

**ORIGINATOR:** Andrew Whinney

**DECISION NO.** 06/2021

**REASON FOR SUBMISSION:** For consideration of OPCC support to Norfolk joining the Open University Centre for Police Research and Learning (OUCPRL)

**SUBMITTED TO:** Police and Crime Commissioner

**SUBJECT:** Open University Centre for Police Research and Learning (OUCPRL)

**SUMMARY:**

1. The OUCPRL is a police / academic consortium run by the Open University and comprised of 21 police forces from around the country
2. The Centre exists to create and use knowledge through both research and education to improve policing for the public good.
3. The programme of work includes problem-solving research on topics as varied as cybercrime, citizens and police use of social media, witness identification, demand management, organizational and individual learning & leadership for public value.
4. The Centre offers a wide range of educational courses and qualifications. Open Educational Resources (OER) are free, informal short courses available on the internet (e.g. on a laptop, tablet or smartphone) which can provide police officers and staff with informal learning and/or with continuing professional development.
5. The Centre is concerned not only with creating new knowledge but also testing and exploring whether, when, how and why it works in practice. The Centre has a range of innovative activities designed to maximise learning between members of the police, between police organisations, and between the police and academics.
6. The membership fee is £7K per annum, which will be funded from the SBOS budget for the coming year.

**RECOMMENDATION:** To approve Norfolk Constabulary joining the OUCPRL to realise the benefits outlined in this decision paper.

**OUTCOME/APPROVAL BY:** PCC/~~CHIEF EXECUTIVE~~/~~CHIEF FINANCE~~  
OFFICER (Delete as appropriate)

*The recommendations as outlined above are approved.*



**Signature:**

**Date: 05/02/2021**

## **DETAIL OF THE SUBMISSION**

### **1. OBJECTIVE:**

1.1 This short paper seeks to outline the services available via the Open University Centre for Police Research and Learning and asks that consideration be given to support from the OPCC for Norfolk Constabulary to join.

### **2. BACKGROUND:**

2.1 The Centre exists to create and use knowledge through both research and education to improve policing for the public good. In this way, the Centre contributes to the work of police agencies as they adapt to a changing policing landscape, with its greater emphasis on evidence-based practice.

2.2 The programme of work includes:

- Problem-solving research on topics as varied as cybercrime, citizens and police use of social media, witness identification, demand management, organizational and individual learning, leadership for public value.
- A wide range of educational courses and qualifications from bite-sized informal learning which is free and available anywhere and anytime which supports continuous professional development, through to part-time PhD study – and lots in between. These can provide police officers and staff with formal qualifications and/or with continuing professional development. These include policing degrees and a Postgraduate Certificate in Evidence-based Practice

- 2.3 An innovative range of knowledge into practice activities on the front-line and across the police organisation, including evidence cafés, peer learning visits, workshops, conferences, and the secondment of police officers and staff into ongoing research projects.
- 2.4 The Centre is based at the Open University Campus in Milton Keynes, in the Faculty of Business and Law and is also supported by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, though it works with all faculties and areas of the University.
- 2.5 Some activities of the Centre are open to all police officers and staff, working in the spirit of The Open University. However, the Centre also works in a highly collaborative way with a partnership of 21 police forces, which help to shape and undertake the programme of activities.
- 2.6 Local governance for this partnership would be through the Evidence Based Policing (EBP) Board chaired by Mr Bailey on behalf of both Norfolk and Suffolk. The EBP Board would ensure benefits from being a member of the OUCPRL are maximised and in line with our current EBP maturity matrix. It would also ensure the joint Suffolk & Norfolk research agenda is considered by the partnership when new work is commissioned.

### **3. AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

- 3.1 The strategic partnership of 21-member police forces / agencies is at the heart of the Centre for Policing Research and Learning, with academics and police working together to develop the strategic plan for the centre in its programme of education, research and knowledge exchange.
- 3.2 Research is produced to high academic standards but collaboration ensures that the work also has direct practical value. The Centre is interested in using evidence not just creating it, so understanding what helps and hinders the use of evidence in the workplace is also important
- 3.3 Education is based on end-to-end learning from free informal small chunks of learning resources right through to PhDs, providing a learning system that is highly relevant to continuing professional development across all ranks and backgrounds.
- 3.4 The Centre is chaired by a senior police representative, elected biennially (currently Dr Steven Chase, Head of people at TVP). The membership group has representatives from all member forces and is the key decision-making body. A steering group guides the work and makes recommendations to the membership group
- 3.5 The centre operates on the basis of annual membership fees to create a joint fund. Each partner pays an annual subscription (£7K) which creates the research and education fund, as well as funding from the Open University and from bids into other funds. The fund enables each police partner to get more out of the fund than they put in and to be part of strategic decisions about research, education and CPD.

3.6 The 21 Current Centre partners are:

- Avon and Somerset
- Bedfordshire Police
- British Transport Police
- Cambridgeshire Constabulary
- Dorset Police
- Essex Police
- Gloucestershire Constabulary
- Greater Manchester Police
- Gwent Police
- Hampshire Constabulary
- Hertfordshire Police
- Humberside Police
- Lancashire Constabulary
- Merseyside Police
- Metropolitan Police Service
- National Crime Agency
- North Yorks Police
- South Yorks Police
- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Thames Valley Police
- West Midlands Police

### **Learning and Education Activities and Outputs**

3.7 The Centre offers a wide range of educational courses and qualifications. Open Educational Resources (OER) are free, informal short courses available on the internet (e.g. on a laptop, tablet or smartphone) which can provide police officers and staff with informal learning and/or with continuing professional development.

3.8 The Open University has a large repository of OERs, and those relevant to policing have been updated and extended. Forces view these resources as valuable in helping officers and staff with continuing professional development, and some forces have links from their intranet sites to these resources. There are approximately 150 free courses deemed relevant to policing.

3.9 There are also more formal learning opportunities such as:

- Studying for policing relevant degrees and management degrees or other related qualifications which can be studied alongside work commitments.
- A Postgraduate Certificate in Evidence Based Practice, designed in consultation with partner police forces, specifically for police officers and staff.
- Opportunities to officers and staff employed by one of the policing partner organisations to undertake part-time PhD's (part funded by the Centre)

### **Research**

3.10 The Centre research is based on a genuinely collaborative working relationship, bringing together the key knowledge, skills and experience of academics with those of police practitioners in a co-research approach. This collaboration is valuable in identifying and analysing problems in order to improve policing. Research projects can come from a range of sources; police policy makers and practitioners may identify real-life, operational or

organisational issues to research or academics may suggest topics which will benefit from practical research

- 3.11 Research is designed in collaboration between academics and policing practitioners and promotes innovation and improvement through the following four research topics and cross-cutting themes:



- 3.12 Research projects are jointly decided between the 21 police partner organisations and the academics affiliated to the Centre – who come from all faculties and institutes of The Open University, which reflects the wide range of disciplines drawn on to tackle key research questions. Police partners add valuable insights, expertise and context to design, carry out and interpret the research. This generates evidence-based practice.
- 3.13 Projects range from demand management, individual and organizational learning, leadership, and police wellbeing through to tackling gun crime, how police and citizens use social media to investigate crime, simulations to enhance training, and using complexity science to tackle policy and practice issues.

### Knowledge Exchange

- 3.14 The Centre is concerned not only with creating new knowledge but also testing and exploring whether, when, how and why it works in practice. So the Centre has a range of innovative activities designed to maximise learning between members of the police, between police organisations, and between the police and academics.
- 3.15 The Centre website (<https://www.open.ac.uk/centres/policing/>) is a source of updated information about education, including CPD, research, knowledge exchange, events and news. It includes a members' area for policing partners to share work which is confidential to the 21 police partners.
- 3.16 The Centre also runs evidence cafes, designed to exchange ideas or knowledge between the café lead and the participants. In most cases, an academic lead will deliver a short presentation on key research in a given area relevant to policing. This is followed by group consideration to the

practical application of the research. The format has proven to be popular because the practical and participative nature of the café is consistent with police approaches to learning and development

- 3.17 The Centre facilitates peer learning visits where representatives of police forces visit other police forces, or other public, private or third sector organisations with lessons to offer police and public services. Examples of this include a visit to Sheffield Teaching Hospital to look at their approach to patient flow from a capacity and demand management perspective, and a visit to Jaguar Land Rover to look at customer service processes.
- 3.18 The Centre also hosts a free annual two-day conference, and delivers research and practice-based seminars at the quarterly membership group meetings.

## **Membership**

- 3.19 Whilst some of the research and learning materials produced by the Centre are freely available there are significant additional benefits to forces in joining the partnership via the paid subscription of £7K per annum. These include:
- guiding and shaping the programme of work
  - close engagement in research
  - piloting new initiatives
  - access to early research findings before they reach the wider police service
  - preferential booking of workshops and peer learning visits
  - sharing learning across the network of police forces and agencies

More details regarding the Centre and membership can also be found in the [Annual Report 2019](#).

## **4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED:**

- 4.1 The OUCPRL has the widest and most diverse membership of any other academic consortiums available to Norfolk Constabulary to join, and provides access to academic experts across a range of disciplines.

## **5. STRATEGIC AIMS/OBJECTIVE SUPPORTED:**

- 5.1 The work of the centre covers a range of topics aligned to the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation, as well as directly supporting the strategic objective of developing evidence-based approaches in Norfolk.

## **6. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 6.1 This funding has been built into the SBOS budget for the first year for £7K per force- there are no further financial implications.

**7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS:**

7.1 No further implications or risks are identified

<b>ORIGINATOR CHECKLIST (MUST BE COMPLETED)</b>	<b>PLEASE STATE 'YES' OR 'NO'</b>
Has legal advice been sought on this submission?	<b>Yes</b>
Has the PCC's Chief Finance Officer been consulted?	<b>No</b>
Have equality, diversity and human rights implications been considered including equality analysis, as appropriate?	<b>Yes</b>
Have human resource implications been considered?	<b>No</b>
Is the recommendation consistent with the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan?	<b>Yes</b>
Has consultation been undertaken with people or agencies likely to be affected by the recommendation?	<b>Yes</b>
Has communications advice been sought on areas of likely media interest and how they might be managed?	<b>No</b>
In relation to the above, have all relevant issues been highlighted in the 'other implications and risks' section of the submission?	<b>Yes</b>
<p><b>Is this report a Confidential Decision?</b> <input data-bbox="1050 1585 1171 1655" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" data-bbox="1243 1585 1364 1655" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, please state reasons below having referred to the <a href="#">PCC Decision Making Policy</a></p>	

**APPROVAL TO SUBMIT TO THE DECISION-MAKER** (this approval is required only for submissions to the PCC).

**Chief Executive**

I am satisfied that relevant advice has been taken into account in the preparation of the report, that the recommendations have been reviewed and that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the PCC.



**Signature:**

**Date: 08/02/2021**

**Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)**

I certify that:

- a) there are no financial consequences as a result of this decision,  
OR
- b) the costs identified in this report can be met from existing revenue or capital budgets,  
OR
- c) the costs identified in this report can be financed from reserves  
AND
- d) the decision can be taken on the basis of my assurance that Financial Regulations have been complied with.

**Signature:**



**Date: 08/02/2021**

**PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION:** *Information contained within this submission is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and wherever possible will be made available on the OPCC website. Submissions should be labelled as 'Not Protectively Marked' unless any of the material is 'restricted' or 'confidential'. Where information contained within the submission is 'restricted' or 'confidential' it should be highlighted, along with the reason why.*