Institution: York St John University

Unit of Assessment: UoA 17 Business & Management Studies

Title of case study: Improved police practice through culture change based on Action Modes of Research (AMR).

Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: September 2014 - July 2017

Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:

Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Prof. Jeff Gold	Professor	2014 - present
Prof. Bob Garvey	Professor	2010 - 2017
Dr. George Boak	Senior Lecturer	2001 - present
Dr. Peter Watt	Senior Lecturer	2014 - 2018

Period when the claimed impact occurred: September 2014 - present

Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

West Yorkshire Police Force engaged in Action Modes of Research (AMR) led by Prof. Gold from September 2014 to July 2016. The aim was to improve organizational culture by accentuating good practice and identifying actionable knowledge through which change could be implemented. As a result of AMR, collaboration between departments increased and this improved resource management. Leadership engagement with staff and uniformed officers improved and moved from autocratic to participatory and consultative. Feedback via AMR sets led to changes in shift patterns and working conditions. Consequently, the organisation experienced a culture shift and policing improved for communities across West Yorkshire.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Profound change in policing culture and practice at West Yorkshire Police was underpinned by mode 2 research carried out in a context of application. Participatory action modes of research were skilfully applied in innovative ways to produce relevant, contextual, and actionable knowledge. The research demonstrates how we can address societal and organizational-based problems through a positive and practical application of action research.

Theme 1: Action Modes of Research [3.1] & [3.2]

The first research strand is underpinned by a collaborative project (principal investigator Prof Gold) funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation investigating how to alleviate poverty in the Leeds City Region (LCR), entitled 'Maximising the local impact of anchor institutions: a case study of Leeds City Region' **[3.1; 3.5]**. Academics worked with 12 anchor institutions within the LCR to address the issue of poverty alleviation through processes of procurement, recruitment and employment. The project employed a novel method of delivering action modes of research. Appreciative inquiry (which focuses on identifying positive action – best practice) was integrated with action learning and action research modes and implemented through action modes of research sets (group meetings) **[3.2]**. This AMR method seeks out best practice and translates research findings into actionable knowledge. Participant engagement in the AMR method generated actionable knowledge (examples of good practice across LCR procurement processes, and a model for wider implementation of good practice), which constituted the key

findings of the report for the prestigious Joseph Rowntree Foundation **[3.1]**. The AMR method created positive personal development outcomes for participants. Research findings showed greater confidence among participants resulting from a wider understanding of best practice and organizational issues, up-skilling and the application of actionable targets **[3.2]**. These findings were subsequently applied to different situations and contexts (e.g. West Yorkshire Police).

Theme 2: Storytelling and sense-making through Action Modes of Research [3.3] & [3.4]

The second research strand employed storytelling **[3.3]** and sense-making through AMR **[3.4]**. It demonstrates the benefit of direct academic involvement and active engagement with practice. West Yorkshire Police used Gold's AMR method (appreciative inquiry integrated with action learning and action research) to explore work performance as a collective endeavour in a novel contrast to traditional talent management **[3.3]**. Stories of collective work were analysed for their value-added benefits. Research findings showed how positive storytelling through conversation provided a route for improving organizational culture. These findings were subsequently applied to different situations and contexts. Sense-making through action modes of research was practiced with West Yorkshire Police to help officers build a strong affiliation to the use of predictive analytics technology and the key idea of evidence-based policing **[3.4]**. It was found that organizational sense-making though the AMR method was an important process for assessing factors that helped or hindered the adoption of new technology.

The originality of this research lies in the added value of integrating appreciative inquiry with action learning and action research modes. Applied together, they form a creative research circuit of identifying, addressing, and learning within the contexts they are employed. The principal focus is to discover what works, why it works and to translate that into positive change. The significance of the research lies in the actionable knowledge that is generated and the positive outcomes that the AMR sets, storytelling and sense-making lead to within, and between, organizations. The novel integration of the appreciative inquiry method with action learning and action research modes provides a route for organizations to increase participatory engagement and communication across the institution, create actionable knowledge in the form of contextual models, and translate acquired knowledge into targeted, practical changes that can be implemented.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Publications
[3.1] Devins, D., Gold J., Boak G., Garvey R., and Willis P. (2017) *Maximising the local impact of anchor institutions: a case study of Leeds City Region*. Project Report, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Maximising the local impact of anchor institutions: a case study of Leeds City Region | JRF

[3.2] Boak G., Watt P., Gold J., Devins D., and Garvey R. (2016) Procuring a sustainable future: an action learning approach to the development and modelling of ethical and sustainable procurement practices, *Action Learning: Research and Practice*, 13:3, 204-218. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767333.2016.1215290

[3.3] Gold J., Oldroyd T., Chesters E., Booth A., and Waugh A. (2016) Exploring Talenting: Talent Management as a Collective Endeavour. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 40:7, 513-533. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-11-2015-0091

[3.4] Watt P., Boak G., Gold J., Krlic M., and Wilkinson D. (2018) Introducing Predictive Policing Technologies: An Evidence Based Case History. In: Hamlin, Robert G., Ellinger, Andrea D. and Jones, Jenni, (eds.) *Evidence-Based Organizational Change and Development (EBOCD)*. IGI Global Premier. evidence based case 5 v02.pdf (yorksj.ac.uk)

Research grants

[3.5] Joseph Rowntree Foundation awarded £93,000 to researchers from York St John

University in partnership with Leeds Beckett University for the project entitled; Maximising the local Impact of anchor institutions in the Leeds City Region. Project duration was May 2015 to December 2016.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words).

In 2014, consultancy firm T-Three conducted a culture audit for West Yorkshire Police (WYP), the fifth largest police force in the UK (5342 police officers, 4376 support staff). The audit revealed low trust in leaders, poor morale, engagement, and motivation. Staff claimed they were treated 'shabbily' and that there was 'a lack of adherence by leaders to values' **[5.1]**. In response to these findings, WYP asked Gold to implement AMR to address concerns raised by the culture audit and generate actionable knowledge. Between July 2014 and July 2016 Gold conducted AMR sets with senior leadership groups (6 times), within the five WYP districts (Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Wakefield, Calderdale), Crime Division and Special Divisions. WYP Chief Constable promoted the use of Gold's AMR approach throughout the organization **[5.2]**. WYP invited Gold to run AMR again with the Leeds Districts in 2019. WYP covers 2.2 million people and includes major conurbations and rural areas.

Theme 1 Changing Work Practices Through AMR

As a result of the AMR sets run by Gold between January 2016-July 2016 at WYP a Leeds District Commander and Chief Superintendent **[5.2]** explained that communication and collaboration between department leaders improved, discord was reduced and leadership teams developed a greater appreciation of the different pressures on funding and resources in the district. The Chief Superintendent stated "you could see quite tangibly the management of the areas and uniform structures started to change" **[5.2]**. Improved communication following AMR sets led to better resource management and improved policing service and delivery in the distrct. The Chief Superintendent explained the abstraction of officers on to other major investigations had created resource gaps in the domestic abuse teams, which became exacerbated during the Christmas period. Patrol Police Constables (PCs) were mandated by the Chief Superintendent to assist the domestic abuse teams during peak Christmas periods, and during summertime neighbourhood teams released staff to the serious and organized crime team to enable more investigations **[5.2]**. A second tangible impact was the benefits of up-skilling uniform staff due to resource sharing. The Chief Superintendent explained he "had a crisis in CID [*criminal investigation division*] because I had no detectives, no one wanted to go into CID, they didn't know how to investigate". The increased collaboration resulting from Gold's delivery of AMR led to the sharing of uniform officers between departments, which meant officers developed skills in new areas. This led to more officers applying to CID – a division that previously experienced fewer applicants – "because they knew they could do it" **[5.2]**. When working as the District Commander of Kirklees District, the Chief Superintendent explained a further impact of the AMR method included the decision (based on acquired actionable knowledge and Gold's research **[3.3]**) to up-skill Patrol PCs in order to reduce pressure on overstretched Patrol Sergeants. The Chief Superintendent explained sergeant ratios to constables were the lowest in the country in the Kirklees District during his time as District Commander and sergeants had the highest number of staff to manage compared to any other force **[5.2]**. In order to reduce pressure on Sergeants, patrol teams were asked to identify team leaders who were "the font of all knowledge, like an informal corporal" **[5.2]** and nominate a PC who could support the management of Patrol Teams. Once identified these PCs would receive additional training on cultural shift, mentoring and talent management. This action benefitted Patrol Teams because it was a bottom-up process and the Patrol Teams engaged with the leadership approach, as "they started to understand where we were coming from, we weren't just people from Mars trying to make it as difficult as we could make it, there were some checks and balances" **[5.2]**.

Gold's AMR method increased leadership understanding of the experience of lower ranking officers and staff. When at WYP Corporate Services, one Chief Superintendent had influence across the whole force and stated he "took on all the ideas that Jeff Gold had taught me" **[5.3]**. In 2016 he conducted a shift review for the whole of WYP following feedback received via the

AMR sets. Feedback revealed WYP uniform officer and staff dissatisfaction at the existing Variable Shift Arrangement and a preference for an early, day and late shift structure. This AMR derived actionable knowledge led to the introduction of the preferred shift structure, which was implemented for the whole Force (approximately 10,000 employees). A second tangible change resulting from feedback via AMR sets included changing the existing WYP vehicle fleet to larger vehicles and the introduction of lighter, more practical police hats **[5.3]**. The changes in working practices and conditions improved productivity and staff experience of the organization. For example, average job satisfaction increased from 4.29 out of 7 in 2015 to 5.24 in 2017 **[5.4]**. The Chief Superintendent stated "people were happier in their work, there was better customer service in the organization and, yes, it benefitted the public" **[5.3]**. He attributed the significant improvement in staff perception – demonstrated in a 2017 Staff Perception Survey **[5.5]** – to changes initiated by Gold's AMR method. The survey reported significant improvement in staff perception of organizational support, supportive leadership, and public service motivation **[5.4]**.

A Deputy Chief Constable of Humberside Police and former Head of Crime at WYP explained Gold's AMR sets, and the conversations they enabled, improved communication and motivation in the WYP Crime division; "staff were given more of a voice and were listened to by all of our leaders, not just me". The Deputy chief Constable explained that this created a more "highly motivated workforce, better skills base and ultimately low sickness recording, so the communities ultimately had better outcomes, better detections" in West Yorkshire. **[5.6]**.

Theme 2 Changing management culture through storytelling

As a consequence of engagement with Gold's AMR method senior leadership groups across WYP changed leadership behaviour from autocratic to participatory and consultative. Actions leaders could undertake to improve organizational culture were identified. A Chief Superintendent and District Commander of Wakefield stated "different district commanders were taking it on board and believed in it and we were doing things differently in terms of their leadership because of Jeff Gold" **[5.3]**. Actionable knowledge generated by the AMR led the Chief Superintendent to undertake actions to encouraging positive storytelling **[3.3]** when he was District Commander of Wakefield District. The Chief Superintendent increased his face-to-face relationships and engagement with lower ranks to improve communication across the police hierarchy in the district and demonstrate that senior leaders were listening to both police officers and staff concerns. The intention was to reduce rumours and a negative 'canteen culture' and improve staff perceptions of leadership at Wakefield by creating positive stories of leadership behaviour. The Chief Superintendent explained "the Chief super making a cup of tea for a PC and saying, 'how's things?', I only had to do it six or seven times and all of a sudden, a whole district of 500 people seemed to know about it" **[5.3; 3.3]**. The Chief Superintendent explained positive storytelling "came from the work Jeff Gold was doing, and the small droplet affect into the still pond and the ripples going out and it got people talking positively" **[5.3; 3.3]**.

During 2019 Gold delivered AMR to Leeds District Superintendents and Chief Inspectors. One Bradford District Superintendent, who had participated in these sessions as a Chief Inspector, stated that the AMR increased communication and collaboration between Chief Inspectors and led to conversations about, and the subsequent challenging of, problematic and autocratic management styles of senior leaders. The Superintendent explained, "asking questions, working things through as a group and problem solving allowed them [*chief inspectors*] to challenge up a bit. It was having the confidence to then go out and put ideas into effect and having an impact" **[5.7]**. The Superintendent also explained the AMR method improved how Chief Inspectors worked together, stating "I think it's been very beneficial and helpful, and I think it has changed the culture in the Leeds District and West Yorkshire Police" **[5.7]** as it formed a "different dynamic and that approach of helping and supporting and working with each other" **[5.7]**.

In summary, the application of **Gold et al.'s** research innovation of integrating appreciative inquiry with action learning and action research modes as Action Modes of Research led to significant impacts, which permeated West Yorkshire Police with extensive reach as corroborated by officers of senior rank.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[5.1] Report: T-Three (2014) West Yorkshire Police Culture Survey, Available at: https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/sites/default/files/files/reports/wypx_report_final_170714.pdf

[5.2] Testimonial: Former District Commander (Kirklees and Leeds) and Chief Superintendent at West Yorkshire Police

[5.3] Testimonial: Former District Commander (Wakefield) and Chief Superintendent at West Yorkshire Police

[5.4] Survey Data: West Yorkshire Police Staff Survey Results 2017, West Yorkshire Police (2017)

[5.5] Report: Graham, L., Brown, N., Zheng, Y and Plater, M. (2016), Leadership, Well-Being and Community Policing Survey, Durham University. Available at: https://www.westyorkshire.police.uk/sites/default/files/files/reports/west_yorkshire_police_-_staff_survey_report_-_issued_30_march_2016.pdf

[5.6] Testimonial: Former Head of Crime Division, West Yorkshire Police; and Deputy Chief Constable, Humberside Police

[5.7] Testimonial: District Superintendent, West Yorkshire Police