

Whodunit – do detectives still have the skills they need to answer that eternal question?

Providing empirically-founded insights into the professional world of criminal investigation.

Key details

Lead institution	Liverpool John Moores University
Principal researcher(s)	Dr Adrian James a.d.james@ljmu.ac.uk
Police region	North West
Collaboration and partnership	The project is supported by Chief Constable Jason Hogg (Professionalising Investigations Programme national lead), Lincolnshire Police, and Jo Taylor (Investigations lead, College of Policing).
Level of research	Professional/work based
Project start date	January 2023
Date due for completion	December 2024

Research context

Against the background of a national crisis in detective skills that is severely limiting the ability of the police to meet the needs of victims (HM Inspectorate of Constabulary 2016 and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services 2022), this research question is, 'Do detectives have the skills and resources they need to meet the normative expectations of victims and communities?'

Data will be collected via national survey and face-to face interviews with policy makers and practitioners.

With the support for the project from the Police Service of England & Wales (PSEW), and the College of Policing, this research aims to critically assess investigators' skills, national investigative policy and the extent to which existing structures and policies support and encourage investigator development.

The aim is to use the knowledge and experience gained from this study to stimulate the debate on investigation with policymakers and to build an evidence-based knowledge. This will inspire new ways of working and improve the quality of the investigative services the police deliver to victims and to communities.

Research methodology

The researcher is using the following research instruments:

1. national online survey
2. semi-structured interviews with detectives and other investigators

Interim reports or publications

Adrian James and others. 2024. ['Whodunnit? Do officers have the skills they need to answer that eternal question?'](#), Liverpool Centre for Advanced Policing Studies.

Research participation

The survey will be open to all detectives and investigators.

Tags

- [Professional training](#)
- [Investigation](#)