

<b>Institution:</b> Bath Spa University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 17 - Business and Management Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Developing and embedding ethical culture, leadership and professional practice in the Police Service of England, Wales, Police Scotland and the Five Arms of the Naval Service		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2014 - 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Prof Allyson Macvean	Professor of Policing and Criminology	27/10/2014 - present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014 – 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Macvean's research has prompted and enabled institution-wide ethical leadership and culture changes to the UK's Police Service and Royal Navy. Since 2014, her work has led to the establishment of ethics committees in these organisations at unit, local, regional and national levels. These ethics committees are available to all personnel, meaning the impact of her research is being experienced in the day-to-day working lives of over 233,000 police workers across England, Wales and Scotland, and nearly 7,000 members of the Royal Marines. The creation of the ethics committees enabled the raising and discussion of ethical dilemmas, which has led directly to policy improvements and the dissemination of ethical values throughout policing and defence services. For organisations that are conferred with powers which include the use of force and can be morally intrusive, the effects of Macvean's research collectively raise ethical awareness and understanding, leading to changed attitudes and better decision-making.</p> <p>In 2020, as a member of the COVID-19 National Foresight Group, Macvean applied her research within a national crisis situation. Her work and experience supported the creation of recommendations to the UK government, informing their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Macvean's research has established that Ethics Committees provide a safe space for practitioners in defence and policing services to discuss the ethical dilemmas they encounter in the course of their working lives. Her work demonstrates that providing this safe space to all ranks of these organisations promotes richer and deeper thinking for the complex and challenging environments in which they operate. This in turn underpins higher standards of conduct, which support organisational learning as well as the Police National Decision Making Model.</p> <p>In the years leading up to 2014, a number of ethically-charged incidents highlighted ethical problems within the police service and Royal Navy. For the police, these included the exposure in 2010 of unethical conduct among police officers working undercover who had entered into romantic relationships - in some cases resulting in children - with the subjects of their investigative work. For the Royal Navy, the 2013 conviction of Marine A for murder, for killing an insurgent found wounded during a patrol in Afghanistan, alongside incidents of bullying and harassment created a need within the service to understand the organisational behaviours, attitudes and culture that led to these situations.</p> <p>In October 2014 Macvean established a research collaboration with Professor Vassilios Papalois (Professor of Transplantation Surgery and Consultant Transplant and General Surgeon in the Renal and Transplant Unit, Hammersmith Hospital, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust) and the Avon and Somerset Constabulary. This collaboration aimed to answer questions prompted by such incidents about how establishing an ethics committee - modelled on those used in hospitals - within a police force could enhance and support the ethical culture and practice of that force (R1).</p>		

Macvean's work is action-based research. It employs iterative cycles that have progressively widened its scope and sphere of influence, confirming her discoveries across different geographical areas, groups of organisations and into related fields. Following her initial collaboration with Avon and Somerset Constabulary, 17 other police forces (including Devon and Cornwall Police, South Wales Police and Dorset Police) approached her to develop her work in collaboration with them. This gave Macvean scope to observe the application of her findings within networks at the regional and eventually the national level, confirming that ethics committees helped to develop and disseminate ethical good practice among both individual forces and groups of forces.

In 2015, Macvean began to apply her research ideas to the military sphere, working with the Royal Navy, transforming and reshaping her research questions to respond to their particular ethical challenges in the wake of Marine A's conviction. Beginning with reviewing ethical training for the Royal Marines, this work has developed to encompass the ethical health and culture of all Five Arms of the Royal Navy (R2).

Macvean's research builds upon a range of established academic paradigms and methodologies including organisational identity, ethical leadership, decision-making, culture and organisational learning, but develops in a unique direction to improve ethical conduct in law enforcement and defence organisations. Her research has identified unacceptable behaviours, practices and leadership styles, and has evaluated and recommended positive changes to support ethical behaviour in these services. Macvean's work has highlighted aspects of these organisations which have implications for ethical conduct and culture, including the 'lived experience' of personnel; how social spaces and arrangements foster and augment behaviours; the concept of the 'frozen' middle ranks; perceptions of the ethical climate at all levels of the organisation; and systems for reporting wrongdoing and unethical behaviour (R2, R4). Her work has also examined areas where the ethical behaviour of the police touches on other fields, such as social work (R3).

### 3. References to the research

**R3** MacVean, A and Theodosopoulou, M (2018) [A qualitative and quantitative review of the implementation of the Ethics Committee in Avon and Somerset Constabulary: the views of referrers and members.](#) Avon & Somerset Police.

**R2** MacVean, A (2018) [The ethical health and culture of the five arms of the Naval Service.](#) Naval Service, London.

**R3** MacVean, A and Read, C (2017) [An evaluation of three One Team initiatives: Halcon, North Taunton and Wellington.](#) Bath Spa University and Somerset County Council, Bath.

**R4** MacVean, A and Spindler, P (2015) '[Principled and ethical policing: some considerations for police leaders.](#)' In: Fleming, J, ed. *Police leadership: rising to the top.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 110-128.

### 4. Details of the impact

Macvean's research has instigated and enabled institution-wide ethical leadership and culture changes in the police services of England, Wales and Scotland and the Royal Navy. Her work has established ethics committees at multiple levels in these organisations (unit, local, regional and national) and are available to all personnel (over 233,000 police workers across England, Wales and Scotland, and nearly 7,000 members of the Royal Marines). This has led directly to policy improvements as well as disseminating ethical values throughout policing and defence services. Her research has further been applied within a national crisis situation (Macvean was a member of the COVID-19 National Foresight Group) where it has supported the creation of recommendations to the UK government regarding handling the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Creating nationwide organisational change in the Police Service

Macvean set up the first ethics committee within Avon and Somerset Constabulary in 2015 with Papalois (Imperial College NHS Trust). Following the positive findings of this project regarding the effectiveness of the ethics committee for developing ethical leadership and promoting ethical behaviour in the organisation, 17 other police forces, including those of Dorset, Wiltshire and Devon and Cornwall, approached Macvean to be involved as she broadened the scope of her

research. After setting up ethics committees within these Services, Macvean created the Police Regional Ethics Network (later Police Ethics Network), the implementation of which “[extended] the benefits of the local Committees to the regional level” (E1, p1). Attendees at the Network’s first meeting on 13 October 2015 included representatives from 5 police forces (Devon and Cornwall, South Wales, Dorset, Avon and Somerset, and Wiltshire), Imperial College NHS Trust, and Bath Spa University. By December 2017 these were joined by an additional 7 forces, plus representatives of organisations including the College of Policing, Police Scotland, British Transport Police, the London Police Ethics Panel, and the Royal Navy (E6b, p8-9). The local ethics committees created a “safe, secure environment for any staff member or officer to raise ethical dilemmas encountered in their work and have them considered and debated” (E1, p1). This was something that did not exist prior to Macvean’s work (E1, p1; E8b, p1). The regional network enabled the escalation of particularly challenging dilemmas, sharing of regionally relevant information, and the dissemination of ethical good practice across the services of the Network (E1; E6a).

The National Police Chiefs’ Council responded to Macvean’s findings by issuing a national directive in 2018 for all police forces to develop ethics committees (E1, p1) to support ethical culture and practice and the Police Code of Ethics. Regional ethics committees, modelled on the Police Regional Ethics Network set up by Macvean, were then established across England and Wales (E1). The success of the regional meetings led to the formation of the national UK Police Ethics Guidance Group in 2018 (E1, p2). This has representation from the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC), the College of Policing, the Superintendent’s Association, the Police Federation and the Home Office, extending the sphere of impact of Macvean’s research, and developing a widespread improvement in the ethical culture of the police, to a national level (E1).

The ethics committees created across the UK in response to Macvean’s research have enabled the review and amendment of local and national policy that did not always facilitate best ethical practice (E1, p2). The Chief Constable of Cleveland Police provides the example of young children who have been found to possess child abuse images: “Previously, these children would have received a criminal record that would affect them into their adult lives, but as a result of ethical dilemma discussion, this policy has changed so that no criminal record is received but instead schools and social services are notified to support the child and their family” (E1, p2).

Deep and rich discussion of dilemmas ranging from operational challenges to issues of organisational policy and matters that are perceived to be unfair or unjust have emerged from the creation and broad availability of the ethics committees (E6a; E6b, p17-20; Police Constable, E8c, p2). This has led to benefits of “increased staff engagement on ethical matters, better understanding of decision making in policing and improved morale” according to an Assistant Chief Constable (Police Scotland, E8c, p1). The increasing number of dilemmas submitted across the police forces (for example, 111 in Avon and Somerset Constabulary between May 2015 and December 2020; 93 in Devon and Cornwall Police between December 2016 and December 2020) demonstrates that staff are raising and discussing ethical issues encountered during their duties.

The ethics committees are valued across all ranks (E8). An Assistant Chief Constable (Police Scotland) states that the “ability to submit dilemmas to the Ethics Advisory Panel positively impacts confidence in decision making throughout the organisation” (E8c, p1). A Sergeant (Devon and Cornwall Police) emphasises how the ethics committee “steps outside of the normal, sometimes blinkered, world of policing and allows dilemmas (or legislation) to be looked at from an ethical angle that is up to date rather than the accepted view of policing that can be ingrained and ‘the way we’ve always done it’” (E8a, p1). A Detective Constable (Police Scotland) explains how the ethics committee helps him take a broader view when making decisions in his work:

Whilst it is not always easy to make a decision that is contrary to the approach I would normally take, the advice and frameworks provided by the ethics panel allow me to base my decisions on the collective ethical considerations of the wider organisation and our communities. This has been so important to me in my work and ensures I am able to

make values-based decisions that are not restricted to my own perspective, moral considerations and experiences (E8c, p3).

The impact of Macvean's work was recognised as being of national importance by the award of an OBE for Services to Ethics in Policing in the 2020 New Year's Honours (E7).

### **Supporting widespread ethical engagement in the Royal Navy**

Macvean's research extended into a collaboration with the Royal Navy following the conviction of Marine A for the murder of a wounded insurgent and a number of cases of bullying and harassment. Her detailed report into the ethical health and culture of the Five Arms of the Royal Naval Service (Royal Marines, Submarine Service, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Surface Community and Fleet Air Arm), submitted in 2018, included 72 recommendations which have "helped to inform [the Royal Navy's] implementation of the next stage of the Naval Service Ethics Programme" from 2019 to 2021 (E2, p1). This work also "encouraged the creation of the new Naval Service Leadership Academy" (E2, p1).

Macvean's work with the Royal Navy began with the Royal Marines in 2015, and the significance of her impact is most clearly demonstrated by her work within this Corps. Her review of the professional practice and training in ethical leadership, behaviour and decision-making within the Royal Marines supported ethical behaviour across the ranks (E3). This work was used to refine ethical training within the Corps, which became 'Commando Ethics'. The 'Commando Ethics' programme has been delivered to all recruits and to all Royal Marine leadership course attendees at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) since September 2015. This programme thus influences the behaviour - and the future careers - of approximately 1500 students per training year (E4, p1). The ethical leadership training influenced by Macvean's research does not only affect those marines taking the training themselves. The 'Ethics Masterclass' which was inaugurated in 2017 with her support is part of a training package delivered each year to 9 Lieutenant Colonels who are selected by the Corps to be Commanding Officers. These officers "may command and lead between 100 and 1000 military and civilian personnel, depending on the type of unit they are assigned" (E4, p2). This spreads the impact of Macvean's research through the ranks and across a broad swathe of Royal Marines employees. The Commandant of CTCRM states that the Ethics Masterclass is "one of the most useful elements of the training ... and is a valuable way of exposing [the Commanding Officers] to different perspectives and experience" (E4, p2).

As with the police, the Royal Navy had no ethics committees prior to working with Macvean, and therefore nowhere for ethical dilemmas to be formally raised for discussion (E2, p1; E4, p2). Her work with the Naval Service Ethics Programme - a unit which responds to unethical incidents as well as driving and embedding an ethical culture - has resulted in the creation of ethics panels, for example within CTCRM. While chaired by the Commandant, "attendance is encouraged from across the ranks as well as from the civilian workforce at the centre" (E4, p2), ensuring that the benefits of ethical debate (as shown by Macvean's work with the police) are experienced across all areas of the Centre. The Deputy Brigade Commander of 3 Commando Brigade outlines the benefits which have stemmed from Macvean's research: "improved transformational leadership, the championing of ethics as the golden thread that runs through our organisation and sets conditions for first-rate trust, empowerment and maintaining the strongest of teams" (E3, p2).

The significance of the impact of Macvean's work to the Royal Navy can be seen in their selection of her to represent the Naval Service Ethics Programme Chair at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)'s Research Task Group 304 on 'Factors Impacting Ethical Leadership' (E2, p2), a role which she has fulfilled since 2017.

### **Supporting ethical decision-making in the COVID-19 pandemic by building on work with UK policing and defence organisations**

As Ethical Advisor to the COVID-19 National Foresight Group (C19NFG), Macvean's research within law enforcement and the military was recontextualised into a fast-paced crisis situation. This situation was characterised by the constant need for decisions to be "made swiftly on complex matters with potentially severe ethical consequences" (E5, p1). Macvean's research and experience informed the ethical decision-making of C19NFG, "ensuring cognisance of those most vulnerable in our communities" (E5, p2). This served a crucial role as the Group worked

with the 42 Local Resilience Forums and the government to “save lives, relieve suffering and support local communities” (E5, p1). As C19NFG findings fed directly into the Prime Minister’s Office, Macvean’s research has helped to shape the way the pandemic has been handled in the UK, for example, through the acceptance “without compromise or exception” of the recommendations contained in 3 rapid reviews whose production was “[enhanced] by Allyson’s ethical counsel” (E5, p2). The Chair of the C19NFG also describes a situation where C19NFG “received a request by the Cabinet Office to change the data we had prepared for publication so as to be a better fit for the way the government wished to be presented to the public”. The Chair faced the possibility of political repercussions which might affect his career as a result of making the ethical choice in this matter. “Allyson [Macvean] was able to advise me - drawing on examples from her experience with the police - of how best to record my decision-making process to protect myself from any potential repercussions that might be incurred as a result of making the right ethical decision [...]. Her advice enabled me to be confident in my decision to reject the government’s request and publish the data without altering it” (E5, p3).

Additionally, Macvean’s research has shaped Police Scotland’s response to the new policing needs of the COVID-19 pandemic. Officers report how their ethics committees provided “clear guidance around the 4 E’s approach [Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce, a model being used throughout the UK to encourage compliance with government pandemic guidelines which positions force as a last resort] based on a strong ethical framework” (Detective Constable, E8c, p2) as well as operational guidance and communication planning (Assistant Chief Constable, E8c, p1).

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

**E1** Testimonial: Chief Constable, Cleveland Police, National Police Chiefs’ Council lead for Ethics in Policing and Chair of the National Ethics Committee for Policing detailing the development and impact of Macvean’s work with the Police Service.

**E2** Testimonial: Fleet Commander, Royal Navy outlining the impact of Macvean’s work on ethical training in the Royal Navy and Macvean’s appointment to NATO.

**E3** Testimonial: Deputy Brigade Commander, 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines detailing the impact of Macvean’s work with the Royal Marines Corps.

**E4** Testimonial: Commandant of the Commando Training Centre, Royal Marines (CTCRM), outlining the impact of Macvean’s work with CTCRM in developing ethics training, senior leadership ethics education and establishing the CTCRM ethics committee.

**E5** Testimonial: Chair of the COVID-19 National Foresight Group, detailing how Macvean’s research supported the Group, influencing the UK government’s management of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**E6** Documentation from the Police Ethics Network (formerly Police Regional Ethics Network):

- **E6a** Sample minutes of a Police Ethics Network meeting (5 December 2017), demonstrating knowledge sharing between Network members and breadth of topics under discussion
- **E6b** Two-year report on the Police Ethics Network, 2016-2017, showing membership of the Network, context of its formation and summaries of the types of ethical dilemmas being discussed.

**E7** [Newspaper article reporting the 2020 New Year’s Honours, including OBE awarded to Macvean for services to ethics in policing](#)

**E8** Questionnaire responses from members of UK police forces on the impact of ethics committees on everyday policing:

- **E8a** Devon and Cornwall Police (Sergeant)
- **E8b** Metropolitan Police Force (Police Constable)
- **E8c** Police Scotland (Assistant Chief Constable, Detective Constable, Detective Inspector, Chief Inspector, Detective Sergeant)