



POLICE:NOW

INFLUENCE FOR GENERATIONS

Crime and Antisocial Behaviour in the West Midlands

Impact evaluation to inform and
improve programme implementation

Introduction

To monitor progress against our [Case for Change](#) and develop our programmes using an evidence-based approach, we gather and analyse data covering attraction, recruitment, diversity and inclusion, participant experience, attitudes and progression. Despite the challenges of doing so, Police Now also analyses data on crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB) in the communities where Police Now participants are posted, working in partnership with independent researchers and academics.

Our latest impact evaluation examined how crime and ASB changed in the communities where our second cohort of National Graduate Leadership Programme participants worked, with key findings to suggest that the targeted problem-solving work of Police Now participants is translating into positive ‘green shoots’ of impact in relation to ASB. The aggregate results of the analysis show an 11.7% reduction in ASB in the communities where Police Now participants were posted, and a 7.2% reduction in communities without a Police Now participant¹ (further details in our [latest Impact and Insights Report](#)).

Whilst trends in overall recorded crime in Police Now communities were consistent with the national picture, disaggregating trends by crime type in the West Midlands shows consistent and positive trends in the communities where our second cohort of West Midlands Police participants were posted. This short brief summarises the findings from this evaluation and details how we are using these insights to inform programme implementation.

Positive trends in crime and ASB in the West Midlands communities where Police Now participants were posted

In the West Midlands communities where Police Now participants were posted, the data suggests:

- A 21% reduction in ASB, compared to a 10% reduction in communities without a Police Now participant.
- Reductions in shoplifting, bicycle theft and theft from person in communities with a Police Now participant.
- Slower increases in other crime types (e.g. burglary, robbery and violent and sexual offences) in communities with a Police Now participant.

These results preclude any firm statements of cause of effect in the absence of a fully randomised design

West Midlands	22-month period	Anti-social behaviour	Bicycle theft	Burglary	Criminal damage and arson	Drugs	Other crime	Other theft	Possession of weapons	Public order	Robbery	Shoplifting	Theft from the person	Vehicle crime	Violence and sexual offences	Total
Non Police Now	Before	71,180	4,039	27,861	30,027	6,208	3,153	21,958	1,546	9,255	5,322	21,048	2,394	31,918	54,849	290,758
	After	64,404	4,149	35,726	32,300	4,454	4,185	27,743	2,081	13,196	8,077	22,897	2,433	44,687	76,105	342,437
Police Now	Before	21,620	1,149	5,321	6,460	2,314	753	7,096	585	2,964	2,336	8,143	2,438	7,373	14,680	83,232
	After	17,134	1,112	6,525	6,771	1,789	761	7,909	687	4,126	3,190	7,344	2,400	10,269	19,600	89,617
Difference	Non Police Now	-10%	3%	28%	8%	-28%	33%	26%	35%	43%	52%	9%	2%	40%	39%	18%
	Police Now	-21%	-3%	23%	5%	-23%	1%	11%	17%	39%	37%	-10%	-2%	39%	34%	8%

¹ The analysis used police recorded crime data to compare neighbourhood level trends in recorded ASB and crime across five partner force areas where 2016-2018 National Graduate Leadership Programme participants were posted, versus trends in ASB and crime in communities without a Police Now participant. Trends were compared for participants' 22-month deployment period (Oct 2016 - July 2018) against the 22 months prior to the cohort joining the programme to control for any seasonal variation (Oct 2014 - July 2016). The analysis was independently peer reviewed, however the findings preclude any firm cause and effect statements noting the absence of a fully randomised design and limitations of police recorded crime data (e.g. changes in recording practices). Further details on the analysis, methodology, limitations and peer review process can be found in the [Police Now Impact and Insights Report 2019/2020](#).

Qualitative research highlights five key reasons why the results for the West Midland Police appear consistently positive, insight we are sharing with forces to improve programme implementation and maximise the potential impact of participants.

1. Posting high-performing participants to the most deprived communities

- A diverse and talented group of participants were posted to some of the very most deprived communities, with eight of the twelve participants posted to communities that fall within the 10% most deprived in the country². These areas are typically characterized by higher crime, ASB and lower public confidence in the police.

2. Comprehensive force induction and collaborative implementation, with a focus on community problem solving

- All participants received a comprehensive force induction prior to the Police Now Academy. This was organised by the Police Now SPOC in West Midlands Police in April, May and June 2016.
- The induction days focused on team building exercises and introducing participants to their neighbourhoods.
- Participants were asked to deliver short presentations on their assigned neighbourhoods to West Midland Police staff and Police Now peers. This instilled a sense of ownership for their communities at the very beginning of their Police Now journey. It also provided participants with a good understanding of the needs of their communities pre-academy, enabling them to contextualise Academy learning and apply this directly to the challenges facing the communities they would be posted to.
- West Midland Police took great care integrating participants into the force following the Police Now Academy. Police Now's mission and values were supported and encouraged by senior officers, staff, line managers and Syndicate Leads in West Midlands Police.

3. Strong alignment between Police Now's mission and force strategic priorities

- Participant understanding of their role and objectives as part of the Police Now programme aligned strongly with the WMP2020 Transformation project, a strategic approach focused on improving service delivery through evidence-based policing and crime prevention.
- Participants' impact presentations were aligned to the forces' strategic priorities, with participants focusing on key issues such as preventing ASB, safeguarding vulnerable people, tackling drug related offences and wider demand reduction.

"As the WMP2020 was an entire redevelopment of the operational model, we were all very aware of the project and the focus on centralisation and demand reduction."
West Midlands Police | Cohort 2 participant

² Based on data from the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Seven main types of deprivation are considered in the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 – income, employment, education, health, crime, access to housing and services, and living environment – and these are combined to form the overall measure of multiple deprivation. Cohort 2 West Midland Police participants were posted to some of the most deprived communities in the country, with an average IMD score of 43.2.

4. Participants capitalised on opportunities to share learning, taking personal responsibility for problem solving

- Participants were provided with several opportunities (prior to and during the two-year programme) to share, collaborate and innovate on community problem solving (e.g. Academy lessons and Police Now Impact Events).
- Case studies and feedback from participants, Leadership Development Officers and force contacts, suggest that participants themselves demonstrated personal responsibility for tackling local issues within their teams using evidence-based problem-solving methods. Indeed, to our knowledge, West Midlands Police Cohort 2 was home to the first Randomised Controlled Trial to be conducted by a Police Now participant.
- Feedback from participants and the Programme team suggests that Leadership Development Officer coaching for participants in West Midlands Police at this time were focused on making tangible impact, supporting participants to think about how to solve problems effectively, measure impact and consider legacy planning beyond the initial two-year programme.

5. A strong sense of cohort cohesion and pride underpinned participants' motivation for making a difference

- The force induction days, coupled with the support of a high-performing West Midlands Police Syndicate Lead and positive welcome from West Midlands Police colleagues, helped to create a strong sense of participant cohesion, solidarity, and friendship. Feedback suggests this lasted the entirety of the programme (and beyond).
- The West Midlands Police cohort had a strong personal attachment to the Midlands with either their home, university (or both) located in the Midlands area. Feedback suggests they were proud to be part of the first Police Now cohort in West Midlands, providing further motivation to make a positive difference.

Recommendations for action resulting from this research evaluation

- **Develop comprehensive force induction sessions and equip participants with local knowledge prior to Academy**
 - Enhance the pre-Summer Academy induction led by Police Now in collaboration with force, with a focus on problem-solving, strategic context and force processes
 - By equipping participants with local knowledge prior to the Police Now Academy, our research suggests participants are able to better contextualise academy learning and subsequently translate this learning into practice.
- **Post participants to the most deprived communities wherever possible**
 - Subject to workforce requirements, our learning suggests Police Now and forces should work together to identify the most deprived communities when negotiating contracts, posting participants here to increase potential for impact on crime and ASB for the most vulnerable in society.

- **Embed evidence-based policing approaches as a core focus**
 - Equip participants with the key diagnostic tools and access to 'what works' evidence to capitalise on their enthusiasm for making a difference using evidence-based problem-solving techniques.
 - Develop knowledge of evidence-based policing approaches among Leadership Development Officers and line managers to ensure coaching conversations are infused with evidence of 'what works', whilst helping participants define problems and effectively measure impact.

- **Ensure participants have access to local crime and deprivation data to inform problem solving**
 - All participants should be given access timely crime and deprivation data relating to their communities, with the support of Police Now and force, to inform and monitor the impact of their problem-solving activity.

Important methodological note

It is important to note that in the absence of a fully randomised design and without controlling for other factors, the impact results presented here preclude any firm 'cause and effect' statements. The results in this briefing (and indeed other Police Now literature) should be treated with caution due to limitations with the data and methodology. This includes, for example, that police recorded crime and ASB figures can be affected by changes in recording practices and they only cover the incidents that come to the attention of the police. Further, it is important to note that like all officers, Police Now participants are subject to abstraction and often work on tasks beyond the boundaries of their dedicated neighbourhood area.