

Exploring the impact of the education-led professionalisation agenda in policing – professional identity and engagement with continuing professional development (CPD)

Exploring the impact of the education-led professionalisation of policing on the professional identity of existing police officers and the effect on officers' professional development.

Key details

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Police region	South East
Level of research	PhD
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Research context

This study uses Bourdieu's theoretical framework (Bourdieu, 1977) to explore the impact of the current education-led professionalisation work taking place in policing on existing officers.

The launch of the policing education qualifications framework (PEQF) by the College of Policing in 2016 sought to raise the level of educational training and learning new officers receive, bringing them to level six undergraduate degree (College of Policing, 2020).

While it has not been unknown for police and universities to work together to provide degree courses, this is the first time that it has been done on a service-wide scale (Bryant and others,

2013).

Change is a stressful undertaking for individuals who experience it. It can impact upon and undermine many elements of their social understanding. Changing goalposts, challenging core assumptions and reassessing elements that are considered to be of importance and worth within their social field can all impact on how individuals make sense of their world (Brown, 1995). The impact can be either positive or negative – the success of the change depends on the engagement and participation of those on whom change is being imposed (Marks and Sklansky, 2012).

Aim

This study aims to explore:

1. the relationship between the education-led professionalisation agenda and officers' own sense of their own professional identity
2. the relationship between professional identity and professional development and workplace learning
3. the impact that the education-led professionalisation agenda has on the respondent's participation in professional development and learning

Research methodology

Formed of a small-scale initial study followed by a larger-scale study and using a comparative case study approach, these studies will explore the impact of the professionalisation of policing through the lens of the macro (the service), meso (the force) and micro (team and individual) fields within policing.

Each of the studies is based around a single force that has been identified based on the date of their adoption of one of the new PEQF entry routes into policing. The three forces selected represent an early, mid and late adopter of the new entry routes and are of comparable size and police a similar force area.

Focusing on uniformed police constables that did not join policing via any of the new PEQF entry routes, the data collection takes place in two stages.

1. Stage one uses a survey.
2. Stage two follows up using semi-structured interviews.