**PDRA Research Project**

Local policing in Scotland

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**Introduction:**

Michael Banton's study (1964) of The Policeman in the Community is widely regarded as the first academic study of policing to be carried out in Britain. Part of that study was a description of 24 hours in the working lives of police officers in an unnamed Scottish city, which can readily be identified as Edinburgh. This study of policing in a Scottish community remains not only a classic, but almost the only piece of research on local policing in Scotland. The purpose of the present project is to fill that gap in our understanding of what is involved in policing in Scottish communities at the local level at the beginning of the 21st century.

*Banton, M. (1964) The Policeman in the Community. London: Tavistock.*  
  
**Aim and Objectives**

To investigate local policing in three communities in Scotland in terms of police activity, policing priorities and public expectations.

* To establish the nature, range and extent of policing activities in local communities.
* To analyse findings in relation to current and potential models of community policing.
* To determine how local commanders decide upon priorities in local policing.
* To identify those factors which contribute to and/or constrain policing in local areas and to develop an understanding of how overall strategic objectives are implemented at community level.
* To determine how and to what extent local policing reflects the expectations of the local communities in which it takes place.
* To identify processes and models which can contribute to effective policing in local communities.

**Key findings:**

The 'Local Policing in Scotland' (LPS) project began in December 2008 with the aim of studying policing activity at the most local levels. Case study areas were chosen within three Scottish forces - Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, Grampian Police and Strathclyde Police - and the project focuses on a number of key elements: the nature of local policing activities as reported by police officers, the determination of policing priorities by police managers, and the role played by public expectations of policing in local communities.

During 2010 fieldwork was carried out in all three areas. Data collection took place in two sub-divisions, one in Dumfries and Galloway and one in Grampian. This included semi-structured interviews with local community and response officers as well as meetings with a wide range of police managers from sergeants to divisional commanders. In addition a number of focus groups were held with community representatives in order to identify their views on the delivery of local policing in these areas. Over the summer a return visit was made to Strathclyde to do a follow-up review on those aspects of the study concerned with the implementation of the force's Community Policing Model.

Preliminary feedback has been provided to all three forces on the initial review of the data and during 2011 further, more extensive analysis of this material will be undertaken in depth. The study is already beginning to identify significant themes, processes and models that can contribute to effective policing in local communities, and plans for the publication and dissemination of its findings within SIPR, to local forces and more widely in the national and international literature will also be put in place.

**Publications:**  
  
[**Local policing in Scotland**](https://web.archive.org/web/20180107094705/http:/www.sipr.ac.uk/downloads/AnnRep2011/Local_policing.pdf) (SIPR Annual Report, 2011)