

Evaluation of vulnerability in custody training

Impact assessment of a training package that seeks to improve the consistency of custody training, focusing on vulnerability and risk.

Key details

Lead institution	College of Policing
Principal researcher(s)	Chris Price and Rebecca Bruce-Smith chris.price@college.police.uk
Police region	West Midlands
Level of research	Professional/work based
Project start date	January 2024
Date due for completion	June 2025

Research context

The [2017 Angiolini report](#) examined deaths and serious incidents in police custody and highlighted the treatment of vulnerable people in custody suites. In response, the College of Policing consulted with chief constables and produced the 'vulnerability in custody' training package. This training seeks to improve the consistency and quality of custody training, focusing on identifying vulnerability and managing risk. It addresses the recommendations made in the Angiolini report.

The training launched in September 2022. Trainers from more than 30 forces attended a 'train the trainer' event enabling them to deliver the learning, either in a classroom or [immersive-learning Hydra](#) setting.

The College is now undertaking an evaluation of the vulnerability in custody training. We seek to understand and robustly identify any potential impact the training has on custody practice.

Lessons from the evaluation will help us:

- understand if any improvements need to be made to the training product
- compare the effectiveness of classroom and Hydra training delivery methods

This will allow us to better support forces, boost core skills and support career-long professional development in policing.

Research methodology

The evaluation is expected to involve survey, interviews, analysis and collection of data.

Knowledge and attitudinal surveys

Training participants will be invited to complete a knowledge and attitudinal survey at three points in time.

1. Before training.
2. Immediately after training.
3. Three months after training.

The survey will be undertaken in all forces delivering the training from the start of the evaluation. The evaluation will aim to include a comparison group of those not scheduled to receive training.

Qualitative interviews

There will be interviews with participants including:

- training participants
- force trainers
- force heads of custody
- healthcare or other professionals working in custody

Analysis of custody records

We will analyse a sample of anonymised custody records, taken from before and after the receipt of training. The sample will include records prepared by those who have received Hydra training,

classroom training and a comparison group. An analysis framework will be developed to assess the quality of decision making, risk identification and management of vulnerable detainees (across a range of vulnerabilities).

Analysis of custody interactions on CCTV

A sample of anonymised custody records will be selected to review the accompanying CCTV footage of 'booking in' interactions after the completion of training. This analysis will triangulate and complement that of the custody records.

Collection of force monitoring and management data

Secondary data will be requested from participating forces to give a detailed picture of training implementation and the custody environment (for example, demand and demographics).

References

Angiolini E. (2017). '[Report of the Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody](#)' [internet]. GOV.UK.

Tags

- [Vulnerable people](#)
- [Detention and custody](#)