

International Law Enforcement Information Exchange (iLeX) project

A UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship exploring information sharing between law enforcement and partner agencies, particularly in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Key details

Lead institution	Edge Hill University
Principal researcher(s)	Dr Becky Phythian phythiar@edgehill.ac.uk
Police region	North West
Collaboration and partnership	• NPCC Intelligence Portfolio • Prof Paul Taylor (Police Chief Scientific Advisor) • Dr Isabelle Bartkowiak-Theron (University of Tasmania) • Dr Scott Keay (Edge Hill University) • RUSI • CGI • Prof Eric Piza (Northeastern University) • Prof Laura Huey (Western University)
Level of research	Professional/work based
Project start date	October 2021
Date due for completion	May 2027

Research context

Background

Criminals increasingly exploit globalisation, technological advances and enhanced mobility to operate across physical and digital borders, often without the constraints faced by law enforcement agencies. As a result, traditional approaches to policing are no longer sufficient to address contemporary threats such as serious and organised crime.

Effective cross-border information exchange and multi-agency cooperation are central to preventative and proactive law enforcement strategies. While significant investment has been made internationally to improve intelligence sharing, coordinated policing operations and collaborative working arrangements, challenges continue to hinder the effective exchange of information. There remains limited independent evidence on what works, what barriers persist and how international law enforcement information sharing can be improved. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensuring law enforcement agencies can respond effectively to increasingly transnational and complex forms of criminal activity.

Aim

To critically assess how information can be effectively exchanged between law enforcement agencies, particularly in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, within the context of serious and organised crime.

Objectives

- Map existing international law enforcement information exchange processes, systems and models.
- Identify barriers and facilitators to efficient information sharing.
- Develop, assess and refine conceptual frameworks to support information exchange between international law enforcement agencies.

Research methodology

Various data collection techniques are adopted, including interviews, surveys, multi agency workshops, participant observations, case studies, police system usage data and FOI datasets. Quantitative and qualitative analyses are used.

Interim reports or publications

Kirby S and Phythian R. (2025). [Does information communication technology facilitate or solve crime? Exploring the experience of law enforcement practitioners in three countries](#). Policing: An International Journal, volume 48, issue 5, pages 1069–1082.

Phythian R and Kirby S. (2022), [What does the UK Police National Database tell us about the future of police intelligence?](#) Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice, volume 17, article paac074.

Phythian R and Kirby S. (2024). [Intelligence-led policing in the 21st Century: How increased mobility requires new paradigms of information sharing](#). The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles, volume 98, issue 3, pages 601–617.

Phythian R and Kirby S. (2025). [Perception or reality? Data protection legislation as an impediment to law enforcement information sharing, and ways to prevent it](#). Police Practice and Research: An International Journal, volume 26, issue 5, pages 570–587.

Phythian R, Kirby S and Swan-Keig L. (2024). [Understanding how law enforcement agencies share information in an intelligence-led environment](#). Policing: An International Journal, volume 47, issue 1, pages 112–125.

Smith M and Phythian R. (2026). [Policing Eurovision: A Multi-Agency Approach](#). London: Routledge.

Additional resources

[Project website](#)

Research participation

Participants include practitioners from agencies including: ?UK police forces, National Crime Agency (NCA), Border Force, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), Counter Terrorism Policing, CGI, Trading Standards, FACT, Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU), Europol, International Crime Coordination Centre (ICCC), League Against Cruel Sports, World Horse Welfare, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), Liverpool City Council, Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP), Australia and New Zealand Police Advisory Agency (ANZPAA), Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC), Victoria Police, South Australia Police, Griffiths University, Australia Federal Police (AFP), Ontario Provincial Police, Toronto Police, Edmonton Police, Vancouver Police, Ottawa Police Service, Royal Canadian Mounted Police

(RCMP), CGI Canada, PRIMECorp and New Zealand Police.

If you are interested in participating or would like to know more about this project, please contact Becky at phythiar@edgehill.ac.uk.