



Ethics Committee

Wednesday 13th September 10:00 – 13:00

Meeting held virtually via Zoom

Present:

Marion Oswald	Chair of Ethics Committee
Jamie Grace	Vice Chair of Ethics Committee
Thomas McNeil	Assistant Police & Crime Commissioner
Jack Tracey	Criminal Justice Policy Lead (OPCC)
Derek Dempsey	Ethics Committee
Malcolm Fowler	Ethics Committee
Simon Rogerson	Ethics Committee
Claire Paterson-Young	Ethics Committee
Jennifer House-Go	Ethics Committee
Sian Thomas	Ethics Committee
Tom Sorrell	Ethics Committee
Kerry Reid	Ethics Committee
Davin Parrott	Data Analytics Lab (WMP)
Sam Todd	Data Lab (WMP)
Pooja Kaur	Data Analyst (VRP)

Apologies:

Pete Fussey	Ethics Committee
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Disclaimer:

The full minutes and advice for the Ethics Committee are usually compiled with the aid of a video recording, which is necessary due to the length and complexity of the meetings. Unfortunately, the recording of the September 2023 meeting became corrupted after it was downloaded. This meant that it was not possible to complete a full set of minutes for this meeting. The recommendations below were compiled from notes taken at the meeting by multiple members. On this occasion, therefore, only the recommendations from this meeting are set-out and not in the usual format.



Broad recommendations

- The Committee noted the high demand on the Lab and the considerable work they were doing across multiple complex projects
- The Committee further noted that several projects presented had overlapping purposes and recommended that further consideration of the overlaps and links between projects could benefit outcomes, support partnership working, and potentially increase value for money of the research done.
- PCC staff were asked to produce a new template for submissions to the committee, to include a requirement for an executive summary that highlights key technical, validity, and ethical points as well as the proposed use of the output of the tool. To be completed by the next meeting in December 2023.

Organisation offending checking tool for PSD (Outcome A – proceed)

- The Committee noted the potential importance of this tool, especially in the light of current conversations around police conduct nationally
- The Committee noted the assurances given about data security and the presence of an audit function, and the considerable work that had been done around associated procedures overseen by professional standards
- The Committee requested that the force return to the committee to report on the outcome and lessons learned from the implementation of the process, and recommended that this work could be further communicated within the wider policing community

Violent Crime Hotspot Policing RCT (outcome E – requests more information from the Lab in order to be able to advise)

- Committee members expressed concern about the potential lack of statistical significance of the results presented, and questioned the implications of the use of a 'cross-over' RCT (each area acting as its own control). It was noted that the method used had been determined by the Home Office based on methods recommended by Sherman et al.
- Committee members also raised concern about the exclusion of certain datasets, in particular those relating to the night-time economy, and the short distance for the displacement check.
- The Committee recommended that prior to further use of the report results, that additional models/results are produced using a parallel track RCT method, and including relevant violence data previously excluded from the model, and increasing the length of the displacement check, for comparison to the existing report.



Harmful stalking and harassment offenders estimation of future risk (outcome E – requests more information from the Lab in order to be able to advise)

- The Committee expressed concern around the accuracy of the tool and the possibility that it may produce high levels of both false positives and false negatives, thus potentially missing offenders who are outliers in terms of behaviour. Specifically, there was concern around the assumption that the Stalking Triage Clinic would be able to identify outliers and inaccurate results consistently.
- The Committee was unclear about the function and operation of the parallel victim 'harm' model and how this would be implemented alongside the offender model
- Due to the limited time in the meeting to explore these issues, PCC staff were asked to arrange an additional meeting to discuss this report further

Serious Violence precursors (outcome E – requests more information from the Lab in order to be able to advise)

- The Committee noted that there was already well-established literature on the precursors to serious violence and expressed concern as to whether this project had drawn enough on that body of research
- It was also noted that this project overlapped considerably with the project presented to the Committee by the Violence Reduction Partnership
- The Committee noted that the Lab recognised that the datasets available to police may be insufficient to produce a valid model for the question being asked
- The Committee recommends that further consideration be given to the established literature and existing research on precursors to serious violence before a model based on limited and potentially insufficient datasets is attempted

Violence Reduction Partnership qualitative data collection proposal (outcome E – requests more information from the Lab in order to be able to advise)

- The Committee thanked the presenters for bringing this project forward at such an early stage and requested that it return to the Committee for further consultation once it is more developed
- The Committee noted that more specificity was needed around which age groups the data collection would target and around the design of the research which took account of the different ethical considerations for each age group, purposes of the research, the risk of triggering and the question of anonymisation of results prior to any wider access being given to results.
- The Committee noted that the VRP has academic qualitative research advice available to it and recommended that this advice be accessed in respect of the design of the research and related materials e.g. consent forms, information sheets, anonymisation procedures.



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Officer visibility (outcome E – requests more information from the Lab in order to be able to advise)

- The Committee noted that this project was at an early stage and noted the assurances given regarding prior consultation with the Federation and other staff representatives
- The Committee recommended that a more precise definition of ‘visibility’ be developed before a data model is attempted, in order to ensure that the correct datasets and modelling technique could be applied
- The Committee recommended that, despite the consultation that had already occurred, the force ensure that wide consultation with staff around the use of ControlWorks in association with officer details continues, particularly due to the proposed link with performance management, to ensure that the definition of visibility is understood and that the use of the data is clarified and ringfenced.

Optimum patrols (Outcome C – proceed with minor amendments)

- The committee noted the link between this project and the work on hotspot policing, and subject to the committee’s recommendations on the hotspot RCT, recommended that further consideration be given to how these 2 projects could be coordinated.