



# **EMPAC Roundtable: Understanding Demand**

**Research Insight report**

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**“Just what is the role of the police? Who gets to decide? If we can’t answer that how can we be our best?”**

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## Background

As part of the *East Midlands Police and Crime Research and Development Plan*, the important topic of 'understanding demand' was highlighted as a key workstream. Superintendent Mark Housley, of Lincolnshire Police, offered to host a roundtable on this topic to seek views and insights. Thanks is due to Mark for being such a welcoming host, Katie Strudwick of the University of Lincoln for facilitating, and for contextual opening statements from Detective Chief Superintendent Chris Davison (Lincolnshire Strategic Partnership) and Professor Ken Pease (University College, London), on partnership perspectives and relevant academic research, respectively.

The topic is of pressing concern to Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners within the EM region, and beyond, as a matter of capacity, capability, efficiency and agility for current and future needs.

The EMPAC roundtable took place shortly before a further NPCC vision development workshop on the same topic (led by Chief Constable Bill Skelly). The NPCC has encouraged debate within the service with partners to help shape the future in this topic. The intention was to offer insights and innovation from the roundtable to inform both regional and national thinking on policy and practice.

## Method

The roundtable informal, action-orientated approach has been used successfully in other settings (such as national security consortiums with academia in Australia) and builds upon the existing collaborative partnership of EMPAC across the region. Within the EMPAC region, the approach was first promoted by Professor Rob McCusker. The basic origins are as a form of democratised conversation – with no 'top table' hierarchy – but rather an open and eclectic problematisation to critically challenge and inform new ways of thinking about key topics. A number of academics from HEIs were involved, across several academic disciplines (i.e. Policing, Criminology, Behavioural Psychology, Engineering, Risk Management, Business) a mix of policing professionals from Demand Management, Control Room, Reactive, Neighbourhood, Analytical, Corporate Services, Vulnerability and those working in strategic partnerships with local government and Community Safety Partnerships.

Specifically, an adapted facilitated focus group<sup>1</sup> method was utilised using a semi-structured conversation topic focus with strategic and tactical questions to provoke discussion (see appendices). Based on the new interactive dynamic of two differing working cultures (of academic and policing) coming together, Grounded Theory<sup>2</sup> principle was used to collect emergent views 'bottom up', to encourage an inductive approach.

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<sup>1</sup> Bloor, M., Frankland, J., Thomas, M., & Robson, K. (2001) - for focus group methodology

<sup>2</sup> Glaser & Strauss (1967) – for grounded theory 'bottom up' insights from participants

The focus on Understanding Demand (see appendices) was framed by wording provided by Superintendent Mark Housley to stimulate the need for practitioners and academics to tackle the challenges and opportunities by working together. There was a clear link between the method of the roundtable seeking research-mindedness insight into understanding demand for the immediate, mid and long-term, to better offer tangible capacity and capability for policing.

## Objective

The RoundTable approach was a tangible way of working in partnership between policing professionals, industry and academic researchers to discover new ways and challenge conventional thinking. The opportunity for the roundtable, given the mix of delegates, was to seek diverse views, establish what is already known and encourage fresh thinking from across the involved partners, with a research 'known unknown' outlook at the centre. The interconnection of differing sorts of data, whether called intelligence, information or evidence are all forms of knowledge which a proactive research outlook can assist to expand.



The objective of the event was to:

Based on current policing challenges in how we understand, manage and predict policing demand, seek insights and innovation using a joint approach between policing professionals and academic researchers to improve policing capacity and capability and inform policy and practice.

The structure of the event's process was in five stages<sup>3</sup>:

### 1. Policing context

- a. How do we begin to understand the demand being placed on the police service?

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<sup>3</sup> At the roundtable, the contextual opening statements were delivered by Superintendent Mark Housley, Chief Superintendent Chris Davison and Professor Ken Pease.

b. What are the drivers and how are these linked to PESTELO?

c. Has the role of policing grown whilst other services have withdrawn service provision? How do we test and evidence change?

## **2. Partnership Context**

a. Demand across the public sector shares certain patterns, arguably affected by austerity

b. How are partnerships working holistically to achieve joined-up efficiency?

c. Is there both technical capability for partnership data and political will to optimise joint working?

## **3. Academic research context**

a. Has prevention investment reduced, meaning reactive demand has increased?

b. Do we understand the science of supply and demand?

c. Are there opportunities in removing process and empowering professional judgement more?

## **4. Facilitated discussion**

a. What can we identify as actions to do next?

b. Plenary with additional post-it note individual feed in

## **5. Respondent validation**

a. Delegate interaction post-event for data and thematic interpretation validation

## Policing context

Demand has increased and this is arguably linked expansion of the role and scope of policing. Demand on the police service is more than 'calls for service', and can be considered as public demand, protective demand and internal demand.



A number of questions were offered about the current use of PESTELO. In understanding demand historically are we able to use what we know to predict future demand, taking into account our understanding of PESTELO? Do we believe this knowledge will allow us to better plan to ensure we have the capacity and capability to deliver in the future? Are the police thinking about demand strategically or in a reactive, response and passive way? Is PESTELO being adopted to the depth it would require to get a proactive and influential understanding of shaping demand and being ahead of future crisis, rather than seeking to respond as best possible after they have happened? Is PESTELO analysis required of the Police Service function overall, rather than simply its activities?



NPCC (2017) guidance was shared with all delegates prior to the roundtable to inform on the detail of current national thinking. The NPCC has approached development on this topic using certain principles.

1. Examine demand beyond recorded crime
2. Explore sources of demand data and how this can be converted into management information
3. Consider the impact on demand of collaborative working
4. Consider demand in the context of 'whole system thinking'

5. Identify on-going professional good practice across the service and set up a central repository to avoid duplication of effort
6. Establish an Independent Advisory Group drawn from various sectors to act as a 'critical friend' throughout the project
7. Link demand to public value in terms of how the services expected and demanded add to public value
8. Utilise current academic research and wider initiatives to develop demand forecasting models
9. Explore the relationships between demand, productivity and resourcing
10. Identify and acknowledge the potential of digital capabilities such as 'Big Data'
11. Consider the leadership and management skills required of leaders, managers and supervisors to use demand information as part of their supervision and management practices

The NPCC suggest the Peelian Principles of policing are still valid but if demand on the Police Service is to be better managed there needs to be more emphasis on prevention and early intervention rather than reaction. This would include increased collaborative working to alleviate vulnerability. The NPCC Reference Group has collated through *Better Understanding Demand – Policing the Future*, core principles for adoption:

- Tools and techniques such as THRIVE and MoRiLE should be adopted across the service
- There should be more emphasis across the service and the public sector on collaborative working and on 'Whole System' thinking
- There should be a reconsideration of the role and scope of the services that the Police Service provides
- There should be more investment in research and use of Big Data solutions
- There should be a better understanding on the part of the Police Service of techniques such as Systems Thinking, Value Streaming, Lean Manufacturing and Process Mapping so as to improve the efficiency of internal processes in order to reduce internal demand and improve productivity
- There should be further work commissioned by the NPCC to consider investment in systems and partnerships to gather demand management information and to develop analytics to better predict future demand
- Police Service funding should be linked to the totality of demand on the service

The work of the Police Service cannot be viewed in isolation but is part of the wider system of Public, Private and Voluntary Sectors working together as a whole to deliver public safety

## Key discussion themes

Questions helped stimulate discussion where the first overarching theme was what do we actually understand by supply and demand?

### Carts before horses: demand driving supply?

<p>Do we know what we mean by supply? There's an economic model. There's so much talk about demand but little about supply.</p>	<p>We just can't say no. Everybody else is. We pick up others' pieces and get the blame.</p>	<p>The person dialling 999 is defining the strategic role of the police. We need to be more sophisticated than that.</p>	<p>A lot of this is about leadership. This needs to be more than survive the shift and the day. Chief officers acquiescing to government and not speaking up is harming society.</p>
<p>Policing is obsessed with structures. There should be more focus on agency – your power to do things that you know to be right.</p>	<p>Neighbourhood policing has become tokenistic – it's a long-term mistake and the cracks will show more and more. What ever happened to NIM and Intel lead policing. Lack of resource in community undermines police ability to recruit and mobilise communities to self help</p>	<p>Demand is changing, like social demographics in the older population. We need to think about the next ten and twenty years not just the next ten minutes.</p>	<p>We are so busy coping with demand now there is never a good time to think about planning for then. 'Then' never comes.</p>
<p>We answer the phone quicker but to do that we have to move to the next quicker too so we're answering phones quicker. Is that quality? Are we a call centre or a police service?</p>	<p>Moving staff around for this crisis then that crisis. This extra and more resources line is a lie – staff have to come from somewhere. Move staff from A to B leaves A with less. That includes stealing rest days. With moving staff and a focus on activity (answer the phone quickly) we create failure and shift demand around the organisation whilst becoming less efficient and effective.</p>	<p>Policing is now institutionally in crisis mode. We're just in denial about it. And the Govt probably don't want us to recognise it and say it. We measure output and activity and success, yet fail to evaluate the impact of our actions on the output. This style of working cascades to the front line and undermines the principles of problem solving.</p>	<p>The difficulties of thinking strategically when under pressure is a given but it is when under pressure that strategy is most important. We see diminishing resourcing of prevention that causes a spiral towards reaction. Ernest Rutherford, the first person to split the atom, once said to his research team "we have run out of money, we must now use our brains". Policing needs to think of subtle ways to increase supply as well as manage demand.</p>
<p>It's a perfect marriage – unthinking inspection with unthinking compliance.</p>	<p>Why does HMIC inspect on a single agency basis when everyone knows so many of the societal issues we're talking about are not just about policing? Take mental health, just for example. We are inspected and</p>	<p>There is a role that force multipliers can play – through the use of communication to send messages it can affect societal behaviour. There's maybe a tension ethically over</p>	<p>It's well documented policing skips through SARA with a quick look then action. Poor evaluation means we're good on action in a crisis, but less good at investing in problem solving as opposed to temporarily</p>

	assessed on process compliance and not the difference we make to the likes of our citizens.	deception in some instances but not all.	fixing symptoms. Police culture of action, output and task completion are well embedded. Understanding and focus of outcomes is less well practised and evaluation linked with research informed evidence is well documented but frequently not practised.
Not only have we got so much data it's entrenched in silo systems and it makes it really hard to event be able to pull together what we already know	We've taken out of neighbourhood policing to deal with reactive; it's like selling all the fire extinguishers to buy a fire engine.	Policing could peer over the fence more – see what the rest of the world is doing in different practices.	There's been an increase in the police role, doing stuff that other agencies are not.

## Busy yet lost: Policing does not know what or who it is

The key point here was that the discussion over managing incoming demand soon turned to a blurred notion of identity. The point was that no-one could pinpoint a common and meaningful definition of what the police was about, even though the Police were busy being the Police. One practitioner explained that when you stopped and thought about that lack of definition it was worrying. It was a narrative describing a profession 'learning on the job' without being sure what the job was.

<p>The police are not social care – somebody somewhere needs to say this. We weren't designed to be, we've slid into this. We've lost our way.</p>	<p>What is the role of the State? What is the role of society? Lots of things the police do now communities used to do for themselves. Nowadays people are connected yet isolated and that is reflected in communities.</p>	<p>In policing we have jumped into how we do things before getting a grip on what we should be doing.</p>	<p>You need to be really clear on your purpose – start with that – it's like a research question; getting the right question helps a lot. This debate may lead to revisiting a new approach to multi-disciplined teams. We need to understand what didn't work with Neighbourhood Management or Total Approach. Police are employing mental health, acute health within its borders already.</p>
<p>We should stop thinking about efficacy and what works and get more fundamental and strategic. That means asking hard questions over what is policing for. By putting that big question to one side we're just drowning in failure in the meantime.</p>	<p>We need to challenge the accepted paradigm. It's a reactive strategy for reactive work. We should be driven by people's journeys – not just by outcomes.</p>	<p>Where did prevention go? We've got less than 1% of our resources in prevention and loads of folk running around chasing their tails and we still can't keep up. Isn't it time to get ahead of the problem? When do we employ the significant learning from the Early Intervention Foundation and the proposed savings that could be realised if we worked differently?</p>	<p>We need to nudge the strategic leaders – it's no good having chiefs in post for just over 2 years and new brooms all the time. It's not good for the service for long term thinking and it doesn't encourage brave thinking.</p>
<p>The inspection regime is kneejerk – it chases policing on the latest crisis. HMICFRS is part of the problem it's politicised and not strategic.</p>	<p>Take mud on the road – whose responsibility is that? The council owns the road and can get it cleared. Why do the police go? Mainly because we're more responsive. We might ask the question why</p>	<p>If you simply police crises you keep moving resources from prevention and you are forever sticking plasters on new things. It's short term superficial thinking.</p>	<p>We need to talk about how much time we spend on failure demand. It's like we're failure orientated.</p>

	the community can't sort it?		
Policing is so risk averse it tries to be everything to everyone but basically in the middle of all that has no idea what it is.	We're process monsters, we follow so many processes we are blind to what's in front of us. What's worse that's an enforced blindness, personnel are not encouraged to use their professional judgement.	Policing needs liberating – cut out the PSD policing the police obsession and process forms. Let police use their professional judgement	We can't solve silos by working in silos
Policing is just trying to protect itself from criticism. It's a survival approach. Is that all we can aspire to?	The stuff we're saying here is about culture. We will need brave leaders to face up to this.	Stop things like DASH – be brave and let police look at what is front of them rather than ticking boxes, or at least understand the role of process and the impact it has on <u>outcomes</u> . Risk aversion might make someone feel better but it's not good for public outcomes. There's no proven link to show DASH process reduces risk. The process itself is measured but the outcome isn't	Policing lives in the here and now but we need to have a vision to take us forward, we're too busy making ends meet
It is grotesque how police time is being stolen to do a whole number of things they should not be doing. If that was stopped you'd have more resource to do the things you should be doing better.	Policing strategic leads get bogged down in weeds, asking the wrong question, we need strategy from them. Not 'why has there been a burglary there', but 'why do we have burglaries'. We perpetuate the checking and lack of trust culture, assuming the more senior in rank the more skilled the individual.	If we just keep fixing problems, that are really symptoms, we will never ever catch up.	We are so busy being busy we haven't to time to ask why are so busy.

## Partnership, collaboration and remits: silo solutions for joined-up problems?

Here, there was a frustration over a whole myriad of jigsaw pieces with little truly supported and operationalised joint working. Joint working was perceived to be a luxury that could not be afforded universally, whilst, paradoxically there was common agreement that individual approaches were a costly way of failing. There was a sense that glossy rhetoric needed replacing with a new more genuine commitment, like a paradigm shift, to work together for joint ownership of joint problems.

<p>The ambulance service says 'no medical emergency there' – so we're not attending. Policing goes to everything, including what everyone else won't.</p>	<p>There's no data about the overall journey – person or victim centre – it's all bits of data from each agency.</p>	<p>The demand for service is really a symptom of failure in prevention.</p>	<p>There is no joined-up working. There is rhetoric but it's not put into action. Strategic leaders should recognise their role in challenging the barriers for change. Police has focussed on regional collaboration and 'blue' light services (Fire &amp; Rescue) – this is not where the synergies are to be found and is a 'red herring' set by the Home Office and Politicians.</p>
<p>It's not just policing who have had a rise in demand – it's all public services, some have had bigger cuts to policing. Youth service, social care, adult safeguarding.</p>	<p>There's politics in all this – often local priorities are set on politics. We have resources policing areas that don't really need it. Why?</p>	<p>The hidden demand is exposed when agencies stop doing what they have in the past, maybe that's about austerity, and suddenly there's this huge job to be done – but by who? Courts close, A&amp;E Close, all to improve their efficiency, what about the wider impact?</p>	<p>We need joint understanding across agencies, joint priorities, joint resourcing to joint issues and stop this in fighting. We need more mature pan agency forums to enable joint working.</p>
<p>The more we do it together the more we do it right first time. The days of single agency working are over.</p>	<p>Where we've got a common problem maybe we can work together more on the innovation (not sure police forces work together internally, frequently NOT a systems approach)</p>	<p>Some of this is really an open problem, it makes no sense to try and keep it private. We can talk about partnerships but we need partners actually sat here. It is my experience that Police are no better than partners at tackling this problem. Police hardly ever consult and frequently fail to attend partner meetings.</p>	<p>Policing has been infected by efficiency (but are we really efficient, do we reduce crime? Do we protect people?) so we count everything. Where is the drive to focus on outcomes?</p>
<p>Academics aren't restricted by police thinking</p>	<p>We are talking about process but what about our collective agency? Why do we talk as if we are powerless to change things?</p>	<p>We need more common language across services – this needs to move beyond a broken mirror with individual bits. We've got blame, defensiveness and competitiveness that is not working for the people.</p>	<p>We have had so many opportunities missed not having academics sat around the table</p>

<p>We are not making enough of the partnership data we've got to inform targeted intervention – do you even know what partnership data there is?</p>	<p>If we just operate Academia could operate a global level 'watching brief' on thematic areas for policing</p>	<p>We've got to get common definitions of what we're trying to achieve across agencies and sectors. We're entrenched in silos and failing alone, together.</p>	<p>We've still got tribalism and protectionism across some agencies not willing to share data to inform the big picture. They're playing it safe whilst society is suffering.</p>
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## Actions

Like other roundtables, this event on understanding demand proved to be a start of something rather than a 'fix'. As with all research process where you think you are starting at is often not where inquiry takes you. In this instance, the question over demand moved to a question over identity. There was also quite an assertive voice to demand joint problems needed joint working: the silos of responsibility and remit did nothing for long term legitimacy or accountability for public outcomes.

There was also a voice over speaking up to reclaim agency rather than playing the role of passive, compliant victim to process. Critical thinking stimulated questions that should be received not as simply negative condemnations, but more enthusiastic calls for change. The roundtable was hugely positive in its energy, whilst addressing a topic where there was a desire to change the conversation of failure and crisis to proactive joined-up prevention and better outcomes.

Collaboration	Partnerships can mean one does the work and the others watch. We need collaboration.	Collaborations mean joint ownership of joint problems. That means joint leadership. And it means bring money, time or resource or go home.	We need to meet again in a more collaborative way – we can talk about social care and EMAS but they need to be here. We need to act collaboratively, not just talk.
Leadership and voice	This was an open discussion about a common problem. Leadership was demonstrated from every role and hierarchical structures need to de-invent themselves to allow everyone to help.	The collective discussion was a more powerful method of thinking than a single executive approach. The forum should be extended for more common use.	Single agencies could adopt but more to the point a joint roundtable across hierarchical structures was needed. Leadership should not be about the leader, it should be about the best outcomes.
Holistic data for holistic issues	There was a lot of data, although there was some suggestion of a reluctance to share by some individual agencies. There was however a dearth of common language, joint ownership and joint understanding of common problems.	The focus should be on the person's journey and outcomes, not the agency role. The person centered approach should drive what the agencies – jointly - should do, rather than the person needing to fit in with the silos.	Person journeys and outcomes focus should become the central approach to inform preventative joint work. If this thinking is correct, reactive demand will fall.

<p>Inspection and compliance</p>	<p>Assuming inspection was about ensuring legitimacy, there should be a conversation about doing the right thing rather than process compliance and crisis management. True legitimacy is doing what is best for the public.</p>	<p>Inspection processes on a single agency basis are incentivising single agency working when it is argued that joint approaches are needed. Inspection agencies – jointly – need to re-think what their role is.</p>	<p>Inspection that is focussed on outcomes that are area based rather than agency focussed are recommended. Open agency could allow more innovation and effectiveness than inspection if more personnel could help influence the work rather than the political presumption that inspection bodies know best.</p>
<p>Quick wins</p>	<p>Remove process wherever possible in favour of professional judgement. Focus more on outcomes than process compliance.</p>	<p>Process was often a position of best corporate defence rather than tailored to what is best in a particular situation.</p>	<p>Processes were also disempowering professionals to make common sense decisions, which could also mean saying no at appropriate times.</p>

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