due to a combination of factors, including limits on communication and marketing spending owing to budget constraints, and a necessary focus on populating the Toolkit before marketing it. A small number of interviewees suggested that

the restructuring of the College during 2014 and lack of dedicated WWCCR staff resource may also have had an adverse effect on the dissemination of research products:

*It's just there's only a certain amount of people in the College and it's quite challenging to put a lot of resource in. I think it probably had a little bit of an impact whilst it [restructuring] was going on because people were having to apply for their own jobs and all that kind of stuff. [S4]*

#### *Resistance to change*

There was no underestimating the challenge for the College and for the WWCCR in changing the thinking and attitudes of police and the way in which practitioners were involved in this process was considered crucial:

*People will be resistant for a long time, and it's about how you manage that, and how you explain what you're trying to do to people and with people. What we know about any kind of successful change is you have to do change with people, not to people. [CP1]*

*Yes. I don't think everyone is going to be a police professional researcher... That is not going to be. But you would expect your most senior officers; I would expect them eventually to have co-authored a paper to get up to that level. I would expect them to come to an interview board and say, "Tell me about something you did that didn't work." Because often they will talk about successes and everything they have done is a success, doomed to success. [CP3]*

As highlighted earlier by our interviewees, affecting change in any large-scale organisation takes time. Unlike other professions, decisions taken by operational police officers are rarely guided by evidence. If an arrest needs to be made, the decision is guided by law; if a situation needs to be managed, the decision is often guided by good judgement and discretion. Very little of an officer's early policing career (to date) involves assessing the evidence of what works and implementing change in accordance with this evidence. It is unsurprising therefore, that operational officers and middle management have been steadfastly resilient in their reluctance to engage with academic research about 'what works' (Rojeck et al. 2015; Green and Gates, 2014; Flynn and Herrington 2015).

Police culture, which has been extensively observed, analysed and documented, has tended to frown upon and mistrust academics and academic outputs; as highlighted by the HPDS interviewees, officers wishing to engage in further study were described as "upstarts". Consortium members and stakeholders all spoke about the resistance from officers to evidence-informed practice, concluding that the lack of engagement between academics and



police officers provided a partial explanation for officers' mistrust of academia and all that it has to offer.

*I think it's right that the police get extremely irritated at the idea of a bunch of academics telling them what to do, it is unacceptable. That's why we should be at pains to tell the police, categorically, that is not what this is about. This is about trying to help you make better decisions, not tell you what those decisions should be. [AC3]*

One of the stakeholder interviewees highlighted the importance of engaging with the entire workforce for evidence-informed practice to be accepted and not viewed as yet another passing fad:

*That culture is not there in policing, and until it is, it will be very difficult to get evidence-based policing accepted more widely than by a group of enthusiasts... The real challenge is to get everybody in policing to understand how it's got to change. [S1]*

Being able to challenge and engage in healthy debate is viewed as an essential ingredient of a culture which appraises and critically evaluates evidence. The traditional command and control structure of policing was viewed as an impediment to this type of interaction.

*In most of the health professions and in academia, you are encouraged to challenge. It's what you do. You challenge everything. I don't mean 'challenge' in an aggressive way. I mean, you say, "Why do we do it like this?" or, "Have you thought about doing it like this?" [S1]*

*There are a lot of people in the organisation that would not challenge me as a superintendent because I am a superintendent. Even if the thing I said was the most absolutely ludicrous, ridiculous thing in the world – yes, there might be some grumbles, but it's surprising how much people will do and not push back just because it's a rank talking. That's not how to deliver a service. [HPDS 6]*

Finally, interviewees discussed how resistance from rank and file officers and their professional body, the Police Federation, to the proposed introduction of a minimum academic entry requirement is hindering the development of policing – although revision and development of the Police Entry Qualification Framework (PEQF) was under discussion at time of writing this report. Resistance to the professionalization of the police is holding officers back and failing to equip them with the necessary skills that policing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century demands. The complexity of the situations police officers now face demand that they are equipped with more than just an understanding of the 'craft of policing'; officers now need to understand what works, in what situations and why, as highlighted below:

*Until we crack the 'cultural' thing about accepting that there should be some national standards which are done consistently, we won't get professionalism in policing. CoP Stakeholder [S1]*

*I don't think that the What Works Centre or the College of Policing will be successful until the system as a whole culturally accepts that some things have got to be done the same and you must accept the qualifications from another force if they've been done to the national standard, or even a qualification from a university...It's so tough on people working in policing. I've had some really heart-rending stories of people who said they'd moved from one force to another, hadn't realised that they'd have to retrain on all these different things, and they felt, of course, rather undervalued. [S1]*

## 5. THE FUTURE

This second evaluation report has sought to describe the evolution of the WWCCR with a particular focus on the programme of work from the Academic Consortium. Our headline finding is that progress has been slow. However, this ‘front-page news’ masks a substantial amount of work undertaken by the WWCCR (the Consortium and the College) over the past two years, including the reviews of crime reduction interventions and their translation for practitioners, the design of the EMMIE system and the Toolkit, and bespoke training for officers in appraising the research evidence. Furthermore, as we have stressed throughout our report, there have been additional developments, for example to police training or professional practice, initiated or managed by the College which may fall outside any exacting remit of the WWCCR but which all contribute to the solid base on which to build and sustain the What Works Centre.

Reflecting on the rate of progress, College staff and members of the Consortium were in agreement about the significant scale of the task ahead, and the initially unrealistic expectations about how much could be achieved in the short term. Various challenges or ‘rubbing points’ were cited as affecting progress, including short lead in times to get the Consortium up and running and research staff in post, limited resources, re-organisation of the College (and of policing) at the start of the project and minor disagreements about the focus or content of the various work packages, although these seemed to be irritations rather than major barriers to progress.

A central and ambitious aim of the WWCCR, however, is to change the organisational culture of the police and other crime reduction practitioners, to increase their use of evidence for policy and strategic decision-making and, in essence, to make evidence use a ‘professional norm’. This is no easy feat when other more traditional approaches to decision making based on professional judgement are deeply ingrained – prompting one of our interviewees to describe the project in terms of ‘turning around a tanker’.

In achieving this change, we suggest that there would be some real value in the College articulating a theory of change more fully. This might include (a) the rationale for moving to an ‘evidence-informed’ style of decision-making, (b) the key groups whose decision-making style is being targeted, and (c) the mix of strategies that is being deployed to achieve this change in decision-making style, and (d) how these are linked or coordinated.

There is a strong case for trying to achieve a sea-change in policing policy and practice in England and Wales that involves professionalization. It is not for this report to make the case, but as the policing environment becomes more complex and less predictable, we can see good arguments in favour of some form of professional accountability over traditional 'command and control' management. In our view, this form of accountability might involve providing front-line staff with more autonomy, on the one hand, and on the other, giving them the knowledge tools needed to exercise this autonomy effectively.

The previous paragraph has briefly illustrated what a rationale for professionalization might look like. This may not be the best or only way of setting out the aims of professionalization, but it would be helpful for the service to have *some* clear articulation of what professionalization involves, and why it is important for the future of policing. We appreciate that setting out clear and precise aims is not always the best way of building a consensus for change. However, the value of making such a statement has to be judged against the context of a lack of understanding about what professionalization and evidence-informed decision-making actually involve, and the scepticism that many police officers feel about what they regard as a passing fad of evidence-informed decision-making.

A theory of change would also need to identify the target groups for change, and what sort of change is needed for each target group. Target groups will depend on the model of professionalization that is being proposed, but if the aim is to provide front-line staff with more professional autonomy it is clear that they must form an essential target group.

There is increasing evidence about the best mix of strategies to achieve a shift in the direction of evidence-informed decision-making. At the start of their lives, What Works centres have tended to focus effort on '*push strategies*' that makes evidence available to decision-makers. We would argue that the College's push strategies are taking shape well, with the Crime Reduction Toolkit at their heart. However, there is room for creating a more balanced economy of push and pull strategies. In examining the scope for broadening the range of strategies for stimulating evidence use, we have used some of the categories of *evidence-use mechanisms* defined by Langer, Tripney and Gough (2016) as our framework for assessing the progress of the WWCCR and in so doing we can highlight where headway is being made and where adjustments or further work are vital.

- Awareness – building awareness and positive attitudes towards evidence use

This encapsulates a main aim of the WWCCR and while the evidence (at least some) is available in a format that is intended not to alienate nor hinder the time-poor officer, there was

limited engagement with the WWCCR, or more specifically with the Crime Reduction Toolkit, at the time of our interviews. This was especially worrying in relation to those who are intended to help 'push' or embed the evidence agenda such as the Evidence Champions or the officers on accelerated promotion who are being trained as future police leaders.

Feedback highlights concerns about the relevance for police of the evidence provided through the Toolkit. This may well change over time as more evidence of a sufficient standard becomes available, however, there is a strong argument for ensuring an outlet for other, non-experimental research, especially in areas of emerging interest for the police as a way of creating curiosity in the research process - *"focusing on what people care about"*.

Care still needs to be taken with the format and content of the material that is 'pushed out'. In particular it would be worth considering finding an alternative to the label of 'evidence based decision-making', which gives insufficient recognition to the role of professional judgement in decision-making. In our view, the approach taken by the Alliance for Useful Evidence – which talks about 'evidence-informed decision-making – is preferable.

- Agree -building a mutual understanding and agreement on policy relevant questions

We have noted the limitations of the current evidence base and how this will likely impede any large-scale conversion of police officers to the utility of using evidence to inform practice. However, at force level and through the work of the Champions for example, there is conversation about the kinds of research questions that the police service need answered and how to support officers who are undertaking academic study in order to match dissertation or doctorate research to knowledge gaps.

The co-production of research and building sustainable partnerships between police forces and academic institutions in England and Wales is the aim of the Police Knowledge Fund and the process and outcomes of those various collaborations will be hugely important in cementing future relationships and matching research to knowledge needs.

- Access and Communication - providing communication of, and access to evidence

A great deal of work and thought has gone into the 'packaging' of evidence for crime reduction practitioners. The Toolkit and the EMMIE system were designed in response to common practitioner criticisms about the unnecessary complexity or long windedness of academic research and the failure of academics to translate findings usefully for a practice audience. One area of difficulty has been communicating the uncertainty of the research evidence on crime reduction interventions – rarely does it provide unequivocal answers to the 'what works'

question and thus Toolkit users need to think about how interventions would be applied in their local context. Building capacity to critically appraise research findings in this way is another important task for the College and the WWCCR (discussed below). Findings of a College-commissioned user testing of the Toolkit suggests the need for some changes to the current presentation of information as well as an interactive walk-through for first time users to provide clear instructions on how the Toolkit should be used. These developments will be important to increase Toolkit use.

*“A cocktail of communication strategies”* is recommended and as noted in Chapter 3, there are a range of evidence structures available to police which predate the WWCCR but can also help facilitate discussion and dissemination of research evidence. Although, some consistency of message across these various structures will be imperative in order to reinforce the importance of evidence in practice. Another point to mention in relation to consistency of message is the revisions currently being made by the College to Authorised Professional Practice, to ensure these too are informed by best evidence.

- Interact – facilitating interactions between decision-makers and researchers

As noted, the Police Knowledge Fund – coordinated by the College - is a key mechanism for bringing together police and academic researchers. Cultivating academic partnerships was also a common activity reported by the Evidence Champions we interviewed and was being prioritised by many forces.

The network of Champions is another structure through which researchers and decision-makers are intended to interact and there is considerable scope to develop the current, rather poorly defined network initiated by the College. Such roles naturally attract the research enthusiasts within forces – we have shown in the report the range of activities they have been involved in - and with some clarity of purpose and a more defined place within force strategic organisation, one can envisage how their positive attitude towards research could be ‘infectious’

- Skills – supporting decision-makers to develop skills to access and make sense of evidence

Most of those we interviewed for our evaluation of year two were educated to degree level - this was also true for our interviewee and survey respondents in year 1 (Hunter et al, 2015) – and often this had been done as part of career development with some proportion of fees funded by the police, although it was noted that there is much less resource for this now.

There is a strategy in place for enhancing skills in appraising and making use of the research evidence. This includes specific activities run by the College and Consortium to increase engagement with the evidence (and Toolkit), such as Evidence Base Camp or Toolkit training but there are also wider curriculum changes to embed an understanding of research into basic recruitment training for police constables and in the National Policing Curriculum with significant development of the PEQF. Again consistency in content and aims and some clear framework for continuous development of skills in this area will be important across these various curriculum and training initiatives.

What was striking in our small case study of HPDS offices was the disconnect – at least as perceived by those we interviewed – between their studying on the scheme and how these officers were being deployed in their home force and a feeling that their research knowledge, gained through the course, was not being sufficiently supported or exploited.

## **Recommendations**

In drawing together the findings in this report, we make the following recommendations. These are made in recognition of the wider activities taking place within the WWCCR and the College, which have not been dealt with in any detail here, but which all contribute to the promotion and embedding of research evidence into practice.

Recommendations include:

- *Development of the theory of change*

In the early stages of the evaluation we found that there was no well-developed ‘road-map’ setting out the processes that would embed evidence more fully, in policing. Our year two evaluation has found some agreement about the underlying principles guiding the programme of work undertaken as part of the WWCCR. At this stage, there would be value in the College articulating more clearly a broad theory of change that located ambitions for introducing research evidence into policing within the broader framework of the professionalization agenda. As noted, this might include the rationale for moving to ‘evidence-informed’ decision-making, the groups whose decision-making style is being targeted, the mix of strategies that is being deployed to achieve change and how these strategies are linked or coordinated. Our view is that these issues will need to be addressed if dissemination/marketing is to be effectively deployed.

- *Making greater use of evidence champions and HDPS officers as advocates*

The network of champions has thus far undertaken an impressive range of activities, often with little time and fuelled by personal enthusiasm and interest. Champions can play an important role in raising knowledge and awareness of the WWCCR and increasing research awareness and expertise locally. There may be opportunities to develop this network, to increase membership or to replace officers who have moved on. The College should coordinate the network – even if this is at a minimal level - and provide a central point of contact for champion activities. Keeping an inventory of the various activities being undertaken by champions would also be useful, including collaboration of champions across police forces, in order to share information and expertise.

- *Better monitoring of website traffic and downloads*

There is currently a lack of in-house analysis of WWCCR use and a clear need to improve the College facility to routinely monitor website traffic to the WWCCR microsite and to the Crime Reduction Toolkit. Currently data allow only blunt measurement of numbers landing on the site and views to toolkit interventions. Data on total numbers and returning visitors, where in the country they are from, or more detail about what products are being viewed and downloaded, would be a useful routine indicator of research awareness and interest.

- *Greater promotion of the Toolkit*

Although our fieldwork was conducted in the five months after the launch of the Toolkit, continuing promotion and training in its use will be important. The Toolkit is a central component of the WWCCR and good user understanding of this resource is crucial to the What Works project. This could include further promotion within the police, but also work with relevant organisations and entities, such as Police and Crime Commissioners, and local authority commissioners, to raise awareness and understanding of how to apply the Toolkit to policy and procurement decisions. In addition, showing how it *has* been used by forces or others to influence strategic or financial decision-making will help to increase its credibility among sceptics.

The relevance of the Toolkit interventions has been raised as a barrier to interest. Thus, investing more in primary research on issues that are highly relevant to policing can help to demonstrate the value of research to the profession. The Police Knowledge Fund will go some way towards addressing this as well as increasing collaboration between academics and the policing profession.



- *Continuing to build capability*

We have detailed a range of activities undertaken by the WWCCR and the College aimed at building capability and increasing skills in understanding and applying research evidence and these should be continued. The current development of the PEQF will also ensure research competencies are integrated into entry requirements and training.

- *Ensuring consistency of message across activities and evidence mechanisms*

As we hope this report makes clear, there is considerable activity by the WWCCR and the College to generate, revise, embed and increase skills and expertise in appraising the evidence base. This highlights the need for some consistency in message across these various evidence mechanisms. We are aware this is already happening with the ongoing amendments being made to Authorised Professional Practice to reflect current evidence but we raise this point as an adjunct to what has been said above about the coordination of strategies, and highlight the importance of evidence-informed practice as being the common thread throughout.

- *Working with other What Works centres*

It is important to share lessons about 'what works' in increasing research utilisation. This is in fact already happening with collaboration with the Education Endowment Foundation to launch an early intervention academy for police leaders to share their ideas about early intervention and develop practical and implementable plans.

#### *Future evaluation*

In our third year of evaluation we will revisit those we interviewed and surveyed in 2014, to assess any change in awareness and application of research evidence. This online second survey will include a core set of questions to allow for comparison with the baseline findings but it will also comprise additional questions about the up-to-date products and activities of the WWCCR so that this can be repeated in future years as a test of 'impact' and penetration of the WWCCR.

We are also undertaking a case study of how evidence is embedded in a force area. This will seek to illustrate how and in what ways evidence has been infused into force strategy and decision-making, what types of evidence are routinely being used and how impact is being measured. This case study will also explore whether the infusion of evidence is across the rank structure or confined to middle and senior management teams.

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## APPENDIX: 1

### Academic consortium outputs

	Detail	Key tasks and outputs	When delivered	Where available	Journal articles and books
WP1	To identify existing systematic reviews within the crime reduction area.	Search strategy and protocol	DELIVERED - Month 6 (Feb 2014)	N/A	Bowers, K. Thompson, L. and Johnson, S. (2014). <i>Implementing Information Science in Policing: Mapping the Evidence Base</i> . Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice, Vol. 8 no. 4, pp.339-352
		Database of existing systematic reviews	DELIVERED - Month 11 (July 2014)	<a href="http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1462096/">http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1462096/</a>	
		Research evidence report entitled "Work Package 1 - Mapping the evidence base: a descriptive analysis of the WP1 Systematic Review Database"	DELIVERED - Month 11 (July 2014)	<a href="http://library.college.police.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/search2?searchterm=c53515&amp;Fields=Z&amp;Media=%23&amp;Bool=AND">http://library.college.police.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/search2?searchterm=c53515&amp;Fields=Z&amp;Media=%23&amp;Bool=AND</a>	
WP2	To systematically map and synthesise evidence across 12 specified crime reduction priority areas	1. Access Control	DELIVERED	<a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/Systematic_Review_Series/Pages/Alley_gating.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/Systematic_Review_Series/Pages/Alley_gating.aspx</a>	
		2. Mediation, mentoring and peer support to reduce youth violence	DELIVERY DATE TBC		
		3. Criminal justice interventions in domestic violence: a systematic map	DELIVERY DATE TBC		
		4. Tagging as a method to reduce theft in retail environments	DUE JULY 2016		
		5. The effectiveness of electronic monitoring of offenders	DUE SEPT 2016		
		6. Speed cameras to reduce speeding traffic and road traffic injuries	DUE JULY 2016		

		7. Personal security alarms for the prevention of assaults	DUE JULY 2016		
		8. Red light enforcement cameras to reduce traffic violations and road traffic injuries	DUE JULY 2016		
		9. Diversity and organisational outcomes	DUE DEC 2016		
		10. the effectiveness of asset-focussed interventions against organised crime	DUE NOV 2016		
		11. Domestic violence perpetrator programmes: A review of reviews	DELIVERY DATE TBC		
		12. motivational approaches as a pre-treatment intervention for domestic violence perpetrator programmes	DELIVERY DATE TBC		
		13. Police responses to people with mental health problems: A systematic map	DELIVERY DATE TBC		
		14. A systematic review of the impact of police pre-arrest diversion	DELIVERY DATE TBC		
WP3	To provide a consistent evaluation standard to rate and rank the effectiveness of interventions and the overall cost-saving (informed by WP5).	Method for rating interventions - presented in a summary report	DELIVERED - Month 12 (Aug 2014) - FINAL VERSION	<a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Documents/Toolkit_method_statement.pdf">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Documents/Toolkit_method_statement.pdf</a>	
		Options for an ONLINE TOOLKIT	DELIVERED - Month 9 (May 2014)	N/A	
		Codebook - this guide will explain how to code systematic reviews in crime reduction	DELIVERED - Month 14 (Oct 2014)	<a href="http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1462093/">http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1462093/</a>	
		Non-populated Coding Instrument	DELIVERED - Month 14 (Oct 2014)	<a href="http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1462093/">http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1462093/</a>	
		ONLINE TOOLKIT	DELIVERED - Month 19 (Mar 2015)	<a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx</a>	
		Trial ONLINE TOOLKIT with stakeholders	Following the toolkit going live (within three months) - DELIVERED	N/A	

<b>WP4</b>	To develop a taxonomy of ranked and labelled interventions by applying the rating and ranking criteria (from WP3) to each systematic review identified through WPs 1 and 2.	Narrative summaries for online toolkit - WP1 Reviews	PART-DELIVERED March 2015 – 10-15 reviews April 2016 – 39 reviews  5 WP1 REVIEWS OUTSTANDING	<a href="http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx">http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Toolkit.aspx</a>	
		Narrative summaries - WP2 Reviews (following the completion of WP2 review)	DUE SEPT 2016		
<b>WP5</b>	To provide guidance for practitioners on data collection and the cost analysis of specific interventions, including how to calculate and present all costs of implementing interventions.	Final guidance material aimed at practitioners in the form of a 5 chapter guide provisionally entitled "A Practical Guidebook for Economic Analysis of Crime Prevention."	DELIVERED - Month 16 (Dec 2014)	NOT YET PUBLISHED – DUE JULY 2016	Tilley, N. et al (2016) 'Economic analysis and efficiency in policing, criminal justice and crime reduction: what works'
		10-page summary version of the above mentioned guidebook	Month 20 (April 2015) revised to Sept 2015 in July 2015		
		An interactive costing tool to help practitioners record and understand costs. A second element will rate interventions by both their benefits (financial savings) and the financial costs of the intervention (D)	Month 17 (Jan 2015) - currently delivered as two spreadsheets		
<b>WP6</b>	To design a development programme on the theoretical and practical understanding of evidence-based	Focus groups with evidence and police practitioners to help define content and delivery method of the programme	DELIVERED - Month 9-12 (May - August 2014)	N/A	
		Paper on the results from the focus groups	DELIVERED - Month 19 (Mar 2015)	NOT INTENDED FOR PUBLICATION	

	approaches that provides instructions on how to appraise the evidence and equips participants with the skills to use evidence to inform their decision-making strategies.	Final Programme design for piloting in WP7	DELIVERED - Month 21 (May 2015)	N/A	
WP7	To deliver a pilot of the proposed development programme including recommendations for improvements and roll out.	Carry out four pilots - a sample of BCUs in areas including Police Scotland, PSNI and two English/Welsh services	DELIVERED (Sept 2015)	N/A	
		Revisit target sites to assess effect on activities including focus groups to compare changes	DELIVERED	N/A	
		Report that assesses how well the pilot met its objectives and identifies opportunities taken by participants to apply their learning.	EXPECTED Month 32 (Apr 2016)		
		Reformatting material delivered as part of the pilot programme to produce 'TRAIN THE TRAINER' material	EXPECTED: Month 32 (Apr 2016)		
		Annual Summer School aimed at analysts and police middle management, where researchers and practitioners will learn about the latest evidence in the field of crime reduction and share their experiences of challenges to implementation and evaluation	DELIVERY DATE TBC		
WP8	To undertake a programme of primary research designed to address key gaps and evidence needs identified over the course of the synthesis work (WPs 1 and 2).	SMART CITIES project	DELIVERY DATE TBC		
		DASH project on domestic violence	DELIVERY DATE TBC		
		NUDGES project	DELIVERY DATE TBC		
		Fourth project (if resources permit)	DELIVERY DATE TBC		



## Appendix 2: Methods

The aim of the second year of the study has been to explore the development and implementation of the WWCCR, in particular the work of the commissioned programme as well as levels of awareness and use of its product amongst a variety of frontline end users. To this end we sought to conduct:

- Depth interviews with those responsible for producing and developing the research products as well as a range of end users;
- Two case studies on Evidence and Frontline Champions and High Potential Development Scheme (HPDS) officers; and
- Mapping of the products and activities of the WWCCR and related hubs of evidence dissemination (e.g. POLKA, Knowledge Bank).

### *Depth interviews*

The final sample of 43 interviewees comprised:

- 19 Evidence and Frontline champions from 15 police forces;
- 7 members of the Academic Consortium from work packages one to eight;
- 6 College of Policing staff;
- 4 senior stakeholders, drawn from the Cabinet Office and the College;
- 6 HPDS officers from cohorts 1 and 2, drawn from seven police forces;
- 1 HPDS trainer.

Depth interviews were conducted either face-to-face or by telephone between April and December 2015.

### *Selecting interviewees*

#### *Champions and HPDS officers for interview*

We were given a contact list by the College of 168 police officers and other staff from 38 Forces, the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing who had the role of Evidence or Frontline Champion. This list also provided an indication of whether or not the named person had been 'active' over the recent past - largely defined as having attended meetings or events or having had some contact regarding evidence-based practice or research activity with the then coordinator of the Evidence Champion network. We contacted 26 champions from 23 forces, ensuring a geographic spread and the inclusion of those from large metropolitan forces and smaller forces, encompassing rural areas. We selected mainly

interviewees who were defined as 'active' although several were included who were not so defined. The officers were emailed a study information sheet and asked to take part in a telephone or face-to-face interview to discuss issues including the circumstances surrounding their taking up the role, their perception of its aims, activities undertaken, the extent of their contact with the College and other champions and views on successes and challenges thus far. We interviewed 19 champions from 15 forces and from the NPCC between May and August 2015 (seven officers either declined or did not respond to our interview request). While these interviews do not cover the work of all champions in all forces, they give a sense of the kind of work that is being undertaken to promote, or embed EBP and the outputs of the WWCCR.

We created a sampling frame for HPDS officers on the basis of contact lists obtained from the College of Policing. This included information only on gender, force and HPDS cohort.

Final selection was based on the need to: Based on this the need to include:

- A geographic/ force spread;
- A gender mix;
- A cohort mix

#### *Consortium, College and Stakeholders*

We selected specific interviewees from the Consortium, and for our producer and senior stakeholder groups based on their involvement with developing the WWCCR and related activities.

Each potential interviewee was invited by email to take part in an interview. This explained the research study and terms of participation. The request was followed up with a second email and telephone call where no response was received. Where there was a refusal or an inability to participate, another interviewee was selected to replicate as far as possible the selection criteria used for the original interviewee (e.g. in terms of geographical area/ force). However alternative interviewees were not sought for the academic consortium, producer or senior stakeholder groups due to our interest in speaking to the specific individuals approached. This did not present any problems as only two of the 18 individuals targeted in these groups were unable to participate (due to time capacity issues).

### *Case studies*

Our case studies are predominantly based on our interviews with champions and HPDS officers.

### *Mapping*

Our mapping activities have been three-fold:

- Understanding and defining the boundaries of the WWCCR for the purposes of the evaluation;
- Tracking the outputs of the academic consortium; and
- Attempting to collect data on internet traffic to the WWCCR microsite and associated evidence structures.
- We were able to track the outputs of the academic consortium through regularly updating a spreadsheet of any reports, articles, books, online content and conference presentations flowing from the project. We learnt of these outputs through checking the WWCCR microsite and through interactions with the university leading the consortium (including an output log that the university itself regularly updated and circulated to consortium members).

**Table A1: Evidence Champions**

	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Dept</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
C1	Inspector – Police Lead for EBP	Organisational Learning	Diploma in Public Sector Leadership
C2	Acting Sergeant, Knowledge Exchange Manager	Corporate Development	Mphil
C3	Police Constable	Problem-Solving Team	Degree in Psychology
C4	Staff Officer	National Police Chiefs Council	BA; Masters in Policing
C5	Academic Field Research Manager (Civilian)	Organisational Learning Team	BA; Masters in Criminology
C6	Sergeant	Control Room	Degree in Policing
C7	Crime Prevention Officer	Crime Prevention Unit	A Levels
C8	Police and Community Support Officer		Certificate in Business Management
C9	Detective Inspector	CID	Masters; studying for a PhD (policing related)
C10	Strategic Planning	Police and Crime Commissioner's Office	Not noted
C11	Chief Inspector	Specialist Firearms/counter terrorism	No formal academic qualifications
C12	Manager of Corporate Development	Corporate Development	Degree and Post graduate (unspecified)
C13	Planning and Performance Manager	Police and Crime Commissioner's Office	Degree (unspecified subject)
C14	Civilian	Analytical Team	Skills courses linked to job
C15	Civilian	Performance and Analysis Team	Law; Masters in Policing
C16	Inspector	Community Engagement	PhD
C17	Police Staff employee	Intelligence analyst	Studying for Masters in research
C18	Researcher	Police and Crime Commissioner's Office	Masters in Psychology
C19	Civilian	Counter-Crime	Masters in Criminology

**Table A2: High Potential Development Scheme Officers**

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Length of service</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Pre joining educational quals</b>
HPDS 1	Male	14 years	Detective Inspector	BA
HPDS 2	Female	13 years	Chief Inspector	GCSEs and A' levels
HPDS 3	Male	11 years	Chief Inspector	GCSEs and A' levels
HPDS 4	Male	12.5 years	Detective Inspector	BA
HPDS 5	Male	8 years	Detective Inspector	BSc
HPDS 6	Male	9 years	Superintendent	BA