

Centre for Policing Research & Learning

Annual report 2024



**10–Years of Policing at
The Open University**

2024: A YEAR IN CPRL



4 New evidence cafés delivered to develop forces



3 Brand new CPD modules designed to support implementation and delivery of the Soteria National Operating Model



Facilitated 10 collaborative events featuring 23 presentations to support knowledge exchange



48 National/ international conference papers delivered by policing academics



CPRL celebrated **10 YEARS** of Policing at the OU
Featuring 26 interactive sessions across 2 days



Hosted domestic abuse workshop with practitioners and academics



£300,000
External funding awarded



10
Face-to-face CPD sessions delivered across England



2,200
Learners engaged across online or face-to-face CPD Days.



New courses were launched by the Department for Policing



34 Peer reviewed journal articles published by policing academics

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FOREWORD

Dr Jennifer Norman
Interim Academic Director
Centre for Policing Research and Learning

Dr Nick Caveney
CPRL Chair and Assistant Chief Constable,
Hertfordshire Constabulary

As we reflect on another year of innovation, collaboration, and impact at the Centre for Policing Research and Learning (CPRL), it's clear that our partnership continues to grow in strength and relevance. The past year has been defined by significant advancements in research, knowledge exchange, and learning, all aimed at shaping the future of policing through evidence-based practices. However, this progress has not been without challenges. Resourcing cuts across both policing and higher education have placed additional pressures on our work, demanding resilience, adaptability, and innovative approaches to sustain our momentum. Despite these testing times, CPRL continues to thrive, demonstrating the strength of our partnerships and our unwavering commitment to making a tangible impact in policing.

In August, Dr Emma Williams stepped down as Academic Director of CPRL, to take up a new professorial position. Her enthusiasm for researching policing and improving learning and wellbeing for officers, was fundamental to the success of the Operation Soteria projects she worked on for a number of years. We thank her for the support she gave to so many colleagues and all she contributed to the Centre.

A defining moment for CPRL this year was our 10-year anniversary, a milestone that underscores a decade of dedication to transforming policing through research and learning. This anniversary was not just a celebration of longevity but a testament to the strength of our partnerships and the tangible impact of our collective work.

The expansion and enhancement of our CPRL Collaborative programme has proven to be a huge success and continues to provide an invaluable platform for engaging with pressing policing challenges. Our 2024 programme featured an array of seminars, research initiatives, and interactive discussions, covering topics such as digital policing, public trust and confidence, demand management, and vulnerability prevention. These sessions have fostered knowledge exchange between academics and practitioners, ensuring that cutting-edge research translates into meaningful, real-world impact. The growing participation and engagement in these

collaboratives highlight their importance as a key vehicle for shaping the future of evidence-based policing.

Our research focus has also extended to frontline policing challenges, with significant impact on officer retention and wellbeing. The launch of the Perinatal Mental Health Toolkit in collaboration with Greater Manchester Police represents a meaningful step towards improving workplace support for officers and staff, while our research into police-perpetrated violence against women underscores the importance of internal accountability and safeguarding within the profession.

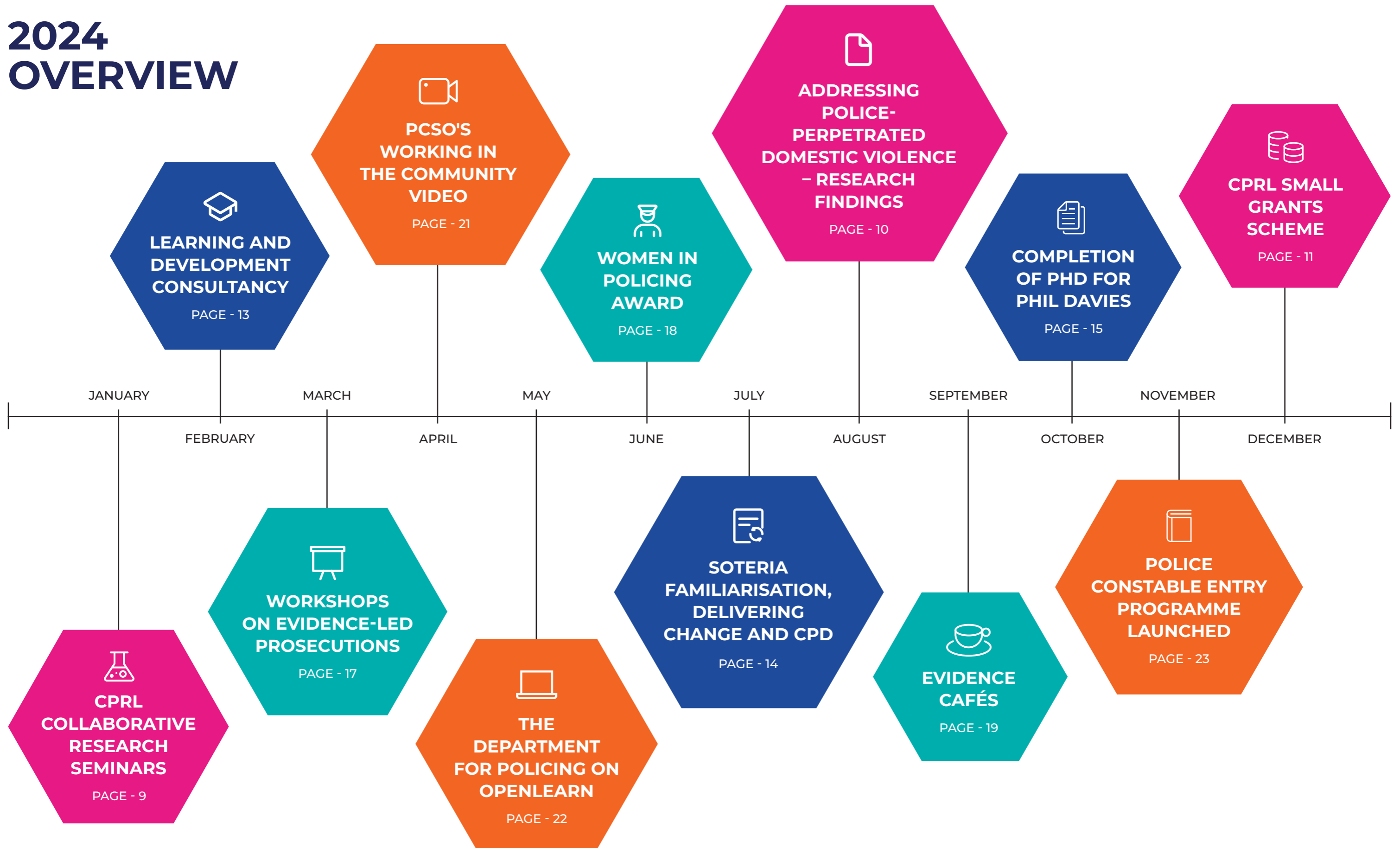
The Centre's emphasis on translating research into practice has been particularly evident in the Operation Soteria initiative, where our CPD programme has been instrumental in training officers to adopt the National Operating Model for RASSO investigations. In November 2024, this work alongside our suite of five policing programmes was recognised with a Teaching Excellence Award. This showcases the Department for Policing's quality of teaching provided to police officers and staff that enhances the skills and knowledge required for policing practitioners.

In October's MGM, we agreed on a strategic pivot towards digital technology and digital options for policing research and learning, in response to NPCC priorities. As part of this shift, we developed several plans including a bid to become one of ESRC's funded Policing Academic Centres of Excellence. Our research on policing organisations, training, and development is a core component of our forward-facing strategy, aimed at identifying the most effective ways to support policing in the digital space. This work ensures that CPRL remains aligned with national policing priorities and continues to drive innovation in modern policing practices.

As we look ahead, CPRL remains committed to fostering a culture of knowledge exchange, driving impactful research, and supporting the continuous professional development of policing professionals. This milestone year serves as both a reflection on our achievements and a launchpad for the future, ensuring that our research and learning initiatives remain at the forefront of policing innovation.

We extend our gratitude to all our partners and members for their dedication and contributions to our shared mission. We hope this annual report provides valuable insights into the breadth and depth of our work undertaken in 2024 and inspires further collaboration as we continue to shape the future of policing together.

2024 OVERVIEW





RESEARCH

CPRL COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH SEMINARS

ADDRESSING POLICE-PERPETRATED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - RESEARCH FINDINGS

CPRL SMALL GRANT SCHEME

CPRL COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH SEMINARS

JANUARY

In 2024, CPRL rolled out a new format for research seminars under the brand 'CPRL Collaborative'. The Collaborative is designed to promote impactful interdisciplinary research at the OU and creative exchanges with CPRL member forces.

Dr. Elke Loeffler, Director of Research and Strategic Partnerships, designed and delivered monthly online research seminars throughout 2024, which were typically attended by 60 participants. The 2024 research seminar programme focused on priority themes such as digital policing, trust and confidence in policing, staff retention, crime prevention, collaborative governance and the impact of the summer riots and unrest on policing and the public. After each event, the PowerPoint files and recordings of the presentations were made available to all members in the CPRL [members' area](#).

Two events during the year involved an innovative 'sandpit'-type format: one focused on digital policing and another on staff retention. In each case, crisp and focused 3-minute inputs were made by a range of speakers from police forces and by OU academics, which aimed to generate, integrate and point to ways of taking forward new research ideas. For example, the retention event discussed not only new ways of achieving retention in police forces generally but also ways of making more attractive and getting more value out of non-traditional roles such as Special Constables.

Research seminars typically included two presentations based on a common theme, which were commented on by pre-allocated discussants, such as Ruurd Jansen from the Dutch National Police or Dr. Fidele Mutwarasibo, Director of the Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership. This helped to make debates lively and strengthened the networking achieved by the seminar. The programme valuably highlighted presentations by representatives of CPRL members, including Dan Popple (West Midlands Police), Kelly Thorogood-Gates (Thames Valley Police), Davina Fereday and Kevin Ditcham (Police Scotland), Lou Provert (Suffolk Constabulary) and Richard Budd (Avon and Somerset Police).

I very much enjoy the presentations on collaborative projects and the new interactive format of the research seminars. The seminar on trust in policing with Prof. Kathy Quick from the USA had a big impact and made me reflect on how we can create a more inclusive culture in UK policing.

Dr. Phil Davies
T/ACC, Lancashire Police and Vice-Chair of CPRL

If you or your colleagues would like to present a research project or explore a new research idea next year, please contact oupc@open.ac.uk to start the conversation.

ADDRESSING POLICE-PERPETRATED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - RESEARCH FINDINGS

AUGUST

As one of Wales's nine universities, the Open University is a member of the All-Wales Practitioner-Academic Collaboration (AWPAC). A team from CPRL including Dr Emma Williams, Dr Clare Rawdin, Dr Anna Hopkins and Dr Shona Morrison were funded to deliver 'Addressing domestic abuse within the police - exploring Welsh police forces' response to victims and offenders' as employees.

Following a number of high-profile cases, police-perpetrated domestic abuse is a key issue within contemporary policing and connects to wider debates over trust and legitimacy. This project investigated an initiative to support victim-survivors of police-perpetrated domestic abuse. The intervention consisted of a two-year pilot service offering emotional support and advocacy for survivors of police perpetrated violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence (PP-VAWDASV). The service (called Tabw) is being delivered by regional domestic abuse charities in two Welsh police force areas (Gwent and South Wales). The project's overall aims were to inform the evidence-base relating to interventions in the domestic abuse area, while also enabling shared learning within and beyond the two featured police force areas.

AWPAC is a vital platform for exchanging knowledge and ideas that can transform policing. By bringing together academics and police, we can develop strategies that are both innovative and practical. The insights gained from academic research directly influence our policies and practices, ensuring that we are equipped to face current and future challenges.

Ross Evans

Superintendent, Dyfed-Powys Police and co-chair of AWPAC

The team finished the analysis of the interviews with stakeholders involved in the design, delivery and/or implementation of Tabw. Representatives from academia and policing across Wales gathered in the summer at the AWPAC Research Symposium to discuss the collaborative research conducted through AWPAC including the findings from this project.

The analysis revealed three central themes. Firstly, the intervention had a bespoke nature which was characterised by its independence from policing partners. Secondly, Tabw was survivor first and very much privileged the voice of those who had experienced police-perpetrated domestic abuse. Finally, it highlighted how the intervention was building relationships and resources, most notable through collaboration with policing partners. Indeed, a subsidiary goal of Tabw seemed connected to rebuilding public trust and confidence in policing.



CPRL SMALL GRANT SCHEME

DECEMBER

Launched for the first time in 2024, this scheme aimed to tap into the innovative thinking within police forces to address their pressing challenges. Open to all CPRL member forces, it encouraged new engagement opportunities with CPRL, focusing on research, learning, knowledge into practice, and education.

CPRL was delighted to receive 13 impressive bids, spanning a wide diversity of topics. While CPRL could not fund every worthwhile project, all applicants received supportive feedback.

In August, CPRL announced four projects which will be funded for one year, up to a maximum of £10,000, with all four projects starting in December 2024. The research teams will give regular updates on the progress of the projects, which are summarised below.

I was delighted to learn how the close collaboration between OU academics and CPRL member forces will be taken further in these innovative and impactful projects funded by the CPRL Small Grants Scheme.

Prof. Mark Durkin

Executive Dean of the Faculty of Business and Law

Evaluating and enhancing support mechanisms for baby loss - A model for nationwide implementation (with the Metropolitan Police Service): This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness and reach of the Baby Loss Support Network and the training provided by the national baby loss charity SANDS, and to explore the feasibility of in-house training to extend these support services.

Student development officers/Tutor Constables (TCs) knowledge package (with North Yorkshire Police): This research will explore the experiences of TCs supporting recruits from all entry pathways to identify the essential qualities and skills of effective TCs. The findings will inform the development of a bespoke blended learning package tailored specifically for TCs.

Exploring and developing effective strategies for police officers when interacting with neurodivergent members of the public (with Staffordshire Police): This research project will identify practical, evidence-based approaches to improving the inclusivity of police interactions with all members of the community and inform a bespoke OpenLearn course designed to equip police officers nationally with the skills and understanding to navigate these interactions more effectively.

Navigating maternity journeys: Collaboratively investigating challenges and identifying barriers for women of colour in UK police forces (with Thames Valley Police, British Transport Police, Women of Colour in Policing, and National Black Police Association): This project will interview, using photo elicitation techniques, women of colour currently on maternity leave or who have returned to work post-maternity or have left policing post-maternity. A knowledge exchange workshop will feature their stories and photographs to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of their challenges and resilience and to generate a discussion of strategies for improvement.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANCY

FEBRUARY

Dr Paul Walley, Ian McNeill and Frances Wright, academics from the Department for Policing and CPRL undertook a Strategic Training Needs Analysis (STNA) for a member force during early 2024. The force requested details of the STNA be anonymised.

The objectives of the work were to identify:

- the training needs of constables, sergeants and inspectors working in response and neighbourhood policing; and
- knowledge of skills gaps relating to criminal investigations and the submission of prosecution files for response officers.

A normal TNA can be explained as “*training needs analysis is the initial step in a cyclical process which contributes to the overall training and educational strategy of staff in an organisation or a professional group*” (Dinah, G. et al, 2004). However, a Strategic TNA is a more wholistic examination of the gap between an organisation’s strategic intent and its employees’ skills to deliver that plan. It is “an improved and comprehensive TNA model, which places strategic goals instead of competence analysis at the core of the TNA to close performance gaps. The new TNA process takes a data analytics approach from several Human Resource Management (HRM) processes to improve the connection between training needs and business priorities with optimal organizational performance” (Jorge, C. et al, 2021). This approach is being repeated with another partner force in 2025 with regard to their officers and staffs ability to maximise the opportunities presented by artificial intelligence.

The team undertook a review of key strategic documents, reports and data, interviews with senior officers and staff, focus groups with front line officers and the design, delivery and analysis of a staff survey. In addition they undertook a site visit to speak with those responsible for learning and development (L&D).

The strategic training needs analysis conducted by CPRL at the Open University identified our force priority training needs. This, together with their subsequent recommendations provided us with a comprehensive evidence base, enabling the L&D function to gain Chief Officer approval for a strategic change programme, aimed at addressing immediate issues and underpinning an improved operating model, which will enable sustained future change to our training and development capability and enhance the experience for individual officers and staff. All of the OU team were highly professional and knowledgeable, demonstrating an excellent understanding of the environment we operate in, all of their recommendations have therefore been taken forward.

Head of L&D

If you would like to explore the use of our strategic training needs analysis expertise within your own force, please contact CPRL at oupc@open.ac.uk.

LEARNING

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANCY

SOTERIA FAMILIARISATION, DELIVERING CHANGE AND CPD COURSE

COMPLETION OF PHD FOR PHIL DAVIES

SOTERIA FAMILIARISATION, DELIVERING CHANGE AND CPD COURSE

JULY

Operation Soteria was launched in June 2021, with the aim of doubling the number of adult rape cases reaching court, and to deliver sustained improvement in the criminal justice response to rape. The Centre has been fully engaged in the work from the start, and work continued throughout 2024 with our focus being to assist in the implementation of the new Rape And Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) National Operating Model (NOM). In January, CPRL organised a workshop to explain the NOM. It was delivered at Ryton to 150 delegates from all forces in England and Wales. This was followed, over the period June and July, by a NOM CPD course to assist those delivering training. This course started with 8 hours of online pre-learning to support a two-day event at Ryton. Our Openlearn Create platform was used to deliver the online learning, support the event and provide teaching materials and audio-visual materials for forces to use themselves. This included high quality bespoke videos and clips from TV documentaries about rape cases.

I found yesterday to be well structured. The facilities were excellent and created an excellent learning environment. The material was relevant and appropriate to the target audience. It was delivered at a speed I found easy to follow and your colleagues worked well to tease out understanding.

Soteria CPD delegate

The online component was so successful the Joint Unit requested that this was partly replicated for investigators in a new NOM CPD module. The initial module pre-learning was supplemented with new online material to replace some of the directly taught materials, reducing the amount of time force trainers were having to spend in class. Learners were also able to complete this training flexibly, at times to suit themselves and without unnecessary abstraction. By the end of the year,

over 1,200 officers and staff had participated in the first of our CPD courses, with over 3,000 views of the course. It is expected the total for the larger investigators' course might be as many as 10,000 by the end of the training. In December 2024, work was underway for an additional module to replace some of the face-to-face teaching conducted in forces.

The CPRL team were also heavily involved with the delivery of regional workshops to assist with the implementation of the NOM. In the first half of the year, Director of Knowledge Exchange, Dr Nicky Miller, supported by Professor Geoff Berry, held workshops to help develop implementation plans in forces. Later in the year they worked with Director of Learning, Dr Paul Walley, to deliver workshops to assist in the implementation. These workshops covered issues such as stakeholder engagement, communication and dealing with resistance to change. Ian McNeill, Senior lecturer in CPD, delivered across three regions, a further one-day NOM training event.

COMPLETION OF PHD FOR PHIL DAVIES

OCTOBER

Phil Davies, currently Temporary ACC with Lancashire Constabulary, completed his PhD in August 2024 following a six-year part time research project supported by the Centre. His field of interest was in the design of police operating models within the framework of complex systems. Complexity theory deals with the study of complex, dynamic and non-linear systems of which it could be argued human systems fit the definition. Phil explored how the successful adoption of a change in operating model by police staff can be tested through agent-based simulation, using a mathematical model derived from complexity.

A general methodology was presented to explore the motivational consequences of policies at all levels in these complex multilevel systems as an alternative to 'point-in-time' staff surveys. It is illustrated by the motivation of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) at the front line of the police management hierarchy. Modelling PCSO motivation dynamics and computer simulation provides a step towards improved management procedures that avoid unnecessary demotivation.

The computational model is based on qualitative team dynamics data collected using a thematic coding method. Interviews were held with ten PCSOs and three sergeants in the Rochdale police district. This produced eighteen 'behavioural codes' for aspects of their work that concerned the interviewees. These behavioural codes are defined to be vertices. Six of these were selected based on prevalence:

- **Purpose** (feedback on role);
- **Availability** of supervision and support;
- **Threat** and risk of harm;
- **Relevance** to role;
- **Orientation** in relation to geographic responsibility; and
- **Lone working** (patrolling).

The first letter of each vertex gives the acronym PATROL. This greatly facilitated the design and implementation of the simulation and combinations of these vertices were built into the model. A simulation was built creating a year in the working life of a team of PCSOs where

combinations of PATROL were tested through randomised tasking of various policy scenarios, such as the reduction of supervision, solo patrolling and reorganisation of beats. The results provided an indication of the PCSOs tolerance levels for change as a tool to engage with policymakers before they make decisions affecting real people.

At times it was a real challenge to balance the demands of public service and study, but I really believed in the project and have taken some of the skills I developed along the way and augmented them into my day job. Modelling is an important tool for working with human systems, but often in policing we seek a linear solution to a complex problem, and the world doesn't always work that way. The Police Service would benefit from wider exploration of the applications of complexity theory. It has provided much benefit in a variety of other fields, from economics to weather pattern analysis. I am proud to have contributed to the CPRL's ever expanding knowledge base.

Dr. Phil Davies

T/ACC, Lancashire Police and Vice-Chair of CPRL



Photo: T/Assistant Chief Constable Phil Davies, Lancashire Constabulary

KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE

WORKSHOPS ON EVIDENCE-LED PROSECUTIONS

WOMEN IN POLICING AWARD

EVIDENCE CAFES

WORKSHOPS ON EVIDENCE-LED PROSECUTIONS

MARCH

As part of a project to explore factors affecting the outcomes of evidence-led prosecutions (ELPs) in domestic abuse cases, the research team led by Dr Anna Hopkins ran three workshops with domestic abuse officers, police officers and Crown Prosecutors from Thames Valley Police, Hampshire Constabulary and North Yorkshire Police during March 2024. The team presented findings from previous quantitative and qualitative phases of the research, involving:

- case file analysis of 72 recent domestic abuse cases from across the three forces, which were taken forward as ELPs due to lack of victim engagement;
- focus groups with police and prosecutors; and
- interviews with victims whose cases had been dealt with via ELP.

In addition, the workshops employed a scenario-based training approach to highlight key findings of the study, with respect to interactions between victims, perpetrators and police at crucial points in domestic abuse cases. The team invited a live theatre company to act out vignettes of specific points in domestic abuse incidents which involved the police and when, the evidence suggests, victims are most likely to dis-engage. It was hypothesised that improvements in police evidence gathering, particularly *res gestae* (or hearsay) evidence upon which ELP cases depend, would lead to an increase in positive charging decisions. The highlighted points were (a) when police are first called to a reported incident of domestic abuse, (b) when police re-visit the victim to try to obtain a statement, and (c) when police are taking a retraction statement from a victim who has chosen to disengage from the criminal justice process.

Following each vignette, the audience was prompted to discuss in detail their observations of the victim and offender's interactions with one another and with the attending officer. The audience was asked specifically to attend to the victim's presenting demeanour and emotional state, to note the police officers' actions and responses, and how better evidence gathering

could be achieved, particularly in terms of officer's descriptions in initial attendance statements of the victims' emotional affect and non-verbal cues. The debate throughout the interactive workshops were recorded, providing a further source of data for the research team. Feedback following the workshops was extremely positive, particularly with respect to the engaging nature of the live scenario-based approach. The team are now in the process of seeking further funding to develop online scenario-based training materials to improve police training and preparedness for attending domestic abuse cases which may lead to ELPs.



Photo: Scene from workshop with actors

WOMEN IN POLICING AWARD

JUNE

On the 18 June 2024, Drs Sarah-Jane Lennie and Keely Duddin, together with Dr Krystal Wilkinson (Manchester Metropolitan University), received an award from the Greater Manchester Police Association for Women in Policing for their Services to Women in Policing, in recognition of their research into Perinatal Mental Health and Police Life.

Perinatal mental illness refers to a range of specific conditions affecting individuals during pregnancy and up to a year post-birth, including anxiety disorders, pre-natal and post-natal depression, post-partum psychosis, perinatal obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), tokophobia and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) linked to birth experiences and/or baby stay in neonatal care.

According to the NHS, 1 in 5 women experience mental illness in the perinatal period, as do 1 in 10 men. However, these figures are a conservative estimate.

The national study interviewed 18 men and women from 11 UK forces, who had lived experience of perinatal mental illness. Working with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) they held a multi-stakeholder focus group including representatives from within GMP, local perinatal mental health services and perinatal mental health academics.

This award recognises the very real and tangible contribution Dr Wilkinson, Dr Lennie and Dr Duddin have made to improving the lives of women in policing. It has been a pleasure to partner with them as the lead service in this research into perinatal mental health and police life.

Anna Rickards
Detective Inspector, Greater Manchester Police

This led to the first National Police Conference on Perinatal Mental Illness, hosted by Greater Manchester Police and led by the research team.

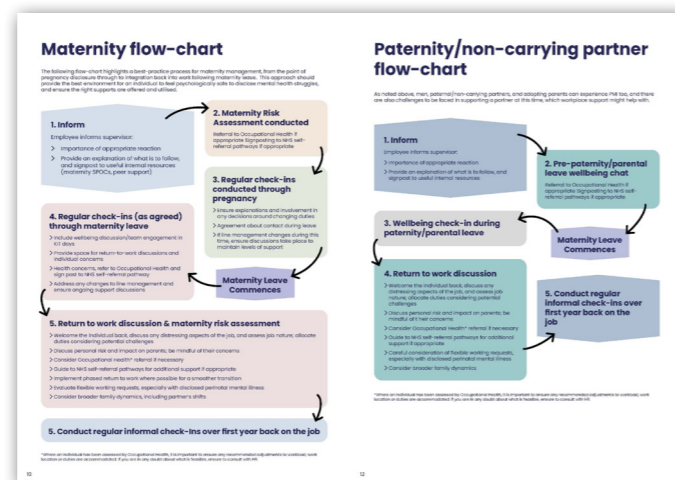
Following on from this, the research team, in collaboration with GMP developed the New and

Expectant Parent Mental Health Supervisor – which has been launched within the force. This toolkit aims to educate line managers on the topic of perinatal mental health and the intersection with police employment; and the importance of sensitive handling and working in dialogue with affected employees. It provides a step-by-step flow-chart to guide the supervisor through each stage of the maternity and/or paternity journey, in a way that maximises the likelihood of mental health-related disclosures and a supportive organisational response.

This was complimented with a review of the existing Expectant Parent Risk Assessment where changes were made to specifically include mental health and links back to the Supervisor's Toolkit.



Photos: New and Expectant Parent Mental Health Supervisor Toolkit



EVIDENCE CAFÉS

SEPTEMBER

Over the past 12 months, the research team has delivered a series of evidence cafés across CPRL partner forces, fostering collaborative knowledge exchange and driving innovation in policing practices. These events, designed to be relaxed and open, provide officers and staff with a platform to share experiences and propose ideas. To date, evidence cafés have been held with Cheshire Police, Lancashire Constabulary, the Metropolitan Police, and West Yorkshire Police, with Merseyside Police scheduled for the new year. Each event has welcomed an average of 30 to 40 participants from various ranks and departments.

The primary goal of these sessions is to facilitate discussions around each force's priorities in relation to research findings, identifying opportunities to translate insights into practical changes. Tailored approaches, developed with input from senior officers, have ensured relevance and stronger engagement at each session.

Attendees have participated in prioritisation exercises using the Q board methodology; ranking statements based on importance and relevance to their force. These discussions have surfaced several recurring themes across forces, including:

- a phased return-to-work process for employees returning after extended leave,
- enhanced training programs for supervisors and line managers, and
- a consistent and supportive return-to-work toolkit, particularly tailored to women's needs.

These cafés have yielded impactful outcomes, with some recommendations already in early implementation stages. For example, Cheshire Police has integrated findings into leadership and management training and introduced maternity wellbeing checks in management meetings. Other forces have updated maternity toolkits, and national discussions on phased return policies are underway.

The evidence café was a great way for HR policy to meet lived experience and realise that the things we think are working and well written, are not always being used in the right way. The live scribe allowed us a really simple way to document aims and have a vision for ways to improve. Having an intermediary in the Open University also really helped us think about how to put the evidence into practice, which sometimes is the hard bit when we think about academic research in policing.

Sarah O'Driscoll
Chief Inspector Macclesfield and Eastern AIT

The research team has also launched several ongoing initiatives to build on this work:

- Women of Colour and Maternity Journeys Project: Focused on minoritised mothers, this project is progressing through ethics approval.
- Impact Funding Initiative: Establishing a national group to drive change, share best practices, and evaluate outcomes.
- Return-to-Work Toolkit: A best practice guide to be presented at a government roundtable.
- Perinatal Mental Health Toolkit: Currently being trailed and evaluated across several forces.
- Knowledge Exchange Event: A national showcase of good practices planned for next year.

By bridging the gap between research and real-world application, these initiatives highlight the value of collaboration in shaping forward-thinking policies across policing forces.

DEPARTMENT FOR POLICING

CREATING VIDEO CONTENT OF PCSOS WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY

THE DEPARTMENT FOR POLICING ON OPENLEARN

POLICE CONSTABLE ENTRY PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

CREATING VIDEO CONTENT OF PCSO'S WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY

APRIL

In the spring, the PCSO module team took a trip to Darwen in Lancashire to produce imagery and a short film depicting the diverse work of the neighbourhood policing team, focusing particularly on the PCSOs. Inspiration was taken from an outdated video, and a lack of visible diversity amongst imagery available online for use within teaching materials. The two-day 'film shoot', was produced in partnership with Red Bird Productions.

The aim of day one was to produce a bank of photographs of PCSOs conducting everyday activities including walking the beat and interacting with both the public and partners within the community. Photographs were also taken of PCSOs working with police officers whilst executing their powers in scenarios such as conducting a person search.

The work that they do is phenomenal, we're always promoting PCSOs, because we couldn't do the job without them.

Neighbourhood Inspector
Lancashire Constabulary

Day two involved filming a 'ride along' with two PCSOs as they attended various engagements including an environmental visual audit with the local council, and their weekly attendance at the asylum and refugee centre. The focus was not only to capture the vast diversity of the role, but also the diversity of the officers involved, particularly in terms of age and ethnic background, challenging the stereotypical images that are more commonly available.

The highlight of the project was attending a local primary school where PCSOs run a weekly 'mini cops' programme with the children. The engagement of the children was clear to see as they sang their 'anthem' along with the PCSOs, before settling into a group discussion around

vandalism, a section of which is included in the final film.

Following several weeks of edits, the final film, entitled 'The role of a PCSO' was premiered at Darwen Police Station, proving to be an emotional experience for some members of the team, as it reaffirmed the true value of their work.

We really enjoyed our time filming in Blackburn with Darwen PCSOs. It was fascinating to get a close-up insight into the work of Police Community Support Officers and to see them building bridges with so many different sectors of the community. We were really impressed with the commitment of the officers to policing through partnership.

Jane Dibbin
Producer, Red Bird Productions

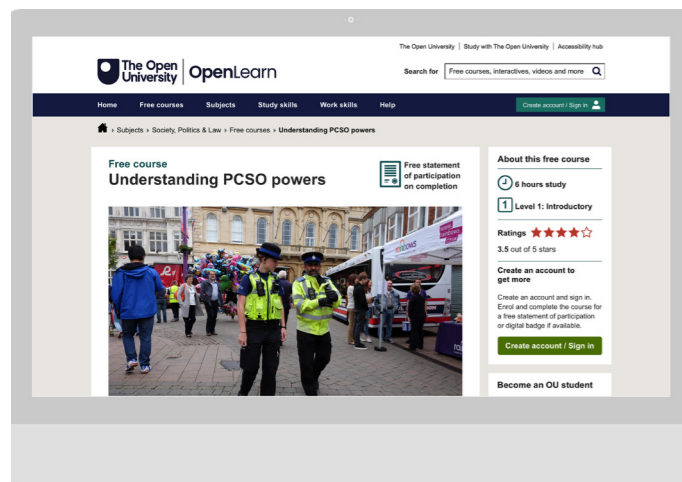
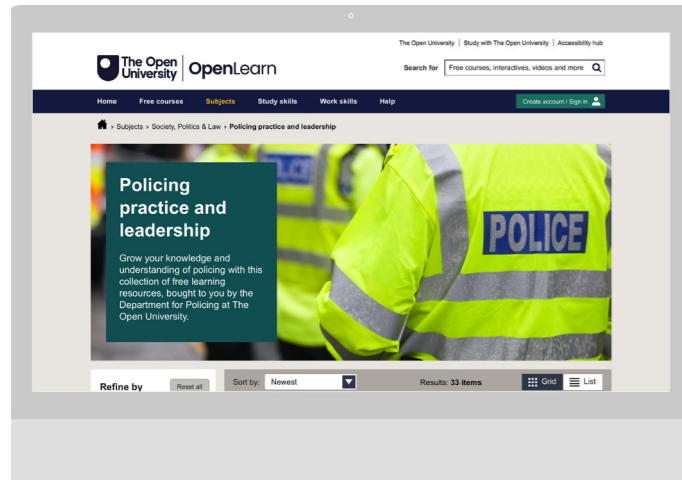


Photo: PCSO Halima Sidat, Lancashire Constabulary

THE DEPARTMENT FOR POLICING ON OPENLEARN

MAY

The [Policing Practice and Leadership Hub](#), devised by the Department for Policing, is a collection of free learning assets that allows you to grow your understanding of policing. The Hub was launched in May 2024 on OpenLearn, the Open University's award-winning free learning platform. The Hub collates free policing related interactives and articles from across the University in one place.



'Understanding PCSO powers' is one of the many courses available on OpenLearn. Published in January 2024 and written by Simon Hull, a Department for Policing academic, the course takes around six hours to study. In the course, learners explore the powers that PCSOs in England and Wales use in their daily duties, their

role in supporting response policing, and the fair and unbiased exercise of their powers and procedures. Upon completion, learners will have an enhanced understanding of this vital role in community safety and will be able to download a free certificate to show that they have completed the course.

'Understanding PCSO powers' has been well received by learners on OpenLearn. It is just one of the many free policing related learning products that are hosted on the platform, which received 11.8 million visits in 2023/24.

POLICE CONSTABLE ENTRY PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

NOVEMBER

Building on the success of the Police Constable Entry Routes - Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) and Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP) - North Yorkshire Police and the Open University were eager to explore a collaborative approach to designing and delivering the Police Constable Entry Programme (PCEP).

Once the Optimisation Curriculum became available through the College of Policing, the team worked closely to develop a non-academic pathway for PCEP, enabling participants to obtain a Diploma of Higher Education if they wished.



In November 2024, a cohort of 16 new recruits commenced their PCEP Programme. Following the same structure as the PCDA and DHEP, the programme combines initial training with online learning, providing an interactive and developmental framework for the first 20 weeks of training. All assessments within the programme are designed with a non-accredited focus, ensuring that participants are not required to undertake additional assessments to claim their Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE).

It has been a fantastic qualification to develop and deliver alongside North Yorkshire Police, and we are absolutely delighted to see the students settling into the programme and enjoying the experience. We are still in the early stages, but as the fourth programme launched, we have every confidence in its success.

Abigail Salter

Qualification Lead for PCEP and Lecturer in Work-Based Learning

10 YEARS OF POLICING CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER

2024 marked the 10th anniversary of the Centre for Policing Research and Learning at the Open University. To mark this important milestone CPRL hosted a 10th anniversary conference titled **Retention & Prevention: Challenges and New Opportunities for Policing Futures**.

The conference took place at the Open University's campus in Walton Hall, Milton Keynes on Wednesday 13th and Thursday 14th November 2024.

The focus for day one was on retention issues, whilst day two highlighted prevention issues. The event included panel discussions, collaborative workshops and featured several high-profile keynote speakers including:

- Chief Constable Jason Hogg, Thames Valley Police and NPCC Portfolio Lead on Retention;
- Professor Sarah Charman, University of Portsmouth;
- Andy Cooke, HMICFRS;
- Professor Adam Crawford, ESRC Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre, University of York and University of Leeds;
- Emeritus Professor Jean Hartley, Open University;
- ACC Dennis Murray, Thames Valley Police;
- Chief Superintendent Andy Cox, Metropolitan Police Service; and
- Nicole Nicholls, Deputy Director, TRACER, National Crime Agency.

CPRL was established in 2014, initially as a four-month proposal to undertake research in partnership with seven police forces across the UK. In that short time, the team undertook two demonstration projects to show what police-academic collaboration could achieve. The projects focused on face recognition and the use of a gaming approach to improve the interviewing of child witnesses; both of which are still topical issues in policing.

Since then, the Centre has developed a wide-ranging, ambitious and innovative programme of activities involving research, education and knowledge exchange. It works collaboratively with a partnership of 22 police forces, as they adapt to a changing policing landscape, with its greater emphasis on evidence-based practice.

Dr Steven Chase, CPRL's first Police Chair, was also remembered on Wednesday 13th November with Emeritus Professor Jean Hartley delivering the second Steven Chase Memorial Lecture.

This was followed by a wine reception during which the Steven Chase prize for research was awarded. The award for 'Research into Practice and Practice into Research', which recognises excellent and impactful research in policing, went to Dr Keely Duddin and Kendal Wright for their project on 'Mothers' experiences during pregnancy and returning to work after maternity leave'.

The project has influenced national guidance and policy, having been integrated into British Transport Police's family friendly guidance; it has formed part of the academic support for NPCC national guidance; and it has informed the Metropolitan Police's work on welfare passports and support for dual-force couples.

We are incredibly grateful to receive this award, which reflects the collaborative effort behind our research on maternity experiences in policing. This work would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of the wider research team, police forces, stakeholders, and participants who have driven our understanding forward. We are committed to continuing this work to ensure women and parents experience positive, supportive maternity and parental journeys in policing, paving the way for meaningful change"

Dr Keely Duddin
Lecturer, Department for Policing



Photo: Dr Keely Duddin and Kendal Wright

Jean enjoys a warm send-off

Emeritus Professor of Public Leadership Jean Hartley delivered the second annual Steven Chase Memorial Lecture to remember CPRL's first Chair.

Having retired in the previous year, Jean returned to present 'Police, Politics and the Purple Zone' which focused on the dynamics of senior police officers working with elected politicians and the implications for police training and development.

Jean co-founded the Centre in 2014, having initiated a successful grant application to the College of Policing, with the support of seven police forces across the UK.

It was a privilege to give the Memorial Lecture, and I based it on my current and earlier research about how public servants work in a political environment but must remain party-politically neutral and for the police to retain their operational independence. I was surprised and delighted at the end of the lecture to be presented with a glass plaque and a photobook based on my work with colleagues from the police, academics and admin staff. It was so heart-warming. I wish the Centre all the best for the future.

Emeritus Professor Jean Hartley
The Open University



Photo: Dr Nick Caveney, CPRL Chair and Assistant Chief Constable, Hertfordshire Constabulary with Emeritus Professor Jean Hartley and Dr Jennifer Norman

REFLECTIONS FROM EMMA

NOVEMBER

Dr Emma Williams joined the Centre in 2021 as Director of Research and Strategic Partnerships and took over as Academic Director in 2023. Earlier this year Emma took the role of Director of the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Uniformed Public Services at Anglia Ruskin University. All at the Centre wish her well in this prestigious role and look forward to future opportunities to collaborate in research and learning activities.

I took over the role of Academic Director at CPRL from Emeritus Professor Jean Hartley in August 2023. Despite holding that position for a short time, I feel incredibly privileged to have been trusted by the academic team and policing partners to lead such an innovative and collaborative Centre.

Since its inception ten years ago, I watched the development of CPRL with interest and it was when I moved there in 2021 as the Director of Research and Strategic Partnerships, I quickly saw how different the Centre was in the landscape of police and academic consortiums and research centres. The commitment the team has to genuine collaboration and codesign (across all of its key areas – research, learning and knowledge into practice) is central to everything CPRL does. It was showcased in the work of the Operation Soteria team, the tutor constable research programme, the VAWG portfolio (led by Dr Anna Hopkins) and the highly acclaimed national work on maternity policy in policing (led by Dr Keely Duddin, Kendal Wright and Dr Sean Bell). All this research has led to projects which move research recommendations into practice which really is the standout that makes CPRL different - their drive to mobilise knowledge into practice.

During my time at CPRL, I was also lucky enough to have been involved in wider work on continuous professional development, led by Dr Paul Walley and Ian McNeill, and transforming some of the outstanding work going on in the Department for Policing and OU in to learning material. The offer of blending online learning tools with face-to-face practical based approaches offers an insightful method to shift research into meaningful messages for practitioners. The focus on knowledge mobilisation really does illustrate the commitment of the team to ensure the research work creates impact and makes a difference to the organisation, the practitioners and wider workforce and the publics.



Photo: Dr Emma Williams

I will miss CPRL and the policing team and very much hope to collaborate with them in the future. I have no doubt they will continue to go from strength to strength.

REMEMBERING DR NICKY MILLER



In December we lost Nicky, a dear friend and colleague, following a recent cancer diagnosis.

Nicky joined the Open University in early 2019 as a Senior Lecturer in Policing and later that year became Director of Knowledge into Practice for the Centre for Policing Research and Learning. She had had a substantial research career in policing, having worked for both the Home Office and the College of Policing (and its predecessors). She had a PhD in investigative psychology and she deployed these skills very effectively in police analysis.

As a civil servant, Nicky had championed the value and practical use of research evidence in policing and initiated several schemes designed to create and strengthen partnerships between police forces and academics across the UK and with international links. For example, she was instrumental in setting up and sustaining the ESRC What Works Centre on Crime Reduction. She was the mastermind behind the UK-wide Police Knowledge Fund which led to awards to 14 universities including a large award to the Open University, which enabled CPRL to expand in 2016. Her leadership of that programme honed her understanding and knowledge about academic-practitioner relationships, which she put to good use when she later came to the Open University.

On joining the OU, Nicky initially worked on the brand-new policing degree apprenticeship programme for police constables. The team was just being set up and Nicky's knowledge of policing, her expertise in research and research methods, and her experience as a manager of people were all helpful in the crucible of establishing a new degree. Her combination of knowledge and skills was unusual and highly appreciated.

Nicky soon became involved in CPRL, initially as Centre Impact Lead and then moving from apprenticeship work to become the Centre's full-time Director of Knowledge into Practice later in 2019. It was Nicky's insistence back at the College which had created this third strand of activity alongside teaching and research, and she expanded this work across the CPRL network within the University and across the UK-wide police forces. Nicky was a positive energetic force who encouraged, challenged, taught, advised, teased, and generally influenced us all to think not only

about research but about how it could or might be used by practitioners. She used the same skills to influence practitioners to think about how they might use academic research in practical ways. She embodied the mantra "Research into practice, and practice into research", coined by the earlier Chair of CPRL Steven Chase. Her work on theories of change helped academics to envisage in the early stages of research design what potential for impact the research might hold, and how to track impacts through the project.

Nicky was a superb representative of OU policing in that practitioner world, through her work on force engagement in evidence-based practice and her sitting on many force Evidence Based Policing Boards. She kept an eye on emerging research findings or innovative methods and encouraged academics to run workshops and seminars to share findings and their implications with police. She was well networked in policing, and gave her time generously to help police make sense and make use of academic research.

Nicky had a clear eye about what makes for good knowledge into practice work with real engagement and exploration of ideas and practices between partners. This was not simple "dissemination" of research findings but a grounded, pragmatic theory and understanding of what makes organisations tick and therefore how to infuse new knowledge into practices in already pressured public services. This was seen in many projects but stands out particularly in the Operation Soteria project about improving police practices in relation to serious sexual offences, where Nicky was central to the work. She was typically modest about her own contribution but those of us who saw the work close up saw how much she shaped that work.

We send our heartfelt condolences to her husband Rohan and her daughter Erin.

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