



Force Management Statements: understanding demand




NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY

Workshop Report
February 2020





Force Management Statements (FMS): understanding demand

This research and innovation workstream's purpose is to better understand and reduce demand, based on Force Management Statement (FMS) requirements. The workstream is led, on behalf of the East Midlands region, by Superintendent Mark Housley (Lincolnshire Police) and Dr Rowena Hill (Nottingham Trent University). In turn, all EMPAC workstreams report back to, and are driven by, the strategic leads: PCC Hardyal Dhindsa and DCC Rachel Swann, on behalf of the region.

FMS is a form of self-assessment that informs the inspection process. It focuses on likely demand over the next four years – covering how the organisation is structured to meet demand; how efficiently it will do it and how much it will all cost.

This means police forces need to be able to collate and use data on current demand, to draw informed conclusions in predicting future demand, aligned to the vision set in the local Police and Crime Plan. One of the purposes of FMS is to help identify the greatest risks to the public, and the external yearly inspection process is carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Police and Fire Services (HMICFRS).

A thematic workshop on Place Based Approaches

Previous EMPAC events have focused upon trying to better understand demand, to identify its causes, in order to inform future preparedness and prevention opportunities. At the event reported upon here, on 28th February 2020, hosted at Nottingham Trent University (NTU), the targeted focus was to explore the benefits of place-based approaches to better understand and reduce demand. Representatives attended from Derbyshire Constabulary, Leicestershire Police, Lincolnshire Police, Nottinghamshire Police, Northamptonshire Police as well as other forces from beyond the region.

The nature of a safe space for open discussion often creates critical reflection, and although several points reported were made about improvement needs, the intention throughout is to seek optimised service delivery, not simply critique.

A summary of the key points emerging from previous EMPAC FMS Demand research events are included in this report's Appendix.

Method

After a contextual introduction by Superintendent Mark Housley and Dr Rowena Hill, a series of presentations were offered to stimulate discussion over implementation of place-based approaches to better understand and reduce demand. The three presentations were: -

- People Zones: Victoria Charlton, Leicestershire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Professor Darren Smith, Loughborough University

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- Cities as a complex system; crime as a complex process: Professor Mark Lemon, De Montfort University
 - Ambidexterity: Professor Peter Kawalek, Loughborough University

The ensuing discussion was facilitated by Dr Rowena Hill, NTU.

Contextual introduction

Superintendent Housley made the points that a wider conversation was needed as understanding, meeting and reducing public demand was not just about policing. Within that, there was an ongoing need to understand the difference demand and need; and that entailed understanding socio demographic changes as well as capacity and capability.

Dr Hill gave a perspective from her national work on the HMICFRS academic advisory group and liaison with the Minister for Policing, including how well-being and 'moral injury' is getting more serious attention given the stresses demand is having on personnel. There was also an increased interest in systems approaches and what that might look like in a geographic region. A key aspect too involved community agency; hence the thematic exploration of the current event.

People Zones

People Zones (PZ) is a community led approach, supported by multi-agency teams, to address behaviours that harm local communities and achieve sustainable change. The PZ model was developed to take forward the learning from the Braunstone Blues Project (BB) which provided a multi-agency service to the community of Braunstone, Leicester. Unlike BB, PZ was designed to be cost neutral. The key elements of BB were that it was geographically defined, community led / engaged and multi-agency driven.

The design of PZ drew on the experience of similar projects which were designed to promote integrated working across agencies focussed on changing behaviour, early intervention and building resilience. The model was tested across three areas:

- * New Parks
- * Bell Foundry Estate in Loughborough
- * Coalville

Since the model was developed the Violence Reduction Units have also been introduced with their emphasis on the Public Health Model – PZs did not explicitly adopt the Public Health Model, albeit the approach was very similar.

The PZ model was reviewed after 6-9 months, and re-designed in line with feedback via:-

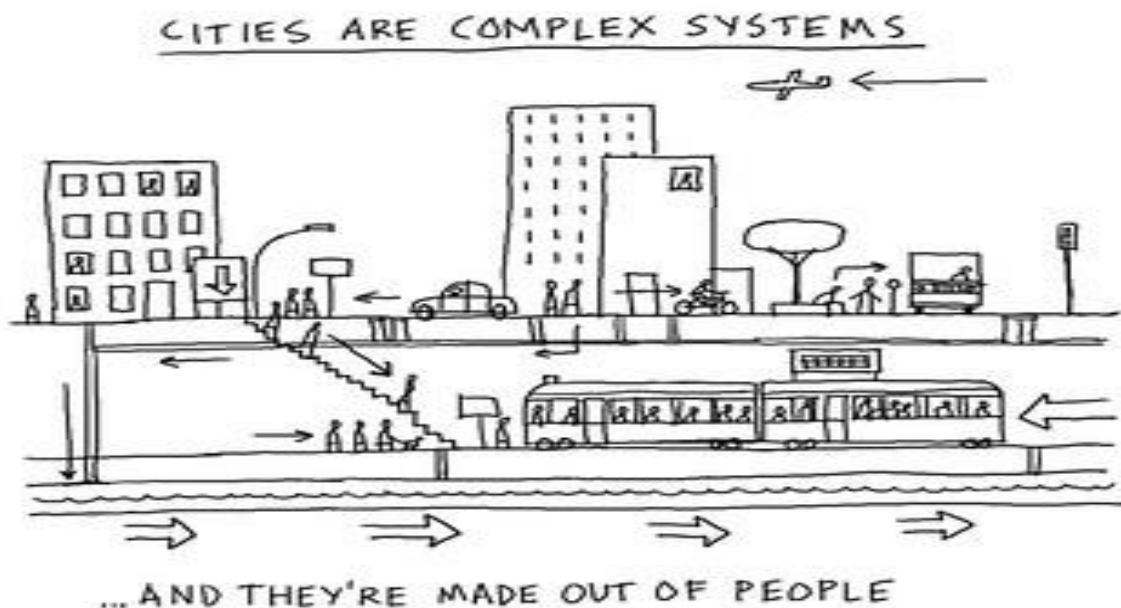
- * Public health models
- * Learning from violence reduction
- * Identified potential funding options
- * Identified ways of developing community leadership
- * Developing an area wide Prevention Board
- * Linking with Public Health Directors

A 20-question doorstep public perception survey, to inform PZ evaluation a year after the project's start, will commence in March 2020. Updates will be published on the EMPAC web.

Cities as a complex system; crime as a complex process

The essential point made here was that we live in an increasingly complex, inter-connected and 'messy' world. As such, more transdisciplinary was required, in the shape of integrated and cross-cutting skills.

Professor lemon was keen to explore and evaluate transdisciplinary approaches to initiating more sustainable urban living, including crime management, in community settings. Key to this was valuing the experience of practitioners, developing skills sets to work across silos and engaging more systems thinking approaches.



Empowering transdisciplinary skills means operating beyond the disciplinary silos; echoing Hochlaf, Quilter-Pinner and Kibassi's *Ending the blame game: the case for a new approach to public health and prevention* (2019). The wider literature has identified correlations between silo working and negative, internally competitive, public service processes on provision outcomes.

There was a need to develop in 3 key domains:

Working between: the ability of any single discipline to investigate complex phenomena invariably requires the effective co-ordination between disciplines (inter-disciplinary) - this is also reflected in the business process;

Engagement: There is a need to improve the engagement of stakeholders (problem owners) with the scientific process and for ensuring that two-way learning takes place as a result of that engagement;

Working across: The ability to understand complex phenomena and to work effectively between disciplines, with practitioners and stakeholders requires the development and acquisition of a set of generic skills for working across them (transdisciplinary – cross cutting skills).

Enhanced transdisciplinarity would enable more holistic systems thinking; more reflectiveness and reflexivity; better communication and better predictive modelling. Including the community would enable more feasibility exploration of the use of social capital. Social network analysis (SNA) could examine structure and resilience of networks and movement of information, for example, to inform social return on investment (SROI). If there were to be more experimentation of such approach in the region, developmental evaluation (DE) would offer an on-going systematic capture and reflexive application of learning acquired, and develop reflexive and reflective capability. Evaluating investment of time and resource, mapped against community resilience, could employ Local Multiplier 3 (LM3) as an understandable way of measuring local impact.

In short, there was a theoretical framework, informed by evidence, and with rigorous evaluation approaches, that could be used to explore operational applications in the region for long term improvement, if there was political will.

Ambidexterity: crisis and creativity

Professor Kawalek cited research by Tushman & O'Reilly (1996) that shows it is difficult, if not impossible, for an organisation to pursue both incremental and discontinuous innovation at the same time. The reference to ambidexterity was to illustrate the ability to do two things together – but in organisational terms the global evidence shows there is very little innovating whilst also doing the day-job at the same time, because of multiple contradictory structures, processes, and cultures.

In also referring to an application in industry (*Apple Inc.*), Professor Kawalek pointed out that there were almost two Apples: one that delivered and one that innovated; based – purposefully - on different sites. In terms of demand, particularly in managing risk, there was an opportunity to use police-academic collaboration as a complementary 'space' to help explore research and innovation, on issues such as Fat Tails. Fat Tails can be illustrated by 1000 missing children, where 999 are found and returned safely, but one is not. The cost to policing and society for that one is greater than the others combined: but how do you know which is the one before it is too late?

Professor Kawalek gave practical examples of where multi-agency working had been effective in reducing crime in Salford. The initiative here, as innovation, had to initially work as a separate arm – in this case staffed by two volunteers in a shed on a car park! Culturally, staff engaged on this cross-cutting agenda, were encouraged to take local ownership and focus on local outcomes, not department structures.

The opportunities for reflectivity and reflexivity could be explored via an East Midlands social laboratory, supported by the police-academic collaboration to explore more systems thinking and more place-based applications, such as *People Zones*, and smarter cities. But it was unlikely that much real innovation could be managed within the epicentre of crisis driven reactive work.

Emergent themes

From facilitated discussion, a number of themes emerged.

The first here concerns the volume of data that causes a form of ‘blizzard’ that is hard to penetrate and make much sense of. This echoes Silver’s (2012) research about the challenge of finding the ‘signal amongst the noise’, when metaphorically an organisation can be deafened by a cacophony, amongst which it is difficult to hear the key sounds – the ones that really need to listening most.

The better the data for analysis the better the possible triage, and the more chance of earlier, proactive intervention. But there was a theme here of limited analytical capacity and jigsaw data.

Where there was analysis, it was an ongoing challenge to be able to integrate numerous data sets for smarter and more agile insight.

Data: snow blindness
The sheer volume of data that is received and collated – likely to increase with 5G – creates a form of snow blindness, where you can’t see the snow for the blizzard.
We amass lots of data but don’t know what to do with it. It’s like being a hoarder. Unless we are able to understand the data, understand the demand, we remain reactive, chasing our tail, and can’t get proactive. It’s like a Groundhog Day, maintenance churn. We just don’t understand demand well enough to stop it happening in the first place.
We don’t have much capacity to understand the data. The scale of the problem is so vast – but there’s a lack of investment in some places. We need more analysts. Lack of analytical capacity means we can’t help smarter working. There’s more investment in operations than intelligence. It means as well we can’t do the evaluations needed.
I think we’re missing the point at times when we focus on just needing more algorithms for the data. The comparable challenge is about the people side not just the tech, it’s about the behaviour of personnel. Think about what capacity and prioritisation skills we have in our wider workforce. How do we get better people problem solving skills – we don’t need robots we need thinking professionals.
In data recording we are snow blind – we have to record everything. We can’t see the blizzard for the snow – we’re just buried in recording.
We need to re-think how we use analysis. We’ve got a reduced number of analysts deployed to fire fight. We need to develop them more, support asking the right questions, and building analytical capacity. The data isn’t often strong and this inhibits potential analysis.
Because there isn’t enough analysis, there are too many intuitive decisions being taken, and a culture of pretend it works.
Where we’ve invested, we’ve got a better technological capability to interpret data, but combining data sets for holistic insight is still a challenge.
Business intelligence technology is important. This allows us to trawl and present the base data to allow a better informed analysed product. Many analysts are spending more time mining data than analysing. It means we’re struggling to cope with the ‘what’ and the really important issue of ‘why’ in the data seldom gets looked at.

Although the entry topic was framed as how to understand and reduce demand, partly because of discussion over what we mean by demand, there was a further emergent theme: that of the governance behind metrics. The broad question was ‘who owns policing’?

There was an increased local funding model but as strong as ever national control of the service. Whilst there were acknowledged pros and cons to a national context, not least because of the increased globalisation of law enforcement, there was also a tension between local management and accountability structures with HMICFRS intervention.

There was mention of forces being internally focused, servicing the inspection framework, as a distraction from being able to meet community need in the best way locally. In short, delegates raised the scrutiny role of the publicly elected PCC and questioned just what the role of HMICFRS was, particularly when through metrics, they were by default managing outputs rather than inspecting outcomes.

Governance as enabling, counting, representing, competing?
There is a lot of police architecture around inspections, working for the inspectorate, tail wagging dog. Police should be picking right thing to do, then inspectorate inspect it, not tell what to do in first place. Inspectorate are trying to manage rather than inspect.
The public maybe are more sophisticated and are not just focused on quantitative measures. The public – local communicate can love you based on what you did, the measures on quants are a clumsy way of doing things.
Maybe forces are faced towards HMICFRS, and internally focused. This means it's often not community focussed enough. Maybe we should rebalance in favour of communities with less emphasis on government inspection? More radically, should the community inspect its own force not HMIC? Maybe through the PCC?
Home Office vs inspectorate – who is going to break the impasse and change the conversation? Management and holding of risk to manage appetite for risk; politicians don't seem to want to have that conversation. Need an adult /mature conversation with Home Office and inspectorates, to use a systems / societal approach. Nobody seems to know how to do that. It would be a huge game changer, a complete re-negotiation with services and the public.
Police are a form of political pawn. There are different forms of pressure – there's a lot of time recording and presenting effect rather than the actual job. Is the balance right? Does all the scrutiny help is it is just micro-managing and making internal demand worse?
When we talk about demand one big difference between now and the 1990s is that policing is much more politicised now. Then again, we've got PCCs elected, but presumably not just as local revenue collectors, but to deliver that local consultation, priority setting and scrutiny. Maybe that's a positive political involvement, if central government also sees it that way?"
We're so scared of the inspection regime things are being done just to satisfy them.
What are the four-year PCC elections about if not to get a local public mandate on policing? Aren't those same PCCs then charged with overseeing the implementation of the operational delivery the Chief Constable leads? So what's the point of the HMICFRS? Surely there a balance in sharing best practice to enable learning, but it sounds like HMICFRS are trying to manage forces,

not inspect them. What do PCCs think about that? Who has the last word, HMICFRS or PCCs? Let's not forget there has been an increased precept funding; so is that about local people paying and supposedly having a say then central Government deciding what's best? Is that what devolution is supposed to be?
Are community the governance? Community assets – so should this be community led as a solution – lots of problems but huge potential.
The governance needs to be here with us, it's no point us just reflecting without the reflexivity – reflexivity is the ability to implement that reflection, learn from it and change.
We need governance to take a more strategic view, to work towards what good looks like, in this case when we are doing more proactive than reactive service. That flipped model of more proactive work needs driving from top leaders to break the reaction focus.
Are the people leading listening to the front-line about the challenges of delivering and meeting the metrics? Sometimes the front line may be better placed to see ways of being efficient. Too often front-line views are discounted as 'moans' when they're often trying to report barriers to efficiency.

Performance measures and metrics had in places a competitive and dysfunctional impact on operations. There was a tension of whistleblowing ethics within this conversation, where the ethics of being aware and the tension of speaking up constrained the honesty and openness of being able to make progress within organisations.

Research ethics-wise, the key points are recounted here anonymously, and offer a shocking reality of the impact of performance and budgetary positions. The tension of managers stuck in the middle of managing according to directive whilst believing in doing the right thing was palpable. The point should trigger much wider consideration as costing management meant the ultimate price was being paid by individual members of the public.

Examples were cited of the perverse effects of metrics - which may as well be seen as strict directives on what and how to do things; flipping inspection mode into management mode. Local public service managers did not want to 'play games' over performance, but were overpowered by a 'hidden hand' in the metrics that seemed to originate at the national level. Although that hidden hand was pervasive, many suggested they did not see the point of it, and felt it was impinging significantly on professional judgement.

The perversity of targets upon operations
Police are like puppets, with lots of effort spent on things out of their control – there's a sense of internal demand where police are powerless other than to comply.
Efficiency is not good enough – policing is too important – the dangers are too high – we don't go to that one job and some is dead – the review after may spots the gap. Policing is too special. There's a huge fat tail risk for policing if things aren't don't properly. This is not true in many agencies, not in private sector.

<p>I'm not so sure it should be about efficiency - it should be about impact. We need the right inputs, do the right activity, measure our output, that achieves the outcome we seek, but the key measure should be impact of all the integral parts.</p>
<p>Don't we often end up just doing measurable things, rather than things that would really make a difference?</p>
<p>Some of our places are pretty much crime free – we don't consider them because it's part of the reactive push, but surely we could learn from their success?</p>
<p>There's such an obsession with performance it means everything has to be successful. We never 'make mistakes' so we never learn. We can't be honest with ourselves.</p>
<p>I don't think performance statistics are that important for the public, they are motivated by how good the relationship is, that's when things may have gone wrong too. With a good working relationship, you can keep going.</p>
<p>Public want to be listened, to, valued, understood. They don't want to become another statistic, they're not interested in statistics, each case is about a real person. They care about how police and others interact with them; they're not part of a factory assembly line, they don't want to be made more efficient. They get treated as part of the production line rather than a customer.</p>
<p>There's a tension in performance and inspection over 'what good looks like' – what we're all chasing. There's a strong government push that it all boils down to numbers. The focus on RCT quantitative evidence is part of that. It's like intuitive evidence is not valued. I don't think practitioners of the public are convinced by just numbers – they judge things by their own experiences.</p>
<p>Although there is this push on efficiency over demand, the whole criminal justice punitive approach doesn't actually work, lock up, release, repeat. So getting more efficient at something that doesn't work – is that success?</p>
<p>The different targets affect, and infect, other targets. We've got tribalism – rather than aligned targets. We need to pressurise to get these assorted targets aligned.</p>
<p>There are initiatives that have saved millions of hours of officer time by stopping doing things – but that defines success as less police time spent.</p>
<p>Perverse targets – ambulances waiting at hospitals before check in to meet the target internally – crazy! Knock on is police can't get an ambulance end up transporting patients, then get stuck in same que.</p>
<p>In a local health authority, it's well known - locally- that because of targets around A & E time targets, ambulances are stacked up in 'holding spaces' to make the admittance performance figures work. The effect of this is we end up unable to get ambulances and end up using policing cars as ambulances, and we end up in the same que. This is all done in the name of improved public service. It's a lie – we see the negative impact on actual service delivery. So what's that game about and for whose benefit. It's like the metrics are in charge?</p>
<p>We have a person who rings in daily to report themselves as murdered. He's alive. Our stance, common sense was that's clearly ridiculous, and we need support referrals in to try and help with mental health issues. But. According to national recording we have to record a crime. Not a murder, as no-one is dead, but because it fits the notion of a possible assault, it's recorded as such. That's how the rules work. Officers and the public would think this ridiculous, but that's the way it is.</p>

MH using police as back door way to use S 136 as easier than MH getting their powers exercised. How do we get agencies to work together in the best interests of the public?
Where are forces in getting ahead of demand curve? We are probably that busy trying to protect our own organisation's reputation we're less open to learning from honesty about failure and success from others and working between forces; it's a more like divide and conquer rather than collaborate and share.
There's a quantitative focus around demand. This puts the emphasis on numbers, quantity and may be not quality. By taking a bit more time, you can achieve a lot more by doing 3 or 4 things fast and just count the numbers. It can be a false economy to follow just the numbers. It's a qualitative thing too, and for the police to keep public support we need to understand that.
We don't have time to think about understanding demand because we're filling forms in for FMS and reacting.

The extent and severity of silos was a strong theme. Delegates reported it as a form of institutionalised tribalism.

There were significant failures in much multi-agency working because of silos, and even dysfunctional competitiveness.

There were silos in function and in data, often linked to the labels attributed to workstreams, that artificially divided holistic situations into specialist focus: pulling back to holistic working then was almost impossible.

Public service enemy No.1 – the silo
Austerity impact – incentive to have multiagency and that's been lost so silos have got worse, mapping that interagency would be difficult. Public health maybe not a good player in multiagency working – OPCC role. Connectivity has come apart between agencies because of austerity. Public serve of last resort. Police having to be security for other agencies – their shrinkage causes us (police) demand.
We're caught up at the local level by the knock-on effect of silos in central Government. There you've got competing departments competing for the same money. Everyone is so busy fighting each other no-one is working together.
The different metrics, ways of measuring success, they set the system up to perform to the metric. Can we push back up at the powers that be that the metrics are aligned and causing silo friction – this larger system is constraining the ground effort.
HMICFRS break things up into tribal inspections and thinking; they label this is police, this is fire and don't seem able to think holistically, and work alongside other bodies such as CQC for joint approaches. This instils silos, top down.
Things are not working across agencies for data exchange – silo issue again.

Is alignment actually possible? Are we underestimating how difficult is to not work in a silo culture?
County lines isn't looked at holistically as it's fixed on a reactive cycle. The missing data that we don't bother to look for – to get the wider context - is inhibiting getting ahead longer term. Looking at things in bits – it's a form of silo thinking approach.
Silos exist in forces – a lack of understanding of other departments has a knock on. This affects analysis for example where the investigation chain might stop intelligence capture. The missing key information misses the opportunity to cross correlate data – as people are often doing the minimum – it means can't do quality and find a richer picture. We miss opportunity to analyse as we have gaps in our own data. The drug zombie is a good example in city centres – we have tried to analyse if folk were homeless, but the missing data means we can't profile and we have just bits of a jigsaw and there's no clarity over whose job it is to collect such missing data.
Partnership working is full of silos. There are instances of Social Care infringing the law, in using unregistered accommodation. Such practices should be referred to Ofsted but a partner agency might not want to do that. We think police partnership is about working together and we're the enforcement arm but it's not working well between us. It's too often dysfunctional.
Police being involved in MH has arguably criminalised lots of people who maybe shouldn't have been – we shouldn't have been there in first place. So maybe it's the best thing is to say no. We've had cases when we've said no, and so have MH. In one case the person died and police exonerated. But is that who blinks first game professional?
What we should be doing is identifying demand – some of the demand is for the police and some of it isn't. But we shouldn't be trying to just turn the tap off. We will come across stuff maybe we shouldn't be dealing with – and that needs to be shared with partners, to put more joint effort into prevention to reduce harm. We're talking here about people's lives.
We seem to have the moral need in conflict with management efficiency. I joined up to protect people not to play ping pong with partner agencies with a person at risk in the middle.
We have a love hate relationship with silos; where we are trying to make sense of complex need, we create more complex and specialist workstreams that end up being silos. It's like we over manage things at times.
Silos cause the opposite to the transdisciplinarity approach you've talked about – it causes ping pong. It's a silo fuelled with blame; that's not my job that's your job.
It's like silos define what is not to be done rather than what can be done, because it puts the blinkers on, emphasises specific roles, and has single strand accountability.
It's not mine / it's yours. Job of police is to protect people. Tension of what is role of police etc. What about joint responsibility? We can't seem to work together.
Mapping our efforts to understand, reduce demand and react, with partners might help us identify the gaps and duplications that surely we can't afford?

Next Steps

This workstream is being led by Superintendent Mark Housley and Dr Rowena Hill, hosted at NTU. A series of events have taken place at Lincolnshire Police HQ and NTU and some offers for the next steps are listed below:-

- Cross mapping the various efforts of the region's forces in FMS to draw out and share best practice trends.
- Explore the potential of further expanded trialling of place-based approaches, such as *People Zones*, informed by the ongoing evaluation by Loughborough University.
- Continue to attract the best force representatives to be able to proactively understand demand and not just review tactical response.
- Explore the work at Northamptonshire Police, who have been exploring triangulating demand to develop pictures of demand on policing teams, to establish required FTE resource needs.
- Offer a development / CPD workshop and network support for analysts (police and related Section 17 CDA workers), for example at NTU.
- Explore wider capacity and capability in joint working to understand demand with key partners. Explore what joint priorities could be emphasised to bring metrics together rather than some being competitive.
- Support a listening exercise of the front-line about the barriers in the way of delivering policing to understand internal and external demand pressures.
- Explore analysis of low / no crime areas to inform and better explain high crime areas.
- Acknowledging the 'ambidexterity' problem (Kawalek, 2020) concerning operational demands, use the 'space' of the academic collaboration more for the region's capacity and capability to explore and enable innovation.
- Explore bringing HMICFRS representatives into the regional conversation to address the implications of metrics and their effects on force operational practice.

Appendices

Summary of key findings from previous EMPAC FMS Demand Research events

Police departments often operate in isolation, which hinders communication and creates more internal demand and unhelpful complexity.	Interventions are claimed as success often with little empirical evaluation evidence.
As various public services have contracted through austerity, police have often expanded to fill the gap. This has damaged quality and overstretched the police.	Demand is measured based on what demand comes into police rather than understanding and responding to community need.
Systems thinking approaches would offer a better way of managing complex demand.	Changing demographics and social trends are not factored into analysis enough proactively.
Demand levels can take a toll on police personnel well-being.	Social Science methods are needed more to inform evaluation of what is effective and why; clarifying correlation and causation factors
Data modelling of risk can be useful in reducing threats to the community, and should be more mainstreamed.	Operational and strategic plans should dovetail and integrate more; there were often too many competing plans.
Increased use of technology was important but needed to be integrated otherwise it created more complexity and slowed interpretation down.	Different agencies had different perspectives on demand, risk and vulnerability which got in the way of working together. More joint working towards joint outcomes was needed.
Resourcing to months and seasons rather than 24 blocks might be more efficient in meeting demand.	We struggle to focus on understanding demand, often reverting to improving response.
The focus on response capability means there is little done to explore and understand drivers for demand. Measures are usually over response, not over understanding demand.	Prevention does not get the investment it needs, for either analysis, staffing, or in multi-agency working. This means the future will remain triaging response.
There is very little space for reflection or reflexivity. Major projects and FMS administration bogs down personnel for months at a time, meaning there is very little agility as the focus is on administrative compliance.	Policing is good at response outputs, in managing what it's got. But without breaking beyond the reactive cycle, demand response will get more rationed and outcomes will deteriorate.