EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING

sebp Society of Evidence Based POLICING

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

Evidence Based Policing

‘Throwing down the Gauntlet…’

Detective Chief Superintendent Neil Ralph

Head of South West Police Collaboration/Vice Chair (UK) Society of Evidence Based Policing

Batting Order.....

- Introduction
- UK SEBP
- What is Evidence Based Policing (EBP) and where did it come from?
- What might an EBP strategy for a policing organisation look like?
- Why is EBP important to policing? (Value)
- Operational focus, Organisational Wellness, Strategic Planning & Governance
- What is the future for EBP....?
- Throwing down the gauntlet.....

sebp
Society of Evidence Based POLICING

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

College of Policing

SOUTH WEST ROCU
Regional Organised Crime Unit

Devon & Cornwall POLICE

COUNTER TERRORISM POLICING
SOUTH WEST

sebp
Society of Evidence Based POLICING
Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence
JOIN FOR FREE

SOUTH WEST POLICE FORENSICS
Care · Collaboration · Excellence

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN
FOR
FREE

Health warning…Chat GPT….!

		UK	Canada
Budget		£19 billion ($35.5 billion)	$19.7 billion (£10.54 billion)
-			
Police Officer Numbers		170,500	71,472
-			
Population		69.1 million	41.3 million
-			
Policing spend per citizen		£251 per person	£180 per person

Police spend per citizen is not very scientific – there are differences!!!!

sebp
society of evidence based
POLICING

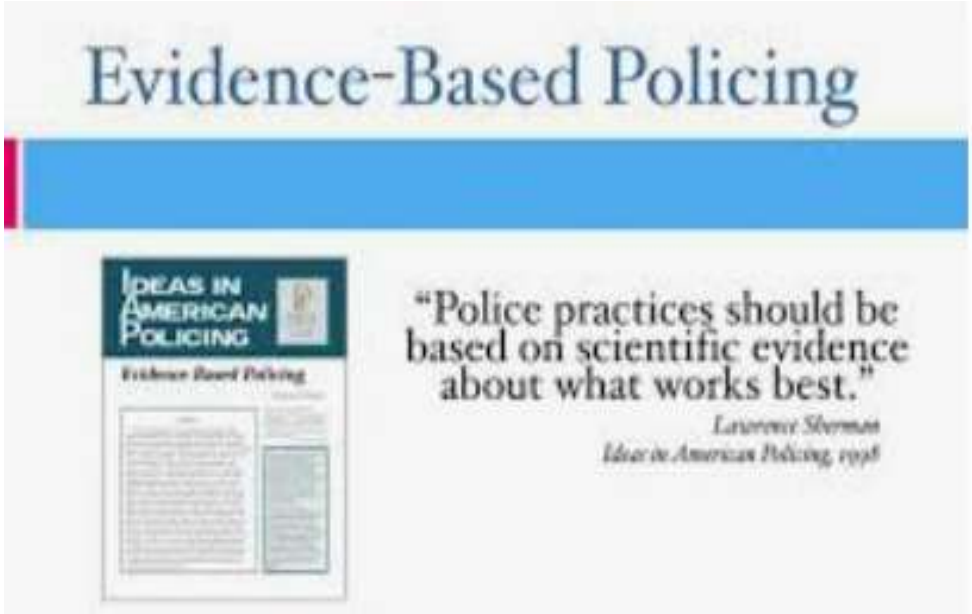
SEBP AIMS:

Aim One: Increased use of best available research evidence to solve policing problems

Aim Two: The production of new research evidence by police practitioners and researchers

Aim Three: Communication of research evidence to police practitioners and the public

- Registered Charity
- 7000+ members across the UK
- Independent
- ‘Force for good from within’
- Partnerships
- Network of Regional Coordinators



Communication Platforms

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

- Website - Society of Evidence Based Policing (sebp.police.uk)
- Social Media (Twitter/X)
- LinkedIn
- The Police Foundation
- Police Oracle
- Policing Insight
- Police Science Dr
- Policing TV

What is EBP and where did it come from?

Society of Evidence Based POLICING

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

What is Evidence Based Policing (EBP) and where did it come from…?

- 1960's – Albert Reiss 1966 Chicago patrol study

- 1972 - Kansas City Preventative Patrol Experiment

- Early 1980's - Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment

- 1995 – Sherman & Weisburd

sebp
Society of Evidence Based POLICING
Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence
JOIN FOR FREE

What is Evidence Based Policing (EBP) and where did it come from…?

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

- 1998 – Evidence Based Policing: Ideas in American Policing '**the use of the best available research to inform police practices and decision making…'**

- 2007 'The Power Few'

- 2008, Sherman made EBP the core of the Police Executive Programme at Cambridge University, a part-time course of study for senior police leaders from around the world to earn a Diploma or Master's in applied criminology

- 2013 – 'The Rise of Evidence Based Policing: Targeting, Testing and Tracking'

- 2014 onwards – UK College of Policing; Israel Police Higher Education Programme, University of Jerusalem; New Zealand Police Evidence Based Policing Centre; funding for EBP research through the National Institute of Justice in the USA; Centre for Evidence Based Crime, George Mason University.

Sherman (2013) in his Triple T paper….many points still relevant today…

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

1. The evidence base for police decisions has grown enormously since 1975.
2. Use of that evidence lags behind the knowledge, but use has also grown – **challenge of getting EBP on the front line**
3. Many police practices, despite their enormous cost, are still untested – **public value**
4. Targeting and testing require highly reliable measures of crime and harm.
5. Crime rates and counts are by themselves misleading; a crime harm index offers far better evidence to guide police decisions.
6. Police in 2012 used evidence on targeting much more widely than evidence from testing.
7. Research on tracking police outputs remains largely descriptive and incomplete, with great room for using new technologies to improve the quality of evidence – AI?
8. More use of evidence can increase police legitimacy, both internal and external (and public confidence)

Getting EBP on the front line line.....

- 2. Use of that evidence lags behind the knowledge, but use has also grown – **challenge of getting EBP on the front line**

- Useful to look at other paradigms where an evidence base has been developed....medicine...

- Neyroud (2017) 122 Randomised Control Trials (RCT's) conducted in policing between 1960 and 2016

- Mazarolle et al (2023) By 2022 this had increased to just under 500

- Over 18000 health related RCT's in the US alone

BUT

- Getting evidence-based practice in health on the front line remains a challenge.....

sebp
Society of Evidence Based POLICING
Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence
JOIN FOR FREE

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

We can learn lessons from history and other paradigms…

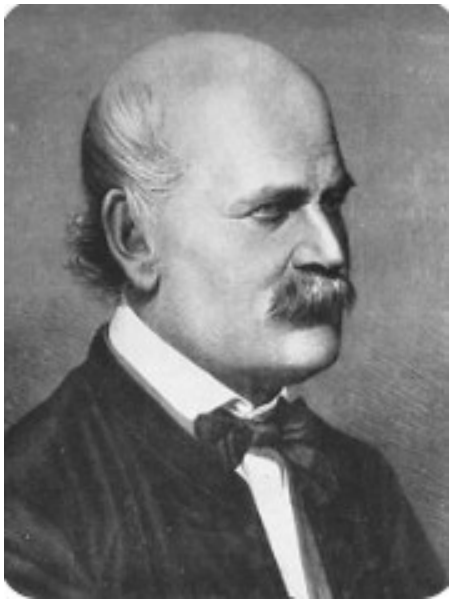
- Sherman (1998) An estimated 85 percent of medical practices remain untested by research evidence.

- Three years after research found that heart attack patients treated with calcium antagonists were more likely to die, doctors still prescribed this dangerous drug to one-third of heart attack patients.

- Eight years after antibiotics were shown to cure ulcers, 90 percent of ulcer patients remained untreated by antibiotics (Millenson 1997).

- Most doctors rarely read the 2,500 medical journals available and instead base their practice on local custom.

- Most studies that do guide practice use weak, nonrandomized research designs – so policing and EBP in particular wants to be like medicine but medicine sees the problems policing does as well!



EBP and Public Value

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

3. Many police practices, despite their enormous cost, are still untested – **public value**

- Austerity and Government funding – so many competing demands – health vs education vs policing…
- What are the costs of doing things that don't work…..? (Scared Straight Programme)
- The benefits of doing things that work! Resourcing, timeliness, invest in other things, workplace and public confidence…..
- Ethics – doing the right thing…..

- 5. Crime rates and counts are by themselves misleading; a crime harm index offers far better evidence to guide police decisions.

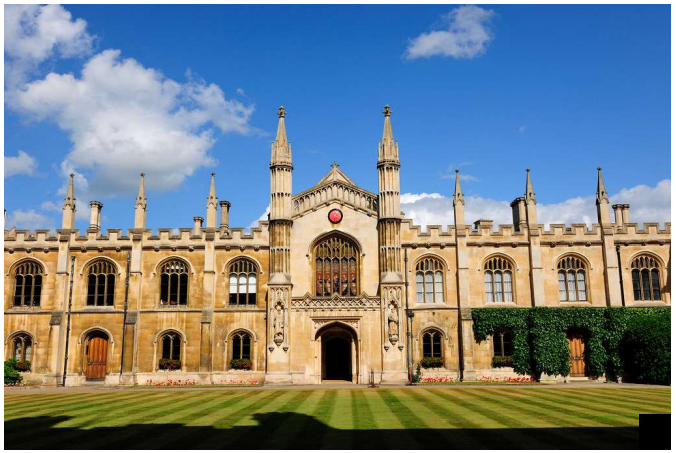
- Crime Harm Index – ‘not all crimes are created equal’ Eg Cambridge Crime Harm Index The Cambridge Crime Harm Index (CCHI) | Institute of Criminology

- Measures the seriousness of crime harm to victims, and not just the number of officially recorded crimes.

- Practically, adoption of a harm index can allow targeting of the highest-harm places, the most harmful offenders, the most harmed victims, and can assist in identifying victim-offenders

- Sentencing guidelines used

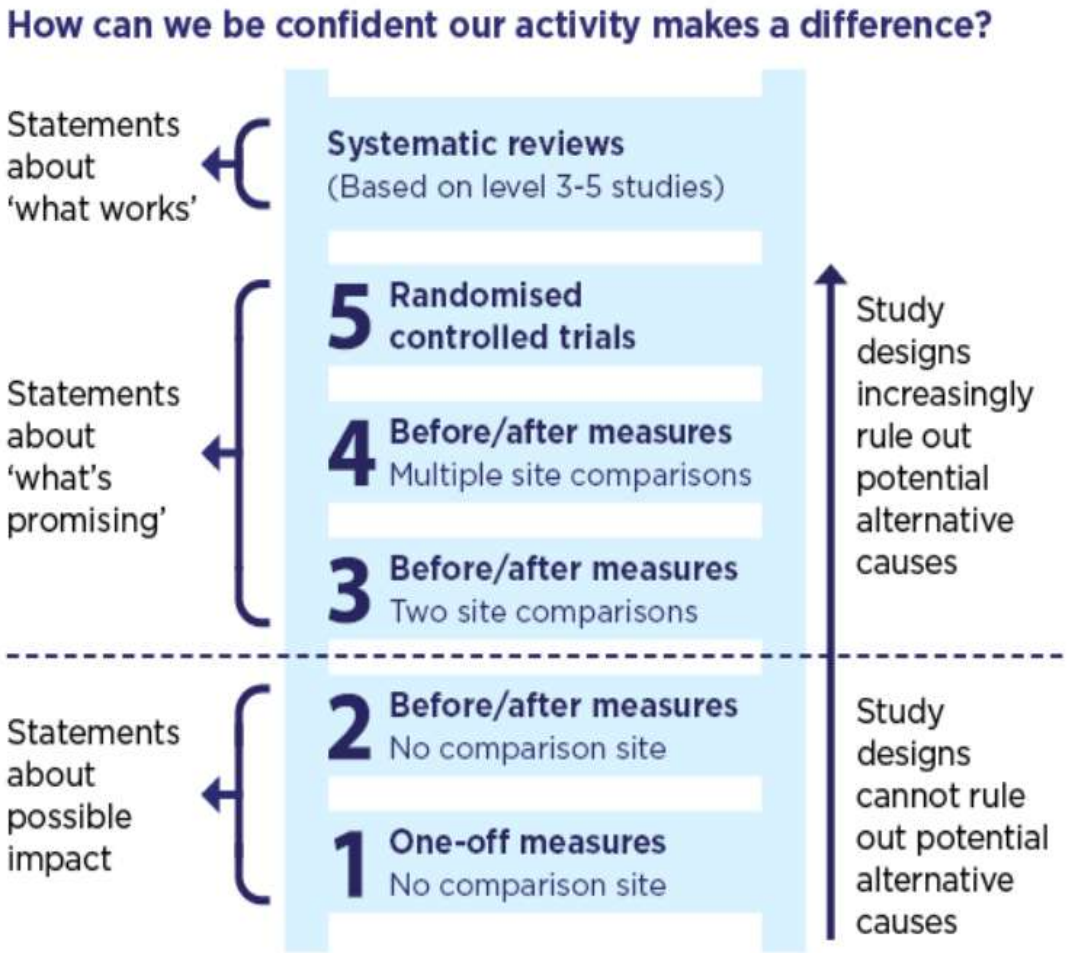
sebp
Society of Evidence Based POLICING
Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence
JOIN FOR FREE



The Maryland Scale

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE



What might an EBP strategy for a policing organisation look like?

Society of Evidence Based POLICING

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

EBP Strategies for Policing...

Develop leadership
- Senior Leaders CPD
- College of Policing Maturity Model
- Evidence based Policy & Practice

Develop skills
- Secondments, student placements & internships
- CPD Programme
- Lunch & Learn sessions
- EBP videos
- Further develop EBP Champions Network
- Build links to talent management

Develop & sustain relationships
- Joint research projects
- Embedded Research Fellow
- Development of new programmes of study (Link to PEQF)
- Employment of students
- Police Knowledge Fund 2?

EBP Strategies

Develop research knowledge
- DA research with Exeter University
- Randomised Controlled Trail with Cambridge University

Develop infrastructure & oversight
- EBP Board
- EBP intranet page
- Managed access to further study & research
- Managed knowledge of research

Context for EBP

- The desire for transformational change
- The delivery of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework
- Increasingly complex problems need greater understanding
- National & International EBP Movement
- The need to deliver a solution that works and is value for money
- The opportunity of the Competency Values Framework

sebp
Society of Evidence Based POLICING

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

Aim

To embed Evidence Based Policing (EBP) in (policing agency), to deliver outcomes and outputs that will support increased public confidence, police legitimacy, and public value.

Objectives

Pillar 1: Our People

Support the production of new research by police practitioners and researchers.

Use EBP as an opportunity to develop our staff and offer opportunities for continual professional development (CPD).

Pillar 2: Our Organisation

Increase the use of the best available research evidence to solve policing problems.

Establish and maintain infrastructure and architecture that will support the embedding of EBP in (Policing Agency) (e.g., EBP Board, EBP SharePoint site).

Support, coordinate and develop the organisational knowledge of academic and/or research projects occurring across the force area.

Support Learning & Development with regards to the management of student officer EBP projects.

Identify potential funding lines, such as making bids to research councils with academic partners, to allow for sustainable funding to deliver high quality, impactive research.

Pillar 3: Our Partners and Communities

Support the communication of research evidence to police practitioners and the public.

Support partner agencies, such as the College of Policing (CoP) and the Society of Evidence Based Policing (SEBP), to strategically embed EBP.

Develop, sustain and maintain relationships with academic institutions.

Support initiatives locally, regionally, and nationally to raise the profile of EBP.

Why is EBP important to policing?

Society of Evidence Based POLICING

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

Why is EBP so critical to policing?

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

- **Leads to better, more informed and objective decision making = Increased public confidence, increased legitimacy and better public value**
- Improves ability to police by consent (UK Perspective)
- **Key to achieve the professionalization of policing**
- **Great example of working in partnership**
- Performance management and cultural change
- LEARN from mistakes rather than fear of failure
- EBP drives innovation
- Empowers staff
- **Supports discretion and experience**
- Leads to enhanced discretionary effort
- Can lead to income generation
- Fits future staffing profile
- Fosters ethical and collective approach to leadership and decision making
- **Improved equality and diversity – can lead to procedural fairness**

Lets look at some studies……

Operational Focus, Organisational Wellness, Strategic Planning & Governance

Society of Evidence Based POLICING

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

Society of Evidence Based POLICING

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

Operational Focus: Hot Spot Policing

Braga et al – Systematic Review of Hot Spot studies

- 65 studies containing 78 tests of hotspot policing
- Significant effect – hot spots policing reduced crime
- No displacement effect – if anything crime control benefits seen in proximate areas

- **Operation Beck (Ariel, Sherman & Newton) British Transport Police**

- British Transport Police conducted a 6-month RCT proof of concept study
- Crime was reduced by 19.5% at treatment hotspots
- No displacement of crime
- Treatment location had a reduction of calls for BTP service by 21%

Operational Focus/Impact on Strategic Planning & Governance

Domestic Abuse

Use Produce Communicate Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

'*Targeting Escalation in Reported Domestic Abuse: Evidence from 36,000 Callouts*'(Bland & Ariel)

Using Cambridge Harm Index (CHI) found no escalation of harm in the majority of cases.

- 76% of unique victim & offender units (dyads) had zero repeat calls
- Among 727 dyads who called police 5x or more times, there was no stat. sig. escalation of harm severity
- 1.7% of dyads accounted for 80% of all DA harm, but in over ½ of these highest harm dyads, there had been no prior contact with police regarding DA.

'*Domestic Abuse: Evaluation of Escalation with Devon and Cornwall Police Data*' (Boyd et al.)

- Replication of Bland & Ariel study. Over 60,000 data sets
- Results indicate a sig. decrease in harm over time, rather than escalation; average CHI score decreases with each of the first 5 events.
- 2.6% of 'high harm' dyads (1,034) with a CHI score of 1460 accounted for 80% of all DA harm.
- Average CHI scores decrease consistently indicating harm decreases across repeat calls for high harm dyads

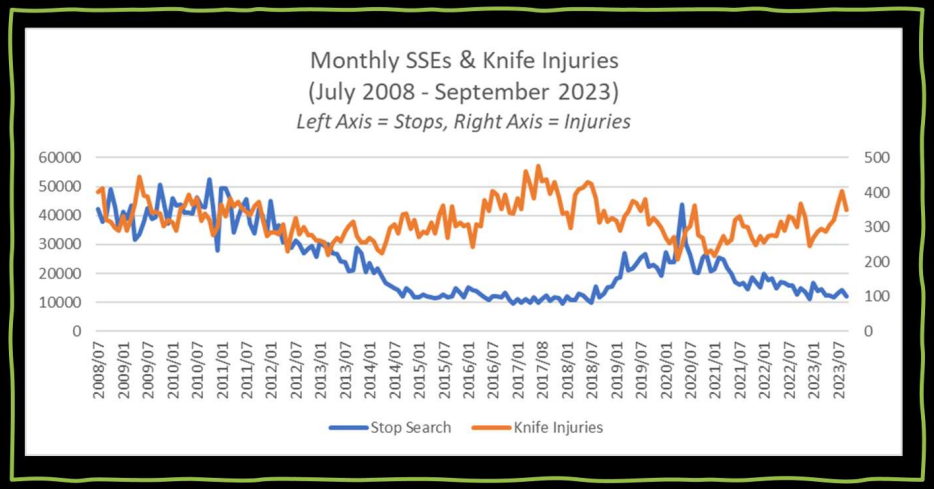
Operational Focus: Stop and Search

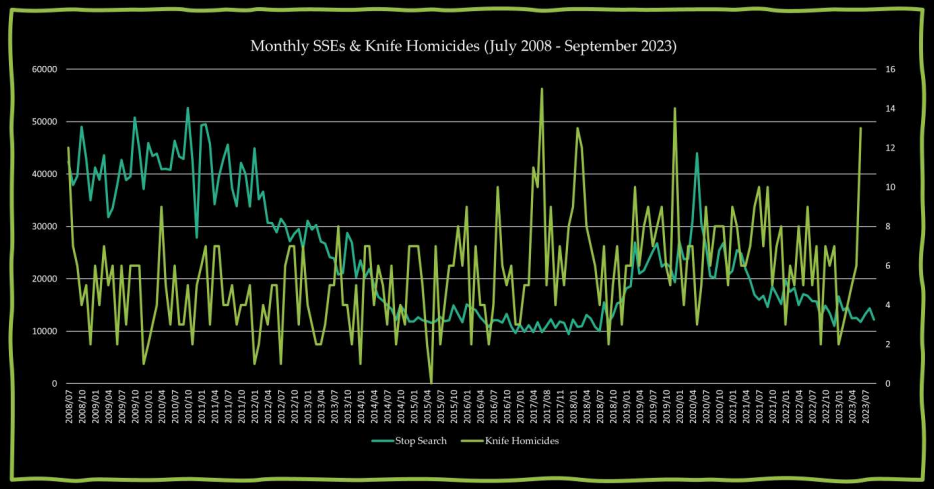
Society of Evidence Based Policing

Use Produce Communicate Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

Can more stop and searches by police cause less knife injury and knife homicides in London? Evidence from 4 million stops in 2008 – 2023 (Piquero & Sherman, 2024).





Operational Focus: Enhanced Video Response

Use Produce Communicate Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

Dorset Constabulary

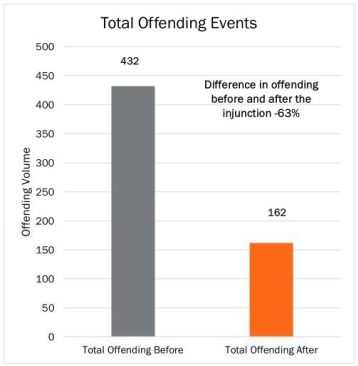
- Speak to a Police Officer over a live video rather than initial attendance. All calls assessed as non urgent
- 89% of victims would recommend EVR to others
- EVR conducted an investigation within 1.28 hours of the call – BAU 203.10 hours
- EVR 96.8% compliant with primary investigation standards – BAU 67%
- 81% of victims in EVR cases satisfied with initial officer that dealt with their case – BAU 46%
- 78% of EVR cases satisfied with the time it took police to respond to their call – BAU 24%
- Initial baseline saving to Dorset Police of £1.7 million

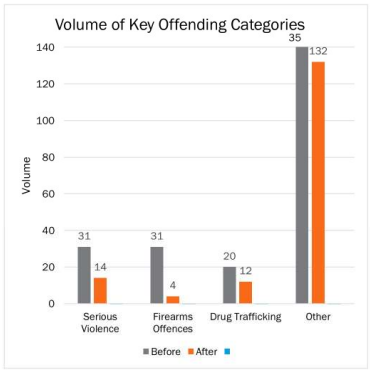
Operational Focus: Ancillary Orders – Gang Injunctions

Society of Evidence Based POLICING
Use Produce Communicate Evidence
JOIN FOR FREE

Richard Carr – Merseyside Police

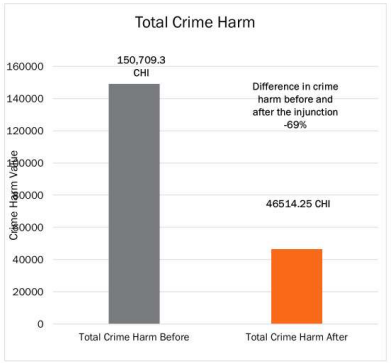
RESULTS

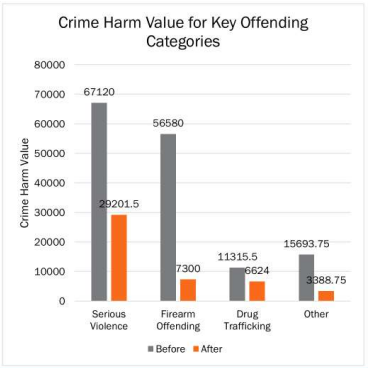




Community first
preventing crime, protecting people
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

RESULTS





Community first
preventing crime, protecting people
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Operational Focus/Strategic Planning & Governance: Houses of Multiple Occupancy

Use Produce Communicate Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

Targeting Nondomestic Violence Inside Houses of Multiple Occupancy (Bowden & Barnes 2015).

- 47 registered HMO's and 117 suspected HMO's (not registered)
- 84% of non domestic violence offences occurring in dwellings occurred in a registered or suspected HMO (which was just 0.4% of all dwellings – Power Few…)
- Combined HMO rate of 48 non domestic violent crimes per 100 dwellings was 137 times higher than non HMO dwellings
- Suspected (not registered) HMO's had a non domestic violence rate 191 times higher than non HMO dwellings, and 32 times higher than registered HMO's
- Implications for targeted policing….?

Organisational Wellness

Tracking procedural justice in stop and search encounters – DCI Greg Tansill

sebp Society of Evidence Based POLICING
Use Produce Communicate Evidence
JOIN FOR FREE

- 140 randomly selected S&S encounters on BWV
- Half low crime areas/half high crime areas
- 4 Police Supervisors and 14 MOTP scored how well the S&S's adhered to 4 dimensions of PJ

Findings:

- High levels of PJ (83%)

- When comparing the same searches, Police Supervisors rated S&S encounters significantly lower than MOTP

- Officers working in *low* crime areas delivered significantly more PJ than those working in *high* crime areas

Strategic Planning & Governance: **The Power Curve of Victim Harm: Targeting the Distribution of Crime Harm Index Values Across All Victims and Repeat Victims over 1 Year . Supt Gavin Dudfield.**

sebp Society of Evidence Based POLICING
Use Produce Communicate Evidence
JOIN FOR FREE

- 30,244 crimes in a 12 month period for one Police Force in the UK
- Cambridge Crime Harm Index
- 'Power Few' – 4% of victims suffered 85% of the crime harm
- The 4% 'Power Few' suffered 15 times more harm than if all victims suffered equal harm
- 63% of the total crime harm attributable to sex offences and robbery
- 29% of the total harm was against repeat victims
- 15% of the total harm occurred after the first offence against the victims

Strategic Planning & Policy Implications?

- More work on predictive crime harm and victim identification?
- More focussed intervention on repeat victims?
- Are we doing enough for victims – EBP and policing in general (throwing down the gauntlet....)?

What is the future for EBP....?

Society of Evidence Based POLICING

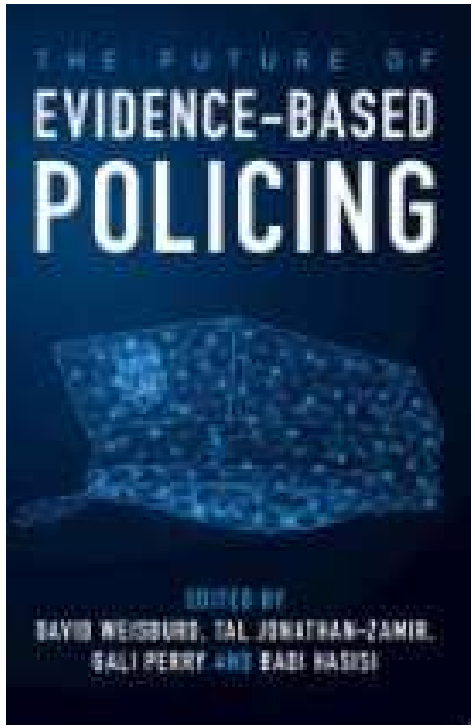
Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

What does the future hold for EBP? The Future of Evidence Based Policing….(Weisburd, Zamir, Perry, Hasisi 2023)

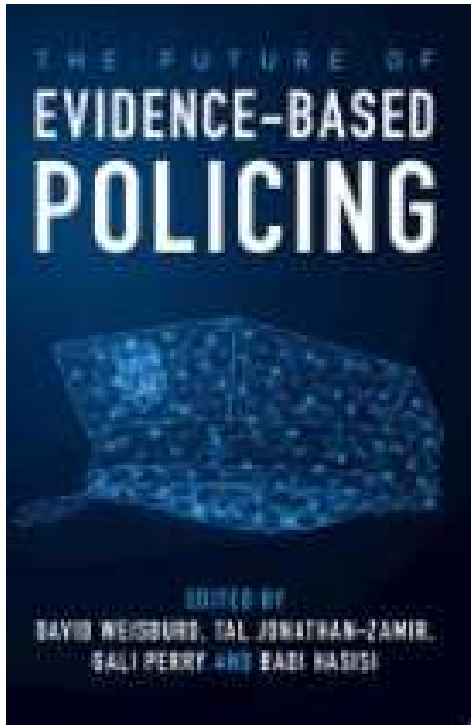
sebp Society of Evidence Based Policing
Use Produce Communicate Evidence
JOIN FOR FREE

- Developing second generation studies of strategies and programmes
- Expanding the quality and breadth of scientific methods in EBP
- Developing comparative research for advancing EBP



What does the future hold for EBP? The Future of Evidence Based Policing….(Weisburd, Zamir, Perry, Hasisi 2023)

- Recognising the importance of a science of street level behaviour
- Expanding knowledge surrounding implementation science



Throwing down the gauntlet.....

seb p
Society of Evidence Based POLICING

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

Throwing down the gauntlet……a challenge to policing and the research community…..

Society of Evidence Based POLICING

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

- Need more research per se. Not everything has to be at the top of the Maryland scale!
- Quant and Qual!
- We need more on the science (or art) of *implementation* – how do we implement this stuff successfully?
- We must involve practitioners – we must not ostracise front line staff – EBP is not a replacement for knowledge, skill, wisdom, experience
- EBP must be inclusive – cannot be elitist
- More research in different territories – generalisation of research?
- Be proactive with government re funding for research
- Get EBP in the everyday policing conversation
- Promote EBP success stories
- **EBP requires brave and visionary leadership – todays investment for tomorrows benefit**

sebp
Society of Evidence Based POLICING
Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence
JOIN FOR FREE

“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; it’s also what it takes to sit down and listen.”

Winston Churchill

sebp
Society of Evidence Based POLICING

Use
Produce
Communicate
Evidence

JOIN FOR FREE

QUESTIONS?