

**ORIGINATOR: IMPROVEMENT & EVALUATION
& STRATEGIC ANALYSIS MANAGER**

DECISION NUMBER: 6 - 2021

REASON FOR SUBMISSION: FOR DECISION

SUBMITTED TO: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

SUBJECT: OPEN UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR POLICE RESEARCH AND LEARNING (OUCPRL)

SUMMARY:

1. The OUCPRL is a police / academic consortium run by the Open University and comprised of 21 police agencies from around the country.
2. The Centre exists to create and use knowledge through both research and education to improve policing for the public good.
3. The programme of work includes problem-solving research on topics as varied as cybercrime, citizens and police use of social media, witness identification, demand management, organizational and individual learning & leadership for public value.
4. The Centre offers a wide range of educational courses and qualifications. Open Educational Resources (OER) are free, informal short courses available on the internet (e.g. on a laptop, tablet or smartphone) which can provide police officers and staff with informal learning and/or with continuing professional development.
5. The Centre is concerned not only with creating new knowledge but also testing and exploring whether, when, how and why it works in practice. The Centre has a range of innovative activities designed to maximise learning between members of the police, between police organisations, and between the police and academics.
6. The membership fee is £7K per annum, which will be funded from the SBOS budget for the coming year.

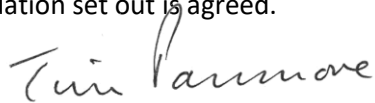
RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the PCC give approval to Suffolk Constabulary joining the OUCPRL to realise the benefits outlined in this decision paper.

APPROVAL BY: PCC

The recommendation set out is agreed.

Signature



Date 26.01.21

DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Centre exists to create and use knowledge through both research and education to improve policing for the public good. In this way, the Centre contributes to the work of police agencies as they adapt to a changing policing landscape, with its greater emphasis on evidence-based practice.
- 1.2 The programme of work includes:
 - Problem-solving research on topics as varied as cybercrime, citizens and police use of social media, witness identification, demand management, organizational and individual learning, leadership for public value.
 - A wide range of educational courses and qualifications from bite-sized informal learning which is free and available anywhere and anytime which supports continuous professional development, through to part-time PhD study – and lots in between. These can provide police officers and staff with formal qualifications and/or with continuing professional development. These include policing degrees and a Postgraduate Certificate in Evidence-based Practice.
- 1.3 An innovative range of knowledge into practice activities on the front-line and across the police organisation, including evidence cafés, peer learning visits, workshops, conferences, and the secondment of police officers and staff into ongoing research projects.
- 1.4 The Centre is based at the Open University Campus in Milton Keynes, in the Faculty of Business and Law and is also supported by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, though it works with all faculties and areas of the University.
- 1.5 Some activities of the Centre are open to all police officers and staff, working in the spirit of The Open University. However, the Centre also works in a highly collaborative way with a partnership of 21 police agencies, which help to shape and undertake the programme of activities. The partnership is not a formal collaborative arrangement under the Police Act 1996 and so does not require a formal collaboration agreement.
- 1.6 Local governance for this partnership would be through the Evidence Based Policing (EBP) Board chaired by the Norfolk Chief Constable on behalf of both Norfolk and Suffolk. The EBP Board would ensure benefits from being a member of the OUCPRL are maximised and in line with our current EBP maturity matrix. It would also ensure the joint Suffolk & Norfolk research agenda is considered by the partnership when new work is commissioned.
- 1.7 This short paper seeks to outline the services available via the partnership and asks that consideration be given to funding annual subscription fees for Norfolk and Suffolk to join the partnership.

2. THE PARTNERSHIP

- 2.1 The strategic partnership of 21 police agencies is at the heart of the Centre for Policing Research and Learning, with academics and police working together to develop the strategic plan for the centre in its programme of education, research and knowledge exchange.
- 2.2 Research is produced to high academic standards but the partnership ensures that the work also has direct practical value. The Centre is interested in using evidence not just creating it, so understanding what helps and hinders the use of evidence in the workplace is also important.
- 2.3 Education is based on end-to-end learning from free informal small chunks of learning resources right through to PhDs, providing a learning system that is highly relevant to continuing professional development across all ranks and backgrounds.
- 2.4 The Centre is chaired by a senior police representative, elected biennially (currently Dr Steven Chase, Head of People at Thames Valley Police). The membership group has representatives from all member agencies and is the key decision-making body. A steering group guides the work and makes recommendations to the membership group.
- 2.5 The Centre operates on the basis of annual membership fees to create a joint fund. Each partner pays an annual subscription (£7K) which creates the research and education fund, as well as funding from the Open University and from bids into other funds. The fund enables each police partner to get more out of the fund than they put in and to be part of strategic decisions about research, education and CPD.
- 2.6 The 21 Current Centre partners are:
 - Avon and Somerset
 - Bedfordshire Police
 - British Transport Police
 - Cambridgeshire Constabulary
 - Dorset Police
 - Essex Police
 - Gloucestershire Constabulary
 - Greater Manchester Police
 - Gwent Police
 - Hampshire Constabulary
 - Hertfordshire Police
 - Humberside Police
 - Lancashire Constabulary
 - Merseyside Police
 - Metropolitan Police Service
 - National Crime Agency
 - North Yorkshire Police
 - South Yorkshire Police
 - Police Service of Northern Ireland
 - Thames Valley Police
 - West Midlands Police

3. LEARNING AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

- 3.1 The Centre offers a wide range of educational courses and qualifications. Open Educational Resources (OER) are free, informal short courses available on the internet (e.g. on a laptop, tablet or smartphone) which can provide police officers and staff with informal learning and/or with continuing professional development.
- 3.2 The Open University has a large repository of OERs, and those relevant to policing have been updated and extended. Forces view these resources as valuable in helping officers and staff

with continuing professional development, and some forces have links from their intranet sites to these resources. There are approximately 150 free courses deemed relevant to policing.

3.3 There are also more formal learning opportunities such as:

- Studying for policing relevant degrees and management degrees or other related qualifications which can be studied alongside work commitments.
- A Postgraduate Certificate in Evidence Based Practice, designed in consultation with partner police forces, specifically for police officers and staff.
- Opportunities to officers and staff employed by one of the policing partner organisations to undertake part-time PhD's (part funded by the Centre)

4. RESEARCH

4.1 The Centre research is based on a genuinely collaborative working relationship, bringing together the key knowledge, skills and experience of academics with those of police practitioners in a co-research approach. This partnership is valuable in identifying and analysing problems in order to improve policing. Research projects can come from a range of sources; police policy makers and practitioners may identify real-life, operational or organisational issues to research or academics may suggest topics which will benefit from practical research

4.2 Research is designed in partnership between academics and policing practitioners and promotes innovation and improvement through the following four research topics and cross-cutting themes:



4.3 Research projects are jointly decided between the 21 police partner organisations and the academics affiliated to the Centre – who come from all faculties and institutes of The Open University, which reflects the wide range of disciplines drawn on to tackle key research questions. Police partners add valuable insights, expertise and context to design, carry out and interpret the research. This generates evidence-based practice.

4.4 Projects range from demand management, individual and organisational learning, leadership, and police wellbeing through to tackling gun crime, how police and citizens use social media to investigate crime, simulations to enhance training, and using complexity science to tackle policy and practice issues.

5. KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

5.1 The Centre is concerned not only with creating new knowledge but also testing and exploring whether, when, how and why it works in practice. So the Centre has a range of innovative activities designed to maximise learning between members of the police, between police organisations, and between the police and academics.

5.2 The Centre website (<https://www.open.ac.uk/centres/policing/>) is a source of updated information about education, including CPD, research, knowledge exchange, events and news. It includes a members' area for policing partners to share work which is confidential to the 21 police partners.

5.3 The Centre also runs evidence cafés, designed to exchange ideas or knowledge between the café lead and the participants. In most cases, an academic lead will deliver a short presentation on key research in a given area relevant to policing. This is followed by group consideration to the practical application of the research. The format has proven to be popular because the practical and participative nature of the café is consistent with police approaches to learning and development.

5.4 The Centre facilitates peer learning visits where representatives of police forces visit other police forces, or other public, private or third sector organisations with lessons to offer police and public services. Examples of this include a visit to Sheffield Teaching Hospital to look at their approach to patient flow from a capacity and demand management perspective, and a visit to Jaguar Land Rover to look at customer service processes.

5.5 The Centre also hosts a free annual two-day conference, and delivers research and practice-based seminars at the quarterly membership group meetings.

6. MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Whilst some of the research and learning materials produced by the Centre are freely available there are significant additional benefits to forces in joining the partnership via the paid subscription of £7K per annum. These include:

- guiding and shaping the programme of work
- close engagement in research
- piloting new initiatives
- access to early research findings before they reach the wider police service
- preferential booking of workshops and peer learning visits
- sharing learning across the network of police forces and agencies

6.2 More details regarding the Centre and membership can be found in the [Annual Report 2019](#).

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This funding has been built into the SBOS budget for the first year for £7K per force – there are no further financial implications.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

- 8.1 No further implications or risks are identified.

ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)	PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	Yes
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	No
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	No
Have human resource implications been considered?	No
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	Yes
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	Yes
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	No
Have all relevant ethical factors been taken into consideration in developing this submission?	Yes

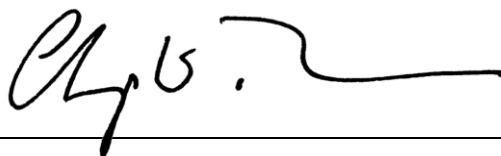
In relation to the above, please ensure that all relevant issues have been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission.

APPROVAL TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION-MAKER

Chief Executive

I am satisfied that relevant advice has been taken into account in the preparation of the report and that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the PCC.

Signature:



Date 26.01.21