

SUPPORTING INTERNATIONALLY
EXCELLENT, MULTI-DISCIPLINARY
POLICING RESEARCH TO ENABLE
EVIDENCE INFORMED POLICY
AND PRACTICE.



Scottish Institute for Policing Research

Annual Report and Accounts 2024/25
for the academic year ending 31 August 2025

**Annual Report and Accounts presented to the
SIPR Board of Governance 11 September 2025**



contents

DIRECTOR'S FAREWELL	5	PARTNERSHIPS	31
DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION	7	POLICE SCOTLAND	32
ABOUT SIPR.....	8	SPA.....	34
FINANCIAL SUMMARY	9	SPA FORENSIC SERVICES	35
Income.....	9	HMICS	36
Expenditure	10	SIPR is home to Scotland's only Policing Academic Centre of Excellence	37
HIGHLIGHTS 2024/25: OUR YEAR IN REVIEW	11	SPACE	37
Research Highlights	13	SPOTLIGHT ON EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS.....	38
Grants	13	INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE	39
Learning and Development Highlights	14	International Advisory Committee member Dr Ian Marder visits SIPR:	
Knowledge Exchange Highlights.....	15	Police Dialogue Project	41
SIPR Impact Awards.....	19	Developing strategic research priorities in the Policing and	
EVENT HIGHLIGHT - SIPR Networking Event: Applied Psychology in		Community Safety Authority	42
Policing Settings (APPS)	20	The Police University College of Finland	43
SIPR Engagement Event & James Smart Memorial Lecture	22	Examples of European engagement via SIPR.....	44
Neurodiversity and Policing Conference 12–13 February 2025 ,		OVERVIEW OF SIPR NETWORKS	46
Edinburgh Napier University	23	PUBLIC PROTECTION NETWORK	48
Policing, Public Health and Vulnerable People	24	Inaccessible Care: An International Forum on Sexual Assault Services in	
Neurodiversity in Policing – Knowledge Exchange	25	Rural Canada and Scotland	50
Policing, Public Health and Vulnerable People	26	EVIDENCE AND INVESTIGATION NETWORK	51
Reflections on SIPC 2025: The Future of Policing and Technology;		POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS NETWORK	54
Promise, Peril, and Pathways to Justice	28	ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK	56
National Arrest Referral Partnership Event.....	30	DEVELOPMENT	58



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: POLICING AND HEALTH, SAFETY

AND WELL-BEING 61

Highlights 62

The Global Law Enforcement and Public Health International conference 2025: Towards a Healthier and More Equitable State 64

Presenting CARE-D at LEPH2025: Scotland's Innovation in Dementia-Related Policing 66

Police Scotland Showcases Neurodiversity Work at LEPH 2025 67

Advancing Anti-Racism in Policing: A Systematic Review 68

Early Career Researcher Grant - The Criminal Exploitation of Victims of Modern Slavery: Comparing the Scottish and English & Welsh Responses 69

SILENT HARM: Exploring the barriers experienced by Deaf women who are domestic abuser survivors 70

New network focusing on emergency responses to substance use and mental health launched 71

Responsive Research Fund - Good Practice in Transfer of Care 72

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL POLICING 73

Highlights 74

Clarus: Update on a Horizon Europe project supported by SIPR 76

Re-imagining the Local Policing of Cybercrime 77

Showcasing ISEDA 'serious game' 78

TITLE?? 78

Dissemination of Investigating New Types of Engagement, Response and Contact Technologies (INTERACT) 79

Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Scotland: Shedding Light on a Hidden Crime 80

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: POLICING SYSTEMS CAPABILITY

AND RESILIENCE 81

Highlights 82

Contemporary ethical challenges faced by police officers in Scotland – A focus on Body Worn Video 84

The DEFINE Project 85

3PO Project comes to a close 86

The Tutor Constable System in Police Scotland: Improving capacity, capability and realising tangible improvements 87

Practitioner Fellowship 89

POSTGRADUATE COMMUNITY 90

Postgraduate Symposium 2025 90

British Society of Criminology Conference 2025 91

SIPR International Student Support 92

Development of an Evidence Based Structured Professional Judgement Risk Assessment Tool for Missing Person Investigations 93



director's farewell



Professor Liz Aston
SIPR Director
(Edinburgh Napier University)

LOOKING BACK 2024 - 2025

I'm pleased to say that my last year as SIPR Director has proved to be another busy and successful one. A key achievement has been securing a new UKRI funded Scottish Policing Academic Centre of Excellence (SPACE). Building on the SIPR model and led by four SIPR Universities, SPACE will enable access to £300k of funding for new research and knowledge exchange related to Safety, Prevention, Analytics, Confidence and Ethics.

Over the past year SIPR is pleased to have awarded three Policing Contemporary Social Harms and Challenges grants and two Responsive Research Fund projects. We also funded three recipients under our inaugural Early Career Researcher grants, two via the Leverage Fund, five via the Knowledge Exchange and Dissemination Fund and matched funded two PhD studentships.

With many SIPR grants from our last phase being completed we have published reports on various topics including anti-racism, workplace expectations and emotional labour in policing. We have supported a number of successful and high-profile events including our SIPR Engagement Event which featured Dr Alison Heydari, Director of National Police Race Action Plan, delivering the James Smart memorial lecture. The Scottish International Policing Conference on the future of policing and technology and the Postgraduate Symposium in May were a highlight in the calendar, providing an important opportunity for engagement and knowledge exchange.

Notably, the SIPR community is delivering impactful research, and we were delighted to recognise the work of Jemina Napier and colleagues on deaf women's access to support after experiencing domestic violence via the SIPR Impact Award, and

for Andy Tatnell to receive the SIPR Early Career Impact Award for his research on tutor constables. The impact of SIPR research has also been highly commended by external bodies.

SIPR's achievements are the result of the efforts of the leadership team and our wider SIPR members and partners, so thank you all for your hard work and I hope you enjoy reading our Annual Report.

RESEARCH:	UKRI funds for the Scottish Policing Academic Centre of Excellence; Award of SIPR Main Grants, Responsive Research Funds, Early Career Researcher Grants, and Leverage Funds.
KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE:	Publication of SIPR reports; Engagement Event and James Smart Lecture; Scottish International Policing Conference; SIPR Impact Awards; KE and Dissemination funds awarded.
LEARNING AND INNOVATION:	Award of two matched funded PhD studentships; PG Symposium.
PARTNERSHIPS:	Organisation of various knowledge exchange events with partners.

LOOKING BACK 2018 - 2025

As I reach the end of my seven-year term as Director of SIPR, we can be proud of what we have collectively achieved. We have developed a strategic plan and strategic research themes, introduced an annual planning process, secured new collaboration agreements (2019 and 2024), revised our website and annual report and grown our core staffing base. We have awarded numerous SIPR research grants, ran countless KE events (pivoting online during covid) and international conferences, supported impactful research and introduced Impact Awards. We have developed various new collaborations locally and internationally, introduced a Responsive Research Fund, an ECR grant scheme, a KE fund and a Leverage fund, and supported the generation of external funding culminating in the recent UKRI PACE award.

I would like to thank SIPR members, SPOCs, core SIPR staff, Associate Directors, policing partners, Executive Committee, Board of Governance and International Advisory Committee for their support in making all of this happen.

Of course, it has been hard work and there have been many challenges along the way. However, I have enjoyed so much about the role, particularly networking and connecting people across policing and academia, nationally and internationally. Supporting the growth of policing research through SIPR grants and facilitating the sharing of knowledge across academia, policy and practice has been extremely rewarding. It has been fulfilling to help create a sense of community amongst policing researchers and practitioners, and to contribute, even in some small way, to the development of the next generation of policing scholars.

When it comes to policing research there is always more to do and plenty of room for everyone to contribute. Some key positives about SIPR are its collaborative ethos, interdisciplinarity and its focus on research that shapes policy and practice. It is tempting to be critical and focus on the challenges of running police-academic partnerships, but we must be proud of what we have and remember that SIPR is the envy of many international colleagues.

I'm delighted to be leaving SIPR in Andrew's capable hands and I look forward to seeing it develop over the coming years. I'm excited to be leading SPACE and taking on a new role as Head of Impact at Edinburgh Napier University.





director's introduction



Dr Andrew Wooff
SIPR Director
(from 1 August 2025)

I am delighted to write this section of the report in my capacity as the new Director of SIPR, a role I took up on 1st August 2025. Over the past 7 years, Professor Liz Aston has been a visionary and inspirational Director of SIPR, developing, growing and enhancing SIPR. Through these developments, SIPR's national and international reputation have helped it secure a place as one of the world's leading police-academic partnerships. I've been involved with SIPR since its inception and have seen first-hand the value of strong, collaborative partnerships between policing practitioners and academic researchers.

Over the years, I've been fortunate to work on a range of externally funded projects, including some funded by SIPR, and have engaged with national and international policing policy. I have co-led the Organisational Development network since 2023 and have represented SIPR across different forum and networks. I have therefore seen directly the ways in which SIPR has benefited research informed practice, responding to the needs of partners and supporting high-quality and independent research.

As I step into this new role, I look forward to building on SIPR's strong foundations and working with our partners to further strengthen and capture our research impact, support innovation in policing, and help shape a positive future for policing in Scotland and beyond. This is an exciting time to be taking on the Directorship, with Edinburgh Napier University being successful in gaining funding to lead the Scottish Policing Academic Centre of

Excellence (SPACE) which brings brings additional opportunities of research funding to SIPR members. Being mid-way through our collaborative agreement, I aim to build on the existing strategy and annual plan and I am in the process of engaging with key stakeholders to feed into the development of SIPR going forward.

I now invite you to read about some of the great work that has been going on across SIPR in 2024/25, and to share this report widely with your contacts. I encourage you to get in touch and tell us about ongoing work and opportunities in your organisation. I look forward to working collectively with you all as we develop SIPR, further enhancing capacity for independent and relevant policing research and knowledge exchange in Scotland and beyond.

about SIPR

"SIPR's mission is to support internationally excellent, multi-disciplinary policing research to enable evidence informed policy & practice."

theme 1:
Policing and
health, safety
and well-being



theme 2:
Technology
and digital
policing



theme 3:
Policing systems
capability and
resilience



OUR AIMS

1. RESEARCH



Facilitating internationally excellent, independent research of relevance to policing.

2. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE



Engaging in a range of knowledge exchange activities to strengthen the evidence base on which policy and practice are improved & developed nationally and internationally.

3. LEARNING AND INNOVATION



Nurturing a culture of learning & innovation.

4. PARTNERSHIPS



Promoting the development of national & international partnerships with researcher, practitioner and policing communities.

3 YEAR PLAN OBJECTIVES: Within these four aims we will strive to achieve the following:

- Supporting internationally excellent policing research under three strategic research themes in order to shape strategic focus and respond to external drivers.
- Enhance excellence of SIPR policing research through improvements to quality assurance processes.

- Facilitate events and enhance knowledge exchange tools with international reach.
- Support evidence to practice routes and develop pathways to enable and document impact.

- Nurture learning and innovation in policing organisations and universities, supporting the postgraduate community and the next generation of researchers and practitioners.
- Foster links between higher education and policing organisations and partners to support training, education, leadership, and innovation.

- Facilitate networking and collaboration between academics, practitioners, and policy makers nationally and internationally.
- Develop strategic links with new and existing partners.

financial summary

SIPR is the product of aspiration for genuine, meaningful, and sustained collaboration between academic policing research and practical policing.

It represents a true collaboration between academia and policing throughout Scotland with all members investing time, energy, and resources into ensuring our mutual success. As such, SIPR's core funding is provided from both Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority as well as contributions from our Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) members throughout Scotland. We are honoured to host the James Smart Memorial Lecture for which we receive annual sponsorship from the James Smart Memorial Fund. Owing to a delay in the engagement event for 2024, the James Smart Memorial Lectures for 2024 and 2025 were delivered as part of the SIPR Engagement Event in February 2025 and the Scottish International Policing Conference in May 2025.



James Smart Memorial Lecture

We are grateful to T/DAC Dr Alison Heydari, Programme Director for the Police Race Action Plan for her James Smart lecture "Building Police Legitimacy: The Time is Now" and to Special Agent Elliot Page for his presentation "Responding to the Global Challenge of Technology Enabled Crime" To read more about both of these, please see pages XX and XX respectively.

The institute received a total of £286,572 in funding from these members and via sponsorship in 2024/25.

Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY

University
of Dundee



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WEST OF SCOTLAND
UWS

University
of Glasgow

UNIVERSITY of
STIRLING



1495 UNIVERSITY OF
ABERDEEN

University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow

HERIOT WATT
UNIVERSITY

The Open
University



Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Abertay
University

RGU ROBERT GORDON
UNIVERSITY ABERDEEN

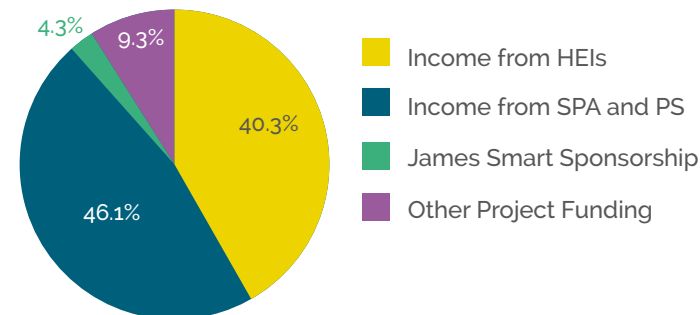
GCU
Glasgow Caledonian
University

POLICE
SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe

University of
St Andrews | FOUNDED 1413

SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY
UGHDARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

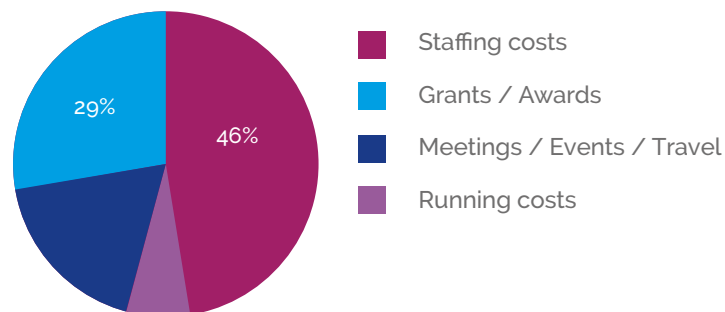
SIPR INCOME 2023/24



EXPENDITURE

2024/25 was the first of SIPR's Phase V (2024 – 2027). In this phase we are particularly focussing on streamlining funding opportunities in particular awarding several new and existing research and engagement grants. We have also seen a busy year with delivering several large-scale events including our 'Engagement Event' and the Scottish International Policing conference. SIPR has renewed its commitment to support learning and innovation particularly through our Early Career Researcher grants and match funded PhDs.

SIPR EXPENDITURE 2023/24



FUNDING ALLOCATIONS 2024/25

£88,000 allocated to RESEARCH

Funding was committed across three grant schemes including £40,000 to the Responsive Research Fund (supporting projects focussed on Transfer of care and Police Visibility); £40,000 for 3 research projects exploring Policing Contemporary Social Harms and Challenges. We have also allocated £8,000 through our "Think Big" research fund.

£39,000 allocated to KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

SIPR organised, delivered, and co-hosted several larger events this year including our first ever 'Engagement Event' in February and delivery of our Scottish International Policing Conference in May. We also held large symposia on diverse subjects including Applied Psychology in Policing Settings.

£45,000 allocated to Learning and Innovation

Not only did we launch the Early Career Grants this year, but we were also delighted to re-establish our SIPR match funded studentships. As well as hosting a successful Postgraduate Symposium.

£6,500 allocated to PARTNERSHIPS

SIPR continued to fund opportunities for partnership working including visitors travel grants.



highlights 2024/25: our year in review



Monica Craig

Knowledge Exchange
and Business Manager

In 2024 we started Phase V of SIPR which will cover 2024 – 2027. There has been so much change in just these short 12 months.

First, we are delighted to welcome Isla Kerr as the SIPR Communication and Engagement officer. Isla brings a wealth of experience in event management and digital communication which has been particularly welcome given the event-heavy year we have had (including, our engagement event, the applied psychology in policing settings, the symposia on arrest referrals and neurodiversity, and of course, our international conference).

Next, we have a real passing of the torch moment with Professor Liz Aston stepping down as SIPR Director. I genuinely cannot express how much working with Liz has meant to me. Those who have been fortunate enough to count Liz as a colleague will know that you will find it hard to find someone more dedicated, more passionate, and more supportive than her. She took on the leadership of SIPR 12 months before I joined in 2019 and, over these last 6 years, we have worked tirelessly together to constantly improve the institute – ensuring funding is competitive, open, and fair; embedding strategies to create and promote excellent research; and showcase Scottish policing research in an international forum. It has very rarely been easy, but looking back, I am immensely proud of the work we've achieved in this time. I know I can speak on behalf of so many people when I say thank you Liz for everything you've done.

However, I know we are in the safest of hands with Dr Andrew Wooff who was successfully appointed as the new SIPR Director. Andrew is no stranger to SIPR having been a recipient of SIPR funding and Associate Director, co-leading the Organisational Development network. Andrew will bring his significant leadership experience to support key strategic objectives including strengthening collaboration; enhancing knowledge exchange; and building on our work in demonstrating impact. This is an exciting time of change for SIPR and I'm eager to see what the next year will bring. I'm looking forward to seeing and working with many of you over this time!

SUPPORTING INTERNATIONALLY
EXCELLENT, MULTI-DISCIPLINARY
POLICING RESEARCH TO ENABLE
EVIDENCE INFORMED POLICY
AND PRACTICE

As always, I am keen to develop new ideas or collaborations so please don't hesitate to get in contact to discuss any SIPR matters (at m.craig2@napier.ac.uk). Also please don't forget to engage with us through our [website](#), subscribe to our newsletter, engage with us on [twitter](#), or [LinkedIn](#), and subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#). You can also connect with us on any of these platforms by scanning the QR Code at the back of this report.

We measure our success against our 4 guiding aims:

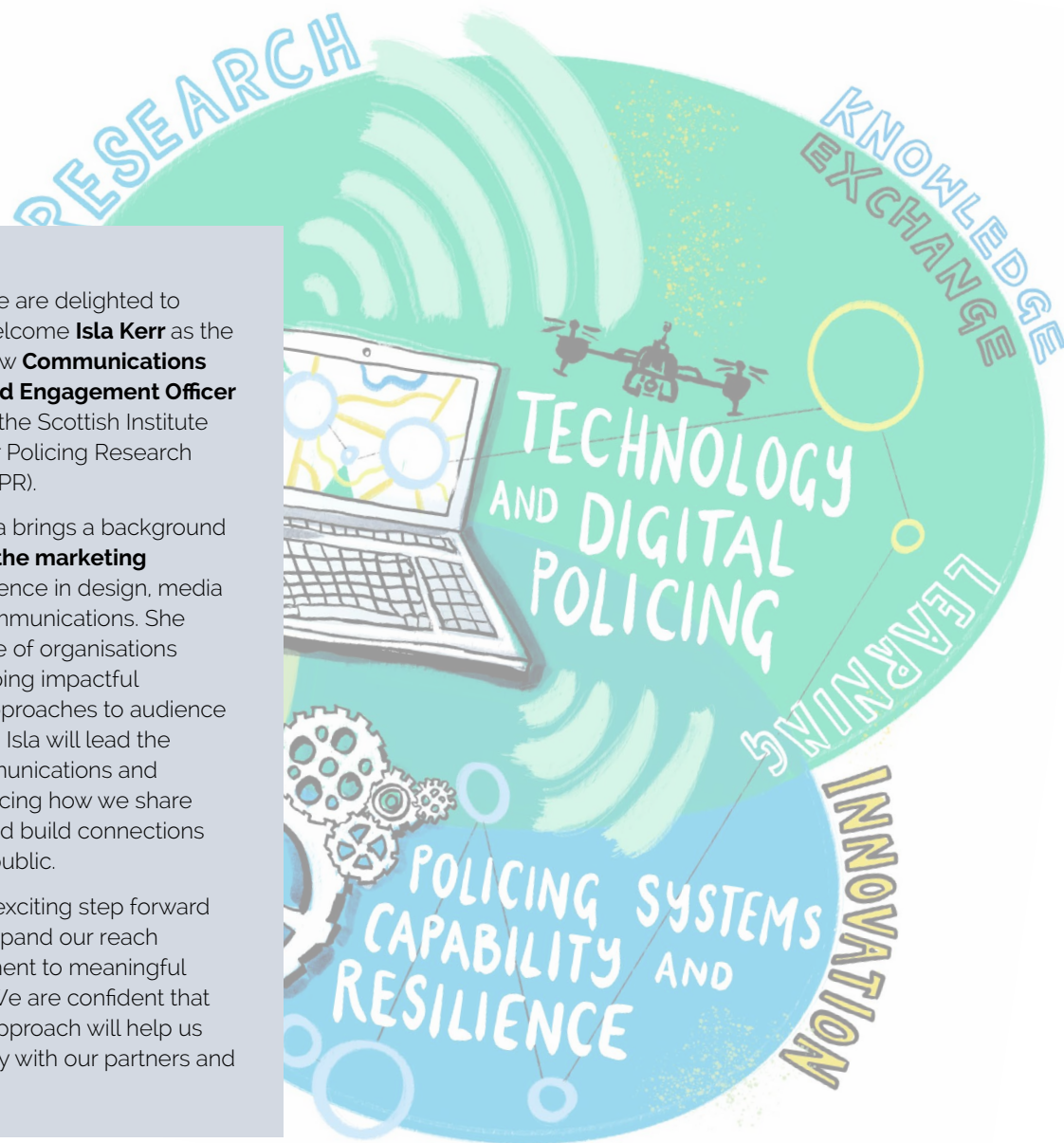
- 1. Research** - Facilitate international excellent, independent research of relevance to policing;
- 2. Knowledge Exchange** - Engage in a range of knowledge exchange activities to strengthen the evidence base on which policy and practice are improved & developed;
- 3. Learning and Innovation** - Nurture a culture of learning & innovation;
- 4. Partnerships** - Promote the development of national & international links with researcher, practitioner, and policing communities.



We are delighted to welcome **Isla Kerr** as the new **Communications and Engagement Officer** at the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR).

Isla brings a background in **creative enterprises and the marketing sector**, with extensive experience in design, media production, and strategic communications. She has worked with a wide range of organisations and agency settings, developing impactful campaigns and innovative approaches to audience engagement. In her new role, Isla will lead the development of SIPR's communications and engagement strategy, enhancing how we share research, promote events, and build connections with partners and the wider public.

Isla's appointment marks an exciting step forward for SIPR as we continue to expand our reach and strengthen our commitment to meaningful dialogue and collaboration. We are confident that her creative and innovative approach will help us engage even more effectively with our partners and the public.





research highlights

NEW GRANTS

£40,000 was allocated to the theme of our annual grants this year - "Policing Contemporary Social Harms and Challenges". Three projects have been funded:

- *"Extending the Evaluation of Return Discussions for Missing Persons with Dementia"* – PI Professor Nadine Dougall, **Edinburgh Napier University**.
- *"Relationships between Police Scotland and Scottish Catholic Community"* – PI Dr Maureen McBride, **University of Glasgow**.
- *"Never Mind the Bollards: Exploring the Consequences of the New Protect Duty for Policing and Security in Scotland"* – PI Dr Ben Collier, **University of Edinburgh**.

£40,000 was also allocated through our Responsive Research Fund focussing on two projects:

- Policing and Visibility – funded research to explore what policing visibility looks like and what it achieves granted to Professor Karen McArdle, **Emeritus at Universities of Dundee and Aberdeen** *"Lights under a Bushel? Researching the importance of visibility to policing practice"*.
- Good Practice in the Transfer of Care – supporting research which identifies models of practice of policing to NHS/ public body transfer of care for individuals in mental health distress. Granted to Dr Martha Canfield, **Glasgow Caledonian University**.

Two projects were awarded from the 'Think Big Leverage Fund':

- Dr Neil Kirk of **Abertay University** was awarded nearly £2,000 to investigate the challenges of identifying and misidentifying AI-enhanced speech.
- Dr Fernando Fernandes of the **University of Dundee** was also awarded £2,000 to investigate Police Scotland's stop and search reform through the gaze of marginalised young people.

ONGOING GRANTS

SIPR continues to support previously awarded grants which are due to complete this calendar year including:

- *"Mapping capabilities for a model of community policing of cybercrime and digital harms in Scotland"* – Dr Shane Horgan, **Edinburgh Napier University**.
- *"Children count: using policing data to inform child sexual exploitation and abuse"* – Professor Debora Fry, **University of Edinburgh**.
- *"Policing after lockdown: re-building relationships with the covid generation"* – Professor Ian Fyfe, **University of Edinburgh**.

PUBLICATIONS

This year we have been delighted to publish findings from SIPR funded research including:

- *Emotional Labour and protection policing: the experience and impact of emotional labour on Police Scotland public protection police officers*
Authors: Dr Maureen Taylor and Professor Lesley McMillan, **Glasgow Caledonian University** [Read here](#).
- *Implementing Anti-Racism I the context of Policing: A systematic Review*
Authors: Dr Myrtle Emmanuel and Dr Kenisha Linton-Williams, **University of Greenwich**, Professor Paul Miller and Professor Zoe Morrison, **Institute for Educational and Social Equity** [Read here](#).
- *Great expectations*
Author: Kirsteen Grant, **Edinburgh Napier University** [Read here](#).

learning and development highlights

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER GRANTS

One key goal for Phase V was to continue to invest in our postgraduate and early career researchers. This year, we launched the SIPR Early Career Grants which aim to support Early Career Researchers demonstrate success in obtaining competitive grants as the Principal Investigator. SIPR was delighted to fund three awards at the inaugural SIPR early career researcher grants totalling £9,000. Two of the three projects are close to publication.

- Dr Corinne Fenech of Glasgow Caledonian University focused on contemporary challenges faced by Police Officers in Scotland in respect of Body Worn Video.
- Dr Estelle Clayton of Edinburgh Napier University sought to identify best practices, primary and secondary benefits experienced amongst ambassadors regarding neurodiversity and policing.
- Dr Grant Barclay of Abertay University explored the critical differences between the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (MSA) and the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015 (HTESA), their specific emphases on protection provisions for victims (who may simultaneously be accused persons), and associated implications for policing first-responders, prosecution, and consistency of enforcement.

SIPR MATCH FUNDED STUDENTSHIPS

Following an open call, two projects were funded in which recruitment is underway.

- One Project is titled "Trauma and Technology: Identifying Best Practice for Video-Recorded Interviews (VRIs) with Victims of Sexual Crimes" and will be led by Dr. Julie Gawrylowicz at Abertay University.
- The second funded PhD, "Enabling People to Identify Deepfakes" will be led by Dr Andrea Szymkowiak, also from Abertay University.



knowledge exchange highlights

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND DISSEMINATION GRANTS

In its inaugural year, the SIPR Knowledge Exchange and Dissemination Fund funded five awards totalling £5,000 to support attendance for SIPR academics and Police Scotland partners as key participants to attend the Law Enforcement and Public Health 2025 Conference in Ottawa, Canada (see pages [64](#) and [66](#) for more details).

AUGUST 2024

NORTHERN POLICE WEBINAR SERIES

"Intermediaries, Vulnerability, and the Criminal Justice System"

Explored how intermediaries support vulnerable individuals in navigating the criminal justice system.

SEPTEMBER 2024

POLICING, PUBLIC HEALTH AND VULNERABILITY POLICING EVENT

This one-day knowledge exchange event provided an opportunity for practitioners and academics working at the intersect for policing and public health to come together to share ideas, explore international and national research and innovation in the support of people considered vulnerable who come into police contact (see page x).

NORTHERN POLICE WEBINAR SERIES

"Hindrances to Inclusive Work Environment: Gender-Based Harassment and Negative Attitudes towards Women in the Police"

Finnborg S. Steinþórsdóttir, Gyða M. Pétursdóttir

SIPR VISIT TO ST ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

Professor Liz Aston and Monica Craig hosted local engagement event with policing adjacent academics at the University of St Andrews.

NORTHERN POLICE WEBINAR SERIES

"The Impact of COVID19 on Partnerships between Police and GBV Service Providers in Rural Scotland"

Prof. Sarah Pedersen

OCTOBER 2024

SYNERGIES IN CYBER: A POLICING, POLICY AND ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

SIPR invited Police, Public Sector, Private sector, and SIPR institutional representatives to come together to discuss current policy, practice and research developments in Cybercrime. ([see page 77](#))

PROTECTING PUBLIC FACING OFFICIALS ONLINE (3PO) CONSORTIUM MEETING, EDINBURGH

3PO WORLD CAFÉ FOR SCOTTISH POLICING PARTNERS

Monica Craig, Dr Andy Tatnell, and Professor Liz Aston delivered this session which engaged representatives from Police Scotland in a structured conversational process which allowed for open discussion and knowledge exchange focusing on four themes: Creating better knowledge about online harms; addressing disparate risk profiles and needs; attitudes and support; and prevention and protection solutions for individuals, families and forces.

EXPLORING INSTITUTIONAL AND SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM – INTERACTIVE EVENT

The University of Edinburgh hosted an interactive event exploring institutional and systemic racism in the justice system, organised by the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) and the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR), with support from the Scottish Government's Cross Justice Working Group on Race Data and Evidence (CJWG). The event aimed to deepen understanding of systemic racism, how to recognise and respond to it, and to encourage open dialogue around tackling issues such as unconscious bias, cultural sensitivity, and intersectionality. Justice practitioners, policymakers, and academic researchers took part in presentations, breakout discussions, and collaborative sessions focused on identifying meaningful next steps for change.

NOVEMBER 2024

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY CONFERENCE, SAN FRANCISCO

Professor Liz Aston, Dr Shane Horgan and Dr Yen Wong presented their paper "Organisational Justice in the Management of Online Risks and Harms to UK Police Professionals" at this year's ASC.

NORTHERN POLICE WEBINAR SERIES

"Northern Police Research Webinar – Republic of Ireland"

Andrew Lacey, Dr Alan Cusack, Bláithín O'Shea

PROFESSOR LIZ ASTON'S INAUGURAL PROFESSORIAL LECTURE "POLICING, POWER, AND THE PUBLIC"

Professor Aston shared key findings from research on local policing, including stop and search and public perspectives on the use of technology in policing. Liz reflected on the role of police-academic partnerships and highlighted the importance of engagement, harm reduction, and accountability to public confidence in policing. See recording

WHAT MAKES CRIMINAL JUSTICE PARTNERSHIPS TICK

SIPR was pleased to host Dr Ian Marder for a seminar titled What makes criminal justice research partnerships 'tick'?, where he shared insights from the development of the Criminal Justice Open Research Dialogue (CORD) Partnership in Ireland. Funded by the National Open Research Fund (2023/24), CORD brings together 120 partners from 53 organisations across research, policy, practice, civil society, and oversight.

The seminar explored findings from a scoping review on research partnerships and how these informed CORD's collaborative approach, drawing on restorative practice and design thinking. Dr Marder discussed how the partnership co-created its purpose, principles, and priorities through inclusive dialogue and relationship-building in a relatively new landscape of criminological research in Ireland. The event offered valuable learning for building meaningful justice research collaborations.

NORTHERN POLICE WEBINAR SERIES

"Mandatory Reporting of Intimate Partner Violence (Manreport-IPV)"

Prof. Morten Holmboe

DECEMBER 2024

3PO SCOTTISH POLICY ROUNDTABLE

A roundtable was held with senior policy colleagues in Scotland focussing on four core areas for recommendations/ improvement, starting from the assumption that addressing online harms requires that they receive formal recognition, that police organisations provide sufficient training to officer's line managers and police leaders, that there is a formal reporting system to record experiences of online harms, and that there is a consistent baseline of support provision nationally for all police officers.

JANUARY 2025

SIPR VISIT TO UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

Professor Liz Aston and Monica Craig hosted local engagement event with policing adjacent academics at the University of Dundee.

NORTHERN POLICE WEBINAR SERIES

"Understanding Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment in Swedish Police Work"

Dr. Arian Rostami

NEURODIVERSITY – NAVIGATING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AT THE INTEREST OF POLICING AND HEALTH

SIPR hosted the webinar "Neurodiversity: Navigating the Criminal Justice System at the Intersect of Policing and Health" as part of its Policing and Vulnerability Doctoral and ECR Series. The event brought together Associate Professors Inga Heyman and Natasha Spassiani (Edinburgh Napier University) alongside self-advocate Natalie Kernaghan McCaughey (get2gether) to explore the experiences of neurodivergent people in contact with policing and justice systems. Discussion highlighted barriers to communication, unmet health and support needs, and the importance of more inclusive, person-centred approaches at the intersection of policing and public health.

FEBRUARY 2025

SIPR SUPPORTED A SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY JOINT RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE FORUM EVENT:

Evidence-Informed Policing with Mark Evans and Bruce O'Brien from New Zealand Police.

NEURODIVERSITY IN POLICING – TWO-DAY EVENT AT EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY

SIPR hosted a groundbreaking two-day event on Neurodiversity in Policing, in partnership with the Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association and Police Scotland.



Bringing together international and local experts from academia, public health, and policing, the event provided a platform to learn, explore, and challenge perspectives on how neurodiversity affects both police officers and staff, and the communities they serve. The first day focused on 'Our People', while the second day addressed 'Our Public'. [see page 23.](#)

NORTHERN POLICE WEBINAR SERIES

"Street Gangs in Finland: Current State and Crime Prevention"

Kimmo Kuukasjärvi, Kari Laitinen

SIPR ENGAGEMENT EVENT AND JAMES SMART MEMORIAL LECTURE 2025

We were pleased to host the SIPR Engagement Event featuring the annual James Smart Memorial Lecture, delivered by T/DAC Dr Alison Heydari, Programme Director for the Police Race Action Plan. The event brought together academics, practitioners, and policymakers from across Scotland to network, discuss research, and explore future collaborations. Attendees engaged with SIPR thematic Networks and met Associate Directors, alongside researchers and practitioners leading innovative work in policing research.

With dedicated stalls for each SIPR Network, Police Scotland, and the Scottish Police Authority, the event also included a "Meet the SIPR Researchers" session, giving researchers from all 14 SIPR member universities the chance to present their work directly to attendees. [see page 22.](#)

3PO WORLD CAFÉ FOR ENGLAND AND WALES POLICING PARTNERS

Monica Craig and Professor Liz Aston delivered this session which engaged representatives from forces in South Yorkshire and Humberside in a structured conversational process which allowed for open discussion and knowledge exchange focusing on four themes: Creating better knowledge about online harms; addressing disparate risk profiles and needs; attitudes and support; and prevention and protection solutions for individuals, families and forces.

MARCH 2025

3PO POLICY ROUNDTABLE FOR ENGLAND AND WALES POLICING PARTNERS

A roundtable was held with senior policy colleagues in England and Wales focussing on four core areas for recommendations/ improvement, starting from the assumption that addressing online harms requires that they receive formal recognition, that police organisations provide sufficient training to officer's line managers and police leaders, that there is a formal reporting system to record experiences of online harms, and that there is a consistent baseline of support provision nationally for all police officers.

NORTHERN POLICE WEBINAR SERIES

To Be or Not To Be Armed: Police Students' Attitudes Toward Armament

Guðmundur Oddsson, Margrét Valdimarsdóttir

3PO END OF PROJECT SYMPOSIUM

The 3PO project consortium meeting at Sheffield Hallam University brought together academic, policing,

and practitioner partners to review progress and shape the next phase of work. The event highlighted the project's impact to date, fostered cross-institutional collaboration, and looked ahead to future challenges and opportunities in digital safety.

ONLINE VULNERABILITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE AND FRAUD – SIPR WEBINAR

On 25th March 2025, the Policing and Vulnerability Doctoral and Early Career Researcher Network hosted an online webinar focused on Online Vulnerabilities in the Context of Domestic Abuse and Fraud.

The session featured two insightful presentations addressing critical issues related to digital vulnerabilities and their impact on policing and victim support. This event provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange among researchers and practitioners working in this important area.

NORTHERN POLICE WEBINAR SERIES

Investigating New Types Of Engagement, Response And Contact Technologies In Policing (Interact)

Professor Liz Aston

APRIL 2025

APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY IN POLICING SETTINGS – SIPR EVIDENCE AND INVESTIGATION NETWORK EVENT

The SIPR Evidence and Investigation Network hosted its 4th networking event, Applied Psychology in Policing Settings (APPS), at the University of Aberdeen's Kings College Conference Centre. [see page 20.](#)

ARREST REFERRAL SERVICES IN SCOTLAND – SERVICE DESIGN EVENT AT EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY

SIPR hosted a key event in partnership with Police Scotland to support the redesign of arrest referral services across the country. [see page 30.](#)

MAY 2025

SIPR POSTGRADUATE SYMPOSIUM 2025

On Tuesday 27th May 2025, Edinburgh Napier University's Craiglockhart Campus hosted the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) Postgraduate Symposium 2025 (#PGSymposium2025).

This annual event provided a platform for postgraduate researchers to present their work, exchange ideas, and engage with leading academics and practitioners in the field of policing research. [see page 90.](#)

SCOTTISH INTERNATIONAL POLICING CONFERENCE 2025

Edinburgh Napier University's Craiglockhart Campus proudly hosted the 12th SIPR Scottish International Policing Conference (#SIPC2025), co-chaired by Dr Shane Horgan (Edinburgh Napier) and Dr Ben Collier (University of Edinburgh).

This year's theme, The Future of Policing and Technology: Promise, Peril, and Pathways to Justice, explored critical issues such as AI, surveillance, and cybersecurity—aligning with SIPR's strategic focus on innovation and justice.

Highlights included the 53rd James Smart Memorial Lecture by Special Agent Elliot Peterson (Defence

Criminal Intelligence Service) and the 3rd Nick Fyfe Lecture by Dr Lisa Sugiura (University of Portsmouth), a leading expert in cybercrime and gender. The conference offered rich opportunities for cross-sector dialogue, networking, and knowledge-sharing across policy, practice, and academia. (SEE PAGE X)

SIPR VISIT TO HERIOT WATT UNIVERSITY

Professor Liz Aston and Monica Craig hosted local engagement event with policing adjacent academics at Heriot Watt University.

SPA-FS KE/RDI EVENT

On the 13th May Lucina Hackman was lucky enough to be asked to facilitate some discussions around areas of research and future planning for the SPA. The enthusiasm for this was obvious and a number of areas for priority were discussed. This included enhanced capabilities for roadside testing for drug driving, methods for capturing the benefits and impact of the role of forensic science and the use of databases that might assist the police to identify and plan for changes in their locality in for example changes in drugs that have been located.

NORTHERN POLICE WEBINAR SERIES

"Justice & Security in Northern Ireland"

Dr Jonny Byrne

JUNE 2025

EUROPEAN POLICE RESEARCH INSTITUTES COLLABORATION (EPIC), NORWEGIAN POLICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, STAVERN, NORWAY

Liz represented SIPR at the EPIC Conference at the Norwegian Police University College. She was invited to present in the technology working group, contributed to discussions about police-academic partnerships and also took the opportunity to network with European policing colleagues. [See page 44.](#)

ACADEMIC CHALLENGE EVENT - RESILIENCE IN SCENE EXAMINATION CHALLENGE

As part of the SIPR Challenge Event series, and in response to a workforce absence issues amongst scene examiners within SPA Forensic Sciences, Dr Noreen Tehrani a Chartered Occupation Health, Counselling and Trauma Psychologist presented current research and best practice regarding assessment and rehabilitation interventions which have helped to reduce sickness absence in the workplace. SEE PAGE ?

JAS SEMINARS

We are now in the second year of our **impact webinar series** in partnership with **Scottish Government's Justice Analytical Services (JAS)**. The series consists of regular webinars, initially developed for postgraduate researchers to engage with and share their research findings with policymaker audiences. However, the success of this series led to it being rolled out to all SIPR members, irrespective of career stage.



SIPR Impact Awards 2025

The SIPR Impact Awards recognise and celebrate research that makes a significant and demonstrable contribution to policing policy and practice. In 2025, two projects were honoured for their outstanding impact.

WINNER – SIPR IMPACT AWARD 2025

DEAF WOMEN'S ACCESS TO SUPPORT AFTER EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Awarded to: **Professor Jemina Napier** (*Heriot-Watt University*)

This year's Impact Award was presented to Professor Jemina Napier for her outstanding leadership of a collaborative programme that has significantly improved support for deaf survivors of domestic abuse. Working with Lucy Clark (Heriot-Watt University) and colleagues from Police Scotland, the project delivered the Justisigns2 and SILENT HARM initiatives, creating bilingual (BSL/English) training, resources, and guidance for police officers, interpreters, and the deaf community. The work led to policy changes within Police Scotland, the revision of key domestic abuse assessment tools, and wider visibility of BSL in the justice system. This groundbreaking work was also recognised with the 2024 Police Scotland Chief Constable's Excellence Award for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.



WINNER – SIPR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER IMPACT AWARD 2025

Awarded to: **Dr Andy Tatnell** (*Edinburgh Napier University*)

Having been commissioned by the senior leadership team within Police Scotland's Learning, Training and Development team, namely Chief Superintendent Alan Gibson, Superintendent Jackie Dunbar and Chief Inspector Rachael Burns, Dr Tatnell worked with Dr Larissa Engelmann and Inspector Jamie Webster from Police Scotland to explore the extent to which the existing tutor constable model within the service was supporting probationer development during the 18-month long 'on-the-job' learning phase of their 2-year Probationer Training Programme. The findings from the study led to the development of proposed policy principles which, it is understood, are influencing the development a revised Probationer Development Pathway. One of the key recommendations, influenced by the excellent work of Inspector Tim Taylor from Bedfordshire Police and the recent study of tutoring in England and Wales by Professor Tom Cockcroft from the University of Central Lancaster, was the introduction of a dedicated tutor constable unit model. The study's reach extended beyond Scotland, with Hertfordshire Police adopting the dedicated tutor constable unit model and fostering international interest. Supported by SIPR, Dr Tatnell led highly effective practitioner workshops and international engagement, establishing himself as a leading early career researcher in the policing field.



EVENT HIGHLIGHT – SIPR Networking Event: Applied Psychology in Policing Settings (APPS)

The SIPR Evidence and Investigation Network hosted its fourth networking event, Applied Psychology in Policing Settings (APPS), at the University of Aberdeen on 16th April 2025. The event was co-organised by Dr Eva Rubínová (University of Aberdeen), Dr Penny Woolnough (SIPR Associate Director, Abertay University), and Dr Julie Gawrylowicz (Abertay University), and attracted a vibrant mix of academics, practitioners, third-sector representatives, and postgraduate researchers working at the intersection of psychology and policing.

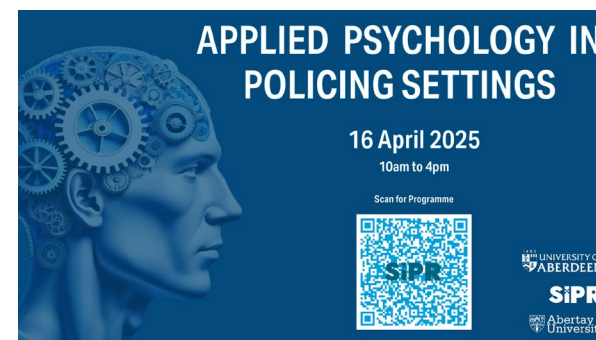
The conference featured eight keynote speakers whose talks spanned a diverse range of cutting-edge topics. Presentations in the morning session focused on the use and implications of AI and emerging technologies in policing contexts. Dr Ailsa Millen (University of Stirling) introduced novel concealed information tests (CITs) for detecting hidden face recognition. Dr Clare Sutherland (University of Aberdeen) discussed AI-generated human faces and the growing difficulty of distinguishing real from artificial, a phenomenon she called 'AI hyperrealism.' Dr Travis Seale-Carlisle (University of Aberdeen) challenged prevailing assumptions about eyewitness reliability, arguing for the evidential value of initial confidence ratings. Dr Anna Bobak (University of Stirling) explored the benefits and pitfalls of automated facial recognition systems, highlighting the dangers of human overconfidence when interacting with such technologies.

The afternoon session explored psychological challenges in working with vulnerable groups. Sam Conway (Abertay University) presented his research on the use of avatars in investigative interviews with young people, while Dr Rui Paulo (Birmingham City University) examined how virtual reality environments

can enhance the ecological validity of eyewitness research. Dr Julie Gawrylowicz (Abertay University) shared insights into how alcohol and video-recorded testimonies influence memory accuracy and juror decision-making. Finally, Dr Eva Rubínová (University of Aberdeen) addressed the complexities of interviewing witnesses in domestic abuse cases, drawing attention to the nuanced memory patterns associated with repeated experiences.

In addition to the keynote sessions, the event offered ample opportunities for engagement through breakout sessions and an impact forum. A well-attended lunchtime poster session showcased ongoing postgraduate research, including projects on concealed recognition in neurodiverse individuals, age-related face recognition challenges, and the diagnostic value of person descriptions in eyewitness accounts.

Held in the historic King's College Conference Centre, the event fostered a welcoming and collaborative environment for knowledge exchange. The in-person format enabled rich conversations between researchers and practitioners, reinforcing the importance of applied psychology in addressing real-world policing challenges.





Feedback from delegates was overwhelmingly positive, with attendees praising the diversity of topics, high-quality presentations, and the meaningful practitioner-researcher dialogue. The event also strengthened interdisciplinary and cross-institutional collaborations, with several new projects and research interests emerging from the discussions.

Overall, the 2025 APPS networking event highlighted the growing importance of psychological science in policing contexts. It underscored SIPR's ongoing commitment to facilitating research-informed practice, encouraging knowledge translation, and supporting professional development for both academics and law enforcement practitioners. We look forward to building on this success in future events.

"My first SIPR event - Applied Psychology in Policing Settings offered incredibly accessible research with clear, high potential for operational policing impact. I was warmly welcomed by other delegates who were keen to and get insight from operational police officers. I made many helpful contacts for the future and thoroughly recommend that colleagues attend future events, they'll be surprised by just how much they can contribute!"

Sergeant Pete McAndie, North East Division

"I found the recent event in Aberdeen very useful and informative. I enjoyed all the inputs and found them relevant to my role in policing (Public Protection). I would encourage more police officer attendance at future events. Following the event, we have met to discuss future opportunities for collaborative work."

Detective Inspector Kerry McCombie



SIPR Engagement Event & James Smart Memorial Lecture



19 FEBRUARY 2025, EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY, CRAIGLOCKHART CAMPUS

The SIPR Engagement Event, held for the first time on 19 February 2025 at Edinburgh Napier University's Craiglockhart Campus, was designed to bring together academics, practitioners, and policymakers across Scotland. This new event provided a valuable platform for networking, sharing research, and exploring opportunities for future collaboration to enhance policing practice and policy. A highlight of the day was the James Smart Memorial Lecture, delivered by Dr Alison Heydari, Programme Director for the Police Race Action Plan. Dr Heydari's

lecture, titled "Building Police Legitimacy – The Time is Now," addressed the urgent need for cultural transformation within policing. Emphasising the critical importance of procedural justice and community trust, Dr Heydari called for immediate and sustained action to achieve meaningful reform.

The event also featured a "Meet the Researchers" session, which facilitated direct engagement between attendees and SIPR researchers from member universities. This interaction promoted the translation of academic research into practical policing solutions and opened pathways for collaborative projects.

With representation from SIPR thematic networks, Police Scotland, and the Scottish Police Authority, the event fostered productive networking opportunities. Attendees engaged in focused discussions aimed at tackling contemporary challenges in policing through evidence-based approaches and cross-sector collaboration.

Overall, the SIPR Engagement Event reinforced the Institute's commitment to supporting policing innovation and excellence through partnership, research, and shared vision for a just and effective justice system.



Dr Alison Heydari delivering the James Smart Memorial Lecture



Participants engaging at the Meet the Researchers session



Networking and discussions among SIPR members, Police Scotland, and Scottish Police Authority

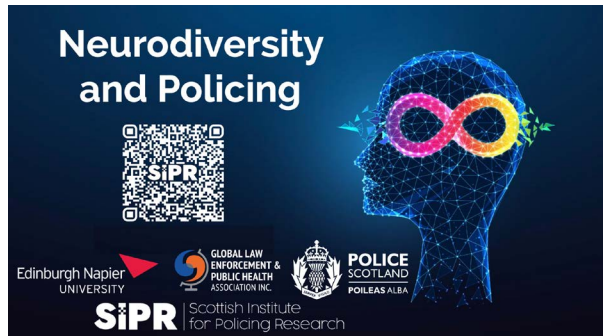


Event attendees exploring research exhibits and thematic network stalls



Neurodiversity and Policing Conference

12–13 February 2025 | Edinburgh Napier University



This two-day conference, hosted at Edinburgh Napier University, brought together national and international academics, police practitioners, public health professionals, and neurodiverse people to explore neurodiversity across policing. Jointly organised by Edinburgh Napier University, Police Scotland, SiPR, and the Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association the event aimed to influence both policing and public health practice and public engagement. The conference built on the SiPR supported Policing, Public Health and Vulnerable People conference held in 2024 which highlighted key gaps in understandings and practice in policing and neurodiversity. This two-day conference also recognises Police Scotland leadership in driving innovation and collaboration to support neurodivergent people.

Day 1 – “Our People” focused on neurodiversity within the policing workforce. Sessions explored how undiagnosed or unsupported neurodivergence can affect officers and staff, with particular attention to workplace adjustments, recruitment barriers, and

diagnostic overshadowing. Delegates discussed the need for inclusive training, support structures, and leadership commitment to embed neurodiversity awareness into organisational culture. Emphasis was placed on co-designed strategies involving neurodivergent staff to promote sustainable and legitimate policing from within.

Day 2 – “Our Public” examined how policing can better serve neurodivergent people in the wider community. The day was strongly framed by the opening presentation by members of the SOLD network - individuals with learning disabilities and/or autism who have lived experience as accused persons in the justice system. The presentation explored key factors contributing to justice system involvement, including social isolation, lack of community support, exploitation, and deficits in social learning. The session addressed the impact of harassment, baiting (especially online), and systemic dependency. The presentation concluded with insights into what constitutes inclusive justice, highlighting the importance of early identification of needs, accessible information, and tailored support throughout the justice process and beyond, to support long-term rehabilitation.

Discussions called for intersectional, trauma-informed approaches, and collaborative service design that includes neurodivergent voices.

Across both days, key recommendations emerged:

- Expand training to recognise and support neurodivergence across staff and public interactions.



- Develop reasonable adjustment protocols in both internal processes and public-facing procedures.
- Recognition of the cumulative effects of traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) in incidents of intimate partner violence (IPV)
- Reduce cognitive burden in communication (e.g., simplified language, recorded consent).
- Embed neurodiversity into policy and leadership agendas to support dignity, safety, and accessibility.

This conference marked a significant step toward a neuro-inclusive policing model, affirming that understanding neurodiversity is critical not only for community legitimacy but also for workforce wellbeing and performance. Outputs from the two-day conference informed further presentation, discussion and debate at the International Law Enforcement and Public Health Conference in Ottawa, Canada 2025.

Policing, Public Health and Vulnerable People



Associate Professor Inga Heyman,
Edinburgh Napier University



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

In September 2024, Edinburgh Napier University and SIPR co-hosted a key knowledge exchange event titled "Policing, Public Health and Vulnerable People." The event brought together academics, police professionals, policy makers and third-sector organisations to explore evidence-based approaches to policing vulnerable people and communities. Focus areas included police custody, dementia, neurodiversity, disability, substance use, and responses to hate crime.

This full-day forum provided a platform for the dissemination of leading national and international research and innovative practice, reinforcing SIPR's commitment to knowledge exchange in collaborative, inclusive, and health-informed policing.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS AND PANELS

The conference featured a series of international and national speakers and expert-led panel discussions:

- Associate Professor Isabelle Bartkowiak-Théron, University of Tasmania discussed and debated "Policing, Public Health and Vulnerability: An International Perspective"
- Associate Professor Megan Parry of the University of Rhode Island examined policing and disabled populations, in particular autistic and Deaf and hard of hearing communities
- Tommy Petillo, Alzheimer Scotland & P.C Yoksan Bell, Police Scotland laid out the ongoing work around Dementia and Missing People
- Associate Professor Andrew Wooff, Edinburgh Napier University considered Police Custody and Vulnerable People
- Dr. Valerie Houghton, Edinburgh Napier University presented research on learning disabilities and hate crime
- The national police carriage of Naloxone was discussed jointly by Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie, Police Scotland and Professor Nadine Dougall, Edinburgh Napier University demonstrated a harm-reduction model underpinned by external evaluation.

The conference focussed on four key themes:

1. Public Protection and Vulnerability

- Central focus on safeguarding individuals with cognitive, psychological, and social vulnerabilities.
- Case examples included the response to missing persons with dementia and policing approaches to disability-related hate crime.

2. Data-Driven Policing and Innovation

- The national police carriage of Naloxone
- Use of emerging research in custodial settings and autism-informed identification processes illustrated innovation in operational contexts.



Neurodiversity in Policing – Knowledge Exchange

The Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) was a critical partner in helping Police Scotland deliver a successful, pioneering and exciting two-day event in February 2025.

Hosted by Edinburgh Napier University in partnership with the Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association - Neurodiversity and Policing saw international and local speakers from academia, public health and policing come together to explore this important subject.

The two-day event offered a platform for learning, exploring, and challenging how neurodiversity impacts police officers and staff and the public they serve, with the theme for discussion on day one was our people, while day two focused on our public.

Professor Inga Heyman of Edinburgh Napier University said:

"Along with our partners, we were delighted to host this important knowledge exchange event. We have a strong history of partnership with SIPR, working at the intersect of policing and public health. We recognise that no one organisation is adequately skilled, equipped and resourced to support people and communities to make lasting change."

"It is crucial we come together across sectors, to explore the academic evidence, practice and lived experiences of police officers who may be neurodivergent to recognise the challenges they face, but also the strengths their neurodivergence brings to their work."

"It is equally important that we learn from people who come in contact with police who are neurodivergent, to better understand how practice can be enhanced to support them."



The event was opened by Assistant Chief Constable Mark Sutherland, Police Scotland's Executive lead for Neurodiversity. He said:

"We are on a journey as an organisation, and SIPR has been a crucial partner in helping us to research and understand the challenges we face. SIPR support for our event has helped us make connections and develop important networks across several sectors. This has assisted us in striking the right balance across our policies and processes to provide fairness and to harness the strengths and talents of neurodivergent individuals."

"By doing this we contribute to our 2030 vision by both supporting our people and the communities we serve."

Policing, Public Health and Vulnerable People



Associate Professor Inga Heyman,
Edinburgh Napier University



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

In September 2024, Edinburgh Napier University and SIPR co-hosted a key knowledge exchange event titled "Policing, Public Health and Vulnerable People." The event brought together academics, police professionals, policy makers and third-sector organisations to explore evidence-based approaches to policing vulnerable people and communities. Focus areas included police custody, dementia, neurodiversity, disability, substance use, and responses to hate crime.

This full-day forum provided a platform for the dissemination of leading national and international research and innovative practice, reinforcing SIPR's commitment to knowledge exchange in collaborative, inclusive, and health-informed policing.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS AND PANELS

The conference featured a series of international and national speakers and expert-led panel discussions:

- Associate Professor Isabelle Bartkowiak-Théron, University of Tasmania discussed and debated "Policing, Public Health and Vulnerability: An International Perspective"
- Associate Professor Megan Parry of the University of Rhode Island examined policing and disabled populations, in particular autistic and Deaf and hard of hearing communities
- Tommy Petillo, Alzheimer Scotland & P.C Yoksan Bell, Police Scotland laid out the ongoing work around Dementia and Missing People
- Associate Professor Andrew Wooff, Edinburgh Napier University considered Police Custody and Vulnerable People

- Dr. Valerie Houghton, Edinburgh Napier University presented research on learning disabilities and hate crime
- The national police carriage of Naloxone was discussed jointly by Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie, Police Scotland and Professor Nadine Dougall, Edinburgh Napier University demonstrated a harm-reduction model underpinned by external evaluation.

The conference focussed on four key themes:

1. Public Protection and Vulnerability

- Central focus on safeguarding individuals with cognitive, psychological, and social vulnerabilities.
- Case examples included the response to missing persons with dementia and policing approaches to disability-related hate crime.

2. Data-Driven Policing and Innovation

- The national police carriage of Naloxone
- Use of emerging research in custodial settings and autism-informed identification processes illustrated innovation in operational contexts.



3. Public Confidence and Legitimacy

- Presentations on neurodiverse and learning-disabled populations highlighted the importance of inclusive, equitable policing to enhance trust.
- Community engagement strategies reinforced legitimacy through transparency and understanding of lived experience.

4. Organisational Development, Health & Wellbeing

- The multi-agency format supported professional development and wellbeing by fostering knowledge exchange and inter-agency coordination.
- Highlighted initiatives included support for officers supporting vulnerable individuals and the emotional impact of such engagements.

KEY OUTCOMES AND IMPACT:

This event served to continue to strengthen partnerships between policing, health partitioners, and academia. It promoted trauma-informed and health-focused police responses and influenced policy, particularly around custody and drug harm reduction. Key areas for future research and multi-agency development were identified along with a key gap in knowledge exchange and policy development in the support of neurodiverse police officers and police responses to neurodiverse people. Consequently, this insight led to the development of the two-day SIPR supported conference 'Neurodiversity and Policing' held in February 2025 and international presentations in LEPH 2025, Ottawa, Canada.



Reflections on SIPC 2025: The Future of Policing and Technology; Promise, Peril, and Pathways to Justice

DR SHANE HORGAN

This year's SIPC welcomed over 200 delegates from international policing and academic communities to the Craiglockhart campus of Edinburgh Napier University.

The day's programme was dedicated to facilitating discussion and debate about the most pressing issues of police uses of and engagements with emerging and newly adopted technologies. Dr Ben Collier and I committed ourselves as chairs to developing a programme that showcased the cutting edge of police practice and academic research. We also sought out topics around which we are forced to have challenging and critical conversations related to best practice, ethics, trust, and human rights.

The day commenced with a powerful Nick Fyfe Annual Lecture delivered by Dr Lisa Sugiura, Associate Professor in Cybercrime and Gender at the University of Portsmouth. Dr Sugiura provided an incisive and hard-hitting account of the insidious and far reaching nature of gender-based harms and violence facilitated by the internet. Her concluding call to action petitioned police and academics alike to take seriously, in both research and practice, the prevalence of physical and psychological harms caused by online gender-based violence, the imperative to challenge historically embedded social structures and cultural sensibilities that enable and facilitate it, and crucially, to take action.

After setting the tone, we commenced our breakout sessions which widened the delegates gaze to other issues including; evidence informed policing, police wellbeing and technology, routine policing and technology; serious and organised cyber-related harm, policing and social media, and automation, algorithms and advanced technologies in policing. Several commonalities emerged across these sessions;

- the needs for evidence and data in the development and adopting of new models and technologies of policing



- The centrality of ethics and consultation in decision making on future developments such as the adoption of live facial recognition or AI supported operations
- Anticipating and preventing inequity of experience of policing
- A cautious optimism about the new technologies present to provide more inclusive, responsive and efficient policing

Special Agent Elliot Peterson of the United States Department of Defence then delivered the Jamies Smart memorial lecture during which he made the technical accessible and took delegates through the complexities and intricacies of investigating, prosecuting and responding to global technology enabled crime drawing on operation endgame as a case study.



Agent Peterson was then joined by Deputy Chief Constable Alan Spiers (Police Scotland), Chief Inspector Craig Naylor (HMICS), and Fiona McQueen MBE (Scottish Police Authority) for a panel discussion. The conference chairs asked panel members to consider how emerging online harms were impacting their work, changing the role of the frontline police officer, what values and principles should guide the adoption and integration of new technologies in policing, and how to ensure the continuation of meaningful public consultation, appropriate scrutiny, and legitimacy in a complex and challenging information environment.

Dr Ben Collier then concluded the day with thanks to all the speakers and organisers for their expert deliveries and contributions.

SIPR and the SIPC continue to illustrate that effectively responding to policing challenges necessitates sustained dialogue and collaboration between academics, practitioners, and the public. This year, that dialogue was concerned with ensuring technological advancements serve to enhance justice, protect the vulnerable, and strengthen confidence rather than erode it. The journey towards a truly just and technologically informed policing future is a collaborative one, demanding ongoing vigilance, critical reflection, and an unwavering commitment to human rights and societal amelioration.





National Arrest Referral Partnership Event

Partners across the criminal justice, healthcare and third sector support services came together to work on the redesign of the arrest referral service across Scotland and learn from the pathways already in place for arrest referrals in custody and those involved in the justice journey.

Hosted by the CJSD Custody Healthcare and Interventions team, the event brought together about 70 partners from across Scotland and was facilitated by the Service Design team at the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) at Edinburgh Napier University on 30 April 2025.

The event marked the first national partner workshop to come together to redesign the arrest referral service and the further development of the process across Scotland, aiming to tackle repeat offending and in turn reduce footfall through police custody.

It means that officers who identify a vulnerability at the point of arrest can highlight this to custody staff who will then consider opportunities for referral to an appropriate service for support.

The event was opened by Assistant Chief Constable Wendy Middleton and Community Justice Scotland Chief Executive, Karyn McCluskey.

ACC Wendy Middleton said:

"We are working to improve the support for people in custody by providing person-centred care and referral opportunities to support services with the long-term aim of reducing reoffending in our communities and preventing people from entering police custody."

"Over the coming years we will develop a modern, person-centred, and trauma-informed custody service using new technology, updated facilities and strong partnerships with other agencies to prevent crime and make communities safer."

"Improving the arrest referral process is part of this work through our Custody 2030 programme."

partnerships





Tom McMahon
Director of Strategy
and Analysis

police scotland

Police Scotland continue to work closely with SIPR as part of our commitment to evidence-led policing. We aim to support research which contributes to our [2030 Vision](#) of safer communities, less crime, supported victims and a thriving workforce.

Our research and insight activity sits within the Professionalism and Enabling Services portfolio in Police Scotland, enabling a coordinated approach that aligns with our strategic policing priorities. The academic research team is the point of contact for research requests and enabling academic-police collaboration across the service. The team continue to work alongside SIPR colleagues to maximise our partnership approach, seeking to understand the impact of research and to ensure there are opportunities for our colleagues to engage in further learning and research opportunities.

Over the last year, research enabled by SIPR has continued to develop and support a programme of research in alignment with our Chief Constable's priorities:

- Trust: The people of Scotland trust us to keep them safe.
- Confidence: People who contact us have confidence in our service delivery.
- Performance: We continually improve and perform at a high level.

We work closely with senior police leaders to identify research priorities and emerging themes for academic investigation that

support our challenges and priorities for change, while staying open to ideas and new challenges emerging from academia. We continue to engage with academics, research participants and policing colleagues to take forward recommendations from completed studies to ensure we are acting to improve policing practice in a transparent and collaborative way. Through collaboration with SIPR we aim to create a culture of learning and continuous improvement within policing: robustly evaluating research to identify good-practice; ensuring that research findings are disseminated across the service; and empowering colleagues to drive evidence-based change to enhance their own service delivery and outcomes for communities and stakeholders.



Police Scotland's Academic Research team provides an ambitious and innovative approach to our service so that our policing colleagues are equipped with the insights and evidence to deliver effective services for Scotland's communities. The team maintains an internal research database, available to all police colleagues, which contains papers on policing research collaborations and evaluations, many of which were undertaken in partnership with SIPR associates. Furthermore, we continue to work with SIPR to devise and host 'Academic Challenge Sessions', which bring together senior police leaders and academic experts to discuss emerging and priority themes in the policing and public landscape, and to discuss strategic approaches which would assist Police Scotland in addressing these challenges. The team have created a [public-facing page](#) which contains details of high-profile research projects that have been delivered with the support of SIPR and their academic associates, as well a contact form which allows prospective researchers to contact Police Scotland with new proposals. We aim to increase public awareness of the impact of policing research, the insights it has provided, and the ways in which we have incorporated it into Scotland's police service.





Tom Halpin
Board Member

scottish police authority

A core commitment of the Scottish Police Authority is to ensure 'policing in the public interest', with the policing by consent delivery model in Scotland underpinned by public understanding, trust, and confidence. Aligned to this is our desire to drive evidence informed policing delivery for the people of Scotland. As co-chair of the Joint Research and Evidence Forum, a policing system and academic partnership aiming to deliver in shared strategic research priorities, I am committed to building a strong foundation of evidence, knowledge, and research to inform decision making. Our relationship with SIPR is critical to delivering on these commitments, building on our approach to triangulated assurance which focuses on data, people, and evidence.

Through collaboration with SIPR, we are working to improve our approach to developing and commissioning research and evidence which aligns to our strategic outcomes and ensures we are focused on emerging trends and issues. The Authority continues to support work with SIPR and other partners to explore pathways to impact and ensure that findings and recommendations from completed research are used to inform and improve operational policy and practice. This involved a focus on comparative analysis to ensure that good practice can be identified and learned from. A positive example of this is the current responsive research fund project looking at transfer of care in relation to mental health. This research project aims to identify examples of practice from other policing systems which can inform and improve the approach taken to transfer of care within Scotland.

During 2024-25 the Authority launched a Knowledge Exchange series focused on sharing best practice around evidence informed approaches to key policing system challenges. Our inaugural event was focused on what makes for good evidenced informed practice and drew international key note speakers thanks to support from SIPR. The 2025/26 series will take the form of online lunchtime learning focused events on key topics such as antisocial behaviour, support to victims, mental health, policing by consent, shoplifting and retail crime, and experiences of children and young people. The series concludes in March 2026 with an event focused on the future of policing. Support from, and collaboration with, the networks and associate directors of SIPR makes this work possible.



**FORENSIC
SERVICES**
**SEIRBHISEAN
FOIREANSACH**



Fiona Douglas
Director of SPA
Forensic Services

SPA forensic services

The Director of SPA Forensic Services, Fiona Douglas, is a member of the SIPR Executive Committee. SIPR's work is aligned to the Forensic Services purpose of providing excellent, innovative forensic services to support justice in Scotland and keep our communities safe and protected.

Forensic Services has now officially launched its refreshed Forensic Strategy 2025-2030 which will ensure we are sustainable, adaptable and resilient to future challenges across our rapidly changing society.

Our previous Forensic Strategy focused on delivering change – including a new operating model and it is now time for a period of consolidation as we roll out the final phase of this model and further embed the benefits from our new and more flexible ways of working.

Forensic Services need a sharp, strategic focus on research and development to ensure we deliver high-quality and ethical services through innovative forensic science. As part of the new operating model, Forensic Services formed a Research, Development and Innovation team, bringing together specialist scientific knowledge and work to influence innovation, internally and the wider forensic community. Collaboration with academic research partners is vital to more effective working across forensic and academic networks, ensuring we bring tangible benefit to the justice community and the wider Scottish public.

Forensic Services has welcomed the support of SIPR in developing its first Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Strategy. The RDI strategy will set out our strategic research priorities over the next 5 years as we seek to embrace ethical technological innovation and maximise the opportunities offered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) to be creative in delivery of our services.

Working with SIPR and other academic partners, we were delighted to host a RDI Knowledge Exchange Event in May 2025. Under an event theme of "Connecting Future Innovations with Justice Outcomes" a workshop approach explored key focus areas; future challenges for policing & safer communities, collaborative working with physical and digital forensics and maximising opportunities offered by AI innovation.

Forensic Services were pleased to support SIPR International Policing Conference with an input on the development of our business case for a Long Terms Sustainable Model for Criminal Toxicology in Scotland. This will lay out how Forensic Services, in close partnership with Police Scotland and COPFS, can keep communities safe by working together to reduce the devastating impact of drug driving on the roads of Scotland.

We recognise that our people are at the heart of everything we do and are fully aware of the challenges to personal wellbeing that a career in forensic services can present. In June the SIPR Organisational Development Network hosted an online Challenge Event, where Professor Noreen Tehrani provided an informative input to Forensic Services Managers on how to support resilience in trauma exposed roles.

SIPR also continues to support a multi-agency working group on Demonstrating the Value of Forensic Science. This is an academic project establish to create a methodology which will effectively assess the value of that work carried out by Forensic Services brings to the public sector.



Craig Naylor

Director of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland

HMICS

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) has wide ranging powers to look into the "state, effectiveness and efficiency" of Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. We carry this out through inspections which cover a range of policing issues. Inspections begin with scoping research to identify current thinking and activities within the policing sphere and where areas of best practice can be identified. This allows our inspectors to take an evidence-based approach to scrutiny of the policing bodies.

HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Craig Naylor, sits on the SIPR board and participated as a member of the panel session at the May 2025 SIPR Conference on the future of policing and technology. The SIPR conference explored many areas of research and heard from Special Agent Elliot Peterson, United States Department of Defence on the challenges of investigating online harms. This innovative input aligned to other inputs across the day, bringing focus to the emerging threats of cyber and fraud activity. This theme is drawn out in the HMICS Scrutiny plan for 2025-28 where we will examine the response to cyber and fraud from policing in Scotland.

Alongside inspection work, the last year included a substantial commitment from the team to develop our [2025-28 Scrutiny Plan](#) which was published in March 2025. The Plan outlines our priorities and scrutiny activities for the 2025-28 period and provides the basis on which we continue to improve policing

across Scotland. During the consultation period, we sought to obtain the views of communities across Scotland, using methods including:

- an online public questionnaire;
- discussion with other scrutiny bodies;
- targeted stakeholder engagement (including elected members and local authorities); and
- environmental scanning.

The views that we received during this consultation allowed us to develop a strong, evidence-based approach to the priority areas for scrutiny.

We are grateful to Dr Liz Aston for participating in an interview for this consultation process, and for her collaboration with HMICS during her tenure as Director.



SIPR is home to Scotland's only Policing Academic Centre of Excellence

The Scottish Institute for Policing Research has been awarded funding to launch one of nine UK centres. A groundbreaking new initiative, the Scottish Policing Academic Centre of Excellence (SPACE), has been launched to transform the future of policing across the UK through cutting-edge research, ethical innovation, and public collaboration.

Led by Professor Liz Aston at (Edinburgh Napier University) with Centre Management provided by Monica Craig, SPACE brings together leading academics from four SIPR member universities – Dr Andrew Wooff (Edinburgh Napier University), Professor Lesley McMillan (Glasgow Caledonian University), Professor Susan McVie (the University of Edinburgh) and Dr Sarah Marsden (the University of St. Andrews).

Centre will focus on three urgent areas of policing: **Safety, Prevention**, and **Analytics**, all underpinned by a strong commitment to **Confidence** and **Ethics**.

"SPACE is about reimagining policing for the 21st century," said Professor Aston. "By combining academic excellence with real-world policing needs, we aim to deliver evidence-based solutions that are ethical, inclusive, and trusted by the public."

The Centre will work closely with Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority, and a wide range of public and third-sector partners and will focus support officer wellbeing, reduce crime through public health approaches, and harness data and AI to improve decision-making and operational effectiveness. Importantly it will enable SIPR to distribute £300,000 to support new research and knowledge exchange activity in Scotland over the next three years.



KEY ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Commissioning challenge-led research projects
- Hosting workshops, webinars, and public engagement events
- Supporting early career researchers and postgraduate students
- Producing toolkits, training materials, and policy briefings

SPACE also places a strong emphasis on equality, diversity, inclusion, and environmental sustainability, ensuring that its work is accessible, responsible, and future-focused.

The Centre officially launches in September 2025 and will operate for an initial 36-month period, with the ambition to become a national hub for ethical, impactful policing research.

Spotlight on External Partnerships

Northern Police Research Webinar Series (Aug 2024 – Jul 2025)

Now entering its third year, the **Northern Police Research Webinar Series** continues to strengthen international collaboration between SIPR and partner institutions across the European North. This includes the Police University College of Finland, Umeå University in Sweden, the Norwegian Police University College, the Universities of Akureyri and Iceland, and Ulster University in Northern Ireland.

Designed to showcase contemporary and impactful research in policing, the series provides a forum for academics, practitioners, and stakeholders to engage across borders. The 2024–25 programme reflects a continued commitment to critical themes in policing such as mental health, gender-based violence, youth-police relations, and digital threats.

Over the past year, the series has drawn audiences of over 250 participants per session, reinforcing its relevance and growing reputation. The 2024–25 academic year features an ambitious and diverse schedule of presentations:

- Explored how intermediaries support vulnerable individuals in navigating the criminal justice system.
- Survey of the Icelandic police revealed high rates of gender-based harassment and resistance to gender equality efforts.
- Examined how the pandemic affected coordination between police and gender-based violence services in rural areas.
- Presented on Ireland's new CAST co-response model supporting mental health interventions with police involvement.
- Investigated mandatory IPV reporting duties and perceptions across professional sectors in Norway.
- Insights into internal sexual and gender-based harassment in Swedish policing.
- Reviewed gang activity trends and crime prevention strategies within Finnish policing.
- Surveyed Icelandic police students on views toward firearms and Taser usage.
- Reflected on the role of the Independent Reviewer in overseeing post-conflict policing and justice powers.





international advisory committee



ACC Gary Ritchie
Chair of the International
Advisory Committee

We are delighted to announce that former Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Gary Ritchie has been appointed as the new Chair of the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) International Advisory Committee.

ACC Ritchie joined Strathclyde Police in 1991 and went on to hold a number of key leadership roles, including Divisional Commander of Dumfries and Galloway and, from 2019-2025, Assistant Chief Constable. Most recently, he has served as Police Scotland's executive lead for operational support.

Throughout his career, he has been at the forefront of innovative, research-informed approaches to policing. He worked closely with academics on the evaluation of Police Scotland's pilot of naloxone, an overdose treatment now rolled out nationally and credited with saving lives. The project has also been recognised through national awards. He also played a leading role in policing the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow in 2021.

As Chair of SIPR's International Advisory Committee, ACC Ritchie brings extensive operational and strategic experience, alongside a strong commitment to research-informed policing and partnership working. His leadership will be invaluable as SIPR continues to strengthen collaboration between research, policy, and practice in Scotland and internationally.

MEMBERSHIP

- **ACC Gary Ritchie**, Assistant Chief Constable, Police Scotland; Chair of the SIPR International Advisory Committee.
- **Professor Nick Bland** (Scottish Government)
- **Professor Nick Crofts** (Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association)
- **Professor John R. Firman** (American University, USA)
- **Dr Bisi Akintoye** (University of Roehampton, UK)
- **Dr Victoria Herrington** (Australian Institute of Police Management)
- **Dr Vesa Huotari** (Police University College of Finland)
- **Professor Sofie De Kimpe** (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)



- **Dr Cynthia Lum** (George Mason University, USA)
- **Professor Monique Marks** (Durban University of Technology, South Africa)
- **Dr Vesa Mutttilainen** (Police University College, Finland)
- **Martin Smith** (Scottish Police Authority)
- **Professor Richard Southby** (The George Washington University, USA)
- **Nerys Thomas** (College of Policing, UK)
- **Dr Ian Marder** (Maynooth University, Republic of Ireland)

ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

We provide professional support and advice to the Director, Executive Committee and Board of Governors on measures that will assist SIPR and its members to deliver the maximum impact from its work both nationally and internationally. We provide support and advice, but do not form part of the formal governance, accountability, or performance management mechanisms for SIPR.





International Advisory Committee member Dr Ian Marder visits SIPR: Police Dialogue Project

Dr. Ian Marder

*Associate Professor in Criminology,
Maynooth University School of Law and Criminology*



In 2024-25, Dr. Ian Marder (Associate Professor in Criminology, Maynooth University School of Law and Criminology) began work with several colleagues to scale up a successful project facilitating dialogue between police officers and young Black adults in Dublin, Ireland. In 2021-22, funded by the Irish Research Council, Dr. Marder and partner organisations (including An Garda Síochána, which is the Irish police force, Sport Against Racism Ireland, Foróige, Black and Irish, and Childhood Development Initiative) trained a group of young Black adults and police officers in restorative practices, co-designed and co-facilitated a dialogue process with additional persons from those communities, and studied the process through observations and interviews.

Their findings were published in the journal *Policing and Society*, and their model of practice was published in the *Journal of Mediation and Applied Conflict Analysis*, in 2024. After disseminating their findings, in 2024 Dr. Marder negotiated a co-funding model to scale up this work. Three additional dialogue processes and their study was funded by An Garda Síochána, the Policing Authority, the Department of Justice and Maynooth University, and supported by Foróige. Work is currently underway to research the short- and medium-term effects and experiences of participants. The *Policing and Society* article about the first phase of the project, written with research assistant Katharina Kurz, won the Policing Journal Article Prize of the European Society of Criminology Policing Working Group in 2024, and the Excellence in Research Outputs Award in Maynooth University the same year. Also in 2024, hosted as a Visiting Fellow with the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR), and as a Visiting Associate Professor by Edinburgh Napier University, Dr. Marder spent a week visiting SIPR and the SCCJR to learn and share knowledge and experience in relation to the building of criminal justice research partnerships. This visit was funded by the National Open Research Forum following the establishment of the CORD Partnership (<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/cord-partnership>), a research-policy-practice partnership of around 60 organisations, chaired by Dr. Marder, which aims to embed a culture of interdisciplinary open research in criminal justice in Ireland.

Developing strategic research priorities in the Policing and Community Safety Authority

Sophia Carey, *Senior Manager (Research), Policing and Community Safety Authority*

In April 2025, the Irish Policing and Community Safety Authority was established as an independent, statutory agency responsible for the oversight of the Irish police service (An Garda Síochána), with a remit to support the effective provision and continuous improvement of policing services in Ireland.

It is a successor organisation to two organisations, the Policing Authority and the Garda Síochána Inspectorate. The PCSA has an additional function in the area of community safety.

Engagement with SIPR by the two bodies which have now combined to form the PCSA included attendance at SIPR conferences and events (in particular the Northern Police Research series of webinars), and also knowledge sharing meetings with SIPR personnel and with key partners such as the Scottish Policing Authority.

These contacts, and the wide range of SIPR research outputs, helped to inform some of the collaborative research initiatives which are currently ongoing in the PCSA, including:

- The initiation of a jointly funded Garda Síochána and Policing Authority/PCSA research project by the

University of Huddersfield, focused on the well-being of An Garda Síochána personnel, which is due to conclude shortly;

- Involvement in the Criminal Justice Open Research Dialogue (CORD) Partnership which aims to embed a culture of interdisciplinary open research in criminal justice in Ireland; and
- Participation in Research Ireland's New Foundations research scheme on the area of policing and community safety.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES IN THE PCSA

Over the next few months, the Authority will be developing strategic research priorities for the period 2026-2028, and in the process will be seeking to continue to learn from the SIPR example of multi-disciplinary and collaborative policing research.

The process of developing research themes for the PCSA has already begun, as one element of a consultation undertaken to inform the determination of the Policing Priorities 2026 to 2028. The Policing Priorities, when determined, will provide clarity on the key areas that require particular attention by An Garda Síochána to improve policing services to the public, and will also highlight the areas within which PCSA oversight will focus. Research priorities will likewise be informed by and speak to the wider Policing Priorities.

Consultation on the Policing Priorities included engagement with stakeholder groups and Garda

Síochána members throughout the country, and an online survey (3,794 responses). In addition, academics with expertise in Irish policing were invited to contribute to an online event which considered five themes in relation to developing new Policing Priorities:

- Supporting and Ensuring Community Safety;
- Protecting and Supporting Victims and the Vulnerable;
- Tackling Organised and Serious Crime;
- Rights-based and Ethical Service Delivery; and
- Technology and Innovation

Additionally, academics were asked about key research priorities. The event pointed to an appetite amongst academics for an expanded, collaborative and innovative field of Irish policing research across a wide range of disciplines to drive improvements in policing services to the public. Knowledge translation, the development of collaborative research partnerships, a need for better data and greater openness to research, the importance of technology, and a need for evaluation work were just some of the priority areas for research highlighted by attendees.

Further engagement with academics will undoubtedly feature as the PCSA continues developing the Policing Priorities, PCSA Strategy Statement and research strategy and themes for the 2027-2028 period.



The Police University College of Finland

The [Police University College of Finland](#) (Polamk) a higher education institution engaging in applied research, serving the planning and development of policing and internal security, and producing novel knowledge police education. Below you can find examples of recent publications and ongoing projects.

- The book [The police and the public: in-depth essays based on Police Barometer Survey data, Vol. I](#) consists of essays based on the Police Barometer Survey (PBS 2022). They describe public austerity programs and trust in the police, unreported crime because of reprisal, and intimidation of victims or witnesses.
- A journal article [Effectiveness of Finnish SISU training in enhancing prehospital personnels' work performance: A randomised controlled pilot study](#) investigated whether a resilience coaching programme would improve the work performance by enhancing situational and decision-making skills of prehospital personnel.
- The report [Prevention of Organized Crime in Denmark and Sweden](#) described the impact of selected programs, projects and measures against organized crime. Only a few of them were based on strong research evidence. The report served the updating of the strategy against organized crime in Finland.
- The annual study on [Hate crime reported to the police in Finland](#) is aimed at compiling basic information on the nature and prevalence of racially-motivated and other forms of hate crime. The data has been retrieved from the police's information system.
- The project doctoral thesis (project) [Advice, request and order in police operations: linguistic study of speech in maintaining public order](#) studies police speech and the linguistic format of its proposals for action. The source material includes police body-worn cameras and retrospective interviews of police officers.
- The project [Development of competence and structures for gaming police activities \(GAMING POLICE\)](#) develops multi-professional activities for protecting children in the world of digital gaming. The aim is to improve police visibility on gaming platforms and discussion forums, and offer help to risk groups and crime victims.

Polamk has a long history of excellent cooperation with the SIPR. Examples of current cooperation include the Northern Police Research Webinar, the Clarus project on digital forensics and joint activities in international research networks (e.g. ESC, EPIC).

Examples of European engagement via SIPR



Professor Liz Aston
*Professor of Criminology,
Edinburgh Napier University*



In June I had the pleasure of participating in EPIC at the Norwegian Police University College in Stavern. This European policing collaboration provided a valuable opportunity to connect with policing practitioners and academics and discuss research and emerging innovation and practices. Marleen Easton delivered an impassioned keynote on the state of policing research working group and even gave a shout out to SIPR as a good example of a strong police academic partnership.

The keynotes were thought provoking, and I also participated in a number of thematic working group meetings. Jasper de Paepe led the organisation of the 'Technology and Innovation' meetings under the theme of 'Police-Society Relationships in an Digitalised Society' and I was delighted to present findings from the INTERACT project, together with researchers from the Netherlands. Next year the conference will be hosted by Northumbria University in Newcastle in June and I hope this will provide an opportunity for more SIPR members to engage with EPIC in 2026.





This year I was delighted to join the European Society of Criminology Working Group on Policing as a country Liaison for Scotland. In this role I will communicate opportunities with colleagues across Scotland and share information about Scottish policing research with colleagues across Europe. In May I attended a planning meeting of the ESC Working Group on Policing Liaisons in Ghent. In addition to the ESC pre-conference event, we discussed the plans for a Special Issue of the European Journal of Policing Studies on Police Academic Partnerships.

I was honoured to be invited to speak on one of three panels on Police Academic Partnerships at the Belgian Centre for Policing and Security 35th Anniversary Conference in Oostende. This provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on and share lessons learned from SIPR. The panels were arranged by Prof Marleen Easton (Ghent University) and the co-editors of the Special Issue. The conference provided an opportunity to meet with colleagues and make new connections via networking with academics and practitioners from across Belgium and beyond.





overview of SIPR networks

EVIDENCE AND INVESTIGATION

The Evidence and Investigation network provides a focus for research in a range of specialist areas related to the role of the police in the recovery, interpretation and effective use of intelligence and evidence in the investigation of crimes and major incidents. This includes the development and evaluation of policy and good practice in the strategic and tactical use of forensic sciences. Consequently, we work closely with key partners in Police Scotland, SPA Forensic Services and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) across the range of projects and activities that are aligned with the network.

POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS

This network provides a focus for discussing and generating independent research concerned with the relationships between police and the communities they serve. In addressing these issues the network draws upon research expertise across a range of academic disciplines, to provide a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of complex areas such as translating research findings into local policing practice, working in partnership with other organisations and increasing public confidence in policing. Through close collaboration with police and other stakeholders the network ensures that research results impact on police policy, procedure and practice. It is led by a Brokering Team, which facilitates and builds connections between relevant practitioners and researchers to further these aims.

PUBLIC PROTECTION

The aims of the network are to both promote, and provide a focus for, independent research on policing and public protection; to collaborate with Police Scotland and other community stakeholders to produce quality research on all relevant areas of public protection; to ensure that independent academic research on public protection is made accessible to police forces, practitioners and policy makers; and to ensure research results impact on police policy, practice and procedure.



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of the Education and Leadership Network is to promote research in police education, learning, and leadership, and support this through several activities, including actively engaging with policy makers within Police Scotland and the SPA not only through the regular Network Steering Group meetings, but also with regular meetings with senior managers from Police Scotland with responsibility for policy and practice in these areas.

DEVELOPMENT

The SIPR Early Career Researcher (ECR) Network supports and develops postgraduate research students and early career researchers across the Institute. With a strong focus on building research capacity and resilience, the network brings individuals together to strengthen connections and foster a supportive academic community.

It encourages collaboration and professional growth through a variety of activities, including writing and paper development workshops, training sessions, mentoring, impact-focused events, and social activities that promote peer engagement and shared learning.



public protection network



**Professor Lesley
McMillan**

Associate Director Public
Protection Network
(Glasgow Caledonian
University)

The aims of the network are to both promote, and provide a focus for, independent research on policing and public protection; to collaborate with Police Scotland and other community stakeholders to produce quality research on all relevant areas of public protection; to ensure that independent academic research on public protection is made accessible to police forces, practitioners and policy makers; and to ensure research results impact on police policy, practice and procedure.

The network defines public protection broadly and includes research on areas such as: all forms of gender-based violence; child abuse and sexual exploitation; children and young people; gangs and youth violence; hate crime; homicide; missing persons; human trafficking; mental health; vulnerable adults; and the intervention, treatment and management of sexual and violent offenders. Research of relevance to the network may be directly on policing or the police, but may also focus on other areas or institutions, but with direct relevance for policing or the police.

MEMBERSHIP

The work of the network is coordinated and facilitated by a steering group comprised of academics from across the SIPR consortium institutions, Police Scotland representatives from across the Public Protection portfolio, and Scottish Police Authority representatives.

ACADEMIC MEMBERS

- **Dr Colin Atkinson** (University of the West of Scotland)
- **Dr William Graham** (University of Abertay)

- **Dr Scott Grant** (University of the West of Scotland)
- **Dr Inga Heyman** (Edinburgh Napier University)
- **Amy Humphrey** (University of Dundee)
- **Dr Lynn Kelly** (University of Dundee)
- **Dr Rachel McPherson** (University of Glasgow)
- **Dr Maureen Taylor** (Glasgow Caledonian University)

POLICE SCOTLAND & SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY MEMBERS

- **Detective Chief Superintendent Sarah Taylor**
- Lead for Adult Protection, Domestic Abuse; Honour-based Abuse; Forced Marriage, Stalking and Harassment – **DSU Adam Brown**
- Lead for Child Protection – **DCS Nicky McGovern**
- Lead for Rape and Sexual Crime, Human Trafficking and Exploitation and Prostitution – **DSU Steven Bertram**
- Lead for Sex Offender Policing – **DSU Mike Smith**
- **Fiona McQueen** (Scottish Police Authority)



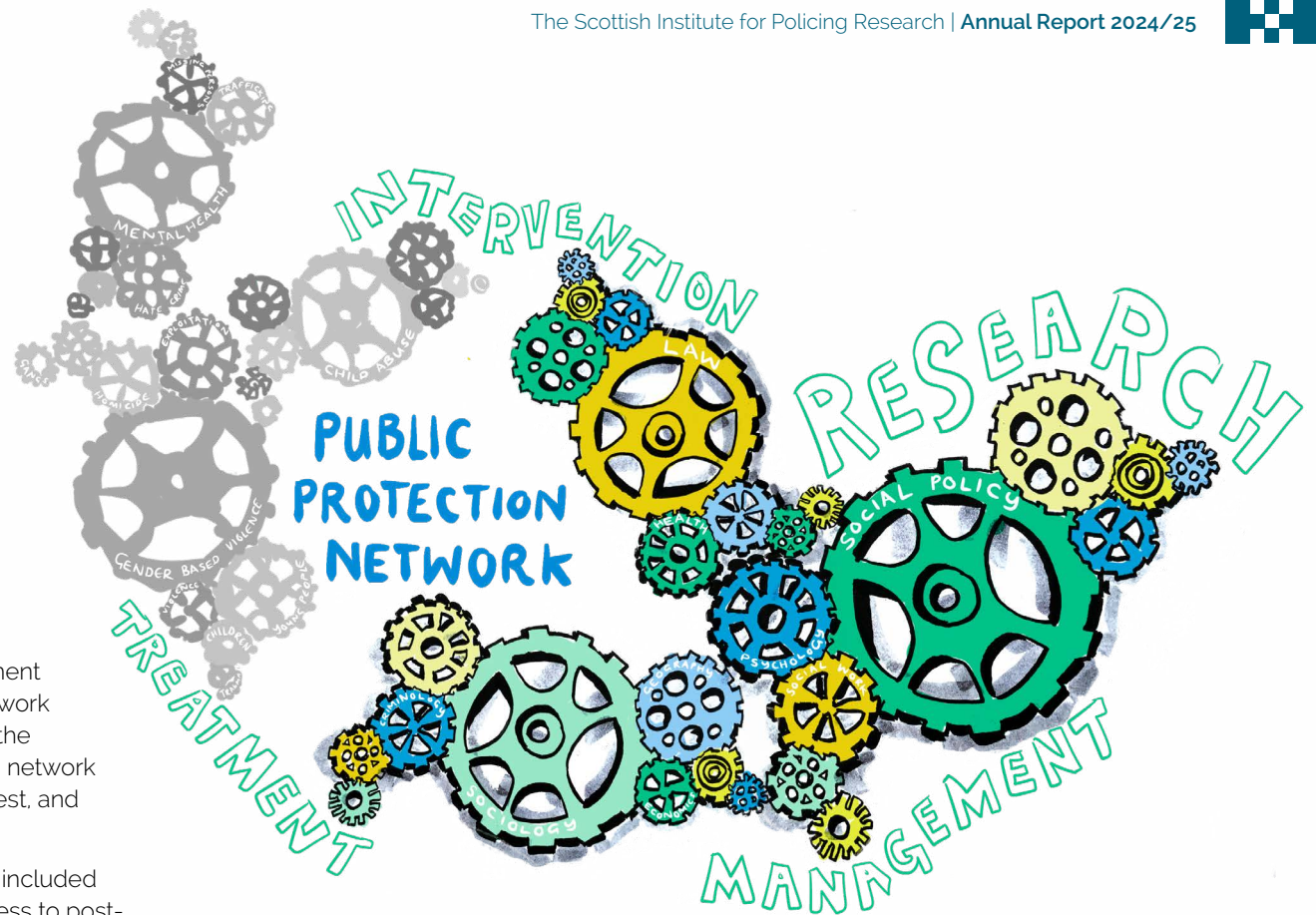
KEY ACTIVITIES/HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2023/24

The network has continued to make valuable contributions including research, knowledge exchange, public engagement and the establishment of new areas of practice. A key focus has been building relationships with the new public protection team at Police Scotland, and working to identify priorities for ongoing research and knowledge exchange. A significant part of the network's activity in 2024/25 was the development and submission of the successful Scottish Policing Academic Centre of Excellence (S-PACE) bid to UKRI. The S-PACE project has several themes, one of which is prevention, including a focus on key aspects of public protection including violence against women and girls. The prevention strand of S-PACE will be co-led by Professor Lesley McMillan (GCU, SIPR) and Dr Sarah Marsden (St Andrews).

Members of the network hosted a table at the SIPR engagement event in Edinburgh in February, introducing attendees to the work of the group, and seeking new expressions of interest to join the network and steering group. This resulted in expansion of the network and the identification of new potential areas of research interest, and steering group membership.

Research and knowledge exchange throughout the year has included work on domestic homicide, image-based sexual abuse, access to post-sexual violence services in rural and remote areas, public harassment and misogyny, online misogyny, young people's experiences of sexual violence and how they form relationships, domestic abuse and technological innovation, juror decision making, return discussion for missing people with dementia and consensus statements between emergency services and public health.

The Scottish Cold Case Unit continues to collaborate with the National Missing Persons Unit and Locate International to provide successful and mutually beneficial collaboration on unsolved missing person and unidentified body cases. The unit was shortlisted in the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) Academic Employability Awards in the Employer and Community Partnership category, which is



testament to the collaboration with Police Scotland and Locate International, and the capacity of the unit to produce excellent graduates for criminal justice careers.

PLANS FOR 2025/26

Building on the recent SIPR engagement event, and the plans to expand the focus of the network, the network will be renamed and membership refreshed to address themes across public protection, safety and wellbeing, and public health. The network will capitalise on these developments and seek to generate new links among the academic community and build new collaboration within and beyond the Police Scotland public protection team.



Inaccessible Care: An International Forum on Sexual Assault Services in Rural Canada and Scotland

Dr Andrew Quinlan (*University of Waterloo, Ontario*)

Professor Lesley McMillan (*GCU*)

Dr Gethin Rees (*Newcastle University*)

Professor Deborah White (*Trent University, Ontario*)

A podcast from the Inaccessible Care project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), was launched by the research team. The podcast focuses on access to post-sexual assault forensic medical services and care in rural areas of Canada and Scotland and discusses the challenges caused by both remoteness and rurality, for those providing services and those accessing them. It centres the voices and experiences of project participants from frontline services in both countries.



The Scottish Cold Case Unit at Glasgow Caledonian University where students and staff work in partnership with the charity Locate International and Police Scotland to investigate unsolved missing person and unidentified remains cases was shortlisted for the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services Academic Employability Awards in the Employer and Community Partnership category.

Academic Employability
Awards 2025

SHORTLISTED

Employer and
Community Partnerships



GRADCORE





evidence and investigation network



Professor Penny Woolnough,
Associate Director Evidence
and Investigation Network –
Abertay University

The Evidence and Investigation network provides a focus for research in a range of specialist areas related to the role of the police in the recovery, interpretation and effective use of intelligence and evidence in the investigation of crimes and major incidents. This includes the development and evaluation of policy and good practice in the strategic and tactical use of forensic sciences. Consequently, we work closely with key partners in Police Scotland, SPA Forensic Services and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) across the range of projects and activities that are aligned with the network.

MEMBERSHIP

The work of the network is coordinated and steered by a Network Steering Group comprising nine academics and three practitioners from Police Scotland, SPA Forensic Services and the National Crime Agency:

- Professor Lucina Hackman, Senior Lecturer in Human Identification, University of Dundee
- Dr Penny Haddrill, Centre for Forensic Science, University of Strathclyde
- Dr Niall Hamilton-Smith, Senior Lecturer in Criminology, University of Stirling
- Dr Richard Jones, School of Law, University of Edinburgh
- Dr Jennifer Murray, Psychology Research Group, Edinburgh Napier University
- Dr George Weir, Computer and Information Sciences, University of Strathclyde
- Dr Susan Griffiths, Psychology, Aberdeen University
- Dr Julie Gawrylowicz, Division of Psychology and Forensic Science, Abertay University
- Ms Fiona Douglas, Director Forensic Services, Scottish Police Authority
- Detective Chief Superintendent Gary Cunningham, Police Scotland.
- Detective Sergeant Stephen Halls, National Crime Agency

KEY ACTIVITIES/ HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024/54

- We continued to contribute to the ongoing SPA Value of Forensic Science Working Group which aims to seek a suitable methodology to: understand the contribution of forensic science within the Justice System; determine how forensic science contributes to overall public safety, crime prevention and confidence in policing; influence decision making in the justice process; to influence research and innovation; support change and future strategic direction; use resources effectively and; define and track investment outcomes as well as demonstrate value for money to the taxpayer.



- We organised the fourth biannual Network event on Applied Cognitive Psychology in Policing Settings at Aberdeen University on 16th April 2025. The event was organised/chaired by Dr Eva Rubinova at Aberdeen University with the support of Dr Julie Gawrylowicz, Abertay University. The event brought together researchers and practitioners interested in applying psychological research in policing practice with a focus on two core themes: 1) Investigative practices involving victims or witnesses of domestic abuse and violence against women and girls; and 2) The use of impact of AI and emerging technologies in policing research and practice.
- We actively participated in the SIPR Engagement Event at Edinburgh Napier University in February 2025, with several stands showcasing research and pathways to impact from Network members, including postgraduate students aligned to the Network.
- We have continued to broker relationships between researchers and practitioners in areas related to the Network to support funding applications (e.g. work relating to the under researched topic of sexsomnia).
- We have continued to expand the reach of research in the Network by working with the Norwegian Police University College to deliver training to Norwegian Senior Investigating Officers on major crime investigation and decision making.
- Considerable progress has been made in relation to the development of the first structured professional judgement tool for missing persons (SIPR funded/ Network aligned PhD), with the completion of all stages of data analysis to inform the underpinning for development of the tool with key support from Police Scotland.

PLANS FOR 2025/26

Over the next academic year, we will:

- Work with the SIPR executive committee, SIPR Leadership Team and other partners to ensure the evidence and investigation network continues to support the broader SIPR strategic objectives.
- Continue to support the SPA-Forensic Services Value of Forensic Science Working Group and look forward to working closely with SPA-FS staff who will be driving forward SPA-FS research and development work.



- Focus on researcher development across the network by organising a development workshop day on Friday 31st October 2025 focussed on doing emotionally demanding at which we aim to: explore what is meant by and challenges of emotionally demanding research; ways to maximise researcher well-being; encourage an open dialogue about doing emotionally demanding research and facilitate networking and the building of longer-term connections for researchers in this domain
- Continue to pro-actively engage with key stakeholders, identify key people and secure their commitment to be actively involved with the network.
- Identify opportunities for knowledge exchange, research and pathways to impact, ensuring there is flexibility within the network to respond to new and emerging priorities
- In collaboration with Police Scotland and key partners, we will support three new Network aligned PhD studentships commencing in October:
 1. SGSSS/ESRC funded PhD research project, commencing October 2025, which aims to develop a Trauma Informed Cognitive Interview.
 2. Joint SIPR/Abertay University funded PhD studentship, commencing October 2025, which aims to identify best practice in the conduction of video recorded interviews with sexual offence victims.
 3. SGSSS/ESRC funded studentship in collaboration with the charity Missing People on adults with Learning Disability who go Missing.
- We will also continue to support the delivery of research impact via the translation of research into policy and practice with national and international law enforcement partners.

Please do get in touch if you have ideas for activities / collaborations you would like the Network to support as we would be delighted to hear from you.



police-community relations network



Professor Megan O'Neill
Associate Director,
Police - Community Relations
Network, University of Dundee

Much of the work of the Police-Community Relations Network Brokering Team this past year has been devoted to supporting and advising on the changes to Local Policing in the three-year business plan for Police Scotland. It has been exciting to see the plans develop between November 2024 and March 2025, and to see the willingness of the relevant teams in Police Scotland to reflect on academic research and advice on the topic.

Some of the consultation process involved the entire Brokering Team and some involved direct consultation with Prof O'Neill. Our consultation events included online presentations and discussion with CS Phil Davison and colleagues, as well as ACC Mairs; and some took place in person, at both The Scottish Police College (SPC) and at the Police Scotland building in Dalmarnock, Glasgow.

During the event at the SPC with the Design Team, it emerged that guidance from Distinguished Professor Cynthia Lum (George Mason University and SIPR International Advisory Board) would be very useful in relation to the 'Playbook' designed by the Centre for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at GMU. Prof Lum very generously met with Prof O'Neill and the Design Team online in January 2025 to discuss in detail what a similar 'Toolbox' might look like in Scotland. We are looking forward to seeing the first trials of the new structure for Local Policing and to continuing to assist with further enhancements.





In addition to the ongoing support for Local Policing, the Police-Community Relations Network worked with Dr Julie Berg from the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR) and colleagues from the Cross Justice Working Group on Race Data and Evidence (led by Scottish Government) to hold a workshop event on Institutional Racism on 24th October 2024 at the University of Edinburgh. There were three speakers, followed by small table discussions. Speakers were Dr Karla Perez Portilla (Glasgow Caledonian University), Dr Lewis Clarke (Police Scotland) and The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights. Dr Anna Souhami (University of Edinburgh) chaired. The event was very well received and led to insightful and thought-provoking discussions.

Prof O'Neill and the PCRN Brokering Team developed a proposal for a Responsive Research Fund project on 'Visibility'. The successful proposals will be awarded at the end of the academic year. The PCRN also assisted with the Anti-Discrimination RRF and the Transfer of Care in Mental Health Crises RRF in terms of developing the calls for proposals, assessing applications and serving on the advisory boards.

Prof O'Neill continues to attend the Violence Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour Gold Group, the Your Police Stakeholder Engagement Forum and the Stop and Search Mainstreaming and Assurance Group meetings as an external advisor.

Finally, new members of the Brokering Team were added after an invitation to express interest was sent out to the wider SIPR membership. These are Dr Diana Miranda, Brad Cotton and Dr Matthew Richardson. Welcome to the Team!

This represents my final report as a SIPR Associate Director, as I will step down from the role in 2025/26. It has been a delight and a privilege to serve as a SIPR AD, and I would like to thank the Police-Community Relations Network Brokering Team for their enthusiasm and insight in our work together over the years. It has truly been my honour to work with you to find ways to support and develop policing in Scotland through academic research. Many thanks also to the SIPR Leadership Team for your supreme collegiality, encouragement and especially to Liz for your inspiring leadership. I will miss working so closely with you all.



Organisational development network

**Associate Professor
Dr Andrew Wooff**

Head of Social
Science, Edinburgh
Napier University



Dr Andrew Tatnell

Honorary Senior
Research Fellow
(Policing), Edinburgh
Napier University



The Organisational Development Network evolved from the legacy Education and Leadership Network. It's new, expanded remit is shown below:

NETWORK THEMES			
PEOPLE	CULTURE	SERVICE DESIGN	TRAINING, LEARNING & EDUCATION
Workforce Wellbeing Recruitment & Retention	Cultural Mapping/ Audit Organisational Discrimination Learning Organisation	Enhancing Response Policing Enhancing Community Policing	Initial Learning & Development Academic Learning & Accreditation Leadership Development & Learning CPD

We've tried to structure work plans under each theme. In support of the Training Learning & Education theme, and the Initial Learning and Development strand, the Network undertook a study of Police Scotland's Tutor Constable model, led by Dr Andy Tatnell. The findings of this high impact work are discussed on [page 92](#).

In response, Police Scotland has accepted most of the recommendations and intends to adopt the suggested policy principles, where practicable.

Although a dedicated tutor unit won't be piloted as was recommended, probationers will be posted to community policing teams for the first year of their probation before moving onto response teams. As per the report, this will hopefully provide probationers with the space and time to learn more deeply than is possible on fast-paced response teams.

With regards to the people theme and the workforce wellbeing strand, the Network organised a very



successful Challenge Event in June 2025 whereby Dr Noreen Tehrani gave a fascinating insight into how to reduce trauma related absences amongst crime scene investigators within the SPA Forensic Sciences workforce. Mangers from Forensic Sciences and others with an interest in this field engaged fully with Dr Tehrani as they explored how the research might be applied in practice. If anyone else has an organisational issue which might benefit from being informed by the latest research please get in touch and we will arrange a suitable Challenge Event for you.

Dr Wooff, working closely with colleagues in Police Scotland, successfully reinvigorated the SIPR Practitioner Fellowship Scheme. Following agreement with the Academic Research Team and the Exec, a practitioner fellow is in the final stages of completing a report on healthcare in police custody for the CJSD. Developing organisational capacity and capability to inform practice through the development of its own unique corpus of knowledge, as in medicine, is one of the traits which defines a profession and separates it from an unskilled occupation. If anyone else wishes to undertake a Practitioner Fellowship, please get in touch with the academic research team in the first instance to discuss.

Additional students have been recruited to the Special Constabulary through the University-Police Scotland link up, supported by Dr Wooff and the network.

The network going forward will focus on supporting Police Scotland to realise its strategic ambitions principally by supporting them to translate academic research evidence into policing practice by, for example, continuing to promote the SIPR Practitioner Fellowship Scheme, relevant Challenge Events and where practicable, through focused pieces of research. Alongside securing strategic buy-in, the success of the challenge events and the practitioner fellowship shows that a focus on specific activities and topics useful to members will be prioritised.

As a network for 25-26, we will continue to focus on practitioner fellowships. We are keen to develop additional opportunities with these. We are liaising with Police Scotland about putting together another challenge session around workforce wellbeing. We are working with the SPACE team to understand how the network will articulate and support the safety theme and adjust the Organisation Development network accordingly. We will continue to progress Special Constable

recruitment across participating universities in the network. We will have ongoing network meetings which will hopefully be facilitated by enhancing relationships with key Police Scotland colleagues and widening University participation in the network.

Lastly, Dr Wooff has been appointed the new Director of SIPR and took up his role in August 2025. As a result of this appointment, Dr Andy Tatnell will assume sole Leadership of the Network for the time being.

IN MEMORIAM: DR. ROBERT SMITH (1959–2025)

The Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) mourns the passing of Dr. Robert Smith, a distinguished colleague, mentor, and friend, who passed away in August 2025. Robert's contributions to policing research and applied psychology were both significant and enduring, leaving a lasting impact on the academic and practitioner communities alike.

Throughout his career, Robert demonstrated exceptional dedication to advancing evidence-based policing and fostering collaboration across research and practice. He was a passionate advocate for supporting early-career researchers and for bridging the gap between rigorous academic research and the operational needs of policing. His guidance and insight were invaluable to colleagues and students, inspiring many to pursue excellence in their own work.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Robert was admired for his warmth, generosity, and integrity. He was a mentor, a collaborator, and a friend to many within the SIPR community. His thoughtful approach, encouragement, and quiet humor enriched every interaction and will be remembered fondly by all who knew him.

Robert Smith's legacy will continue to influence policing research and practice for years to come. The SIPR community extends its deepest condolences to his family, friends, and all who had the privilege of working with him. He will be profoundly missed and never forgotten.

development



**Professor
Kirsteen Grant**
Edinburgh Napier
University

This initiative, led by Professor Kirsteen Grant, is concerned with building postgraduate and early career researcher (ECR) capacity and resilience. It provides an opportunity to bring together and strengthen our ECR communities as well as generate and facilitate collaborative networking and development.

LOOKING BACK – ACTIVITIES AND HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR

A variety of webinars and workshops have taken place throughout the year, including Writing for The Conversation; Demonstrating Impact through Research; and Research Funders and Funding. Some of these events have been co-organised and co-chaired with the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR), which is an excellent means of sharing resources and bringing together both networks.

We are now in the second year of our impact webinar series in partnership with Scottish Government's Justice Analytical Services (JAS). This series consists of regular lunchtime webinars, initially developed for postgraduate researchers to engage with and share their research directions and findings with policymaker audiences. However, the success of the series led to it being rolled out to all SIPR members, irrespective of career stage.

Last year we launched a collaborative seminar series with the Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre (VPFRC) hosted jointly at the Universities of York and Leeds. A SIPR organised and chaired webinar took place earlier this year on the topic of 'Neurodiversity: Navigating the Criminal Justice System at the Intersect of Policing and Health'. Our speakers, both from Edinburgh Napier University, were Dr Inga Heyman, Associate Professor of Policing and Public Health, and Dr Natasha Spassiani, Associate Professor of Intellectual (Learning) Disability and Health

Equity, and they were accompanied by a service user who provided a fascinating insight into her lived experience.

We also awarded postgraduate and ECR funding this year. First, we launched an ECR grant scheme, which saw three awards made. These went to Dr Corinne Fenech, Glasgow Caledonian University, Dr Estelle Clayton, Edinburgh Napier University, and Dr Grant Barclay, University of Edinburgh. We look forward to seeing the outcomes and outputs from these projects in due course.

Finally, our annual Postgraduate Symposium was held on 27th May. This year's programme included a keynote presentation from Dr Amy Burrell, Research Fellow at University of Birmingham, who spoke on the topic of 'Developing and Navigating an Academic Career'. Ten student presentations then took the form of 'five slides in five minutes', and we ended the symposium with a highly interactive 'world café' session, which covered the themes of: Ethics, Wellbeing and Decision-Making; Technology, Law and the Future of Policing; and Navigating Academic Careers. The Best Presentation award went to Sam Conway, PhD candidate at Abertay University, whose presentation explored the use of avatar technologies in forensic child interviews. The Best Poster award was given to Khalid Khan, PhD candidate at Edinburgh Napier University, whose research explores the impact of exposure to digital forensic evidence on the wellbeing of police officers in the UK. The day ended with an in-person social event, which was organised and hosted by our SIPR postgraduate representative, Esme O'Donnell.



LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead to next year, we are planning a two-day residential writing retreat for postgraduate research students and early career scholars, which will take place later in 2025. The retreat is being organised and funded jointly between SIPR and SCCJR. We are also planning to launch a series of bi-monthly lunchtime 'power hours' from September 2025. Guided by action learning methodology, these sessions are aimed at postgraduate students and ECRs and will take the form of short presentations and question/answer sessions. We also look forward to continuing with our webinar series', expert presentation sessions, and one or two in-person networking events too. Moreover, we look forward to supporting more talented early career scholars and innovative and impactful research projects throughout 2025-26.

PHD MATCH FUNDING UPDATE

A further SIPR PhD match funding scheme was launched this year, which saw two awards made, both to Abertay University.

One award went to a supervisory team led by Dr Julie Gawrylowicz, Reader in Applied Cognitive Psychology, for a PhD project on 'Trauma and Technology: Identifying Best Practice for Video-Recorded Interviews (VRIs) with Victims of Sexual Crimes'. This interdisciplinary project aims to identify best practices for VRIs with adult victims of serious sexual crimes. By collaborating with stakeholders such as Police Scotland and Victim Advocate Services, the research will focus on optimising the setup and presentation of VRIs to benefit both victims and officers. Joining Dr Gawrylowicz on the supervisory and advisory team are Dr Penny Woolnough, Reader in Forensic and Investigative Psychology and SIPR Associate Director, Abertay University; Dr Karen Goodall, Senior Lecturer in Applied Psychology, University of Edinburgh; and Professor Amina Memon, Professor of Psychology, Royal Holloway, University of London.

The second award went to Dr Andrea Szymkowiak, Reader in User Experience, and her team for a project on 'Enabling Users to Identify Deepfakes'. This studentship is supported by SIPR and the Abertay cyberQuarter within the Faculty of Design, Informatics and Business. Deepfakes, i.e., realistic

AI-generated images, videos or audio of people doing and/or saying fictional things, may be used to present misinformation, to manipulate or harass, or to persuade people to act, benefitting a bad actor at the significant detriment to individuals, communities and organisations. The aim of this work is to improve and investigate how people identify deepfakes from genuine online media with the intent to create training material to support identification of such deepfakes. Using a mixed-



method methodology and eye-tracking technology, the project will investigate whether people can reliably identify deepfakes, what information they attend to when making decisions regarding the veracity of online material, the effect of user characteristics and context of deepfake identification, and whether training can improve the reliability of the identification process. This project will be supervised within the Department of Cybersecurity and Computing by an interdisciplinary supervisory and advisory team led by Dr Szymkowiak. Joining Dr Szymkowiak are Dr Lynsay Shepherd, Reader in Cybersecurity and Human-Computer Interaction; Professor Lynne Coventry, Director of the Abertay cyberQuarter; and Marc Kydd, Foundation Lecturer in Cybersecurity.

It is anticipated that the outputs and impact generated from both projects will be of widespread and significant benefit at multiple levels, including individuals, policing organisations, and government bodies. We look forward to following the progress of both projects.

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER GRANT SCHEME UPDATE

This year SIPR launched its early career researcher (ECR) grant scheme, which saw three awards being made to talented early career scholars.

The first award went to Dr Corinne Fenech, Glasgow Caledonian University, for a project on 'Contemporary Challenges Faced by Police Officers in Scotland – A focus on Body Worn Video', which explores police officers' perceptions of Body Worn Video (BWV) technology during its phased rollout. Grounded in procedural justice and institutional theory, the research investigates how BWV influences officer behaviour, public trust, and internal organisational culture. Through qualitative group interviews with officers at varying stages of BWV adoption, the research contributes to evidence-based policing by informing ethical technology integration and supporting Police Scotland's Vision 2030 goals of trust, accountability and community safety.

The second award was made to Dr Estelle Clayton, Edinburgh Napier University, to progress Police Scotland's 'DEFINE' (Develop, Encourage, Foster Inclusivity for Neurodiversity in Everyone) pilot. This qualitative project explores best practices and learning opportunities from the pilot. The intention for the pilot was to promote and embed an inclusive ethos and support framework for neurodiverse officers and staff, and to raise awareness of neurodiversity within the organisational culture and structure of Police Scotland.

Finally, Dr Grant Barclay, University of Edinburgh, along with co-investigator Dr Alicia Heys, Senior Lecturer in Modern Slavery at the Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull, were awarded funding for a project on the topic of 'The Criminal Exploitation of Victims of Modern Slavery: Comparing the Scottish and English & Welsh Responses'. This project explores the critical differences between the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015, their specific emphases on protection provisions for victims (who may simultaneously be accused persons), and associated implications for policing first-responders, prosecution, and consistency of enforcement. The overall aim of the project is to determine if the respective legal approaches of each jurisdiction lead to different outcomes in practice, both in terms of prosecutorial and policing behaviour, and to draw conclusions on best practice when dealing with victims of criminal exploitation.

All three projects are innovative and timely, and all have the potential to make significant contributions and impact at multiple stakeholder levels. We look forward to seeing the outcomes and outputs in due course.



strategic priority 1:

**policing and
health, safety and
well-being**





strategic priority one

This theme explores issues such as Prevention; Role, value and impact of policing within the wider system; Gender Based Violence; Mental health; Substance use; Public protection; Missing persons; Community Safety and harm reduction; Local policing, visibility and accessibility; Police-community relations; and public confidence and legitimacy.

PUBLICATIONS:

Irwin-Rogers, K., Billingham, L., Fraser, A., Gillon, F., McVie, S., and Newburn, T. (2025) Preventing Violence: The past, present and future of the public health approach. Policy Press. <https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/preventing-violence>

Gorton, V., McVie, S., Matthews, B., and Murray, K. (2025) 'Investigating the association between health vulnerabilities and police enforcement during Covid-19: A novel study using linked administrative data in Scotland'. Journal of Criminology. <https://doi.org/10.1177/26338076241304446>

Murray, K., McVie, S., Matthews, B. and Gorton, V. (2024) From parking tickets to the pandemic: Fixed Penalty Notices, inequity, and the regulation of everyday behaviours. British Journal of Criminology. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azae016>

Napier, J., Clark, L., Leeson, L. & Quigley, L. (2024). "I faced so many barriers": Access to support for deaf female survivors of domestic violence in the UK. Just. Journal of Language Rights & Minorities, Revista de Drets Lingüístics i Minorities 3(1), 97-141. <https://doi.org/10.7203/Just.3.27933>

The work was recognised with the Police Scotland Chief Constable's Excellence Award (2024) in the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion category, and the SIPR impact award 2025.

POLICY BRIEFING PAPERS:

McAra, L., & McVie, S. (2024). Ministerial Policy briefing: Evidence in support of raising the minimum age of responsibility in Scotland. [Click to download](#) [PDF]

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

Morales, A. and McVie, S. (10 September 2024) Mapping the dynamics between violence, deprivation and alcohol outlets in Scotland using ambulance service data. International Population Data Linkage Network Conference, Chicago.

The Police-Community Relations Network worked with Dr Julie Berg from the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR) and colleagues from the Cross Justice Working Group on Race Data and Evidence (led by Scottish Government) to hold a workshop event on Institutional Racism on 24th October 2024 at the University of Edinburgh. There were three speakers, followed by small table discussions. Speakers were Dr Karla Perez Portilla (Glasgow Caledonian University), Dr Lewis Clarke (Police Scotland) and The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights. Dr Anna Souhami (University of Edinburgh) chaired.

Dr Jonathan Mendel edited (with Kiril Sharapov and Suzanne Hoff) a [special issue](#) of *Anti-Trafficking Review* on anti-trafficking funding. This included (with Kiril Sharapov and Kyle Schwartz) an article on anti-trafficking funding in the UK: 'Expansion, Fracturing, and Depoliticisation: UK government anti-trafficking funding from 2011 to 2023'. This includes discussion of funding for policing and related work.

He also published (with Kiril Sharapov) an *Anti-Trafficking Review* [article](#) on "Re-politicising Anti-Trafficking: Migration, labour, and the war in Ukraine". This presented evidence for the advantages of rights-based approaches to migration and labour exploitation, which has implication for policing.



Toolkits, resources and training materials in English and BSL for police officers, interpreters and the deaf community (<https://justisigns2.com/outputs>)

A BSL glossary of 33 key terms for domestic, sexual and gender-based violence in the UK available freely to anyone through a HWU website, to fill a gap in knowledge (<https://signs.hw.ac.uk/justisigns2/>)

Video teaching resources modelling poor and best practices for interpreter-mediated interviews with deaf DA survivors

The SILENT HARM documentary, a 17-minute video presented in BSL drawing together factual information and the lived experiences of deaf women survivors of DA, as an educational resource for everyone that is freely available. The documentary was shown at a Deaf Women's Safety community launch event, in collaboration with Police Scotland, and is now widely used in police and interpreter training. The video <https://youtu.be/dclKqUtlI0k> has been watched over 1,300 times.

As a follow-up, Police Scotland created a further series of BSL videos aimed at the deaf community affected by domestic abuse. Launched in December 2024, the series of 13 videos, provides crucial information on DA including how to recognise abusive behaviours and how to report them. These videos are available on the Police Scotland website, offering accessible resources for the deaf community (<https://www.scotland.police.uk/advice-and-information/domestic-abuse/>)

We wrote two submissions to the UK Government in response to their VAWG Strategy consultation and were invited by Police Scotland to give input to their Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy, raising awareness of the needs of deaf women.

We also gave evidence to a Scottish Government Independent Review of Funding for Services for Violence Against Women and Girls. Based on this, recommendations were made in the report about the need for deaf-specific services to be funded

The Naloxone evaluation team that published Hillen et al. (2024). Police officer knowledge of and attitudes to opioid overdose and naloxone administration: an evaluation of police training in Scotland. *Policing and Society*, 35(1), 1–16, were shortlisted for the Times Higher Education Awards Research Project of the Year and received **Highly Commended**.



The Global Law Enforcement and Public Health International conference 2025: Towards a Healthier and More Equitable State



Inga Heyman

*Associate Professor,
Edinburgh Napier University*



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

The Seventh International Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH 2025), held in Ottawa, Canada, convened a diverse global audience of practitioners, researchers, educators and advocates under the theme "Towards a Healthier and More Equitable State." The event emphasised integrated, interdisciplinary approaches to address systemic issues at the intersection of policing, public health, and social justice. Similar to previous LEPH conferences, there was significant international attention and engagement on Scottish approaches to policing and public health practice research, leadership, education and co-production. This report brings firstly an overview of the international conference and key highlights, followed by key reports by SiPR colleagues presenting at the conference.





A defining feature of LEPH 2025 was the inclusive representation of historically marginalised voices, including Indigenous peoples and those with lived experiences of vulnerability with justice involvement. Their contributions guided a critical re-examination of traditional responses, institutional practices, public confidence, community safety, harm reduction and preparation of public sector professional - echoing SIPR's Strategic Research Priority 1: Policing and Health, Safety and Wellbeing.



KEY OUTCOMES OF THE CONFERENCE:

Reimagining Crisis Response

Delegates explored and brought critical examination of innovative, community-led alternatives to traditional policing and health responses to mental health and behavioural crises. The shift aims to reduce harm, increase trust, be responsive to limited public sector resources and deliver tailored person-centred care during crises. A recurrent theme was the need for cross-sector training, governance, and accountability that keeps the individual at the centre of the response —directly supporting SIPR Research Priorities 2 and 3: Technology and digital policing and Policing systems capability and resilience. Each advocating scalable, evaluable practices based on real-world outcomes underpinned by social, ethical and legal considerations.

Integrating Public Health and Justice

LEPH 2025 reinforced the public health framing of justice issues. Discussions focused on the social determinants of health—housing, poverty, racism, and education—as underlying drivers of justice system contact. Presenters urged for upstream investment in trauma-informed care, prevention, and early intervention,

alongside ethical, coordinated data-sharing practices. These calls resonate with SIPR Research Priorities 2 and 3: Technology and Digital Policing, particularly the emphasis on responsible data use, and Priority 4: Policing and Vulnerability, through recognition of systemic inequalities and their role in shaping interactions with policing.

Cultural Responsiveness and Inclusion

The conference challenged prevailing notions of safety, health, and justice by prioritising community defined solutions. Speakers promoted trauma-informed and anti-racist approaches to policing and public health, supported by culturally grounded training and inclusive workforce development. Restorative practices, neurodiversity-informed practice education, and trauma-aware police and health care were highlighted as emerging innovations. These discussions reflect SIPR's commitment to Policing systems capability and resilience with a focus on leadership and workforce development, focusing on building empathetic, culturally competent professionals across public sectors.

Calls for Systemic Change

Many promising initiatives presented remain pilot-stage and under-resourced. LEPH 2025 urged for institutionalisation of effective practices, supported by sustainable funding, legislative backing, and national coordination and cross-sector consensus. An underpinning theme was for the leveraging of sectoral bodies to consolidate knowledge, support implementation, and facilitate system change—further aligning with SIPR's cross-cutting goals of interdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge mobilisation.

CONCLUSION

LEPH 2025 reaffirmed that public safety is a shared, societal responsibility rooted in dignity and equity. As one speaker noted, "We cannot punish our way out of public health crises." The conference concluded with the launch of the Africa Law Enforcement and Public Health (ALEPH) Network and a call to action ahead of LEPH 2026 in Leeds. <https://leph2026.org/>

In both spirit and substance, the conference closely aligns with SIPR's strategic priorities, offering a global roadmap for reimagining policing through the lenses of health, justice, and community partnership.

Presenting CARE-D at LEPH2025: Scotland's Innovation in Dementia-Related Policing



Professor Nadine Dougall

I attended the LEPH2025 (Law Enforcement and Public Health)

conference in Ottawa, Canada in July 2025 with support from a SIPR travel award, alongside Associate Professor Inga Heyman.

Two Scottish-led research projects developed by our team were presented: the CARE-D project (Cost and case study Assessment of Return Discussions for missing persons with Dementia), funded by Alzheimer Scotland and SIPR, and a study on the impact of the UK National Consensus Statements on the role of emergency services in public health, funded by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). This report focuses on CARE-D.

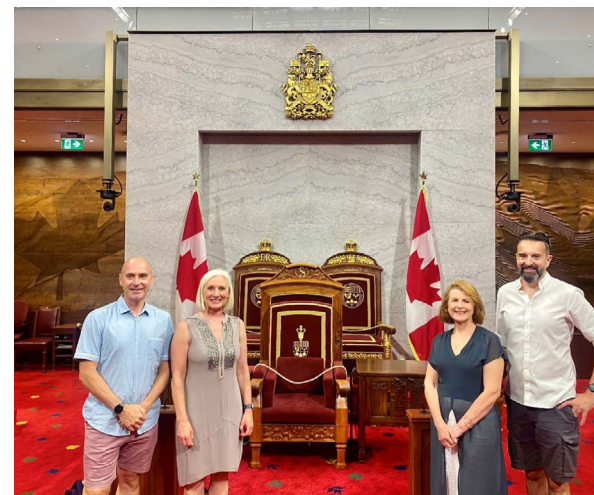
I presented on behalf of our CARE-D research team as part of an international panel of academics exploring multi-agency responses to dementia—an area of increasing concern given the ageing and expanding global population. The session was expertly chaired by Acting Superintendent Graeme Gallie of Police Scotland, whose insights helped frame our findings in an operational context. Dr Andy Tatnell, CARE-D Research Fellow, played a central role in the delivery of our research.



While our broader evaluation includes cost analysis across Police Scotland and Alzheimer Scotland, we shared interim findings from our initial qualitative case studies. These focused on the experiences of police officers, Alzheimer Scotland dementia advisors, carers/ family members, and people with dementia who had gone missing - interviewed as dyadic partners where possible.

My presentation highlighted the emotional and operational challenges of dementia-related missing incidents, and the preventive potential of Return Discussions in supporting individuals and reducing recurrence. There was strong international interest in the model, with delegates keen to explore similar approaches in their own jurisdictions.

Ottawa provided a fitting international setting for the conference. The city has many impressive public buildings and a well-organised layout, which were much admired, and it must rank as one of the most polite and welcoming cities I've visited. A highlight was a private tour of the Canadian Senate, housed



in a building of architectural significance with strong historic ties to the UK. The visit prompted reflections on how research can inform national policy and legislation, and on Scotland's growing contribution to global conversations on policing, public health, and vulnerable populations.

While in Ottawa, we were also delighted to learn that SIPR has awarded us further funding to extend the CARE-D project. This will enable additional case studies and strengthen the evidence base for our national recommendations to follow later this year.

***CARE-D research team:** Professor Nadine Dougall, Associate Professor Inga Heyman, Dr Andy Tatnell, Associate Professor Jennifer Murray, Professor Jill Stavert, Associate Professor Fiona Maclean, Jan Savinc, and Dr Lydia Emerson.



Police Scotland Showcases Neurodiversity Work at LEPH 2025

Police Scotland was proud to participate in the Seventh International Conference on Law Enforcement & Public Health (LEPH 2025), where Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Mark Sutherland and Superintendent Graeme Gallie presented alongside colleagues from Edinburgh Napier University. The conference was held in Ottawa, Canada and was attended by delegates from across the world. Their session focused on the innovative work being done to recognise and support neurodiversity within policing.

In addition, ACC Sutherland supported a post graduate student event with Professor Inga Heyman where he presented on Evidence Based Practice and how positive relationships between academia and police can support safer communities.

The visit was supported by the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR), whose commitment to high-quality, independent research continues to inform evidence-based improvements in policing policy and practice across Scotland.

ACC Sutherland said:

"Police Scotland has a long-standing relationship with LEPH. Strong collaboration between policing and academia is vital to building safer communities and a thriving workforce."

"It was a privilege to present with Superintendent Gallie on how we're improving support for neurodivergent individuals - both within our workforce and across the criminal justice system."

They were joined by Professor Stan Gilmour of Oxon Advisory, who discussed neurodivergence in criminal justice interactions. The session drew delegates from global law enforcement, public health, and academic sectors, reflecting the growing importance of collaboration at the intersection of these fields.

Professor Inga Heyman of Edinburgh Napier University, who chaired the session, added:

"The work being done in Scotland on neurodiversity is groundbreaking in terms of global law enforcement. Delegates from around the world recognised the relevance and impact of these initiatives, supported by SIPR."

Police Scotland has long embraced a public health approach to policing - focusing on prevention, early intervention, and tackling the root causes of crime and harm. The force aims to build a safer, more inclusive Scotland, where all individuals feel supported and communities are more resilient.

The work on neurodiversity reflects this broader vision and continues to grow through partnership with SIPR and academic experts.



Advancing Anti-Racism in Policing: A Systematic Review

Dr Myrtle Emmanuel, Associate Fellow, Institute for Equity, University Centre and Associate Professor & Academic Lead for Race Equity, University of Greenwich | **Dr Kenisha Linton-Williams**, Fellow, Institute for Equity, University Centre and Associate Professor, University of Greenwich | **Professor Paul Miller** | Principal and CEO, Institute for Equity, University Centre | **Professor Zoe Morrison**, Grampian NHS

In 2024, with the support of SIPR's Research and Rapid Response Fund (RRF), we led a [systematic review](#) examining how anti-racism has been conceptualised, implemented, and assessed within policing contexts in the UK. Our aim was to identify evidence-based interventions and highlight gaps between rhetoric and reality in efforts to embed anti-racist practice in policing institutions.

The funding provided a vital opportunity to bring together a cross-institutional research team in collaboration with the Institute for Equity, University Centre (formerly Institute for Educational and Social Equity). Engaging with literature spanning over two decades, the review assessed 77 publications across academic and grey sources, analysing them against three core criteria: the operationalisation of anti-racism, assessment of interventions, and consideration of relevant policies and practices. The findings



revealed a significant implementation gap: while many sources engage conceptually with institutional racism, few offer clear operational frameworks or sustained evaluation mechanisms.

We were proud to formally announce the review report at the SIPR Conference in February 2025, and engaged with Assistant Commissioner Alison Heydari, the National Police Chiefs' Council Race Action Plan lead. A photo from that event, capturing our shared commitment to advancing race equity in policing, accompanies this article (in photo, L-R: Dr Myrtle Emmanuel, Dr Alison Heydari, Dr Kenisha Linton

Williams). The review has since been disseminated at SPA / Police Scotland Knowledge Exchange national event in February 2025, informing practice dialogue and policy conversations at both operational and strategic levels.

SIPR's support was instrumental, not only in funding the project but in creating a platform for visibility, engagement and impact. The review has already catalysed invitations to collaborate on knowledge exchange and policy development activities across several UK forces.

We are now exploring further funding opportunities to develop an anti-racism assessment framework tailored for policing, informed by the findings and sector engagement that SIPR made possible.

Emmanuel, M.; Linton-Williams K., Miller, P.; Morrison, Z. (2025) Implementing Anti-Racism in the Context of Policing: A Systematic Review. Police Scotland and Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR). Available at: <https://www.sipr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Final-RRF-Anti-Racism-Report-with-Technical.pdf>



Early Career Researcher Grant – The Criminal Exploitation of Victims of Modern Slavery: Comparing the Scottish and English & Welsh Responses



Dr Grant Barclay,
*Early Career Fellow in
Evidence and Criminal
Law, University of
Edinburgh (PI)*



Dr Alicia Heys,
*Senior Lecturer in Modern
Slavery, Wilberforce Institute,
University of Hull*



The criminal exploitation of victims of human trafficking and modern slavery continues to pose significant problems for the criminal justice system, in terms of victim identification and bringing perpetrators to justice. In particular, the status of victimhood can be lost by individuals who commit offences as part of their exploitation, with criminal justice actors focusing more on the offence at hand, in terms of its commission and the identification of the individual as perpetrator.

The international community has long been aware of this potential risk and seeks to avoid the revictimization of exploited individuals through criminal justice processes. Of particular importance, the Warsaw Convention in 2005 tasks states to ensure victims are not punished for offences committed as a result of their exploitation. The 2011/36/EU Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims further requires Member States to ensure that their legal authorities have the option of not prosecuting such individuals, avoiding the criminalisation process entirely.

As a result of the UK's international obligations, its constituent jurisdictions have each enacted legal frameworks to try and tackle this insidious problem. As part

of their recognition of the non-punishment principle for victims of modern slavery involved in criminal exploitation, England & Wales introduced a bespoke statutory defence which can be used where cases proceed to trial. In contrast, Scotland requires the Lord Advocate, as head of prosecutions in Scotland, to provide guidelines to prosecutors which must be followed when making decisions about whether to charge victims of human trafficking for offences committed as a result of their exploitation. There is no bespoke defence of trafficking in Scotland, and thus where cases do proceed victims of trafficking must rely on defences like coercion and necessity, which are poorly suited to the trafficking context.

The overall aim of this project is to determine if the respective legal approaches of each jurisdiction lead to different outcomes in practice, both in terms of prosecutorial and policing behaviour, and to draw conclusions on best practice when dealing with victims of criminal exploitation. To this end, a full day workshop was held at the University of Edinburgh on May 19th with individuals invited from key agencies in both Scotland and England & Wales, including COPFS, Police Scotland and their English & Welsh equivalents, as well as solicitors, academics and social workers from both sides of the border. With a view to maximising the accessibility of the results of this information gathering session, the project will produce four outputs across different formats: a detailed summary of proceedings; two blog posts (comprising a general overview post and one which focuses specifically on the policing aspects of the project); and a podcast which will offer thoughts and reflections from the investigators.

SILENT HARM: Exploring the barriers experienced by Deaf women who are domestic abuser survivors

Professor Jemina Napier, Lucy Clark, Heriot-Watt University | **Constable Stephanie Rose, Detective Constable Sarah Winters, Detective Constable Stephanie Torrance, Police Scotland**



Deaf women are two to three times more likely to experience domestic abuse (DA) than hearing women, yet face significant barriers in accessing support - especially when services rely on interpreters. To address this, two linked projects - Justisigns2 (2020–2022) and SILENT HARM (2023–2024) - were launched to improve access to DA support for deaf women using British Sign Language (BSL).

These projects, led by Heriot-Watt University and funded by the European Commission and the Royal Society of Edinburgh, were among the first in the UK to explore the unique experiences of deaf women survivors of DA. Using a community-participatory approach, researchers collaborated with Police Scotland, interpreters, and DA professionals to identify challenges and co-develop solutions. Surveys and interviews revealed systemic barriers, including inaccessible language and a lack of BSL resources.

KEY OUTCOMES INCLUDED:

- Revising Police Scotland's Domestic Abuse Questionnaire into plain English and BSL.
- Creating bilingual resources and a BSL glossary of key DA terms and basic sentences in BSL for police officers to use when coming into contact with deaf women



- A mini-documentary outlining the experiences of deaf women experiencing DA
- Hosting events like the "Deaf Women's Safety" session in March 2024, attended by 147 people.
- Engaging with stakeholders such as SIPR, the College of Policing, and deaf advocacy groups.
- Running bilingual social media campaigns and vlogposts, which reached thousands and led to direct support for deaf women.



- The projects significantly influenced policy and practice, increasing BSL visibility in the justice system and improving interpreter training. Deaf women reported feeling heard and empowered, with many gaining a clearer understanding of abuse and legal rights.
- Overall, these initiatives have had a lasting societal impact by removing barriers, informing policy, and ensuring deaf women survivors of DA in Scotland have equitable access to justice and support in their own language.



New network focusing on emergency responses to substance use and mental health launched



Dr Lisa Schölin, from the University of Edinburgh,
in collaboration with
Professor Hughes and Dr Gearoid Brennan, NHS
Lothian/University of Edinburgh.

In February 2025, the Acute Response to Emergency Mental Health and Substance use (ARMHS) Research Network launched. Funded by Royal Society Edinburgh's Research Collaboration grant, the network is led Dr Lisa Schölin, from the University of Edinburgh, in collaboration with Professor Hughes and Dr Gearoid Brennan, NHS Lothian/University of Edinburgh. The network brings together researchers, clinicians and practitioners, public and third sector, and people representing lived experience across the broad range of emergency responses to substance use and mental health including police, ambulance, emergency departments. The network focuses on knowledge exchange and fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, with the aim of developing more holistic and impactful research to improve care for a group of people who often have poor experiences of care. The network meets three times per year, with the next meeting taking place at Glasgow Caledonian University on 23 September.

If you are interested in the network and want to be added to the distribution list, please email Lisa Schölin at lisa.scholin@ed.ac.uk

Responsive Research Fund – Good Practice in Transfer of Care

Dr Martha Canfield,
Glasgow Caledonian University



In 2024, a team of academics was awarded a responsive research grant from the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) to examine how individuals in mental distress are transferred from police custody to healthcare services across international policing systems. The research team led by Dr Martha Canfield includes Dr Elena Dimova and Professor Liz Hughes from Glasgow Caledonian University, Professor Susan McVie from the University of Edinburgh, and Professor Martin Webber from the University of York.

The study aims to synthesise existing models of transfer of care from police to healthcare providers (or other relevant agencies) for individuals experiencing mental distress. While mental health services are best

placed to support individuals in crisis, police are often the first point of contact. In certain situations, police officers have the legal authority to transport individuals to a designated "place of safety" if there is a significant risk of harm to themselves or others.

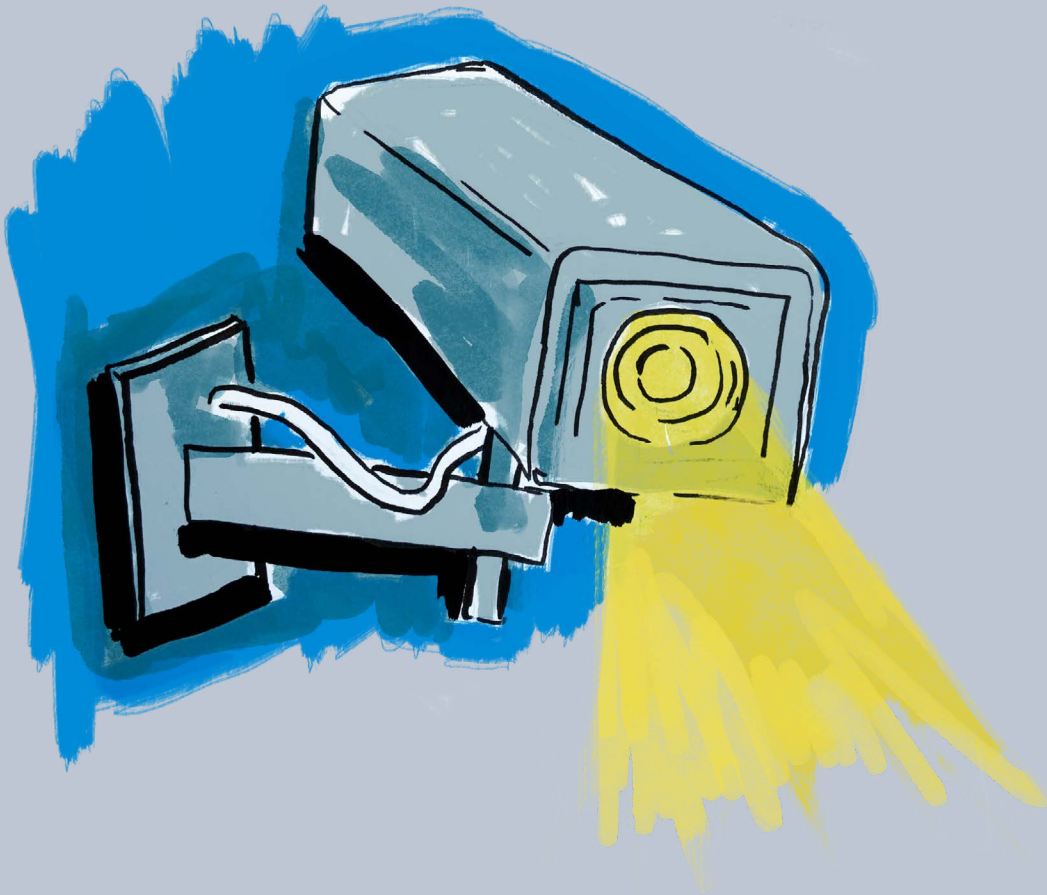
However, this practice raises important concerns regarding the appropriateness of police involvement, as well as the processes, locations, and waiting times associated with transferring care to mental health services. These challenges are especially pronounced in Scotland, where large rural and remote areas mean services are more dispersed, crisis response times may be longer, and the distances required for transport are often greater than in urban areas.

In recent years, a range of innovative international care transfer models have improved outcomes for people in crisis. Identifying and synthesising this evidence can provide valuable insights to inform and shape the development of future approaches in Scotland.

This SIPR funded study involves a rapid review of models of transfer of care published since 2010. Rapid reviews aim to identify in a time-sensitive manner what is already known about a practice issue by using streamlined systematic review methods to search for available evidence. The review is being co-produced with members of the Advisory Group, which comprises

service users, academics and staff from Public Health Scotland, Scottish Police Authority, and Police Scotland Mental Health Taskforce.

The final report is currently being finalised and comprises a synthesis of 24 published peer-reviewed articles. Identified models in the included studies tend to fall into one of four categories: co-response models (shared protocol in which police officers are paired with mental health professionals to respond to incidents involving individuals experiencing mental health crises) liaison models (police officers with specialised mental health training/healthcare professionals who serve as the first-line responders to mental health crises in the community), designated places of safety models (locations where individuals experiencing mental health distress can receive immediate care and assessment); and screening tools (used in community settings to evaluate an individual's mental state, risk level, and immediate needs). A range of outcomes influencing the transfer of care are being extracted from the studies, and key recommendations are being developed to inform both policing practices and the delivery of mental health care.



strategic priority 2: **technology and digital policing**



strategic priority two

This theme explores issues such as frontline policing and technology; Digital contact, online visibility & accessibility; Big Data and predictive policing; Surveillance; Cyber enabled/ dependent crime; Cyber security; Public protection; Maximising intelligence; Digital Forensic investigation; and Social, ethical and legal considerations.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS:

Lombard, N. and Proctor, K. (2025) 'Justice Work: Sisters (having to) do it for themselves. Women's experiences of the criminal justice system when reporting domestic abuse and stalking' British Journal of Criminology Volume 65, Issue 1, January 2025, Pages 1–16

Butterby, K. and Lombard, N. (2024) 'Developing a chatbot to support victim-survivors of domestic abuse: considerations and ethical dilemmas.' Journal of Gender Based Violence

Diana Miranda will be representing SIPR on the Scottish Biometrics Commission Advisory Board

Enabling People to Identify Deepfakes

Supervisory Team: The candidate will be supervised within the Department of Cybersecurity and Computing by an interdisciplinary team led by Dr Andrea Szymkowiak. Queries on this project should be directed to Dr Szymkowiak at a.szymkowiak@abertay.ac.uk.

Dr. Julie Gawrylowicz, Reader in Applied Psychology at Abertay University and an active member of the Evidence and Investigation Network, has been awarded external funding for two PhD students who will commence their research in October 2025. The SIPR-matched funded project aims to identify best practices for Video-Recorded Interviews with victims of sexual offences. The SGSSS-matched scholarship will develop a Trauma-Informed Cognitive Interview framework. Both studentships directly align with all three of SIPR's Research Priority Themes, addressing the intersection of policing, technology, and victim-centred justice.

Additionally, former SIPR-Postgrad coordinator and winner of best presentation at the SIPR Postgraduate symposium 2025 Sam Conway, one of Dr. Gawrylowicz's students, successfully passed his viva examination. His research focused on how novel technologies, such as avatars, can facilitate disclosure and memory recall in children and adolescents during investigative interviews. Sam collaborated closely with the Joint Investigative Interviewing Team during his PhD to ensure his work was informed by practitioners' perspectives and grounded in practical application. Dr. Gawrylowicz and her PhD student, Sam Conway, also presented at the Applied Psychology in Policing Settings conference, held at Aberdeen University and jointly organised by Dr. Rubinova, Dr. Gawrylowicz, and Dr. Woolnough.

Cybercrime Summer School

SIPR sponsored the 7th Strathclyde International Perspectives on Cybercrime Summer School which ran for five days in August 2024 with over 70 participants including from Police Scotland, Scottish Government, a wide range of Scottish and UK universities as well as many participants from Canada and Germany, and some from as far away as Italy and Malaysia. We had a variety of speakers across many different fields and across academia, industry, and law enforcement, with interactive workshops, lectures, and research talks. SIPR is sponsoring the 8th Strathclyde International Perspectives on Cybercrime Summer School which runs 25th-29th August 2025.



SIPR Supported Seed Funding and the Development of a Future Leaders Fellowship Application

In 2024, Dr Eva Rubinova from the University of Aberdeen received seed funding from SIPR to conduct pilot work to develop an application for the Future Leaders Fellowship. The proposal focuses on improving evidential gain in domestic abuse interviews and was supported by Police Scotland and SIPR.

Dr Eva Rubinova

New PhD Researcher Joining the SIPR Network

Miss O. Victory Ulamen, a recent graduate from the University of Aberdeen, was awarded a competitive PhD funding from the EastBio Partnership. Under the supervision of Dr Eva Rubinova, Miss Ulamen will examine how emotion experienced during negative interpersonal interactions impacts memory, and how to best support witnesses to report evidence.

The APPS Conference Sparked New Academic-Practitioner Collaborations

Following the April 2025 conference Applied Psychology in Policing Settings, researchers from the University of Aberdeen met with representatives from the local Public Protection Team to discuss areas of future collaboration. We look forward to developing projects focused on officer wellbeing, AI in child criminal offences, and investigative interviewing techniques.

Dr Eva Rubinova, Dr Clare Sutherland, and Dr Susan Griffiths

Liz, Estelle, Megan and the INTERACT team published seven briefing papers which may be found [here](#), including a summary briefing outlining project findings: Aston, E., Wells, H., Clayton, E., Bradford, B., O'Neill, M., Andrews, W. (2025). INTERACT Project Findings: Summary. [INTERACT Briefing 7](#).

The INTERACT team also published Bradford et al. (2025). 'To whom am I speaking?': Public responses to crime reporting via live chat with human versus AI police operators. *Policing and Society*, 1–17. (open access)

Clarus: Update on a Horizon Europe project supported by SIPR



Professor Megan O'Neill

Associate Director, Police - Community Relations Network, University of Dundee



In November of 2022, I successfully lead a consortium of European partners from 12 organisations across six countries to apply for funding from Horizon Europe. The successful project, Clarus (claruseu.net), was designed over the course of about 14 months, from fledgling idea to the final 150-page application.

The focus of Clarus is to improve communication, working cultures and the reduction of bias in the processing of digital forensic evidence by police and forensic examiners. We are designing a lexicon for digital forensic evidence as well as a tool to check text for possible biased wording.

During the design process, it was crucial to meet in person the core team of proposal developers in two-day writing retreats. These events not only shaped the final text of the Clarus application but enabled us to start to work together as a team. We managed three writing retreats, one of which was funded by the SIPR Innovation Fund. This enabled researchers from the UK to travel to Finland by paying for our



travel expenses as well as the meeting space in Helsinki. While we were there, we worked with our Finnish partners to develop the text and held an online meeting with the rest of the consortium to get their insights. This focused time together was vital for the timely development of our successful proposal.

Clarus was awarded the funding in April 2023 and started work in November 2023, under the leadership of the Security Centre of Greece (KEMEA). We have now reached the half-way point of the project, marked by the mid-term view in Brussels in June 2025. We are making good progress on our deliverables and have recently completed the data collection phase of the project. The findings will soon appear on our website in short 'executive summaries'. We are now turning our attention to developing our tools, the related training for practitioners and a publicly accessible MOOC (massive open online course). An important



element of Clarus is our Citizen Juries, one in each of five countries, which helps ensure our work remains accessible and useful for the general public.



Re-imagining the Local Policing of Cybercrime



Dr Shane Horgan,
Edinburgh Napier University



Dr Ben Collier,
University of Edinburgh



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

While cybercrime policing has become an increasingly popular object of criminological study in recent years, the role of 'local policing' has been neglected, with one rare exception (see Thomson, 2024; forthcoming).

The literature has prioritised examining high policing contexts and specialist units who pursue more sophisticated cyber-criminality with unconventional or non-routine responses (e.g. Whelan et al., 2024; Collier et al., 2022). Accounts of the frontline mostly remain occupied with 'limitations' described nearly two decades ago (Wall, 2007); complexity, resource intensity, multi-jurisdictionality, legal and definitional ambiguity, non-routine characteristics, and cultural misalignment. Where frontline cybercrime policing has been a focus, studies mostly examined 'perceptions' of frontline officers, the challenges they experience, training deficiencies and need for upskilling (Harkin and Whelan, 2022; Hadlington et al., 2021; Cockcroft et al., 2021; Wilson et al., 2021).

Our qualitative study of 22 frontline, response, and specialist police officers in Scotland replicated earlier findings of 'challenge', training needs, and

limitations. However, they also revealed a vast quantity of hidden labour that is mostly unrecognised both organisationally and academically. Beyond their investigative functionality, frontline officers engage in extensive mental-health triage and blue light response, victim support, restorative justice practices, and police-community relationship building. We argue that despite the organisational and cultural push towards conventional criminal justice outcomes, local police in Scotland have adapted to these dated 'limitations' by leaning into their wider, well established, 'service role' (Punch, 1979; Reiner, 2010). Our data reveals that frontline responses to cybercrime include the pursuit of alternative forms of justice (i.e. restorative and procedural) that aiming to minimise the acute and systemic harms experienced by victims while also promoting public confidence through expectation management and procedural understanding.

The restorative qualities of the frontline response are reflected in the following elements participants describing routinely providing in cyber-related calls;

- Official recognition of harm done to victims
- Answers about what has happened, why, and what it means.
- Safety and empowerment by employing the

symbolic power of 'the uniform' to restore victims sense of security

- Restitution through signposting, official recording, and investigation where possible

Of course the predominant absence of 'an offender' limits the possibility of a true restorative justice approach here.

The **procedural justice qualities** of local responses stem from the challenges associated with complexity, data requests, and resource availability in cybercrime inquiries. Our data suggests that through ongoing procedural updates, progress information, and check-ins officers seek to minimize negative impacts of cybercrime on force reputation and legitimate Police Scotland as a fair and respectful first responder worth engaging with. This is further reinforced by the restorative aspects of frontline responses.

Overall, we argue the relegation of the frontline to auxiliary functionality has led to an under theorisation and lack of engagement with the broader policing role and function in cybercrime contexts. In limiting our imagination of policing to 'crime-fighting' and criminal justice, we have missed opportunities to embed productive alternative forms of justice. Police officers are already pursuing these alternatives to ameliorate victims' experiences and promote public confidence

and institutional legitimacy. However, the time and resources involved alongside conventional investigation and response work significantly diminishes capacity and morale. This raises important questions about whether response policing is the appropriate home for this task, and if not, who may be best placed to adopt it.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Collier, B., Thomas, D. R., Clayton, R., Hutchings, A., & Chua, Y. T. (2022). Influence, infrastructure, and recentering cybercrime policing: evaluating emerging approaches to online law enforcement through a market for cybercrime services. *Policing & Society*, 32(1), 103–124.

Hadlington, L., Lumsden, K., Black, A., & Ferra, F. (2021). A Qualitative Exploration of Police Officers' Experiences, Challenges, and Perceptions of Cybercrime. *Policing : A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 15(1), 34–43.

Harkin, D., & Whelan, C. (2022). Perceptions of police training needs in cyber-crime. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 24(1), 66–76.

Thomson, C. W. (2024) Policing Everyday Cybercrime: Police Scotland's Sensemaking Approach to Cybercrime Policing [Doctoral Thesis] Available from: <https://discovery.dundee.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/policing-everyday-cybercrime> [Accessed: 17/06/2024]

Whelan, C., Dupont, B., Harkin, D., Martin, J., Miccelli, M., & Villeneuve-Dubuc, M.-P. (2024). Expertise Integration in Cybercrime Policing: Exploring Civilian Career Lifecycles. *Deviant Behavior*, 1–18.

Wilson, M., Cross, C., Holt, T., & Powell, A. (2021). Police preparedness to respond to cybercrime in Australia: An analysis of individual and organizational capabilities. *Journal of Criminology* (2021), 55(4), 468–494.

Showcasing ISEDA 'serious game'

Nancy Lombard

Professor in Sociology and Social Policy, Glasgow Caledonian University



Professor Nancy Lombard and Dr Kate Butterby have showcased an innovative training method to help police officers deal with cases of domestic abuse.

The researchers hosted two events: an event at GCU campus and another at the police college featuring a demonstration of an interactive serious game developed as part of the EU-funded project Innovative Solutions to Eliminate Domestic Abuse (ISEDA). ISEDA is a Horizon Europe-funded collaboration between 15 partners from nine European countries, with the main objective to combat and eliminate domestic abuse via modern technological tools and practices. DCI Adam Brown, from Police Scotland, attended the session to discuss the challenges of policing domestic abuse. Professor Lombard and Dr Kate Butterby highlighted research from the point of view of victim-survivors before Chad Commeau, of developers THK Games Lab, demonstrated the serious game solution.



Title?

Dr Shane Horgan,
Edinburgh Napier University

SIPR support has enormously helped our dissemination of knowledge and impact from the influence policing project.

We presented the results at a number of conferences with SIPR support, and I have given invited talks on Influence Policing at Manchester and Sheffield universities, as well as at a number of practitioner events. Scrambling for Safety is a meeting of campaigners, policymakers, activists, and journalists dating back to the late nineties - it was a perfect audience for discussing the project findings. There was particular shock at the privacy implications of state access to detailed behavioural targeting information for the delivery of influence campaigns. Following Sfs, I am now building on these connections as the new chair of its associated foundation, the Foundation for Information Policy Research. ACE-CSR involved dissemination at the other end of the spectrum - it is GCHQ's academic outreach conference, organised by the National Cyber Security Centre. This was a great opportunity to speak to a very different audience, who had a lot of interesting reflections on accountability and the positive potentials of similar methods. CyberUK and SHB were not possible due to unforeseen circumstances, but we managed to present in Tokyo using Edinburgh University funding, allowing further on the ground research on public campaigns on the Tokyo metro for comparison with the UK's See it Say it Sorted campaign - itself linked up to a set of extensive digital influence adverts under CT Policing.



Dissemination of Investigating New Types of Engagement, Response and Contact Technologies (INTERACT)



Professor Liz Aston
(PI), Edinburgh Napier University



Dr Helen Wells
(Co-I), Keele University



Dr Estelle Clayton
Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Edinburgh Napier University



Professor Ben Bradford
(Co-I), University College London



Professor Megan O'Neill
Associate Director, Police - Community Relations Network, University of Dundee



University of Dundee



Edinburgh Napier University



Economic and Social Research Council

Grant number: ES/V00283X/1/

Building on the successful INTERACT Conference hosted at Edinburgh Napier University in June 2024, the INTERACT team published seven briefing papers which may be found here, including a summary briefing outlining project findings and recommendations INTERACT Briefing 7.

Among other things, the INTERACT project highlighted the importance of public consultation and engagement, consideration of accessibility needs, sufficient 'channel choice' and the centrality of relational aspects to public trust in policing.

Liz Aston organised an INTERACT Strategy and Policy Forum in London in November 2024 to explore implications of findings for digital police-public contact with key stakeholders. We discussed findings and explored implications and recommendations from briefing papers with key police forces and UK bodies including the National Police Chief's Council (with leads across several relevant portfolios), Office of the Police Chief Scientific Advisor, Home Office, College of Policing and police inspectorates and accountability bodies.

Feedback from the Strategy and Policy Forum suggests that our findings enhanced their understanding of digital police public contact, with all participants from key organisations expressing an intention to make changes as a result of discussions. Helen Wells also organised a bespoke dissemination event in June 2025 focused on partner forces in England.

The INTERACT team have various academic publications in preparation and this year published: Bradford et al. (2025). 'To whom am I speaking?'; Public responses to crime reporting via live chat with human versus AI police operators. Policing and Society, 1-17. (open access)



The INTERACT team also presented findings in Australia, at the American Society of Criminology Conference in San Francisco, as part of the Northern Policing Research Webinars in March, via a CCCU/UCL webinar in May, at EPIC in Norway in June and nationally via various fora including at the Scottish International Policing Conference.



Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Scotland: Shedding Light on a Hidden Crime



Child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) is a complex and evolving crime that takes many forms, ranging from online grooming and image-based abuse to hands-on offending – and it is a growing concern that police forces around the world are determined to tackle.

In Scotland, new research has shed stark light on the true scale of the problem. Data compiled by the Childlight Global Child Safety Institute, hosted by the University of Edinburgh, estimates that around 150,000 children in Scotland – almost one in five of those aged 5–17 – have been subjected to at least one form of technology-facilitated online sexual abuse in the past year.

This equates to an average of more than 400 cases every day, a figure that is over 70 times higher than the number of cyber-enabled sexual crimes against children recorded by Police Scotland. Many of these crimes go unreported, with significant numbers of children never disclosing what has happened to them.

The figures come from Childlight's *Into the Light* project, which examines the prevalence of technology-facilitated CSEA across Western Europe. When applied to Scotland's child population, the data also indicates that:

- Nearly 90,000 children (12%) have experienced online sexual solicitation, such as unwanted sexual talk that can include requests for sexual acts.
- In contrast, only 2,055 cases of online CSEA were reported to Police Scotland between April 2023 and March 2024.
- Technology-facilitated abuse can include sexual extortion, the non-consensual sharing of sexual images, and increasingly the use of AI-generated deepfake content.

The research also examined perpetration, drawing on a representative UK-wide survey of adult men. Based on these self-reported behaviours, Childlight estimates that in Scotland:

- Over 76,000 men (2.9%) have deliberately viewed child sexual abuse material online at some point in their adulthood.
- Nearly 100,000 men (3.7%) have flirted or had sexual conversations online with a child under 18.
- Almost 37,000 men (1.4%) have engaged in sexually explicit webcamming with a child.
- More than 53,000 men (2%) have paid for online sexual interactions, images or videos involving children.

Childlight states that these figures are likely conservative, as they rely on anonymous self-reporting in general population surveys. They illustrate the scale of the threat and the critical role that Police Scotland and other agencies play in holding perpetrators to account, disrupting harm and preventing repeat offending.

However, it contends that enforcement alone is not enough. It argues that the scale of abuse revealed by this research points to the urgent need for multi-agency prevention efforts, including better education, stronger regulation and global cooperation.

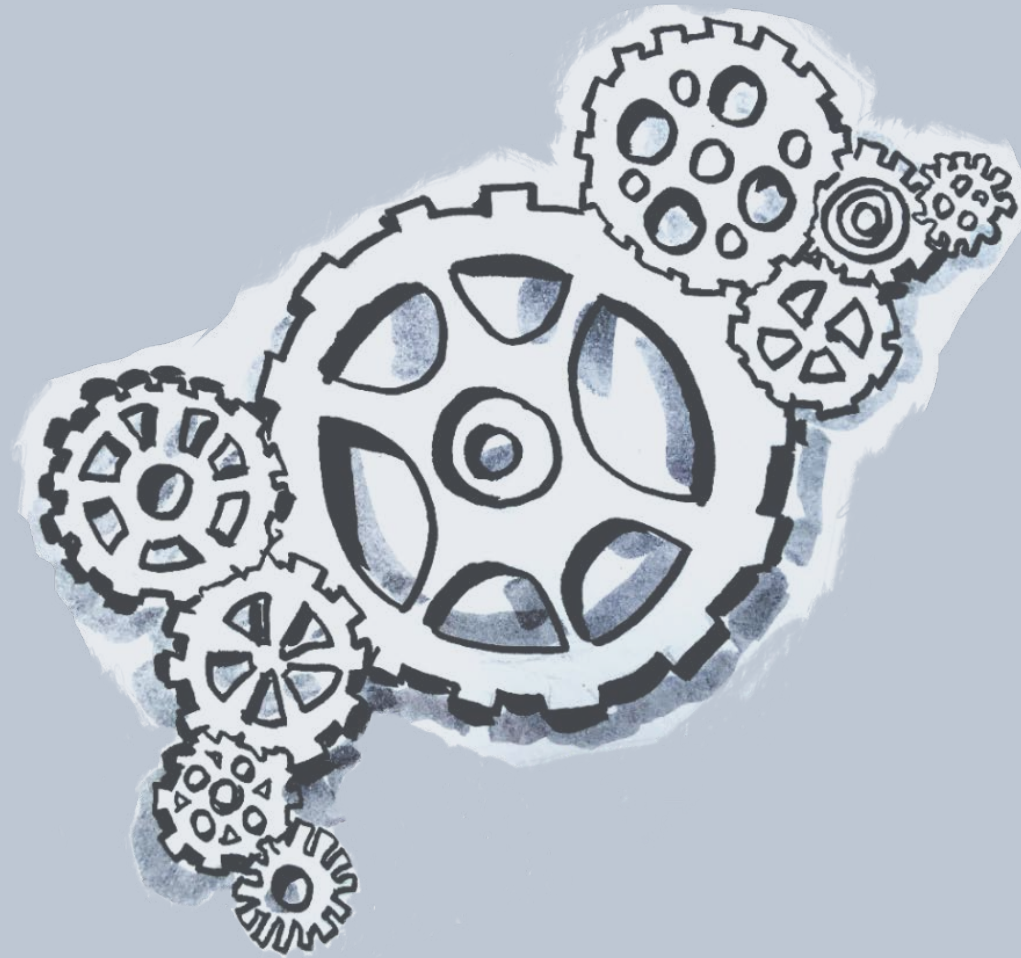
To support this, Childlight has developed new resources for SIPR to inform action and build capacity in this area. This includes two accessible data briefings on CSEA in Scotland – jointly funded by the Human Dignity Foundation – and the production of best practice guidelines for establishing academic-policing data partnerships on CSEA. These guidelines promote collaboration across data sharing, analysis, training, and dissemination, using the partnership between Police Scotland and the University of Edinburgh as a case study.

Childlight has also set out minimum standards and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the safe and ethical use of administrative data in this context, shaped by input from the wider Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) network.

As Professor Debi Fry, who led the project, explains:

"Police Scotland is playing a vital role in holding perpetrators to account and preventing further abuse against children. To close the gap between victimisation and reporting, we need continued collective effort focused on early intervention and systemic prevention."

For more information, visit www.childlight.org



strategic priority 3:

policing systems capability and resilience



strategic priority three

This theme explores issues such as Workforce; Support for operational policing; Retention/ recruitment; Business change/ change management; Culture, diversity, and inclusion; Staff well-being; Leadership; Training, learning and education; Demand; and Data; and investigations.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS:

Tatnell, A., Dougall, N., Heyman, I., and Wooff, A. (forthcoming) "I think we've all got a duty of care... and you don't need to stop where you think your role ends": A case study of how connective professionalism can improve community safety and wellbeing. *Policing and Society*.

Engelmann, L., and Tatnell, A., (Under review). How to blend the art, craft, and science of policing to develop learning organisations: A Scottish case study. *Policing: A Journal of policy and practice*.

Buchanan, J., Horgan, S., Wooff, A., and Tatnell, A. (2025) 'Covid-19, Communities and Policing: Service Abstraction and the Persistence of Place', *Policing and Society*.

Engelmann, L., and Tatnell, A. (2024) 'Researching police professionalisation in Scotland, Sweden, and Finland. In: Martin, M., and Tong, S. (eds.) Introduction to policing research: Taking lessons from practice 2nd ed. Oxon: Routledge.

Police Scotland are undertaking a review of the 2-year probationer Training Programme and have invited Dr Andy Tatnell who leads SIPR's Organisation Development Network to sit on the Strategic Oversight Group.

McVie, S. (4 February 2025) A 'whole system approach' to preventing justice contact: An optimistic, yet cautionary, tale from Scotland. Invited keynote address for the Investing for Prevention Symposium, convened by Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership, Child Protection peak and Peak Care. Brisbane, Australia.

McVie, S. (4 February 2025) Scottish Police Authority Roundtable on Evidence-Informed Policing. COSLA, Edinburgh.

Kurpiel, A. and McVie, S. (10 September 2024) Policing and Health Vulnerability: Administrative Data Linkage in Scotland. International Population Data Linkage Network Conference, Chicago.

Dr Mahnoz Illias completed a mixed-methods PhD exploring the gendered toll of policing on the health and well-being of women in policing. She received a nomination for Bellahouston Medal for an exceptional thesis. Her research highlighted how organisational injustice and precarious workplace social support exacerbate mental health challenges which informed strategies to improve leadership, culture, staff well-being, and gender-sensitive retention in policing.

New IAC member Cinla Akinci published this paper titled '**A Marriage of Convenience': Interorganizational Learning through Strategic Collaboration**'. Cinla Akinci is a Senior Lecturer at the University of St Andrews.

The study, published in the *British Journal of Management* in March 2025, examines how two police forces in the United Kingdom engage in a strategic partnership through collaboration. It explores the emergence of inter-organizational learning, the tensions that surface during the partnership, and how these tensions are resolved. The research contributes to inter-organizational learning theory by highlighting the multi-level processes involved and the interconnected outcomes necessary for successful collaboration.



SIPR is pleased to announce the publication of **Great Expectations! Work and Workplace Expectations, Realities, and Retention of Police Officers in Scotland**, led by Professor Kirsteen Grant (Edinburgh Napier University), with co-investigators Dr Britta Heidl, Professor Christof Backhaus, and Diane Vincent. Funded through SIPR's "Developing Effective Policing Systems" grant, this mixed-methods study compared the hopes of probationers and early-career officers—centred on serving communities, feeling respected, and progressing professionally—with the day-to-day realities reported by established officers. Findings reveal a notable gap between expectations and lived experience, with many experienced officers expressing regret over their career choice. The report offers seven key recommendations to Police Scotland, including aligning recruitment messaging with frontline experience, enhancing leadership and training practices, and strengthening wellbeing support, all aimed at reducing turnover and improving workforce retention.

Police Scotland, along with police services from Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, Catalonia, Niedersachsen, Finland and Norway will be taking part in the RECPOL 2 (Recruitment, Education and Careers in the POLice), a longitudinal, cross-national research project which will follow police students from the beginning of their education for the first six years of their careers as police officers, are already in, and the project is lead from the Norwegian Police University College in Oslo.

Jackson, Louise A. (2025). Gender and policing in the UK: historical perspectives on 50 years of equality legislation. *Policing and Society*, 35(5), 603–623. <https://doi-org.eux.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/10439463.2024.2424801>. The article is part of a special issue on 'Police and History' edited by Mary Fraser (University of Glasgow).

Wong, Y. N., Horgan, S., & Aston, E. (2025). 'Managerial approaches to mitigate police professionals' online harms in the United Kingdom'. *Police Practice and Research*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2025.2522835>. This 3PO article argues for (1) national-level advocacy for increased focus on personnel vulnerabilities which supports organisational-level shifts towards, (2) an emphasis on wellbeing, and (3) broader managerial training in online harms management.

Z. Alexander, J. Kloess, and M. Larkin - An Exploration of the Personal Experiences of Forensic Scene Investigators' Daily Work: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis - *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*

L. McMinn, J Kloess and Z. Stephenson - 'Empowering Young People with Special Educational Needs to Recognize and Report Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: A Mixed-Methods Review' - *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*

Contemporary ethical challenges faced by police officers in Scotland – A focus on Body Worn Video



Dr Corinne Fenech,
*Lecturer in Marketing,
Glasgow Caledonian University*



This research, funded by the SIPR Early Career Research Grant Scheme 2024, examines ethical dilemmas encountered by police officers in Scotland arising from the deployment of Body Worn Video (BWV) technologies. BWV Systems record audio and video on demand, capturing the previous 30 seconds of footage upon activation.

Their use is guided by the Code of Ethics for Policing in Scotland, Police Scotland - Body Worn Video Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and PLANE principles which guide that actions must be Proportionate, Legal, Accountable, Necessary and Ethical.

Through this study I investigate how these formal guidelines translate into practice, and what it means for police officers, on a human level, to carry and activate cameras during day-to-day duties. Two focus groups were conducted with a range of officers: those possessing experience of BWV, those undergoing

rollout, and officers not currently using BWV, including managers. This diversity enabled the exploration of contrasting attitudes and lived experience of BWV in the field.

Participants were asked to reflect on their perceptions and experiences of BWV, its influences on their wellbeing, privacy, and job satisfaction, and its broader effects on citizen privacy, officer-public interactions, and the risk of malicious complaints. Officers also discussed the ethical tensions arising from the use of this technology as well as how BWV may enhance or complicate accountability.

BWV's integration is not a simple technical deployment, but a complex organisational and cultural process shaped by attitudes towards change, concerns around surveillance, and the dynamics of teamwork and institutional support.

Insights from the study can support local policy makers in refining BWV SOPs and policing strategies. They also have relevance for international bodies committed to SDG Goal 16 – Promoting Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. They are aimed at contributing to practice by bringing to light the nuanced ethical challenges faced by officers in the field. It is intended to support efforts to strengthen ethical conduct and

psychological wellbeing in Scottish policing. It may also aid Police Scotland in the ethical implementation of emerging technologies. This project is also expected to contribute to theory in the areas of policing and behavioural ethics scholarship.

Personally, this research process has deepened my appreciation for the complex and often unseen dimensions of police work. I was particularly struck by accounts, highlighting the challenges officers face, including the persistence of generational mistrust toward the police, the emotional toll of being subject to malicious complaints, and the inhibiting effect of surveillance on informal interactions. These insights have underscored the delicate balance officers must maintain between accountability and authenticity in their daily roles.

I am grateful to SIPR, Glasgow Caledonian University and Police Scotland for their confidence in this project. Particularly to SIPR for awarding me my first research grant following completion of doctoral research in ethical decision-making in organisations. This an initial step which shapes the trajectory of my research and the development of future collaborations.

This project is currently at data analysis stage and will be concluded by August 2025.



The DEFINE Project



Dr Estelle Clayton,
Lecturer in Criminology.
Edinburgh Napier University



Neurodiversity includes autism, ADHD, dyspraxia, dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia (non-exhaustive list). The Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill Consultation (Scotland) is currently considering the introduction of a requirement for a national strategy on neurodivergence in Scotland. Academic evidence consistently finds that lack of appropriate support in the workplace is associated with poor wellbeing and high levels of burnout and this may be particularly exacerbated by the unique stressors in policing (Tromans et al., 2023).

Whilst understanding of neurodiversity is becoming more mainstream within UK workforces, there are several challenges that affect neurodivergent individuals, which include: prohibitively long wait times for NHS diagnosis and prohibitively expensive private diagnosis, a sense of both validation and grief that can follow either self-identification or formal diagnosis (Cage et al., 2024), and the risk of prejudice and discrimination following disclosure in the workplace (Romualdez et al., 2021).

Within this context, and in recognition of the need for policing to ensure wellbeing support for neurodiverse staff and officers, Police Scotland have undertaken the DEFINE pilot in 2024. This has involved approximately 12 'Ambassadors', drawn from officers and staff, who have been supported by a disability coordinator

in Police Scotland, to be the point of contact of officers and staff regarding neurodivergence. Their work involves providing support and signposting to appropriate guidance and support available in Police Scotland, the SPA, and external organisations, and to promote and embed the ethos of 'Develop, Encourage, Foster Inclusivity for Neurodiversity in Everyone' within Police Scotland's organisational culture. The Pilot continues to support officers and staff to date. The Pilot demonstrates and embodies a recognition of the need for policing to ensure wellbeing and organisational support for neurodiverse officers and staff, and aligns with Police Scotland's 2030 vision to ensure a thriving workforce through contributing to milestone 1.22 'continue to support our neurodivergent colleagues and communities'.

The DEFINE Project sought to identify best practices and learning outcomes from Police Scotland's DEFINE Pilot. This project was comprised of qualitative research designed in collaboration with Police Scotland, and with funding support from The Scottish Institute for Policing Research. The project explored insights gained from seven semi-structured interviews with Ambassadors (x5) and senior officers (x2) involved with the design and implementation of the DEFINE Pilot. Key findings were communicated to Police Scotland in a 22-page report in March 2025, followed by a learning workshop in May 2025. Findings from this report will be developed for academic publication in 2025.

3PO Project comes to a close

The 3PO project (Protecting Public Facing Officials and their Dependents Online) has now concluded. The project, led by CENTRIC at Sheffield Hallam University and involving multiple academic and policing partners, made significant strides in understanding and mitigating online harms.



SIPR has been delighted to be involved in this important research which highlighted the unique online threats faced by frontline officers and staff, and their families due to their public-facing roles. These include cyber-harassment, doxxing, and reputational attacks, often spilling into their personal lives. Officers frequently manage their digital presence through discretion and boundary-setting, though many lack clear guidance on reporting incidents or accessing support. A national survey of 758 police personnel revealed moderate to high concern about online risks, especially regarding family exposure and self-censorship. Many respondents felt under-supported and desired better guidance and parity between responses to physical and psychological harm.

Research also uncovered the experiences of children of police officers who face challenges such as bullying and exposure to anti-police sentiment online. Interviews with teenagers revealed that while many practice online safety, they often use platforms unfamiliar to their parents, such as Snapchat and Discord. Recommendations include early, ongoing conversations about online safety and age-appropriate access to devices.

A social media analysis identified four major themes of online harm: reputation damage, personal attacks (especially hostile sexism), abusive protest, and

identification of officers. Managerial perspectives revealed a focus on misconduct and reputation over wellbeing, with a call for a cultural shift towards an ethics-of-care approach.

The project has developed practical tools, including a Self-Assessment Tool to help officers review and adjust their social media privacy settings. This tool has been well-received and is being refined for broader use. Events such as the Police Scotland Wellbeing Conference, REPHRAIN Festival of Privacy, and World Cafés have facilitated stakeholder engagement and feedback.

In early 2025, policy roundtables were held with key stakeholders in across forces in the UK. These roundtables were valuable in identifying the need for clearer definitions, standardised policies, and integration with post-incident procedures. Participants supported embedding training into CPD, improving reporting mechanisms, and enhancing

support structures like wellbeing champions. Concerns were raised about mandating policies and data management. A central recommendation was appointing a national champion to drive implementation and raise public awareness of online abuse impacts on police personnel and families.





The Tutor Constable System in Police Scotland: Improving capacity, capability and realising tangible improvements



Dr Andy Tatnell,
Associate Director,
SIPR - Organisational Development Network Lead



From early 2024 to late 2025, a SIPR and Police Scotland-funded team comprising Dr Andy Tatnell, Dr Larissa Engelmann and Inspector Jamie Webster undertook a study, at the Police Scotland's request, of the services' approach to tutoring probationer constables.

The aim of the study was to provide empirical evidence to inform changes to policy and practice within Police Scotland which might enhance the capacity, capability and professionalism of Police Scotland's approach to tutoring police recruits during their 2-year initial police learning programme.

The research objectives were to:

- Assess the existing tutor constable model, with a focus on ways in which tutoring can be used to drive improvements in officer retention, particularly in respect of developing a more diverse workforce.
- identify indicators of a good tutor constable
- identify how good tutor constables might be selected, trained, recognised/acknowledged/rewarded, assessed and continually developed in the role
- identify what structures should be in place to support effective oversight and governance of a revised tutoring model.

STUDY DESIGN

Drawing on the approach taken by Professor Tom Cockcroft to his study of tutoring within English and Welsh policing, the research team undertook a national survey of the tutoring model in each of the 13 regional policing divisions. 25 responses were received from 12 of the divisions. The team also undertook 2 deep dive case studies in 2 policing divisions which involved 24 individual, semi-structured interviews with police officers including probationers, tutor constables, shift sergeants and inspectors, and senior leaders together with four focus groups, two of which involved probationers and two of which involved tutor constables. We also undertook interviews with Executive level officers from a number of staff associations.

WHAT WE FOUND

POSITIVES

One of the key positives we found was that being tutored was a positive experience for many probationers, although many felt that they had been "lucky" in getting a good tutor or tutors.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

We found that the existing model is fragmented, fragile and uncoordinated.

- There is insufficient focus on the professional development of probationers (and tutors) during 'on-the-job field' training. Probationers are seen first and foremost as deployable resources to help meet demand.

- there is insufficient space and time for Tutors to show Probationers how to do new tasks properly from the start. Doesn't help minimise 'practice shock' nor is it helpful in developing competence and confidence.
- there is an over-reliance on the dedication of tutors who often struggle with the demands of the tutor role and their day job.
- the limited variety of calls makes it challenging for probationers to evidence core competencies and values.
- The current model is hindering Police Scotland's wider strategic ambitions to develop its people and enhance their wellbeing.

DESIRED ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD TUTOR CONSTABLE

The desired attributes of a good tutor constable were generally perceived as:

- Patience
- Enthusiasm (for being a tutor)
- Competence
- Several years experience
- Motivation (for doing the job of a police officer)

However, given the imbalance between the number of available tutors and the number of probationers, managerial officers did not always focus on the desired attributes but instead applied an informal minimum standard when identifying (or voluntelling) tutor constables, namely:

- Had completed their probation
- were an authorised police driver
- had no glaring disciplinary issues

RECOMMENDATIONS

13 recommendations were made to Police Scotland around the key themes of the study findings namely Selection, Training and Development, the tutoring process, and tutor workloads.

One of our recommendations was that Police Scotland pilot a dedicated tutor unit which sadly has not been implemented. However, it is understood that on completion of their initial 16 week 'classroom-based' learning phase, probationers will now be posted to community policing teams for the first year of their 2-year probationary period where it is hoped they will get the space and time to learn more thoroughly than they do on a response team. It is not known if this approach will be evaluated and if so, by whom. Interestingly, this community policing team approach is used by Hertfordshire police who have recently trialled a dedicated tutor unit model along the lines of that used in Bedfordshire Police where it has significantly reduced resignations amongst probationers and shortened the time it takes for probationers to achieve independent patrol status. It is also understood that Police Scotland are currently revising the 1-day, on-line Moodle training package for new tutor constables with a view to returning to in-person learning.

The findings pamphlet from this study can be found at [\(link to pamphlet on SIPR website\)](#).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research team would like to thank Chief Superintendent Alan Gibson (now retired), Superintendent Jackie Dunbar and Chief Inspector Rachael Burns of Police Scotland for commissioning and part funding this study in conjunction with SIPR; Professor Tom Cockcroft and the Open University for the advice, guidance and support provided to us in developing our research design which mirrored the design of a similar study undertaken by them in England and Wales. We are particularly grateful to Professor Cockcroft for presenting the findings from his study in England and Wales, and to Inspectors Tim Taylor and Alison Beazley of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Police respectively for sharing their research and practice at our knowledge exchange events; and of course to the many police officers from Police Scotland who gave of their time to share their perceptions of tutoring, being tutored and leading and managing probationers and their tutors in very challenging operating environments.



Practitioner Fellowship

Alison Wightman

I started with Police Scotland in January 2020, working in ACC Major Crime and Public Protection, DCC Crime and currently DCC Transformation. During a "My Career" discussion, I indicated that I would like to learn more about the organisation and develop my skillset. My staff officer put me in touch with Academic Research who explained the Practitioner Fellowship programme in depth. I asked to be considered and was delighted to be accepted.

My report is based on the current landscape of the healthcare provision within Police Scotland custody suites and how they vary across Scotland, dependent upon the geographical Health Board. My report provides an insight into the Custody User Experience Survey, which was introduced in November 2024. I have reported my findings, what might be seen as best practice, highlighted the differences in healthcare provision and services within police custody, listed common themes and noted recommendations.

The Practitioner Fellowship has given me an insight into a small area of Criminal Justice, while carrying out research and analysing data.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Andrew Wooff for his valuable support and all of my colleagues at Police Scotland for their assistance.

"Dr Andrew Wooff supervised this practitioner fellowship which was trialled in the CJSD of Police Scotland. Working in conjunction with ACC Middleton, Andrew helped design and support Alison in the successful completion of this practitioner fellowship. This was the first run under the reinvigorated scheme and while a very positive experience in lots of ways, there is lots of learning to take away from this process. Alison will be awarded a certificate of completion and a letter of gratitude from the main sponsor (ACC Middleton). Andrew will be working with Lesley Weber to put a paper together for Police Scotland Executive on how to roll out the next phases of Practitioner Fellowships."

author?



postgraduate community

Postgraduate Symposium 2025

In June 2025, we welcomed the return of the SIPR Postgraduate Symposium, this time hosted by Edinburgh Napier University. The symposium remains a free and supportive environment for postgraduate students working on policing-related research. Year after year, it enables students to showcase their work and build meaningful connections with academics and practitioners.

Now in its 8th iteration, the SIPR Postgraduate Symposium continues to evolve – and this year saw an updated format designed to boost engagement. The day opened with a keynote presentation by Dr Amy Burrell, Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham. In her talk, *Developing and Navigating an Academic Career*, Dr Burrell shared candid reflections on her professional journey through academia and beyond, touching on themes of career precarity, cross-sector roles, and the value of volunteering.

After the keynote, 10 students presented their work to an audience of fellow postgraduates, academics, and police practitioners. Each presenter had five minutes and five slides to outline their thesis, followed by audience questions. The concise format drove focused discussion and challenged students to sharpen their communication, critical thinking, and storytelling skills – distilling complex research into a clear, compelling message for a diverse audience.

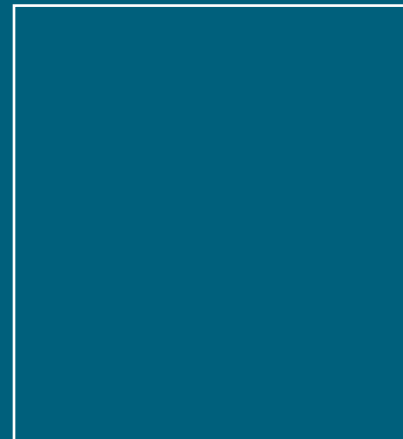
A distinguished panel of experts offered feedback and judged the presentations. This year's judging panel included: Prof Liz Aston, A/Prof Andrew Wooff, Dr Amy Burrell, and Dr Jennifer Galbraith. The Best Presentation award went to Sam

Conway, a PhD student at Abertay University, whose presentation explored the use of avatar technologies in forensic child interviews. The panel commended Sam for his depth of knowledge, confident delivery, and the originality of his research.

In the poster competition, attendees voted anonymously to select the winner from a range of strong submissions. The Best Poster award was given to Khalid Khan, a PhD student at Edinburgh Napier University, whose work was recognised for its clarity, visual impact, and research relevance. His research explores the impact of exposure to digital forensic evidence on the wellbeing of police officers in the UK.

The event was rounded off with a World Café session – a first for the Postgraduate Symposium. This brought attendees together for collaborative discussion, knowledge exchange, and reflection across three themed tables: Ethics, Wellbeing & Decision-Making in Policing, Technology and the Future of Policing, and Navigating Academic Careers.

The day concluded with a social for postgraduate researchers – an opportunity to continue conversations from the day and strengthen the sense of community across the 14 Higher Education Institutions that make up the SIPR network.





British Society of Criminology Conference 2025



ESME O'DONNELL

I attended the British Society of Criminology Conference in July to present my paper, "Desecuritising through Reflexivity: Rethinking Risk, Gender, and the Ethics of Care in Criminological Research".

My presentation formed part of a panel on reflexivity during the PGR Day and explored how gendered assumptions about risk shape research relationships, arguing for a more reflexive and care-oriented approach to ethics in criminological research. The Q&A session that followed sparked thoughtful discussion on researcher and participant positionality, as well as best practices for gaining and maintaining access to criminal justice practitioners. It also facilitated connections with other policing scholars, providing an opportunity to discuss how Feminist Care Ethics can contribute to policing scholarship and to further disseminate emerging findings from my PhD research on police discretion during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ethical tensions officers experienced while enforcing public health regulations.

Beyond presenting, the conference gave me the chance to engage with emerging research on policing, rehabilitation, gender-based violence, and green criminology. One session on green criminology examined the impacts of the XL Bully ban on dogs and their caregivers, highlighting the absence of impact assessments prior to

the policy's introduction and raising important questions about whose perspectives matter when assessing harm. Another panel on gender-based violence centred on how practitioners should engage with individuals adopting incel ideology, with one panellist emphasising the need for critical empathy: the ability to understand and explain others' perceptions and practices while maintaining enough distance to question and critique them. This struck me as particularly relevant to my research, where officers described the emotional difficulty of empathising with those they encountered while enforcing laws they felt were not always in the individual's best interests. I also attended a presentation on the use of Public Spaces Protection Orders to address nuisance driving, where the speakers mapped the introduction of PSPOs across England. Seeing how spatial and temporal mapping can make complex data patterns visible prompted me to think about how such visualisation techniques could be integrated into mixed-method approaches in my future research.

I am grateful to SIPR for supporting my attendance at the BSC conference, which enabled me to disseminate my work to a wider audience, connect with researchers across institutions, and lay the groundwork for future collaboration. Exposure to subfields challenged me to think critically about how knowledge is produced and what assumptions underpin different forms of criminological inquiry. These insights have strengthened my analytical skills and informed my thinking about the kinds of mixed-method and interdisciplinary research that might be needed in the future. I have returned with a stronger sense of connection to the wider research community, new questions to ask of my data, and fresh ideas about how my findings might contribute to broader debates across the discipline.

SIPR International Student Support



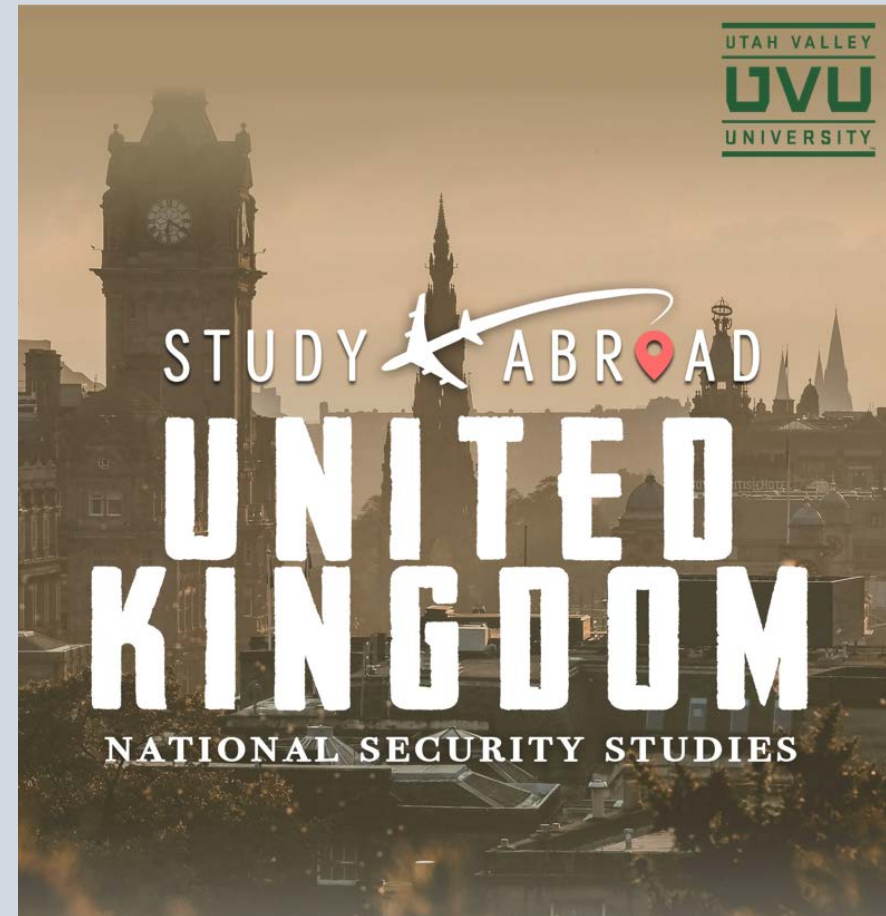
MARY KENT

In my role of university professor and program director, I have been charged with taking ten National Security Studies students from Utah Valley University, Utah, on a visit to the United Kingdom to study the differences in

national security strategy between countries.

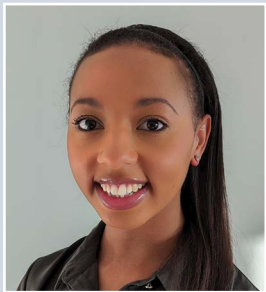
Not knowing where to begin to make these arrangements, I reached out to the Scottish Institute for Policing Research to find those willing to share their knowledge and experience with my students. I found a wealth of support, assistance, and willingness. Members responded to my requests with enthusiasm for the study abroad program, interest in our students and their studies, and have offered continued support to help make our experience in the UK a memorable one. I have been a member of SIPR for several years now through my work as a PhD student at the University of Stirling but had found little opportunity for engagement due to being an ocean apart. The UVU study abroad program finally gave me the opportunity to engage with SIPR professionals and impressed me with the comradery among members.

Having begun a working relationship with members has provided an opportunity for me to speak to my students about attending higher education in the UK and the benefits of belonging to an international organization such as SIPR. The research by the organization has provided additional resources for my studies as well as those of my students and opened their eyes to the international work being done on topics they are passionate about. I am truly appreciative of SIPR. The people, the work, the research, and the opportunities provided have enriched my studies and will provide an enhanced experience for my students on their UK study abroad this coming July and August!





Development of an Evidence Based Structured Professional Judgement Risk Assessment Tool for Missing Person Investigations



NESHA CHAN

This research aims to improve existing missing person risk assessment practices through the development of a structured professional judgement risk assessment tool, combining empirically established risk factors with professional judgement.

To achieve this, the project adopted four stages:

- 1)** A systematic literature review of 115 papers exploring risk factors associated with missing person harm outcomes.
- 2a)** Analysis of 21,476 police missing person cases to identify risk factors associated with being traced alive or deceased.
- 2b)** In-depth analysis of a subsample of 2,507 cases to identify risk factors associated with fatal and non-fatal harm.
- 3)** A survey of 79 professionals to explore their perspectives on the importance of specific risk factors and effectiveness of the current risk assessment process.
- 4)** Development of a structured professional judgement (SPJ) risk assessment tool.

This research has been supported by Police Scotland and funded by SIPR and Abertay University.

KEY FINDINGS

When combining the findings from each stage, 298 risk factors were identified. Of these, 41 were deemed to be strong statistically supported risk factors, with three or more research papers or stages finding a statistical link to harm. These included demographic risk factors (4), mental health risk factors (7), vulnerability risk factors (9), influence risk factors (5), behavioural risk factors (4), missing incident specific risk factors (5), and other risk factors (7). The survey of professionals highlighted concerns with the current risk assessment process, including its subjective nature, the ambiguity of risk grading criteria, the majority of cases being graded as medium risk and decisions being heavily influenced by resource availability. The in-depth case analysis also allowed for areas of improvement to be identified in how risk assessments are currently completed, including the ambiguity of some risk assessment questions, repetition across risk assessment questions, some risk assessment questions requiring information that is difficult to ascertain, insufficient traced information being recorded and a limited understanding of harm outcomes, particularly non-fatal harm.

NEXT STEPS

The new SPJ risk assessment tool is currently under development, with the statistically supported risk factors being refined into risk assessment questions and guidance notes. Furthermore, key changes will be incorporated to address the areas of concern outlined above. Once complete, the risk assessment tool will be tested, validated and piloted.

Connect with us



SUPPORTING INTERNATIONALLY
EXCELLENT, MULTI-DISCIPLINARY
POLICING RESEARCH TO ENABLE
EVIDENCE INFORMED POLICY
AND PRACTICE.

RESEARCH

KNOWLEDGE
EXCHANGE

POLICING
AND HEALTH
SAFETY AND
WELLBEING



TECHNOLOGY
AND DIGITAL
POLICING



LEARNING

INNOVATION

POLICING SYSTEMS
CAPABILITY AND
RESILIENCE



PARTNERSHIPS