

Public and personal safety training (PPST): An observational evaluation of training models and operational outcomes

Observational evaluation of public and personal safety training (PPST) across forces using linked training and use-of-force data to examine how operational outcomes vary with time since training and delivery model.

Key details

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Police region	West Midlands
Level of research	Professional/work based
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Research context

Public and personal safety training (PPST) is a core component of officer safety and operational effectiveness within policing. It is designed to equip officers with the skills, judgement and confidence required to manage conflict, use force proportionately and minimise harm to themselves and the public. Despite its importance, there is limited empirical evidence on how different PPST delivery models influence operational outcomes over time, particularly in relation to the potential for skills fade between training episodes.

The PPST national trial has been established to address this evidence gap. It brings together data from multiple police forces to examine how training frequency and delivery model are associated with real-world use-of-force (UoF) outcomes. Forces are delivering PPST using one of several models, including:

- annual refresher training
- biennial refresher training
- a split delivery model

Alongside this, linked administrative data are being collected on training records and UoF incidents, supplemented by officer surveys capturing confidence, experience and self-reported application of skills.

The primary aim of the evaluation is to assess how operational outcomes vary with time since PPST training. Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether outcomes such as injury, use of specific tactics and complaints are associated with the recency of training. A secondary objective is to explore differences in outcomes across training delivery models, recognising that these comparisons are observational and not based on random allocation.

The evaluation is designed to provide robust, decision-relevant evidence to inform future PPST policy and delivery. Findings will be interpreted cautiously, acknowledging the limitations inherent in observational data, and will contribute to a stronger evidence base on training effectiveness and officer safety.

Research methodology

The evaluation uses a multi-site observational cohort design based on linked administrative data from participating police forces. The study combines retrospective baseline data with prospective quarterly data collection to examine how operational outcomes vary with time since public and personal safety training (PPST). As forces are not randomly assigned to training models, the design is quasi-experimental in nature and findings are interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

Data are collected from three primary sources:

- First, use-of-force (UoF) data are extracted from force systems, including information on incident date, type of force used and outcomes, such as officer and public injury and complaints.
- Second, PPST training records provide information on officers' training dates, delivery model and outcomes (for example, pass or fail). These datasets are linked using officer identifiers, allowing calculation of time since the most recent training at the point of each UoF incident.
- Third, officer surveys are administered immediately before and after training, with an optional follow-up at 12 months, capturing self-reported confidence, experience and application of skills.

The primary analytical approach examines associations between time since training and UoF outcomes. Incidents are grouped into time-since-training bands, and outcomes such as injury rates, complaint rates and use of tactics are compared descriptively across these groups. Where feasible, rates are standardised using estimates of the number of officers in each time band to account for variation in exposure.

As the dataset matures, multivariable regression models will be used to adjust for confounding factors and explore differences across training delivery models. All findings will be presented with appropriate caveats, reflecting the observational nature of the study and limitations in the underlying data.