19/12/2025

Evaluation and implementation of decision-support tool for identification and management of risk in non-convicted RASSO perpetrators

Evaluation and implementation of decision-support tool for identification and management of risk in non-convicted RASSO perpetrators

Project involving the implementation and evaluation of a structured decision-support framework developed to identify and manage risk in non-convicted rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO) perpetrators.

Key details

Lead institution	Bournemouth University
Principal researcher(s)	Margaret Hardiman (Bournemouth University), DCI Jonathan Rees (Dyfed-Powys Police), Pippa Greggory (National Crime Agency), Dr Kari Davies (Bournemouth University), Prof Miranda Horvath (University of Suffolk) and Syeda Kazmi (Bournemouth University) mhardiman@bournemouth.ac.uk
Police region	South East
Collaboration and partnership	Project led by Heddlu Dyfed-Powys Police (HDPP) with formal support from the National Crime Agency (NCA) in collaboration with Bournemouth University and the University of Suffolk. This project has been funded by the Police STAR Fund.
Level of research	Professional/work based
Project start date	April 2024

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Date due for completion	March 2025

Research context

Identifying and managing rape and serious sexual offence (RASSO) perpetrator risk is crucial to policing. Previous research found low conviction rates for RASSO perpetrators, despite 25% of perpetrators being named in previous sex offences (OSB 2022). The use of alternative disruption methods like civil orders are also currently under-utilised.

Previous work with Heddlu Dyfed-Powys Police (HDPP) established the need for a tool that helps officers identify and manage risk in non-convicted RASSO perpetrators and better inform and encourage the use of different disruption options. For this tool to be successfully implemented, we now need to evaluate it and understand how other forces can use it.

Aims

This project builds on a previous year of Police STAR funding that enabled us to to achieve our two main aims:

1. build an initial version of the tool
2. conduct analyses of the tool's perceived utility by HDPP officers

This year we sought to:

- test the framework's efficacy
- understand the framework's synergies with other, newly implemented risk management initiatives in force
- pilot the tool in HDPP and review implementation

Research methodology

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This project involved multiple strands that encompassed the following research methodologies.

Strand 1 – embed

A critical part of tool development before wider launch is the testing of reliability, validity and utility.

- Inter-rater reliability testing (ask officers to review the same set of cases and compare the risk ratings generated and the interventions recommended).
- Indicative validity testing (develop a gold standard review, test tool against historic cases).
- Utility testing (via two surveys get feedback on the framework, to understand whether it is 'user-friendly').

Strand 2 – evolve

Understanding the tool's synergies with other initiatives in force.

- Review documentation about other HDPP initiatives.
- Engage in workshops and train sessions with officers involved in these initiatives, to understand the effect this new tool may have on the force and force practice.
- Hold talks with key HDPP stakeholders to understand how the tool may affect the force at strategic level.

Strand 3 – engage

Rollout of the tool in HDPP, reviewing implementation.