

Researching the future of local policing in Scotland: a Police Community Relations sandpit

Wednesday 24th June 2015, 10.00 am – 3.00 pm
Edinburgh Law School, University of Edinburgh

Local policing lies at the heart of the legislation that created Police Scotland and is fundamental to the way the police service interacts with the communities it serves. Police Scotland's Strategic Planning and Development Unit, in consultation with SIPR, has now conducted a review across the organisation about what issues should be given priority for research requests at a local level. This exercise has informed the key themes that will form the basis of this Police Community Relations sandpit.

The sandpit has two main **objectives**:

- Following a period in which the new Police Scotland has been bedding in, it is about renewing and refreshing relationships and networks between researchers, police officers and partner practitioners who share interests in local policing and police community relations. It is also about creating new relationships and welcoming new people who wish to become involved in the network.
- It is about starting academic-police-practitioner conversations around issues of mutual interest in order to set an agenda for future collaborative working that is needed to enhance and support local policing in Scotland. To that end, it is proposed that the sandpit should not be a talking shop but that participants should use it to identify topics for further ongoing collaboration and will be invited to submit proposals for research projects to be funded from a Police Community Relations Collaborative Project Fund (see below).

The two main themes that were consistently identified as priority areas for research by Police Scotland Business Areas were:

- **Multi-agency collaboration and community policing** (specific topics within this included: effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements; opportunities for collaborative working around deprivation and anti-social behaviour through Community Planning; the Midlothian Family Resilience Project; embedding a culture of community/local policing; the impact of total place initiatives on community engagement; delivery of services to those with mental health issues; effectiveness of Town Safety accreditation schemes; and, best practice within community safety hubs)
- **Alcohol, drugs and prevention** (specific topics within this included: the effect of licencing on local communities and hate crime; improved data recording and sharing amongst public services to combat alcohol-related harms; links between alcohol, violence and anti-social behaviour; and effectiveness of Alcohol Brief interventions on behaviours of problem drinkers)

A linking theme across all of these research priorities is **partnership working**.

The sandpit: approach and organisation

The sandpit is open to all members of the SIPR network and all practitioners and organisations with an interest in local policing. The idea is for the agenda to be open, and for there to be maximum opportunities for similarly minded participants to share ideas.

If you would like to participate, please register using the SIPR website at:

http://www.sipr.ac.uk/events/sandpit_240615.php or contact Tim Heilbronn
(t.d.heilbronn@dundee.ac.uk)

Be sure to include your **institutional affiliation** and if there is a **particular issue or topic in which you have an interest**. All participants will be asked to provide a **5 minute 'pitch'** of their field of interest/expertise and/or of any specific research ideas that they would actively like to share and engage potential collaborators with. In order to assist with the organisation of the event around participants' own contributions we urge you to *inform organisers at least 48 hrs in advance if it becomes apparent that you will not be able to attend*.

Police Community Relations Collaborative Project Funding

As noted, a key objective of the sandpit is that it should stimulate connections and ideas that can be taken forward and actioned beyond the sandpit itself. It is envisaged that there will be tangible outcomes and outputs that result from the sandpit. SIPR will award Police Community Relations Collaborative Project Funding grants to support ongoing activity that emerges from the sandpit. An in-exhaustive list of the kinds of thing that could be supported through these grants includes:

- A systematic review of evidence on a given topic & a process for promoting its use
- Series of workshops designed to disseminate existing research and/or forge links between different partners
- Practitioner fellowships and/or support for internships across agencies
- Small-scale collaborative research projects
- Scoping work designed as a precursor to a larger external funding bid or collaborative research studentship application
- Development of student-led engagement/research work with the SIPR community

Police Community Relations Collaborative Project Funding grants will be valued at up to £5,000. Grant application forms will be available through the SIPR website from the end of June 2015. The forms will set out clearly the criteria that applications will be expected to meet. Applications should be submitted to Tim Heilbronn, SIPR Business & KT Manager (t.d.heilbronn@dundee.ac.uk) by 31st August 2015, these timelines being designed to allow potential collaborators to work together on proposals following the sandpit. All applications will be reviewed by the SIPR Executive Committee and awards are expected to be announced in October 2015.

Going forward: promoting ongoing conversations about local policing

The sandpit is not being envisaged as a one-off event. Rather it is the beginning of active re-engagement around local policing and police community relations following the period of substantial organisational reform. Going forward from the sandpit itself it is hoped that participants will have made connections and/or developed concrete ideas that can be developed and used to create new research and knowledge exchange activities, either through SIPR funding or other means. Further events will be run through SIPR to maintain this momentum. Feedback will be sought from participants in order to guide and shape the development of future meetings, whether they be future sandpits or other kinds of interaction. We hope that participants will want to be involved in shaping this work.

As an on-going means of interacting and connecting with one another, and sharing the outputs from events such as this and other instances of Police Community Relations working, we will also be encouraging participants to keep up to date with the SIPR blog (<https://blog.dundee.ac.uk/sipr/about-this-blog/>). We will also be giving guidance on how to become involved so that you can share your practice and your research and maintain connections made through SIPR.

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