Improving representation and inclusion in serious and organised crime policing roles

Developing a mature understanding of diversity within serious and organised crime (SOC) roles to embrace surface-level characteristics and understand hidden-level diversity.

Key details

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Police region	South East
Level of research	Professional/work based
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Research context

The legitimacy of policing is essential in keeping communities safe. Despite sustained and multi-seated initiatives to increase representation of established diversity characteristics progress is glacial. The challenge is significantly more acute in specialist roles tackling serious organised crime (SOC).

Our research takes the existing challenge of insufficient knowledge of the enablers and deterrents of SOC work and adds:

- recommendations of the government's SOC strategy of a focus on internal representativeness

- the evidence that a focus on surface-level diversity characteristics is insufficient to enhance diversity

From that standpoint, our project uniquely aims to consider diversity in its widest form in order to:

- develop new knowledge of the enablers and deterrents of moving to SOC roles
- provide evidence of the perceptions of inclusivity of SOC teams
- through network analysis, explore how the interplay of network ties and diversity factors (both surface-level and deep-level) impacts the likelihood of successful or unsuccessful transitions into SOC roles
- provide innovative recruitment and retention policy recommendations to enhance the representativeness of SOC policing
- through a comprehensive dissemination strategy, share learning across all forces and national policing bodies

Insufficient knowledge of the enablers and deterrents of SOC work and a lack of diversity within SOC roles needs attention. When our research successfully delivers this new knowledge, it will be possible to not only measure surface-level and deep-level diversity characteristics within SOC but also to map related network variables.

This will make the pathways to these roles more visible and reproducible across forces, thereby enhancing future equality monitoring efforts. The measurement of social network characteristics will also enable a more innovative approach to:

- recruitment into specialist roles
- evidence to inform retention policies
- the implementation of further training and/or positive action

Research methodology

This research uses an exploratory sequential mixed-methods research design, with the results from each workstream informing the design and direction of the next stage. This approach of data integration allows the examination of contextual factors such as culture, perceptions and beliefs qualitatively and then to develop quantitative measures.

- Workstream one: landscape scanning – collection/analysis of data from 43 forces, rapid evidence assessment.

- Workstream two: qualitative analysis – semi structured interviews across four forces.
- Workstream three: social network analysis (SNA) – mapping the professional relationships within the policing community, highlighting influential nodes and interactions related to transitions into SOC roles in relation to deep-level diversity factors identified in workstream one.
- Workstream four: sharing and dissemination.

Tags

- Diversity and inclusion