

Acknowledgements

The Organising Committee acknowledges the generous support of ACPOS and the Scottish Funding Council, who fund the Scottish Institute for Policing Research, as well as the support received from our Principal Annual Lecture Sponsor, Alpha Translating & Interpreting Services Ltd. We also thank the University of Strathclyde for hosting this event.



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SIPR Annual Lecture

sponsored by ALPHA Translating & Interpreting Services Ltd.

Chair: Peter Wilson (Chair, SIPR Advisory Board)

18.00 Welcome, Professor Philip Winn (Deputy Principal, University of Strathclyde)
Introduction: Professor Nicholas Fyfe (Director, SIPR)

18.10 Professor Nick Tilley (Jill Dando Institute of Crime, UCL) 'Discretion and Discipline in Policing'

19.00 Q & A Session
Vote of Thanks, CC Pat Shearer (President, ACPOS)

19.30 Wine Reception
SPONSOR: Alpha Translating & Interpreting Services Ltd. Selma Rahman, Business Manager (Public Sector)

20.00 Depart

SIPR Contact details

The Scottish Institute for Policing Research
School of Social & Environmental Science
University of Dundee
Dundee DD1 4HN
Scotland

t: 01382 384425 / 384205
f: 01382 388588

www.siprac.uk

The Fourth SIPR Annual Lecture
by Professor Nick Tilley

Discretion and Discipline in Policing

30th September 2010
University of Strathclyde, Glasgow



Alpha

Principal Annual Lecture Sponsor



Alpha Translating & Interpreting Services Ltd is delighted with its continuing association with SIPR and its Annual Lecture as Principal Annual Lecture Sponsor.

‘Discipline & Discretion: the role of discipline and discretion in delivering an improvement agenda’

Alpha appreciates this third opportunity to engage with SIPR and your Guest Speaker this year: Professor Nick Tilley.

Alpha’s expertise, based on specialisms in linguistics, crosses varying sectors including the criminal justice sector, ngo sector and ‘marginalized communities’. These specialisms and broad base of engagements directly includes Scottish forces and ‘communities’ and ensures our acute awareness of two aspects of ‘discretion’.

The first is the realization by the police for the need to engage, enthuse and gain the trust of all communities. Forces across Scotland have scrutinized and changed their interaction accordingly: not least through their discreet, judicious commitment to raise the levels of trust and engagement between communities, local forces and the police in general.

The second directly impacts on our service provision namely: the discretion of linguists when dealing with you and the individual requiring linguistic support. Equally then, discretion for linguists is not an option: it is a steadfast requirement, built into the Codes & Policies we operate, and as complimentary to the Lord Advocate’s Guidelines.

Irrespective of enforcing codes and practices, we continue to believe in two central themes:

Firstly, a ‘one-size-fits-all’ service cannot meet the requirements of different clients - even police forces sharing experiences and commonalities - when those ‘requirements’ are defined exclusively by costs. In the current cost cutting context, cost cutting must maintain quality, secure savings but not result in deterioration. In the current climate, should ‘different clients’ now consider a ‘joint approach’?

Secondly, Alpha continues to assert that a service will only be driven up, maintained and sustained when it is both informed and appropriate, ranging across costs, education and training, thus enforcing the discipline of professionalism in linguistics. But that returns us to the quandary: are police requirements (linguistics) informed, up to date, and set in the appropriate ‘context’, namely beyond the confines of ‘costs’?

Alpha continues to regret the lack of Scottish wide basic disciplines: recognized and adhered to, regarding the educational requirements, cpd, and professional scrutiny of linguists. We will continue to raise the issue of required change as an obligation to clients to ensure a professional service that does not stagnate but demonstrates improvement.

Alpha would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the organisers and Professor Nick Tilley, and to affirm our continued support to SIPR and Scotland’s police forces.

Alpha Translating & Interpreting Services Ltd.
18 Haddington Place Edinburgh EH4 4AF
t 0131 558 9003 f 0131 620 3215
e enquiry@alphatrans.co.uk
www.alphatrans.co.uk

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The Fourth SIPR Annual Lecture

NICK TILLEY



Nick Tilley is a professor at the Department of Security and Crime Science, University College London. He is also emeritus professor of sociology at Nottingham Trent University. He spent 1991 to 2003 seconded to the research department of the Home Office. His research interests lie in policing, crime prevention and programme evaluation methodology. Current projects relate to homicide and organised crime, the international crime drop, and alcohol related crime and disorder in and around football matches. He is author or editor of some ten books and around 150 chapters, journal articles and published research reports. His most recent books include Crime Prevention (Willan 2009), Evaluating Crime Reduction Initiatives (Criminal Justice Press, 2009), and Situational Prevention of Organised Crime (Willan 2010). He was awarded an OBE for services to Policing and Crime Reduction in 2005 and elected to the Academy of the Social Sciences in 2009.

Discretion and Discipline in Policing

Drawing its inspiration from some developments in public health in the United States, the starting point of the lecture is the need for an improvement agenda to infuse policing. The particular focus will be on the role of discipline and discretion in delivering an improvement agenda. The key question is, ‘What forms of discretion and discipline create what patterns of improvement or deterioration in what contexts?’

Notwithstanding the inexorability of discretion, there are easily recognised and frequently noted risks in its exercise. A police officer who has to exercise discretion may be tempted to abuse it, may have superiors who are apt to turn a blind eye to it if it helps achieve their objectives, will often make their decisions in less than ideal circumstances, and will rarely be able in full confidence to know what the upshot will be. But despite its problems, police officers for the most part seem to enjoy the discretion they have and see it as one of the rewards of the job.

In relation to better rules or better discretion as the better routes to improvement, the following general principles seem to me to be important starting points: For some purposes rules have to be explicit and to be followed. Those relating to the collection, non-contamination, continuity in, storage of and analysis of physical evidence comprise significant examples. For some purposes it seems likely that discretion will be important, for example in relation to methods of dealing with so-called ‘wicked issues’: those for which there is no existing, standard, tried and proven general response. Having stressed the need for discretion and for a knowledge-base of tested theory to inform its use, it has to be recognised that the police often have to act in conditions of substantial uncertainty.

Issues of discretion and discipline in effecting improvements in policing are important, and high levels of discretion will always be needed for some areas of policing. Discretion needs to be as informed as possible, and indeed the effectiveness of policing may be improved by developing more informed default routine behaviours.