Devoting Time to Persuasion: Communication and Challenging Business as Usual

It was made clear in England and Wales by the Neyroud review (2011) that a path was being set with the explicit aim of shaping a future 'professional' vision of policing. On behalf of the new incoming Police Commissioner, we created a visionary project that went far beyond our previous isolated attempts[1] to embed evidence in the MPS. Our programme had a number of broad strands (i.e. governance, locking together performance and research, training and organisational support), each focussing upon a separate issue with the totality of the programme being stronger than the sum of its parts.

We absolutely believe such a corporate approach to embedding EBP into *business as normal* and empowering police staff to create and to draw on best knowledge is the right approach. We believe that an internal transformation is critical. This should be supplemented with independent university engagement or bespoke university courses (typically) working with relatively small numbers of motivated officers or individual academic/police officer research. However, our experience is that the benefits of improving individual officer knowledge are very rarely driven or pulled together by any strategic organisational narrative. As a consequence, there is no corporate commitment to embed the systematic use of or encourage the generation of evidence within the police organisation. This difference is key and is core to how we work. We believe if the delivery of policing is to change, it *has* to come from the centre of the organisation and be supported by strategic vision—not an agitation from the periphery. Neither individual police officers, nor charismatic academics bring about the necessary foundations for evidence-based working to take a firm hold. And any commitment brings with it the need for more mature discussions around evidence-based policing. In this section we draw on the survey featured in the first part of this monograph and add some case studies where we have been successful in introducing the use of research-based evidence into the decision-making frame.

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[1] Our previous attempts to embed evidence were not as comprehensive, e.g. such as attempting to develop research groups or evaluation training.