

Research Symposium Report

DPP Headquarters, Llangunnor, Carmarthen.

6 October 2017

Introduction

The Commissioner introduced and chaired the seminar and explained his view that research helps us to understand whether policing activities are effective and efficient. He considered it contributed to providing robust evidence-based decision making on policing services.

The 5 speakers provided each provided very specific inputs based on their research studies. These were of very diverse topics, with the common theme that they had relevance for policing in Dyfed Powys.

Two personal observations are: (a) policing is one of the most researched occupational groups around, though it so diverse that it is still possible for a researcher to define a suitable area; and (b) that DP Police has supported staff for advanced study and this appears very worthwhile for professional development, deeper policing knowledge and improved decision-making.

Presentations

CI Steve Thomas. Conducted research on **The Force Control Centre**. This receives 27,000 calls during a year and assigns dispatch times to calls. The Centre has mainly civilian police staff and there is a steady turnover as it is seen as a route into PCSO or PC roles. The focus of research was on the Vulnerability of the caller. Vulnerability he defined as people who are unable to take care / protect themselves from harm. This he viewed as important as there were relatively few police supervisors and the decision on the appropriate dispatch depended on an understanding of vulnerability. He sought to identify current practice, evaluate and make recommendations. His findings were: (a) 69% of respondents fully understood the definition; (b) there was a difference in expectation between police staff and officers; (c) there was peer pressure in autonomy in decision making; (d) consistent refresher training would be beneficial; and (e) an improvement in IT systems would be advantageous.

Gareth Norris (Aberystwyth University) reported on his work on **The Business of Farm Crime**. He explained that the biggest area where crime was under-reported is Farm Crime. His aim was to understand the extent, effects and responses to farm crime. He reported on the scale of Farm Crime in Wales and that the largest categories were Agricultural Vehicle Theft, 4X4 Theft and livestock theft of cattle and sheep. There were also other categories that are reported by the NFU, such as fly-tipping and theft of gates etc. A key point he made was that the impact on a particular farm business can be substantial and long-lasting. He undertook survey work to understand the relationship between farm businesses and police. He found that: (a) the reporting of farm business crime is high, but the chances of successful prosecution was low; (b) criminal activity was often organised and from outside the community; (c) 47% of respondents had been victims of crime; and (d) 85% thought farm crime was on the rise.

David Morgan (DPP) addressed the topic; **Does the training provided to DPP student officers in relation to mental health meet the required learning requirement?** He explained a systematic approach to a small sample size of 24 officers, before and after Mental Health training. He made certain conclusions; (a) Mental Health first aid is focused more towards the practicalities on operational policing; (b) mixed learning methodologies including e-learning would be beneficial; (c) more training is provided; (d) training includes case studies; and (e) recruiting processes for PCOs and PCs are reviewed to ensure relevant MH interview questions are included.

Rebecca Zerk (Aberystwyth University) worked on **Victims Perspectives of the Police Response to Domestic Violence**. She cited an HMIC 2014 report that observed that the DPP service was simply not good enough; victims were placed at unnecessary risk and it was not recognising domestic abuse as a serious crime. She undertook a small (circa 15) structured interviews. Key findings were that victims experienced coercive control; felt isolated, alone and scared; experienced lack of control; with increased isolation and

fear. She described an empowerment model in which the complainant was believed and taken seriously. There ought to be training for frontline officers to recognise the nature of abuse, the dynamic nature of risk and ensure that victims are at the centre of decision making.

Bob Barker (Drugaid) presented on the topic of **Drug Consumption Rooms: A Welsh Response**. He has completed a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship to study Drug Consumption Rooms. He provided a noteworthy context on the scale of the problem with the UK accounting for one-third of all Drug Related Deaths in Europe, With 271 deaths in Wales (2016) up from 205 (2015). In Swansea there were 67 deaths and NPT 46 deaths i n 2016. He explained the benefits of dedicated Drug Consumption Rooms, not simply as a room but with a range of advisory services that can serve to enhance harm reduction.

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