



The adoption of evidence-based policing: the pivotal role of first line police leaders across England and Wales

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Introduction

One of the many important roles for first line leaders (team leaders) within the emergency services is leading the development of an operational workforce to deal with future challenges, whilst understanding the possible impacts of new developments in often volatile, uncertain, complex and regularly ambiguous environments. Such leaders have direct influence over the success of the frontline workforce. Whilst it is tempting for first line leaders to concentrate on dealing with the current problems, such leaders should not shy away from tackling the challenges of embracing, driving forward and managing change (Pearson-Goff & Herrington, 2014).

Society demands exemplary standards of those working within policing, as they uphold the law, prevent crime, bring to justice those who break the law, protect, and reassure citizens and communities. To meet these challenges, police leaders should be appropriately equipped with the best available knowledge, understanding and skills, whilst possessing the correct behaviours, so that they can lead the workforce, role model and support professional practice, whilst continuing to serve their teams, organisation and wider communities.

Martin et al., (2017) suggest a challenge for future police leaders across England and Wales is enabling and empowering new graduate police officers to be effective in a policing culture which traditionally highly values the experiences and craft of practice. To assist in such transformation and inform professional practice, the whole police service needs to be proactive and empower a broad adoption of evidence-based policing (Sherman, 1998).

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3 Identifying a continually growing evidence-base (Sherman, 2013), and the benefits it can
4 present when making often crucial decisions directly impacting the service, public and
5 society, evidence-based policing (EBP) is now embedded in the education and training of
6 new police recruits across England and Wales. As with other emergency services, policing is
7 striving to embody a service wide evidence informed culture (Strategic Policing Partnership
8 Board, 2023). The role of the first line leader is pivotal in such cultural change, leaders
9 should not be afraid of upsetting traditional routines and networks, instead becoming agents
10 of change (Maranto and Wolf, 2013). Yet their understanding and adoption of EBP has to a
11 large extent been under-developed, however their role is crucial within the workforce and
12 central to the embedding of workplace professional practices (College of Policing, 2015).
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31 **Literature review and discussion**

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35 Providing policing across England and Wales are over 147,000 full-time equivalent regular
36 police officers, there are also 86,000 police staff in both operational (e.g. crime scene
37 investigators) and back-office (e.g. HR specialists) roles supported by 14,000 uniformed and
38 non-uniformed volunteers (Home Office, 2023a). This workforce, exceeding 247,000
39 personnel, provides policing services across 43 'locally based' Home Office police forces
40 covering England and Wales. In addition, several thousand officers, staff and volunteers work
41 for other non-Home Office police forces and law enforcement agencies, such as the British
42 Transport Police, Ministry of Defence Police and National Crime Agency (Home Office,
43 2023a).
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3 In a complementary way to the long history of the health care professions making the best use
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5 of evidence on which to base their professional practice, the formalised use of evidence on
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7 which to base policing practice has a relatively recent history and is continuing to evolve.
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10 Often referred to in the health care professions as evidence-based practice, its importance for
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12 trainee paramedics is identified (Wilson et al., 2021), whilst in nursing an evidence-based
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14 approach is viewed as means to provide high quality care (Kumah et al., 2022). The
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16 interpretation and use of 'evidence-based policing (EBP)' has continued to evolve, with the
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18 concept often being initially attributed to Sherman (1998). HM Government (2021) identify
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20 the importance of **evidence-based approach to policing, although such an approach should not**
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22 **be viewed in isolation from its broader organisational context (Sherman, 2013).**
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29 There are a number of authors who discuss what constitutes EBP, **its limitations,**
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31 **interpretation** and the requirement to widen its remit to encompass and make best use of the
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33 evidence available (Sherman, 2013; Bowers et al., 2017; Fleming & Rhodes, 2018). Such
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35 **evidence comes in a range of forms, quality, rigour and depth that requires careful**
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37 **interpretation and evaluation** to inform practice and assist in decision making (Bowers et al.,
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39 **2017; Brown et al, 2018; Fleming & Rhodes, 2018; Pepper et al, 2020).** The types of
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41 evidence **to be interpreted can vary significantly** including the outcomes of an experimental
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43 randomised control trials (RCT), peer reviewed journal articles, **workplace reports**, certain
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45 websites etc., with each source of evidence placed on a hierarchical scale based on the
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47 **perceived** reliability, generalisability, validity and replicability of the evidence. The College
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49 of Policing (2023c) suggest that EBP should focus on the best available evidence to inform
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51 both practice and decisions.
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3 There are those who argue that a focus on EBP takes away from the importance of the 'craft'
4 of policing, with the need for EBP to be viewed as another tool (Fleming and Rhodes, 2018).
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6 Widening the scope of what constitutes EBP, perhaps even moving to embed the notion of
7 evidence to inform policing practice rather than using a hierarchy of evidence on which to
8 base practice and workplace decisions, follows on from ideas suggested for consideration by
9 other professions such as nursing and social work (Rycroft-Malone, 2008; Nevo and Slonim-
10 Nevo, 2011). Such an approach of evidence-informed policing widens the opportunities for
11 all first line leaders, whether police officers, staff or volunteers, to access and reflect upon a
12 range of the best available evidence and employ this in their everyday professional practice.
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26 The College of Policing (2015) recommend the need for consistent standards in police
27 leadership (although standards that are too rigid may stifle innovation and creativity).
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29 Government policy is crucial in shaping the quality and skills of police leaders (Sherman,
30 2013). Considering both evidence-based and/or evidence-informed policing, within the
31 strategic requirements for policing, the Home Office (2023b) refer to using information to
32 inform decisions in activities including working within multi-agency partnerships, joint
33 operations and dealing with serious and organised crime.
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44 Such a belief for the need to develop police leadership is not limited to England and Wales.
45 For example, one of the aims for the establishment of the Netherlands National Police is to
46 improve police leadership, creating space for operational leaders to utilise their skills
47 (Terpstra, 2021). The importance of developing effective leadership across the police service
48 in England and Wales is one of the key priorities for policing highlighted as a requirement to
49 ensure a workforce able to meet future challenges (Strategic Policing Partnership Board,
50 2023). Central to such changes are the first line leaders, those with whom police officers,
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3 staff and volunteers have regular contact, they set the pace and expectations for the daily
4 workplace routine along with the appetite for the adoption of EBP in professional practice.
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6 Sherman (2013) acknowledges that despite their costs, many practices in policing are still
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8 untested.
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15 Police leaders are likely to be the experienced police officers, staff or volunteers who are
16 instrumental in influencing behaviours and actions of both their team members and new
17 peers, as temporary, newly promoted or established police sergeants, staff, and volunteer
18 equivalent. They are responsible for leading the team by example, with first line team
19 leaders/supervisors having significant influence on their teams. For example, a respondent in
20 a Norwegian study reported how leaders need to be fully aware of how the signals they
21 convey influence others (Filstad and Karp, 2021). Maranto and Wolf (2013) points out how
22 innovative alternate approaches may be stifled when those seeking promotion only emulate
23 the behaviours of those who have achieved success.
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38 First line leaders either directly or indirectly impact upon frontline policing, with leadership
39 styles adopted to suit situations. Morrell and Currie (2015) describe how police leaders in a
40 riot needed to adapt their leadership approaches to be more directive as required. It is
41 imperative that first line leaders understand, utilise and champion the regular application of
42 EBP to professional practice as an additional tool to aid their craft. These first line team
43 leaders are critical in influencing change; however, such leadership roles can often be
44 challenging to convince of the need for change (Lum and Koper, 2017). As the CEO of The
45 College of Policing, Chief Constable Marsh explained, leadership within policing has failed
46 on numerous occasions and at many levels (Topping, 2022).
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Police First Line Leaders in England and Wales

There are 21,216 police sergeants across the 43 police forces in England and Wales (Home Office, 2023a). These sergeants have been promoted into role through successfully completing an established and nationally recognised promotion process. Maranto and Wolf (2013) argue that such standardised promotional rigour selects those who are familiar with the process and adhere to the organisational norms, rather than recruiting leaders externally who, with different ideas, will innovate and challenge. Standardised historical views of leadership may also favour those with certain characteristics (such as through gender bias) over others who are less represented as leaders (Hobday et al., 2019).

The College of Policing (2023a) describe how police sergeants are first line leaders providing daily supervision and support to their policing team of constables and/or staff. They are responsible for developing competence within the team and through co-ordination, sergeants monitor and respond to the need of frontline policing ensuring local objectives are achieved, public order maintained, the law upheld enabling public safety and the ongoing confidence of citizens and communities (ibid.).

The majority of police staff are recruited locally by each force, as a result, there are limited national processes for either the appointment or promotion of police staff into similar levels of leadership or the national collection of such data in any depth, this is an area of continued concern raised by Palmer et al., (2019) and requires further research. There is also limited information on the promotion of uniformed volunteers, termed special constable, who donate their time on the frontline.

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3 Focusing on police sergeants as operational first line leaders, they usually begin their policing
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5 careers as response officers, gradually developing experience over a number of years and
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7 then applying to move 'up the ranks' to leadership positions, **often in the same force. Maranto**
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9 **and Wolf (2013) discuss how Commissioner Bratton of the New York Police Department**
10 **(NYPD) had a pool of talented officers available, as the NYPD recruited nationally with**
11 **specific criteria (including military service or two years of college), so skills for potential**
12 **success were in place. In a similar way, in the not-too-distant future, many forces across**
13 **England and Wales will have a 'critical mass' of officers on the front-line who have been**
14 **through a degree level initial entry route and may aspire for promotion.**
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26 Davis and Bailey (2017) identify **however** in their research within a UK police force how
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28 there continues to be a strong attachment **in policing** to the hierarchical approach to
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30 leadership, with hierarchical and bureaucratic structures being present in the German Police
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32 (Barth-Farkas and Vera, 2016), and similar hierarchical and centralised structures in the
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34 Netherlands National Police (Terpstra, 2021). In US policing there is also a culture of
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36 deferring to those with the highest rank in a militaristic style attitude to command and control
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38 (21CP Solutions, 2023).
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45 This traditional approach to leadership, sustained through highly structured and bureaucratic
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47 organisations, continues to lead in some areas to the assumption that rank, and authority
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49 equate to good leadership (Martin et al., 2017; Herrington and Colvin, 2016). Ratcliffe (2022)
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51 adds that perceived seniority in terms of years served or reputation, means that junior
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53 officers, perhaps as the first officer attending an incident, often seek and defer to the advice
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55 from their 'senior' peers and resolve issues in a similar manner rather than adopt new
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57 innovative approaches and ideas. **Hobday et al., (2019) discuss working practices where**
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3 leaders' directions are unequivocally accepted, with Fleming and Rhodes (2018) adding
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5 comments from sergeants who wanted to try new approaches, but where overruled by their
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7 seniors. As a result, the established operational culture continues in the same way (Ratcliffe,
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9 2022).

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15 The exception to the traditional routes to leadership development within policing in England
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17 and Wales is the national police direct-entry inspector and superintendent schemes, which
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19 recruit (albeit in limited numbers) existing exceptional leaders into the service. However, this
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21 scheme has attracted criticism including the lack of operational experiences achieved through
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23 a grassroots approach to policing before promotion.
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30 *Police Leaders: international perspectives*

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36 Police officers, particularly those on the frontline, face physical dangers and the possibility of
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38 injury in their daily workplace routines (Hyllengren et al. 2016; Wood, 2022). Davis and
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40 Bailey (2017) highlight how police leadership practice is often framed in terms of risk.
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42 Research in Sweden suggests that police leaders need to understand the workplace context,
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44 whilst also continuing to display important leadership traits such as being approachable,
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46 supportive and championing their teams cause (Hyllengren et al., 2016). Such experiences of
47
48 frontline policing are of great value when making decisions (Fleming & Rhodes, 2018) and
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50 valued in leaders as demonstrating an understanding of the policing 'craft' (Filstad and Karp,
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52 2021).
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3 Hyllengren et al., (2016) highlight the importance of police leaders being able to make
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5 decisions, at times swiftly, at other times understanding the need to escalate decisions to
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7 others more senior or decide to follow set guidance (ibid.). Davis and Bailey (2017) report a
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9 similar focus on task based operational leadership, suggesting such an approach prevents the
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11 use of innovative practices.
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17 Researchers in the USA identify how police leaders are perceived to be 'effective' when they
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19 demonstrate competence in making decisions, being able to make decisions that result in the
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21 achievement of their tasks and goals (Schafer, 2008; Schafer 2010; Andreescu and Vito,
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23 2010). Schafer et al., (2019) report how in the USA there is often limited time available for
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25 leaders to engage in developing their understanding and application of research informing
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27 their actions.
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33 Murphy and Drodge (2004) conducted research in a Canadian police unit, they describe how
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35 the methods by which the leaders make their decisions, ensuring they are both fair and
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37 justifiable, play a vital part in developing legitimacy and respect of their team. However,
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39 many Canadian police leadership courses do not significantly enhance an understanding of
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41 the benefits of utilising research to inform decisions (Huey et al., 2021). Wood (2022)
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43 suggests the time is now right for the police in Canada to enhance police leadership,
44
45 rethinking the ways in which leaders are selected and developed for their leadership roles. In
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47 the USA, the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015) also calls for the setting
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49 of required standards and learning programmes for every level of leadership, along with new
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51 approaches to promotion. A greater emphasis needs to be placed on the educational
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53 development of leaders (College of Policing, 2015). This resonates with renewed calls in the
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55 USA to develop transformational leaders who can think critically along with developing the
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3 essential leadership skills, continuing to reflect how within policing, training is regular but
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5 education often rare (21CP Solutions. 2023).
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12 *The education and professional development of first line leaders in the use of EBP*
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17 If the police service in England and Wales provides appropriate training, knowledge and
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19 skills, police officers, are better equipped to apply their professional judgement (Topping,
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21 2022). Therefore, if first line leaders are to be effective in their roles, they too need to be both
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23 educated and trained to **apply their professional judgement to interpret sometimes**
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25 **contradictory research evidence and utilise** in practice. **Although the complexities of**
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27 **embedding EBP are acknowledged (Sherman, 2013), Davis and Bailey (2018) suggest that**
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29 **police leaders should be encouraged and supported to adopt alternate approaches.** Martin and
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31 Mazerolle (2016) discuss how police leaders themselves need to develop understanding in the
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33 use **and value** of research. They advocate professional development modules on EBP are
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35 taught across the service by experienced academics (*ibid*). **As Bowers et al., (2017) discuss,**
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37 **difficulties may exist translating research written for an academic audience into professional**
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39 **policing practice.**
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47 Having acquired such knowledge, understanding and skills, first line leaders should then role-
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49 model good practice in the use of EBP, influencing their team members and peers. The
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51 impact of leaders on others behaviour is evident (Ordon et al., 2019). Martin and Mazerolle
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53 (2016) advocate that police leaders need to be responsible for developing their teams
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55 understanding and use of EBP, **however Huey et al., (2021) identifies how the widespread**
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3 adoption of EBP across policing is going to be challenging, not only culturally, but also
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5 making such changes within the constraints of time, cost, and expected quality (Smith, 2019).
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10 The process through which police leaders in England and Wales are selected, developed and
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12 appointed, the National Police Promotions Framework (NPPF), was introduced in 2015. The
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14 NPPF commences with police officers demonstrating competence in their current rank, then
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16 they complete a nationally set legal knowledge examination, which tests knowledge and
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18 application of various aspects of the law from crime and evidence to roads policing and
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20 general policing duties. Applicants for promotion are then assessed against rank specific
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22 competencies before being temporarily promoted and complete a work-based portfolio,
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24 usually within 12 months, to be confirmed in the rank. Of course, the formal appointment of a
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26 leader does not inevitably equate to effective leadership as, for example, they may not
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28 possess the required skills and abilities (Smith, 2019).
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35 During the 12 months of temporary promotion, newly promoted leaders can study a number
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37 of educationally recognised units, developing their knowledge and skills of supervision,
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39 management and leadership. Roberts et al. (2016) highlights the importance of education in
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41 developing the leaders of tomorrow. Included in the educational units offered to new
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43 sergeants through the NPPF is the need to make evidence-based briefings and debriefings,
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45 beyond which, references to making the use of EBP on which to base both practice and
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47 decisions is somewhat limited. However, Huey et al., (2021) reports how one senior
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49 Canadian officer respondent in their research suggests that countries, like the UK, are better
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51 at developing understanding in leadership programmes of how to use research evidence to
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53 inform policing decisions.
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3 Through study and completion of the NPPF work-based portfolio evidencing practical
4 application of leadership in the rank, depending on the force, those in temporary positions
5 may also complete and be awarded a Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) level 4
6 certificate in police management.
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14 Initial education and training routes for new police officer recruits in England and Wales, are
15 licensed through the College of Policing. The work-based police constable degree
16 apprenticeship (PCDA) and degree holder entry programme (DHEP) lead on successful
17 completion to a Framework for Higher Education (FHEQ) level 6 (Bachelor degree level)
18 award in professional policing practice. There is also a non-degree level programme for new
19 officers which was first introduced in 2006, the initial police learning and development
20 programme (IPLDP), which leads to a level 3 diploma in policing mapped to the RQF, this
21 route will cease to exist in March 2024. In November 2022, the Home Secretary announced a
22 new entry route was required by the police service, the so called police constable entry
23 programme (PCEP) is an unaccredited route of entry for recruits who do not wish to study for
24 an award and will be available from April 2024 (College of Policing, 2023d). Police forces
25 can opt to use whichever of the initial entry routes they wish to follow in order to meet their
26 force needs.
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46 The FHEQ is a national educational framework established by the Quality Assurance Agency
47 for Higher Education (QAA) against which educational providers can set and assess
48 academic standards with comparable understanding of qualification requirements, outcomes
49 and awards (QAA, 2014). The QAA (2014) identify how the FHEQ has a number of staged
50 levels for higher education (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from levels 4 to 8, in
51 Scotland levels 7 to 12), with distinct progressive reference points for intellectual
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3 achievement, increasing challenge and complexity of learning, against which providers can
4 benchmark their own programmes. **This is complemented by a subject specific benchmark**
5 **statement for policing (QAA, 2022).** The FHEQ and RQF are both national educational
6 frameworks used by educational providers across England and Wales which align to the
7 European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The EQF being an element of creating a broader
8 skills agenda for Europe, aiming to improve the transparency, comparability and
9 transferability of qualifications (European Commission, 2018). Generally, a Bachelor's
10 degree (level 6) in the UK is considered comparable to a Bachelor's degree in both the USA
11 and Canada.

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26 **Under the headline banner of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF), the**
27 work-based initial entry programmes are studied by new recruits in partnerships between
28 police forces and higher education providers for either two years achieving a Graduate
29 Diploma if they already hold a level 6 FHEQ award, or if they do not hold an FHEQ level 6
30 award, for three years achieving a BSc (Hons) at level 6. There is also a level 6 knowledge-
31 based BSc/BA (Hons) in professional policing taught solely by higher education for those
32 aspiring to join the police service but have not yet been recruited. Whichever route of entry is
33 studied as either a new police officer recruit or aspiring police officer, EBP is embedded as a
34 key theme throughout the duration of their studies across all educational levels of 4 to 6
35 (Rogers et al., 2022). This enables new officers and those aspiring for recruitment to possess
36 the knowledge and understanding, but also in work-focused programmes, the skills to apply
37 EBP in the workplace. An understanding and use of EBP is also embedded within the QAA
38 (2022) subject benchmark statement for policing, which describes what might reasonably be
39 expected of policing graduates.

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3 With the demise of the IPLDP, the PCEP is to be taught in-force over two years (College of
4 Policing, 2023d) without external recognition through an award or educational partnership.

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7 Its planned introduction has caused much debate as to the depth and rigour of the learning
8 along with the impact, or otherwise, on changes to the cultural norms of policing aspired too
9 through the introduction of the PEQF suite of programmes.
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17 New police recruits completing PEQF initial entry routes to policing, reveal that, to varying
18 levels, their studies assisted over half of them understanding EBP and almost two thirds
19 utilising EBP in their daily work (Rogers et al., 2022). den Heyer (2023) also reports progress
20 is being made in the adoption of EBP by the police service. These research findings must be
21 tempered though with those of Palmer et al., (2019), who report that officers within frontline
22 policing often know about EBP, however the regular use in daily practice is limited, valuing
23 instead the local tacit knowledge and experience of the 'craft' of policing. In a similar way,
24 Wilson et al., (2021), found that trainee paramedics gained the underpinning research skills
25 during their studies, but the application to practice still required changes in both workplace
26 attitudes and behaviours. den Heyer (2023) suggests that one of the main barriers to the
27 widespread adoption of EBP may be their immediate supervisors, who often act as
28 gatekeepers to the sharing of research.
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47 The professional development of policing employees is integral to empowering
48 organisational change and enhancement of professional knowledge (Kohlström, 2022).

49 Roberts et al. (2016) suggest that the embedding of education within policing enables future
50 leaders to develop and utilise transferrable cognitive ability and high-level critical thinking
51 skills to deal with complex problems and identify innovative solutions, with such leadership
52 development programmes having positive workplace impacts (Ordon et al. 2019). Schafer et
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3 al., (2019) extols the value and importance of timely and locally delivered professional
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5 development to team leaders. A study with the German Police also highlights how there are
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7 notable benefits of linking both practical work-based experience with knowledge-based
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9 classroom education (Barth-Farkas and Vera, 2016).

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15 As such an influential role, perhaps one of the keys to changing the culture to embed the use
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17 of EBP across the service is to provide the time for formal structured development of the
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19 knowledge, understanding and workplace skills of first line leaders in the effective utilisation
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21 of EBP. HM Government (2021) describe a number of initiatives aimed at developing the
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23 evidence-base to inform and enhance frontline policing practice, yet **almost a century earlier,**
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25 **Volmer (1933) similarly discussed the benefits to police leaders of conducting studies and**
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27 **applying their findings to the structure of beat patrols. Yet the value of such evidence**
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29 **informed approaches continue to be debated, and there continues to be major obstacles to the**
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31 **widespread adoption of EBP (Huey et al., 2021).**

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38 There is certainly a need through professional leadership development to enhance
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40 understanding of EBP, its **interpretation and** application across existing and new police first
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42 line leaders, **where gaps in knowledge and understanding can lead to a lack of confidence in**
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44 **leading change (Smith, 2019).** The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015)
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46 suggests that there should be a requirement for ongoing education in order to remain within
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48 leadership positions, **perhaps this should include an understanding of EBP.**

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54 Research in England and Wales by den Heyer (2023) reports that over 22% of police
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56 respondents suggested that sergeants should know about external research into policing, with
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58 over 50% of respondents suggesting that it is important for all within the service. This is not
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3 to suggest that many police leaders do not understand, **have the opportunity or** utilise EBP in
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5 their roles, but it does not seem to be the case across all police first line leaders.
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10 Any professional development in the use of EBP should at least equip every first line leader
11 with the level of understanding of an equivalence to that of their new level 6 graduate recruits
12 who they will be supervising and have direct influence, and as Kohlström (2022) suggests,
13 assist them in integrating their learning into practice. The success of such cultural change
14 relies on existing and new police leaders adapting to the changing style of policing education,
15 to one where leadership decisions are questioned and may require justification (Martin et al.,
16 2017). Ratcliffe (2022) found that police officers who had some understandings of research
17 were more receptive during training to the value of research evidence informing their
18 practice, whereas those who had not required more persuasion. Contemporary policing is
19 certainly striving through multiple means to strengthen the wide spread adoption and daily
20 application of an evidence-based approach to the provision of policing (Pepper et al., 2020).
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37 First line leaders are instrumental in facilitating cultural change within their teams. Through
38 the adoption and utilisation of the varying types of evidence of what works, leaders should
39 adopt an approach where they champion specific practice, in effect being positive role models
40 for what 'good policing' looks like (Filstad and Karp, 2021). Although first line leaders are
41 critical at influencing change, they can also be challenging to convince of the need for such
42 change (Lum and Koper, 2017). However, once convinced of the need, effective leaders have
43 great influencing and negotiating skills, often using evidence-based case studies to illustrate
44 how a change of approach is required and what works successfully (Fitzgerald et al, 2013).
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55 **Maranto and Wolf, (2013) describe how Bratton often showcased precincts and leaders who**
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3 adopted innovative approaches to reducing crime, empowering the evolution of a learning
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5 organisation.
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10 This is not to suggest that at a point of crisis, a frontline leader will and should pause
11 significantly to consult the evidence-base before making a decision, as Herrington and Colvin
12 (2016) suggest, at times there will be a need for hierarchical leadership approaches, such as
13 the high-stake situations described by Morrell and Currie (2015). It stands to reason that an
14 effective policing leader will make time bound decisions using their existing knowledge and
15 experience for an effective resolution.
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26 Leaders across a range of policing levels often have limited time available (Fleming &
27 Rhodes, 2018; Schafer et al., 2019), however their ability to access and reflect upon others
28 research can be valuable in informing decisions. Adopting such an approach enables new and
29 existing leaders to innovate and seek solutions to complex problems (Herrington and Colvin,
30 2016), however this does not come without challenges of successful implementation, but the
31 approach should be viewed as an underpinning philosophy rather than a hard tactic to be used
32 on every occasion (Pepper et al., 2020). Even if consulting the evidence-base is after an event
33 to inform and assist in shaping leaders' future actions and decisions for the inevitable 'next
34 time'.
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51 **Concluding thoughts**

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56 Although not to replace but complement both craft and valuable experience, all emergency
57 services first line leaders, should understand and champion the use of the evidence-base in
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3 their professional practice. Acknowledging some of the organisational and cultural challenges
4 of adopting an evidence-based approach, current first line leaders, should illustrate and
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6 promote the use of evidence from a range of sources to help inform workplace practice and
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8 assist in making decisions.
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14 First line leaders in policing should mentor and support their team members translating the
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16 best available, up to date evidence into everyday policing whilst promoting widely the
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18 benefits and encouraging other team members to utilise EBP. The cultural and organisational
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20 challenges which exist across policing to the widespread adoption of EBP should however
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22 not be underestimated. Those team members who are slower to adopt EBP should benefit
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24 from investment of time and coaching, with examples of where using EBP has been
25
26 successful. The wider showcasing of successful EBP interventions and possible force led
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28 activities promoting examples of utilising EBP, which cannot be achieved without
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30 organisational investment, may also be beneficial influencing cultural change across the
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32 workforce.
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40 Additionally, first line leaders not only require experience and 'the craft' to lead within
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42 contemporary policing, but also the knowledge, understanding and skills to access, interpret
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44 and champion the best available evidence to utilise EBP, whilst also leading cultural change
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46 to adopt the approach across the service. Importantly, such cultural change requires 'buy in'
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48 from all first line leaders, who require encouragement and support from senior leaders, along
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50 with importantly time allocated for their own professional development.
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55 Therefore first line leaders, whether police officers, staff or volunteers need to become
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57 confident in the application of EBP to professional practice, achieved through formal and
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3 structured development of their knowledge, understanding and skills. Leadership
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5 development relating to EBP should be at least to a similar educational level of learning to
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7 that of their new recruits. Such development should enable leaders to find, interpret, critically
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9 review and judge the value of the evidence. Leaders should be positive role models for the
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11 adoption of EBP, supporting and taking others on a journey to embed a cultural change.
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14 However, repositioning such cultural norms will take time.
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19 Acknowledging the ongoing debates on the impact of PCEP within policing in England and
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21 Wales, the perceived level of learning for leaders to equate to that of the new recruits will
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23 concerningly, as with the IPLDP, be to a lower equivalent level than that of the PEQF entry
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25 routes. An area for future longitudinal research.
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31 There is also a requirement for research into the recruitment, educational development and
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33 adoption of EBP by first line leaders. Such research will assist in the evidencing and sharing
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35 of success stories along with identifying requirements to reframe approaches to enhance
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37 adoption and impact upon cultural change.
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