

Institution: Durham University		
Unit of Assessment: 17, Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Improving Wellbeing and Service Behaviour in Policing		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: Between 2006 and 2020		
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:
Les Graham	Professor (promoted November 2020)	2003 to present
Tom Redman	Professor (deceased Dec 2015)	2004 to Dec 2015
Yuyan Zheng	PhD Student / Postdoctoral Research Associate	Sept 2014 to Aug 2019
Marisa Plater	Research Assistant	April 2013 to present
Sara Gracey	PhD Student / Postdoctoral Research Associate	Oct 2014 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: Between 1 August 2013 and 31 December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact <p>During this REF period, the Durham University policing research project has expanded rapidly from impacting on a single police force to involve all of the forty-three Home Office police forces within England and Wales, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the British Transport Police and the Ministry of Defence Police. The underpinning research has had significant and extensive impact on working practices, procedures and policies within forces implemented to achieve improvements in police officer and staff wellbeing and their service behaviour (e.g., reduced levels of exhaustion and fatigue, and increased levels of work engagement, process improvement activity and discretionary effort both to serve the public and to fight organised crime). This has not only benefited the police officers and staff employed (approximately 215,800 individuals), but also the communities they serve. The research has had direct influence on the Home Office Front Line Review of Policing Recommendation Report (July 2019). The quality, importance, and impact of this research on achieving a step change in context and conditions for the policing workforce are recognised by the Home Office, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the National Police Chiefs' Council, and the College of Policing.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p>Police forces play an important role in society and are unique agencies in that they have exceptional powers. Due to austerity and reduced funding, over the past nine years UK police forces have had to restructure and reduce their number of employees. The deep cuts in other social agencies' funding have resulted in policing, as the service of last resort, facing increased demand. In the face of these challenges there are growing concerns for the wellbeing and motivation of police officers and staff. In its annual assessment of policing HMICFRS (2017, p.7) noted that <i>"from speaking to staff and officers throughout every police force in England and Wales, we can see that policing is under significant stress."</i></p> <p>This research project was initially based on the developing research programme of the Principal Investigator, Professor Les Graham, working with Professor Tom Redman (deceased) studying the relationship between organisational Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and employee public service motivation, commitment, and discretionary effort. More recently, the project has built upon internationally leading research conducted by members of the Durham University Business School (DUBS) International Centre for Leadership and Followership (ICLF). The main aim of this research project has been to build a shared body of evidence based on rigorous research in police forces that can inform both local decision-making within police forces and national policing policy. To guide the reader and make clear that the impact claimed is underpinned by this research, Section 3 provides the dates that the research was first conducted. Following this date, through large scale surveys of their workforce, the research findings were replicated and legitimised in the other forces involved in this research project. Professor Les</p>		

Graham and his team then presented results to key force personnel, issued reports on key findings and held knowledge sharing workshops with each force to develop police practitioner knowledge and understanding of the evidence and underpinning theory to enable translation of the research findings into effective interventions and policy changes.

Public Service Motivation, Wellbeing and Human Resource Management (HRM) Practices

R1 demonstrated that public sector workers have high levels of public service motivation (PSM) particularly when facing high levels of work overload. This occurs through a process of the meaning of their work increasing as they attempt to meet the needs of the communities they serve [R1, R2]. While a high level of PSM is beneficial to the public, society, and organisations within which they work, there can be costs for individuals' home life and wellbeing due to them overinvesting their personal time and energy into their work [R2]. The findings [R1] suggest that as work demands increase, the adoption of supportive HRM practices can ameliorate these negative effects on employees. R3 demonstrated the importance of positive HRM practices for employee performance. The findings [R3] also suggested that the HRM practices an organisation adopts signal to employees how much they and their contributions are valued, and how concerned the organisation is for their wellbeing [R3].

Workplace Stressors and Wellbeing

In a longitudinal study R4 examined causal relationships within the well-established *challenge-hindrance stressor framework*. While *challenge stressors*, which refer to perceptions of work-related demands such as workload, time pressure, and responsibility increase stress and hence reduce wellbeing, they also hold the potential for increasing work motivation and performance. On the other hand, *hindrance stressors*, which refer to perceptions of work-related demands such as red tape, role ambiguity, and administrative hassles, act as barriers to achievement and have harmful effects on wellbeing and behaviour. In a first test of this framework in policing [R4], challenge stressors were confirmed to be positively related to police officer and staff engagement, while hindrance stressors were negatively related. Moreover, the negative impact of hindrance stressors on wellbeing over time was found to be significantly higher compared to that of challenge stressors [R4].

Leadership Style

In a review of leadership in policing (College of Policing, 2015), it was identified that to meet the challenges faced there was a powerful need to move away from the traditional command and control style of leadership. R5 and R6 provide strong empirical evidence of the negative impact of an authoritarian leadership style and the positive benefits of servant leadership. Authoritarian leadership was shown to be associated with reduced employee wellbeing and discretionary effort [R5]. In contrast, servant leadership was found to have a positive impact on employee wellbeing, discretionary effort and service performance for the public [R6].

3. References to the research

- R1. Gould-Williams, J. S., Bottomley, P., Redman, T., Snape, E., Bishop, D., Limpanitgul, T., & Mostafa, A. M. (2014). Civic Duty and Employee Outcomes: Do High Commitment Human Resource Practices and Work Overload Matter? *Public Administration* 92(4): 937-953. DOI:10.1111/padm.12019.
- R2. Zheng, Y., Wu, C. H., & Graham, L. (2019). Work-to-non-work Spillover: The Impact of Public Service Motivation and Meaningfulness on Outcomes in Work and Personal Life Domains. *Public Management Review* 22(4): 578-601. DOI:10.1080/14719037.2019.1601242. (This research was first conducted in 2015 in Cumbria Constabulary).
- R3. Snape, E., & Redman, T. (2010). HRM Practices, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and Performance: A Multi-level Analysis. *Journal of Management Studies* 47(7): 1219-1247. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-6486.2009.00911.x. Submitted as an Output for REF2014.
- R4. Graham, L., Lockey, S., Zheng, Y., Plater, M., & Gracey, S. (2020). The Impact of Workplace Stressors on Individual Wellbeing and Engagement in Policing. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.3553709. (This research was first conducted in 2017 in Durham Constabulary).
- R5. Zheng, Y., Graham, L., Farh, J. L., & Huang, X. (2019). The Impact of Authoritarian Leadership on Ethical Voice: A Moderated Mediation Model of Felt Uncertainty and Leader

Benevolence. *Journal of Business Ethics*. DOI: 10.1007/s10551-019-04261-1. (This research was first conducted in 2016 in Cleveland Police).

- R6. Zhang, Y., Zheng, Y., Zhang, L., Xu, S., Liu, X., & Chen, W. (2019). A Meta-analytic Review of the Consequences of Servant Leadership: The Moderating Roles of Cultural Factors. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*. DOI: 10.1007/s10490-018-9639-z. (The association between servant leadership and police officer and staff wellbeing and service behaviour was first demonstrated in 2016 in Durham Constabulary).

This body of work has been peer reviewed both internally and (with the exception of R4) externally by internationally recognised peer-reviewed journals and is well above the 2* benchmark.

4. Details of the impact

The underpinning research has been utilised and made relevant through each of the forces participating in repeated large-scale surveys that have been conducted for all police officers and staff, on average every 18 months. Using quantitative analytical techniques, factors having the largest impact on focal measures have been identified and priorities for action recommended. Working with executive teams, senior leaders and staff representatives to discuss the research evidence and implications of the findings, effective interventions and changes to working practices and policies have been developed (E1 p.13, 45 and 74).

The findings in R1 and R2 increased understanding within policing of the risks that high PSM can have for individuals under conditions of high workload, as they attempt to meet the needs of the communities they serve despite incurring costs to their own wellbeing (E1 p.10 and 15). The research [R1] demonstrated that these negative effects on employees can be ameliorated by the adoption of supportive HRM practices. Furthermore, the findings of R3 demonstrated the importance of workforce perceptions of HRM practices and, in particular, of organisational support for police officer and staff wellbeing, discretionary effort and performance (E1 p.15, 21 and 41). The findings [R1, R2 and R3] have directly influenced the development and delivery of HRM policy within police forces (E1 p.1 and 54) and employee wellbeing strategies (E1 p.7, 10 and 49). Examples of policy changes introduced in forces as a result of this research to improve HRM practices and workforce perceptions of organisational fairness and support, and hence their wellbeing, include changes to *promotion processes*, (E1 p.6, 41, 46, 51, 54, 56, 62 and 65); improvements to how *sickness is managed* (E1 p.6), improved *bereavement policies* (E1 p.15), improvements to *personal development* processes (E1 p.11, 56, 62 and 67); the introduction of *wellbeing champions*, who speak up on issues of concern for their colleagues, (E1 p.7, 17, 46, 51 and 68); *physical fitness campaigns* (E1 p.7 and 17); *rebalancing and addressing workload concerns* (E1 p.65 and 73); reduction in *cancellation of rest days* (E1 p.62) and a more supportive approach to *handling how complaints and misconduct allegations are investigated and dealt with* (E1 p.15 and 56).

The research [R4] on challenge and hindrance stressors was “a new concept” in policing (E2) and has been received with particular interest (see for example, E1 p.10, 16, 46, 60 and 64). Working with Durham Constabulary, Professor Les Graham developed the “100 little things” intervention which demonstrated that the force valued the workforce and their contributions and cared about their wellbeing. Through asking the workforce to suggest ideas on how their wellbeing could be increased small changes were then made to improve processes, equipment and conditions to remove hindrance stressors or as they are known in policing ‘barriers’ to people doing their job well. As the Chief Constable of Durham Constabulary commented “*The evidence and finding that it is not so much how hard a person works, but that it is the difficulties, frustrations and barriers that individuals face in their work that have a larger impact on an individual’s wellbeing has had a very large impact on our thinking and has allowed the force to develop effective interventions and policy changes*” (E1 p.16). The effectiveness of this programme was identified and evidenced by the HMICFRS (2017) (E3 p.28, p.54, 55 and 64, and E1 p.16) and interventions to reduce hindrance stressors have been implemented in forces across the UK (see for example, E1 p.1, 7, 10, 17, 38, 40-41, 46, 51, 54, 60, 62, 64, 67, 70 and 75).

The research [R5, R6] demonstrated the benefit of adopting a supportive leadership¹ style in place of an authoritarian style for police officer and staff wellbeing, discretionary effort and service behaviour. Consequently, there has been recognition across policing of the need to move from

¹ Servant leadership has been renamed and is known as supportive leadership in policing.

the traditional authoritarian style to a more supportive leadership style (E1 p.8, 10 and 70). As commented by the Chief Constable of Hertfordshire Constabulary *"...importantly the work with Durham University has fundamentally changed the leadership debate within the Constabulary"* (E1 p.50). Based on the research, Durham Constabulary adopted supportive leadership as the preferred style (E1 p.27) and established a leadership academy (E1 p.17) to provide training to all supervisors within the force. The impact and importance of adopting this leadership approach was recognised by the HMICFRS *"The new, supportive leadership approach has been developed in conjunction with the university and has been widely publicised. This approach has evolved in Durham Constabulary over the last four years. It rests on a combination of academic theory, staff surveys, and previous learning and analysis of what has worked. The approach to leadership underpins the strategic direction of the constabulary through organisational attitudes and behaviours, valuing people and talent development"* (E3 p.109). Other forces that have made significant investments based on this research and completed extensive leadership training include Devon and Cornwall Police (E1 p.10); Essex Police (E1 p.38), Gloucestershire Constabulary (E1 p.42, 44); Greater Manchester Police (E1 p.45-47); Merseyside Police (E1 p.55) and South Yorkshire Police (E1 p.62).

The research findings have been presented on the Strategic Command Course (SCC)² for the past three years (E1 p.14) and there is clear recognition that this has supported the development of future chief officers and other senior police practitioners (E4 p.1 and 2). Wider dissemination of the findings has also occurred through five annual practitioner conferences held at Durham University (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019). These have proven useful in facilitating the exchange of ideas and establishment of a network of interested experts from different forces to develop the impact of the research further (E1 p.40, 53, 59 and 62).

Longitudinal studies using matched employee responses have demonstrated the achievement of improvement in focal measures in a growing number of forces (see for example, E1 p.16, 43, 45, 57, 63, 64, 68, 70, 73 and E3 p.28). Furthermore, there is recognition of the direct contribution of the research to the improvement of HMICFRS ratings of forces (see for example, E1 p.39, 43, 55, 68-69, 72-73 and 75). Of particular note are the performances of Durham Constabulary and South Yorkshire Police. The Chief Constable of Durham Constabulary acknowledges that *"...Durham Constabulary has been assessed as the only force to be outstanding by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) for four consecutive years. The research has been a significant enabler of this achievement"* (E1 p.14). The Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police observed *"...in 2016, at the start of our work with Dr Graham and the University, South Yorkshire Police was rated as 'Requires Improvement' in most areas of inspection with some areas identified as 'Inadequate'. This left the force ranked bottom of the 43 forces in the country. Since this time performance improvement has been driven across the organisation to the extent we are now graded as 'Good' in all areas and 'Outstanding' around ethical conduct, moving us in to the top five forces nationally. In summary, the excellent quality, detailed and meaningful research conducted by Dr Graham and the University, has provided us with a strong evidence base to assess the many organisational changes that have been undertaken since 2016"* (E1 p.63).

On 23 May 2018, the then Home Secretary announced the need for police reform and that a review of policing would be conducted to improve wellbeing, efficiency and productivity of policing on a national scale. In acknowledgement of the impact of the findings [R1- R6] on forces, the Rt. Hon Nick Hurd MP, then Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, appointed Professor Les Graham to the Front Line Review Steering Group (E5 p.1). The research findings (summarised in E6) informed the direction for the review (E5 p.2), were presented to Home Office officials out of committee and to the Policing Minister bilaterally (E5 p.3), and made a direct influence on the recommendations in the Home Office Front Line Review (FLR) of Policing Policy Report (E7 p.4, E1 p.78). The then Policing Minister stated (E5 p.4): *'I am so grateful to you for the hugely constructive way that you worked with us and helped bring greater depth, rigor and understanding to the evidence base.'* The FLR Review report (E7) set national policy regarding: the need for forces to achieve the right balance between meeting demand and supporting individuals (directly influenced by R1, R2, R3, R5 and R6), the reduction of internal demand (influenced by R4) and a commitment to change how the wellbeing of the policing workforce is evaluated through both the

² The SCC is a statutory requirement for officers seeking promotion to Assistant Chief Constable and above.

establishment of a national mechanism for wellbeing provision and changes to how HMICFRS inspect wellbeing within forces (influenced by R1- R6). Furthermore, the FLR Review report confirmed that police funding would be increased by more than GBP1billion for 2020 (E7). As observed by the Thames Valley Police Director of People, there is no doubt that the research findings have “*directly informed the Front Line Review, shaped policy and influenced funding decisions*” (E1 p.78).

As stated by the College of Policing Lead for Wellbeing: “*The key aspects researched by Durham University have undoubtedly deepened our understanding of the challenges policing has faced regarding maintaining the wellbeing of the policing workforce in a period of deep austerity*” (E8 p.1). From their work with the Durham team, the College have changed their Senior Leadership Development Programme (aimed at chief inspectors, superintendents and staff managers at similar levels). “*Trainers have since incorporated the principles of supportive leadership into the SDLP and it occupies a full day of training*”, and the “*key supportive leadership principles have been mapped with the College of Policing’s Beyond 360° assessment tool*”, so that police leaders on the course will now “*not only be able to understand the concepts of supportive leadership and the state of leadership in policing nationally, but also receive bespoke feedback on how they are performing individually*”, with this forming part of their development plan, attests the College’s CEO (E8 p.3-4). In recognition of the importance and impact of the research on wellbeing, on 29 October 2019, Professor Les Graham was appointed by the HMICFRS to the PEEL Legitimacy External Reference Group (E9) to advise on the content of future inspections of forces and hence contribute further to policy at a national level within policing. He has also been appointed to lead the National Policing Wellbeing Research Project, a three-year research project to assess the wellbeing of all officers and staff nationally within the UK to guide future policy (E1).

Of further note is the comment by the Chief Constable of British Transport Police that: “*...the research studies completed by Durham are contributing to changing the face of policing*” (E1 p.70). This impact was formally recognised by Chief Constable Jo Farrell (Durham Constabulary) who awarded Professor Les Graham a *Chief Constable’s Commendation* in July 2019, for the excellence of the policing research program in terms of both its depth and reach, and the impact it has made at both a local and national level (E1 p.14 and E10).

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

- E1. Testimonials from Chief Constables of City of London Police, Cumbria Constabulary, Devon and Cornwall Police, Durham Constabulary, Essex Police, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Greater Manchester Police, Gwent Police, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Merseyside Police, Norfolk and Suffolk Police, North Wales Police, South Yorkshire Police and West Yorkshire Police; other testimonials: Bedfordshire Police, British Transport Police, Cleveland Police South Wales Police and Thames Valley Police.
- E2. Transcript from then Durham Constabulary Chief Constable Mike Barton BBC 5 Live Interview with Anna Foster (Aired on 10.10.18).
- E3. HMICFRS PEEL Inspection Reports for Durham Constabulary (2016, 2017 & 2018/19).
- E4. Testimonials from Chief Constables Iain Spittal (08.03.17) and Dee Collins (22.03.19).
- E5. Home Office letters: appointment of Dr Les Graham to the Front Line Review (FLR) of Policing (13.06.18); commentary on the contributions of the research to the FLR (14.11.18); recognition of the contribution of the research to the FLR from the Rt. Honourable Nick Hurd MP, Minister State for Policing and the Fire Service (24.07.19).
- E6. Graham, et al. (2019). Technical Report: Research into Workplace Factors, Wellbeing, Attitudes and Behaviour in Policing, Summary of Evidence and Insights. Presented for the Front Line Review of Policing. Available from the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.
- E7. Home Office (2019). The Front Line Review Recommendation Report. (Issued by the Home Office, July 2019). ISBN: 978-1-78655-847-3.
- E8. Testimonial letters from College of Policing Wellbeing Lead (20.02.20) and CEO (7.12.20).
- E9. Letter from HMICFRS (29.10.19).
- E10. Chief Constable Commendation – Dr Les Graham (02.07.19).