Reflections on academic-police partnerships: What seems to work and what doesn’t

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Our role

The purpose of the College of Policing is to provide those working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public, and secure public trust.

We have three complementary functions:

- **Knowledge:** developing the research and infrastructure for improving evidence of ‘what works’. Over time, this will ensure policing practice and standards are based on knowledge, not custom and convention.

- **Education:** supporting the development of individual members of the profession. We set educational requirements to assure the public of the quality and consistency of policing skills, and facilitate academic accreditation and recognition of our members’ expertise.

- **Standards:** drawing on the best available evidence of ‘what works’ to set standards in policing for forces and individuals, for example, through Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and peer review.
**Dialogue of the Deaf**

**Academic:** Why do the police insist that they know better when the researchers are expert in knowledge construction?

**Police:** Why do researchers write recipes when they can’t even cook?

**Academic:** Why are the police so unwilling to examine their own organisational performance?

**Police:** Why are researchers unwilling to produce information that a practical person exercising power can use to change a limited aspect of the organisation instead of theoretical and explanatory structures of no use to the problem solver?

**Academic:** Why are the police so bloody defensive?

**Police:** Why are researchers so bloody virtuous?

**Academic:** Why do the police ignore research findings?

**Police:** Why don’t researchers produce usable knowledge?

**Academic:** Why do the police always reject any study that is critical of what they do?

**Police:** Why do researchers always show the police in a bad light?

**Academic:** Why don’t police officers even read research reports?

**Police:** Why can’t researchers write in plain English?
Partnership work is crucial

Surveys show officers rely on and prefer professional experience rather than research

BUT

The more they know about research the less they believe the police alone have enough information about crime and what to do about it

AND

The more they are exposed to research the more likely they are to be willing to do experiments

SO

When research is part of their professional experience - they will be much more likely to use it!

Palmer (2011) Survey of inspectors and chief inspectors in Greater Manchester Police
Lum et al (2012) Receptivity to research in Policing
Building Partnerships through…..

Police Knowledge Fund

To support the development of sustainable education & research collaborations between police forces & academic institutions.

1. Build sustained capability amongst officers and staff to understand, critique and use research

2. Embed or accelerate understanding of crime and policing issues, and evidence based problem-solving approaches

3. Demonstrate innovation in building the research evidence base and applying it through knowledge exchange and translation across all levels of policing.

15 bids representing 39 forces & BTP

Better Policing Collaborative

Exeter Policing, Evidence & Research Translation Project

Centre for Policing Research & Professional Development

Open Source Comms, Analytics & Research Centre

East Midlands Policing Academic Collaboration

Promoting Tipping Points for EBP: an International Centre

Teaching the workforce about RCTS

Action Learning Plus

University of Exeter

The University of Nottingham

The University of Northampton

University of Cambridge

University of Oxford

Cardiff University

Keele University
14 bids representing 39 forces & BTP

- Memory evidence in rape & serious sexual offences
- Developing Restorative Policing
- Public Protection & Crime Prevention
- Mental Health
- Policing Hate Crime
- Improving Investigation of Cyber enabled crime
- Enhancing police responses to child sexual exploitation

Colleges/Universities involved:
- College of Policing
- City University London
- University of Bedfordshire
- Leeds Beckett University
- University of Sussex
- University of York
Different types of partnerships

1) Cooperation
   • Short-term and informal partnerships

2) Coordination
   • More formal partnerships that centre on a specific project or goal. The partnership ends with the conclusion of the project.

3) Collaboration
   • Formalized long-term partnerships where police agencies and researchers work together on multiple projects over time.
Building Partnerships...

Common Vision

Flexibility

Leadership & Senior Support

Impact

Trust

Compatible Partners

Channels of communication

Management

Respect for Cultural Differences
“The EMPAC fellowship scheme enabled me to carry out research into my area of interest - supporting and identifying victims of modern slavery. I partnered with academics specialising in modern slavery and victim support. They guided me through the whole process, from deciding how best to collect my evidence, how to select my participants, and how to analyse the results. The experience has resulted in a piece of research which I hope can inform how we work with partner agencies to assist victims of this abhorrent crime. I would strongly encourage more frontline officers to undertake academic research - if you have recognised there is a problem which needs addressing then you are in a strong place to solve it. Everybody should take responsibility in shaping policing for the future.”

Amy Rutland, Temporary Detective Constable, Leicestershire Police, EMPAC PKF Collaboration
Building Partnerships....

Common Vision  Flexibility  Leadership & Senior Support

Impact  Trust  Compatible Partners

Channels of communication  Management  Respect for Cultural Differences
“Three months as Senior Practitioner Fellow with the Open University’s Centre for Policing Research and Learning (CPRL) taught me many things, not least that despite the chasm of differences between law enforcement and academia the two can work shoulder to shoulder on key research. This is of course dependent on the spirit of the people involved, their dedication to the cause and willingness to learn from each other, which was achieved with gusto in this union. In a nutshell, CPRL does what it says on the tin and more. The opportunity has forged stronger links between our organisations and more collaborations are now flourishing, not to mention the relationships it has afforded us with various police forces. Likewise the research I was able to conduct has provided the beginnings of an evidence base to otherwise unexplored work and been extremely well received and useful to the NCA.”

Jane Birkett, Senior Officer, National Crime Agency, The Open University PKF Collaboration
Building Partnerships....

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- Flexibility
- Leadership & Senior Support
- Impact
- Compatible Partners
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- Channels of communication
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Building Partnerships....
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“The work we have been fortunate to conduct with higher education and private companies, because of the PKF has been invaluable. We have managed to better understand the ethical principles of our workforce and produce extremely innovative and practical learning and development solutions. I know for certain that it would have been incredibly difficult to foster these relationships without the PKF”.

Detective Inspector Eric Halford, Lancashire Constabulary, The Open University PKF Collaboration
“The ExPERT project played a vital role in delivering an evidence-based initiative called #RU2DRUNK. Without the financial and academic support from project ExPERT the trials undertaken in Dorset Police would not have been possible. The #RU2DRUNK trial in Dorset contributed towards the growing plethora of evidence-based initiatives supported within Dorset Police. As a result of the trial police and academics have built lasting working relationships and continue to work alongside each other supporting future projects.”

Holly Damen, Temporary Sergeant, Dorset Police, ExPert PKF Collaboration
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“We are shaping our organisation to be much more about early intervention, prevention...What are the critical life events for children as they’re developing and growing within their family setting and how those adverse childhood experiences might ultimately be predictors for them being recidivist offenders or long term victims for the future so the academic rigour that comes with the involvement of the team from the University of Birmingham and the Better Policing Collaborative, the fact that we do use evidence in our decision making actually gives us some confidence that the decisions as leaders we’re making are the right decisions. The Police Knowledge Fund by facilitating such work has helped enormously towards shaping the collaboration”.

Chief Superintendent Chris Johnson, West Midlands Police, Better Policing Collaborative
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Ending the Dialogue of the Deaf?

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Any Questions?

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