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A Narrative Review of the Literature on the Recruitment of Younger Police Officers in Age and in Service: What are the implications for the Police in England and Wales?

Abstract

The Police Uplift Programme (PUP) in England and Wales aims to recruit more than 20,000 new police officers into the service. There is little known about the potential consequences associated with a large-scale recruitment drive and the effect of introducing a younger cohort of officers into the ranks of the police. This paper is based on a narrative review of 2,110 English-language titles including grey literature exploring the implications for the police of a younger in age and service workforce profile. Titles were identified through electronic and hand-searching methods. 59 were assessed for inclusion, of which 49 titles were subject to a full-text review. The majority of papers were from North America. Three themes were identified from the review: (i) Issues related to cultural considerations including younger officers' preference for transparent and linear relationships and highlighting an emphasis on public service; (ii) Wellbeing and work-life balance considerations; (iii) harnessing the skill base through effective recruitment and retention practices. The findings suggest that police forces can create a narrative for new recruits as adult learners committed to public service combined with enhanced leadership styles that prioritise teamwork, transparency and personal development.

Introduction

The Police Uplift Programme (PUP) aims to recruit more than 20,000 new police officers into service across England and Wales (Home Office, 2019) as part of the government initiative to increase the operational workforce across all Police Forces. Following on from the recommendations resulting from the Neyroud Review (2011), Police Forces in England and Wales were tasked to professionalise their service through an education and training programme that aims to embed nationally approved standards in policing. This led to the development of the Police Education Qualification Framework (PEQF) which incorporates a Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA). All of these initiatives formed part of a drive towards professionalisation overseen by a governing body, the UK College of Policing.

The planned increase in police numbers and the drive towards professionalisation has led to a discussion as to a possible impact that new recruits will have on policing, and on wider police culture (Brown, 2020; Cox and Kirby, 2018). Based upon available Home Office figures, the number of police officers aged under 26 years has increased by 131% in 2017 to 2019¹ prior to the proposed recruitment of 20,000 new police officers. The introduction of new police officers will lead to an increase in the number of younger, more highly educated police officers. A crude estimate suggests that if the full 20,000 recruits are found and a conservative approximation of 80% are aged less than 26 years (n=16,000), then this could more than double the number and proportion of younger police officers (as of 2019 officers aged under 26 were recorded to be 14,225) in service in a short period of time. The implications of this younger workforce have been placed within generational cohort theory

¹ 2017 figures <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2017>; 2021 figures <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2021>. Downloaded 2nd November 2021.

that has been used as a framework to group people by their year of birth whilst assigning a range of attributes and characteristics such that each generation has unique characteristics that define how they perceive the nature of employment and work-life balance (Strauss and Howe, 1991). ‘Generation Y or Z’ or a ‘Millennial’ group born between 1980 and 2000 have emerged as a group of particular interest (Hilal et al, 2017; Wilson, 2017, Orrick, 2008). Although the limited current literature has focused on the implications of retaining police officers in service in terms of the relationship between management and officers, and the effect on organisational commitment (Charman and Bennett, 2021; Belur et al., 2020; Allisey et al, 2014), there is a need to establish the likely needs of an increase in younger police officers in service and to understand their expectations of the role.

Central to the success of PUP is ensuring that police force areas have the infrastructure to support new recruits to retain and motivate them in their new roles. This is further linked to the PEQF and a wider professionalisation agenda which sets expectations that new recruits within the PCDA and Degree Holder Entry Programme will have the opportunity to embed and develop their academic learning with the assistance of a dedicated tutor constable. Some limited evidence on the implementation of direct entry schemes into policing suggests that the current workforce can feel responsible for the decisions made by new officers within operational contexts as a result of their lack of time and experience in service. Research by Williams et al (2020) found that this caused current officers to question the extent to which the new officers could make effective decisions without the operational experience perceived as an essential component of policing. Similarly, this literature review aimed to explore issues related to a larger proportion of new recruits that are both younger in age, and in service. The observations gleaned from the review are aimed to facilitate the development of an effective strategy to support forces in terms of recruitment, retention and learning and

development. For this study, the research questions were two-fold. Firstly, what are the organisational implications of having a young (in age and service) workforce? Second, what interventions have been identified as being useful to support a younger workforce?

Methods

Search Strategy

The search strategy involved the retrieval of peer-reviewed and ‘grey’ literature, articles or reports that were relevant to examining the changing age profile within police settings. Four electronic databases were searched for titles between 2005 and 2021 as required by the commissioning authority: Criminal EBSCO Host, PsychInfo, Scopus and Google Scholar. The starting date of 2005 was chosen to ensure a sufficient number of papers were incorporated that included some key references from this time. An initial pilot identified a limited number of academic titles and therefore non-peer-reviewed, grey literature were added including hand searching UK and US consultancies or think-tank websites with a known interest in policing. EThOS and ProQuest-Thesis was also interrogated for post-graduate dissertations and theses. This approach was supplemented with a generic Google (not Google Scholar) search for titles which was limited to the first 15 pages.

The search terms used key characteristics of a younger work force supported by use of a Boolean operator “AND” with “police recruitment” to include “graduates and policing”, “graduates and retention”, “younger workforce”, “organisational demography”, “Millennials” “Generation Y”, “Generation Z”, “future workforce” and “experience and policing”. The Boolean search table is included as an online Supplemental Table.

A preliminary grouping of the titles was undertaken on the impact of a younger workforce considering their expectations, development, and retention. Additionally, given the capital attached to experience in policing (Williams et al, 2021), identified titles were examined for any impact of a lack of knowledge ‘build up’ on policing and current officers. Furthermore, the size of older and younger officers alongside the impact of taking officers away from duties to study, officer wellbeing and continuous professional development for serving staff were also elements examined (Williams et al, 2020).

The approach was altered in two instances from initial inception. First, following an initial search based on titles relating solely to the UK, the search was broadened to include English-speaking countries such as North America, Australia, and New Zealand as the recruitment challenges for these countries were similar to the UK involving the loss of experienced police officers due to retirement, and the need for recruiting younger officers as their replacement (Wilson, 2012). Second, the process of website scanning yielded a number of non-peer reviewed titles. Adams et al. (2016) deploys a tiered system for selecting articles related to its likely value to the research question, where the highest Tier (1) has the highest overall quality and Tier 3 the lowest. Our initial search strategy proposed accessing only the highest Tier which related to government and consulting or think-tank reports/White Titles. After reviewing the lower tiers (2 and 3) which included newspaper or magazine articles and blogs, it was decided to include these discussions if relevant to the topic. The decision to include these sources were in response to the limited evidence-base and, it was noted that a number of these articles were written with awareness of local operational needs (for example, by serving police officers).

Study Selection

2,098 titles were located through searches of academic, electronic databases with an additional 12 articles located through web focused website scanning or a generic Google search. These titles were screened using the abstract or title summary based on inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 1).

[Insert Table 1 about here]

The retrieved citations were screened and ordered using Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Figure 1). Of the 2,110 titles identified 2,051 were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria. Of the 59 titles that were screened for inclusion, 10 were excluded at the second stage of the process (full-text review) leaving 49 valid titles. 16 titles were grey literature, 10 peer-reviewed published academic papers, seven online magazines or newspaper articles, 14 theses (Masters, DBA, PhD) or conference or seminar presentations; one blog; and one book chapter. Most Titles were from the United States (n=36) with five from the UK, four internationally focused; three from Canada and one from Australia/New Zealand.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Quality Appraisal

The titles were appraised using a Weight of Evidence (WoE) approach as summarised by Gough et al. (2007) that provides an overview of quantitative and qualitative methods. Using this approach, three domains are established: relevance, appropriateness of methods and the quality of execution of these methods. These three domains are aggregated to derive a single WoE 'score' of 'high', 'medium' or 'low'. Placing non-peer reviewed titles into these domains proved problematic as grey literature tended to be less concerned with methodological robustness which therefore excludes two of the three categories within the WoE. Therefore, many grey literature titles were scored based on the relevance to the topic and this may overstate its importance relative to academic titles. Using this method three titles were graded as 'high', 28 scored 'medium' and 18 'low' (Table 2).

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Data Synthesis

The findings from the titles were synthesized using recommendations for a narrative synthesis in line with Popay et al. (2006). The results from this approach were captured visually using mapping methods advocated by Arksey and O'Malley (2005). The first phase focused on establishing themes by sorting the data into groups by creating a visual map. Labels were created to describe links between themes and lower-order sub-themes. This allowed for the visual clustering of similar data. The approach was checked and validated by the two researchers. As issues were mapped, the researchers established the relative importance of each emerging theme. This was determined by the frequency in which a title

mentioned an issue within a theme and the importance or relevance to the research question. This created an informal ‘weight’ to place onto each issue as it was grouped into a theme. Three overarching themes were identified using this method and is describe below.

Findings

This section presents the key themes arising from the analysis. The first theme relates to organisational and cultural considerations that arise when faced with a changing workforce demographic. This includes changes in how police forces educate and train its workforce, how a changing demographic affects the culture of an organisation and officers’ commitment to public or community service. A second theme focuses on officer wellbeing and maintaining a work-life balance. A final theme examines how the workforce can be developed and optimised to meet the needs of modern policing. The themes can be considered as overlapping as a changing demographic among new recruits highlights the importance of creating a balance between maintaining effective institutional knowledge and ‘traditional’ models of leadership with officers’ well-being and offering flexible working that maintains a meaningful work-life balance (Charman and Bennett, 20210).

‘Traditional’ Organisational Cultural Considerations: The Old Meets the New

Police learning

The introduction of the College of Policing’s professionalisation agenda has created a model that standardised education and training through the PEQF (Williams et al, 2019). Whilst the landscape in the US (where much of this literature is from) is fundamentally different, there

are a number of key learning points that confirm the need to see new officers as dynamic, adult learners whose continuous development and learning is blended with their operational experience in the workplace. This is essentially what the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) aspires to achieve through a staged learning process and the attachment of new officers to tutor constables for the purpose of putting their learning into a practical context.

A number of titles (5, 15, 17, 19, 24, 27, 40) advocated ‘mentoring’ to engage and support younger officers. This was to develop a collegiate and supportive environment where officers felt valued. Mentoring in this capacity allows for the interaction between newer recruits and longer serving officers to facilitate discussion and support (for example, to provide an informal ‘sounding-board’ to discuss practical work and related issues). This approach places newer recruits as adult learners and promotes a policy of ongoing education and development (supported by current officer mentoring). In this context formal training and educational learning is iterative with an expectation that expertise is derived from the accumulation of the academic learning and the build-up of experiential knowledge as described across a number of titles. Additionally, critical thinking skills and enhanced communication skills were considered important particularly when considering police as role models across diverse communities (Hilal et al., 2017).

Recognising younger officers' preference for transparent and more linear leadership

The complexities of police leadership are a current area of interest in policing and whilst reviews of the literature are often inconclusive (Pearson-Goff and Herrington, 2014). Current research areas have explored the links between organisational justice theory and policing

leadership (Bradford and Quinton, 2014) and the situational leadership in policing (Davies, 2019). Four titles (4, 15, 21, 48) specifically discussed (in a US context) whether traditional policing that focuses on training recruits using command-and-control leadership techniques are optimal for younger officers in terms of retention and motivation. Indeed, this has featured recently in research exploring police resignations in the UK where police officers were shown to value their time in service but struggled to manage the demand made of them, compounded by a perceived lack of accountability (7).

It was further argued that younger officers have a preference for flatter organisational structures with greater transparency in the decision-making process that also includes creating an environment for discussing policy and strategic decisions (8, 15, 27, 29). The literature suggests that this may create a tension with older officers who have a career history of working within hierarchical command-and-control structures, where flatter, more collegiate approaches may be considered an antithetical to traditional policing methods. A subset of the literature focused on an apparent need for younger officers to receive ‘excessive praise’ aligned to a reduced sense of being able to take criticism compared to other generations of officers (3, 9, 21). Indeed, this sense of feeling valued is linked to the literature on police wellbeing and job motivation in the UK context and supports the need for officer ‘health’ to be considered as central within the supervisory process for new recruits (Hesketh et al, 2016).

A commitment to public service

The Police Federation Pay and Morale Uplift November Report (Police Federation, 2020) illustrates that 92% of new recruits state that they are proud to be police officers. There is strong evidence from this review that younger police officers are more comfortable with diversity, share the ideals and values of public service and a desire to undertake activities that are considered a vital in a community-focused service (5, 9, 27). There was also a suggestion of a shift in younger police officers placing greater value on concepts of public service relative to traditional concerns of financial or job stability.

Moreover, cross-sectional surveys (mainly North American) suggest that younger officers are broadly satisfied in their roles compared to other age-groups and that any differences in satisfaction levels are marginal. Despite this, there is a suggestion that younger officers may have different perceptions of organisational commitment compared to older generations as a consequence of having more previous job experiences. Despite these differing perceptions, age is not seen as a prognostic for an intention to leave suggesting that staff turnover may be a function of other factors specifically relevant in policing such as leadership, organisational factors and maintaining work-life balance (7). This finding runs contrary to the wider human resourcing literature that shows turnover and turnover intention are higher in a younger workforce but that this declines with age, length of tenure in post and family commitments (Ertas, 2015, Cho, 2012). This may suggest that police officers have made some psychological commitment to the police force and the public service focus at this stage.

Wellbeing and work life balance

The onset of the pandemic in the UK has fundamentally changed the way organisations approach flexibility in the workplace although there is some evidence that lockdown has had

an adverse impact on stress levels in operational police officers (Brown and Fleming, 2021; Fleming and Brown, 2021). Research has identified a broad range of organisational stressors that are considered harmful to police officers' mental health and wellbeing (Demou et al., 2020; Purba and Demou, 2019). However, these harmful effects caused by working practices in policing can be mediated by organisational strategies that aim to specifically address work-life imbalances (Poulose and Dhal, 2020). Evidence from other sectors has suggested that increased education attainment is associated with an enhanced awareness of the need to integrate awareness of work-life balance needs into daily working routines (Stoilova et al., 2020)

A strong and consistent theme identified in the titles was for younger officers' preference to ensure a work-life and wellbeing balance is acknowledged and integrated into operational practice. Consequently, the introduction of a more educated and younger police workforce may result in a cohort of officers prioritising their work-life balance needs and in doing so, older officers may perceive this as antagonistic to accepted or conventional policing methods. Strategies for developing work-life balances would need to be cognisant of the differing perceptions of this need. A number of these titles discussed the possible tension between a 'long-hours' culture and the need to maintain a balanced approach to their employment that may affect attitudes to future job retention as suggested in the wider literature (Turnbull and Wass, 2015; Karaffa et al., 2015)

The Process of Recruitment and Retention

The ongoing development of interpersonal or life-skills ('personal qualities') to manage the complexities of modern policing featured in the review. A greater emphasis on these skills

was viewed as important in navigating the role of police in supporting ‘social welfare’. Here, it was perceived that wider social, partnership and collaborative skills are required to forge relationships with individuals and bodies outside of traditional policing such as public health or voluntary organisations (5, 30, 48). In relation to collaborative working and problem solving this is critical in a UK context as policing becomes further aligned with public health approaches associated with vulnerability, mental health and social problems (Van Dijk et al., 2019; Van Dijk and Crofts, 2017). Developing this key skill set is a core aim of the PEQF and would further embed the commitment new officers have for public service whilst simultaneously acting as an attraction for new recruits, and a motivation for retaining officers in the longer term.

In addition, the reviewed titles highlighted younger officers’ knowledge of technology through the use of mobile technology and social media (15, 19, 30, 40). Given the technological advances in the Criminal Justice System (use of algorithms etc) this advanced knowledge might be considered an advantage. Indeed, younger officers may view technological changes and advancement more favourably compared to other age groups. However, there was also evidence that this may be a source of tension where the ubiquity of younger people’s online presence may require careful management and monitoring. In relation to potential misconduct issues this is an important finding.

The literature highlighted the need to develop new recruitment approaches to ensure that the motivation young people express when joining the police is maintained over time. For a number of commentators, there was a desire to streamline the hiring process by reducing the time taken to complete recruitment and make it more efficient (24, 26, 27, 30, 42, 46). In the UK, retention and police officer motivation for joining the service has featured in the

narratives surrounding the new entry process developed via the implementation of the PEQF through the drive for continuous development (Wood, 2020; Williams et al., 2019). The literature related issues of recruitment to the context of a perceived US ‘crisis’ in recruitment as older police officers are retiring in large numbers and they have not been replaced by younger officers whose perception of policing may have been affected by recent national protests (Mourtgos et al., 2021; Rhodes and Tyler, 2021). Similarly, retention in a UK context has also been problematic over recent years (Hilal et al., 2019). To complement the recruitment process, continuous approaches to support the candidate were advocated including the development of a ‘customer support’ function that allowed for feedback to be incorporated into the recruitment process (20, 26, 42). A continuous cycle of review and evaluation of the recruitment and retention process was recommended (24, 26, 27, 38, 46).

A major component of enhancing the recruitment process was the need to develop more sophisticated approaches in relation to the internet and social media that made the offer more attractive to young people. This method was considered useful for engaging younger people at an earlier stage to develop a future recruitment pipeline as well as offering interaction with people to address recent criticisms of policing activities. Considering this in the context of UK policing and the recent negative media coverage this option to consider the reality of police work before joining is an interesting idea. This approach was considered to have potential to assist with the recruitment of more diverse candidates to ensure that the police are representative of local communities.

Other mechanisms for bolstering recruitment and interest from younger people included developing formal pathways from schools, colleges and universities often by incorporating policing into standard curricula. Other suggestions included ‘ride-alongs’ to provide hands-on

experience of police business; using off-duty police as ‘informal recruits’ to advertise the service to family members and friends; involvement of parents as part of the recruitment process and creating internships similar to other public and private institutions.

Discussion and Conclusions

The introduction of the PEQF and subsequent curriculum has prioritised the need for officers coming into policing to be upskilled in critical thinking, community awareness, communications and problem solving. The findings from this narrative review highlight the potential requirements and expectations of the new demographic of officers entering the service. The review suggests that officers have a commitment to public service, and in the US are considered socially liberal in their views at the point of entry into the police relative to previous cohorts of police recruits (although further research is required to determine whether this viewpoint holds for UK officers). Moreover, the civic aspect of policing is reinforced through a desire to understand and communicate more effectively across diverse community settings. More broadly, given the current climate and the narrative about policing aligning itself more with public health, public value, early intervention and recognising where to divert people from the criminal justice system, this drive needs to be nurtured.

This approach can be linked to wider developments in the human resources literature that suggest in order to recruit a younger workforce there is a need to engage with a clear narrative, purpose (bottom-up approaches) and ‘activities’ that illustrate the culture of an organization (Pritchard, 2018). This can be seen to create a tension between the needs of a younger demographic of recruits and the demands implicit within a ‘traditional’ hierarchical employer like the police. These tensions are also manifested in the concept of minimising risk

which create a culture of risk aversion and a reversion to the status quo (Davis and Bailey, 2017). This inherent tension was also noted in a study examining the ‘psychological contract’ (Rousseau and Tuoriwala, 1998) between personnel in the Portuguese military (Soares and Mosquera, 2019). Here, work arrangements that prioritised long-term loyalty combined with continuous professional development were associated with higher levels of professional engagement, but this approach needed to be balanced with immediate and short-term demands of a military career. This approach relies on an enhanced participatory leadership that prioritises transparency to foster a wider police narrative that is attractive to younger recruits. Moreover, the findings suggest that enhancements to recruitment can be made to minimize wastage throughout the process. This can link to the wider human resourcing literature that suggests diverse personality types amongst younger people are engaged through differential recruitment channels (Linnehan & Blau, 1998).

Therefore, as indicated in the findings, the role of supportive supervision and the ability for mentors or tutor constables to facilitate learning being gleaned through academic input into practice is central to this approach. This would reflect the fact that the new officers are adult and iterative learners who require ongoing development through a learning culture. In the UK there is evidence (Williams, 2018) to suggest that current police officers acting in tutor constable roles have not been given the appropriate skills to support this blended learning approach to police education. It is here that the first point of tension arises between maintaining that desire for learning in new officers and the current police culture that values and rewards time in the job and experiential knowledge over external knowledge that comes from outside the police (Williams et al, 2020). This is combined with tension between ensuring a long-term vision of the service is balanced with the operational needs of day-to-day policing (Soares and Mosquera, 2019). This has implications for the organisation in

terms of both retaining new recruits and the possibility of bringing new critical learning and thinking into a police service that is operating in a complex environment. Furthermore, this is bound by governmental oversight through PUP. This is particularly important if the police are committed to establishing a more problem-solving approach to dealing with these issues and moving this discourse from rhetoric to real change. There may be an opportunity to develop an enhanced approach to mentoring and coaching as derived from the wider human resourcing literature (cf. Clutterbuck, 2008) with the aim of institutionalising the concept (Tyler et al., 2011; Sprafka and Kranda, 2008).

Charman (2017) mirrors this perspective from the viewpoint of new officers who clearly articulated a perception of themselves as different to the traditional officer model who is embedded in a particular style of police culture. Research in Australia, undertaken by Chan (1997), found similar results. New officers are socialised into culture via their organisational police tutors where they can receive advice to forget what they have learnt from their education and listen to the narrative of those already in the job. This sense of reality check can indeed influence the onset of cynicism and therefore risks losing the insights and different perspectives that new officers offer the service alongside the longer-term erosion of motivation.

This is further compounded by the review findings about leadership styles and the desire for more open and transparent approaches from new recruits. Given the leadership input that officers might experience in the police curriculum, if this is not accorded with what they experience when they arrive in service, this dissonance could impact on their perceptions of the organisation. Far from the traditional command and control style, new police officers' value the importance of inclusivity and flatter structures. This highlights the need for new

recruits to understand the need for adaptive, situational leadership styles dependent on the context of the situation and, conversely, the need for those in leadership roles to be encouraged to be more participatory in their approach with new officers. Indeed, research suggests that key leadership traits include integrity, communication, work ethic, history of operational experience, trust, value or care of personnel and inclusion in decision making (Hoggett et al., 2019; Bradford and Quinton, 2014; Schafer, 2010) all contained within a “servant leadership” model that prioritises teamwork, collaboration and personal growth (Martin et al., 2017).

Over the pandemic, the police have become far more adaptive to flexible working which has enabled a more balanced work and life experience for many officers (Brown and Fleming, 2021; Fleming and Brown, 2021). Whilst the implementation of flexible workplace options is complex and needs to be developed strategically with the needs of the individual as central to it (Kossek et al, 2016), this change in working practice is seen as paramount for the new officers. The acceptance of society to discuss the need for balance and wellbeing is clear particularly over recent years in policing (Hesketh and Cooper, 2016). There is much work being conducted on this area and yet anecdotally the shift in police culture to move this from simply a narrative to a reality for officers is not consistent (Williams et al, forthcoming).

The critical cultural and knowledge-based tensions between new officers and the traditional learning environment act as barriers to their acceptance from the current workforce in the UK context and this has already been found in the context of direct entrants as Inspector Level (Williams et al, 2020; Davies and Silvestri, 2020). May and Hunter (2018) found similar issues in their assessment of the Police Now programme where recruits on the scheme discussed the need to embed their learning with the support of experienced officers.

However, those established officers described the difficulty and frustration of trying to support officers in applying their learning within a time-limited environment.

There are clearly some very progressive strategies being established in the UK for new recruits around blended learning, immersive learning tools and a drive to educate officers about crime, vulnerability, criminality and the impact of the social contexts in which these occur. This review suggests, to prevent new officers perceiving that they have to adapt into the current culture in order to 'get on', the current workforce need to understand the skills that new officers might offer the police service if it genuinely wants to change and adapt. The skills the new generation offer around understanding the social context of crime, public value, community and police relations and technology needs harnessing or there is a real risk that retention will become problematic and investment in these officers will be lost.

Study Strengths, Limitations and Challenges

A strength of this study was the inclusiveness of a range of grey literature including utilising sources usually outside the scope of an academic literature review such as PhD theses, studies from police officers undertaking leadership training, online trade magazine and blogs. This may be considered relevant as many of these sources were from serving police officers and can be seen as an important representation of 'views from the ground'. A number of these whilst not peer-reviewed, have been overseen by academics and some of this work is of a high calibre.

The review has a number of limitations. The majority of titles are from the United States and therefore not entirely comparable with the UK. The focus on English-speaking forces may artificially exclude from our analysis more equivalent forces to the UK (such as from Europe). The enhanced use of grey literature has included a high number of 'low' quality titles that are either largely descriptive or based on the personal views of the author(s). As described above, the difficulty in translating a quality appraisal method used for academic titles may not be appropriate for grey literature and may overstate the importance of some titles especially in the context of a field with limited peer-reviewed evidence. A number of titles have described intergenerational differences in general terms. For example, the 'millennial' group now includes people up to early middle-age (40 years). A number of theses deployed cross-sectional survey designs to describe differences between different age-groups which lead to differences as a function of age (as younger officers are less likely to be in a senior role and are more likely to undertake more routine activities). In other words, the empirical analyses are unable to comment on longitudinal changes in perceptions. The differences reported across generations may be because new recruits who have been surveyed are young with attitudes that are likely to change once in the workforce for a longer period of time. Cross-sectional surveys however, cannot determine whether this is a permanent cohort shift. Some of what is described has been known in the wider human resources literature for some time and has been seen as age not cohort related. We advise some caution in the use of this information when describing inter-generational differences as moderators such as seniority and task assignment are not incorporated. This may overstate differences such as organisational commitment, satisfaction levels and other psychological factors.

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Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion	Exclusion
Between 2005 and 2021	Before 2005
Published in English	Non-English language titles
Examining English-speaking countries only	Non-English language speaking countries
References to workforce planning in a policing-context with reference to age	Workforce planning not policing-specific or related activities
Workforce planning in related occupations to policing	

Table 2: List of Titles and WoE score

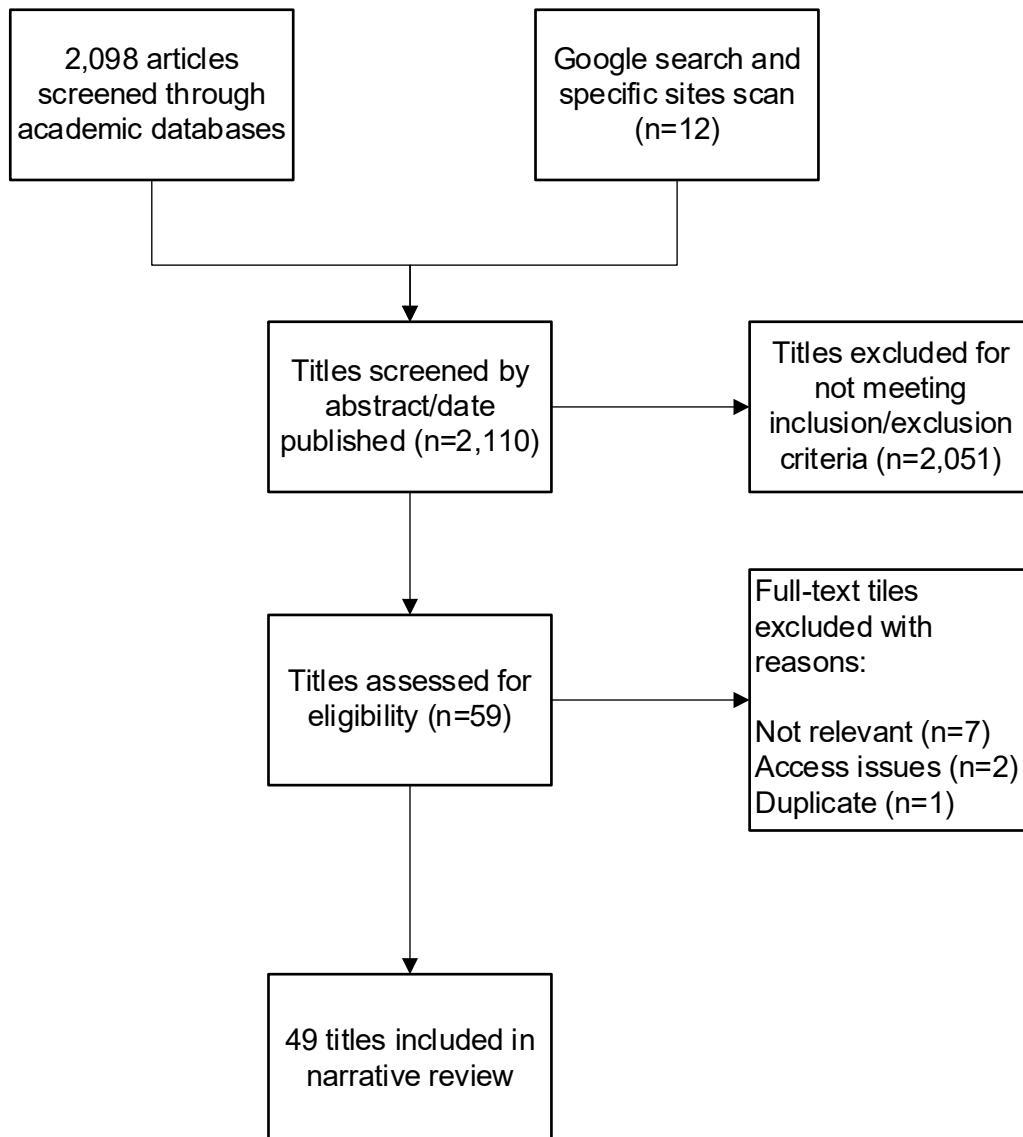
No.	Reference	Type of Article	WoE Score
1	Akin (2020) Multigenerational Perceptions Of The Law Enforcement Work Environment	Phd Thesis	Medium
2	Allisey, A. F., Noblet, A. J., Lamontagne, A. D., & Houdmont, J. (2014). Testing model of officer intentions to quit: The mediating effects of job stress and job satisfaction. <i>Criminal Justice and Behavior</i> , 41(6), 751-771.	Peer-reviewed Paper	Medium
3	Barlag, S. M. (2016). Retaining the millennials: how excessive praise produces failure.	Grey Literature	Low
4	Belur, J., Agnew-Pauley, W., & Tompson, L. (2020). Designing a graduate entry route for police recruits: lessons from a rapid evidence assessment of other professions. <i>Police Practice and Research</i> , 21(2), 134-151.	Peer-reviewed Paper	Medium
5	Bolton (2005), Policing Matters: Recruitment, Training and Motivation	Grey Literature	Low
6	Cain (2020), The Present and Future Law Enforcement Workforce: A Generational Comparison of Motivators for Entering and Remaining in the Profession	Phd Thesis	Medium
7	Charman, S. and Bennett, S. (2021), Voluntary Resignations from the police service: the impact of organisational and occupational stressors on organisational commitment; <i>Policing and Society</i>	Peer-reviewed Paper	Medium
8	Chevremont, M. J. (2019). Millennials in policing: Recommendations for reshaping the workplace to recruit and retain millennials in law enforcement.	Seminar Paper	Medium
9	Cox, G. M. (2012). Crisis in police recruitment: Public service motivation and changes in generational preferences.	Phd Thesis	Medium
10	Economist (2017), The force is weak. Police departments struggle to recruit enough officers	Magazine Article	Low
11	Fairley, A (2020a) A networked approach to policing	Blog	Low
12	Harmon R (2011)., A New Approach In Recruiting & Retaining Qualified Officers At The Bella Vista Police Department.	Grey Literature	Low

13	Helldorfer, Kelly Lee, "'I Can Haz Applicants": An Analysis of Police Recruitment and Marketing Through Social Media" (2016).	Masters Thesis	Low
14	Hilal, S., Densley, J. A., & Jones, D. S. (2017). A signalling theory of law enforcement hiring. <i>Policing and Society</i> , 27(5), 508-524.	Peer-reviewed Paper	High
15	Hubbard, T. (2019). Millennials: Adapting Police Recruiting and Supervision Practices.	Grey Literature	Medium
16	Huey, L., Kalyal, H., & Peladeau, H. (2017). Preparing police recruits of the future: An educational needs assessment	Grey Literature	Medium
17	Huey, L., Peladeau, H., & Kalyal, H. (2018). There's more than one right path to the destination: Does degree type make difference in police recruiting. <i>Journal of Criminal Justice Education</i> , 29(3), 399-413	Peer-reviewed Paper	Low
18	Hur, Y. (2017). Does training matter in public organizations? Assessing training effects in the US law enforcement agencies. <i>International Journal of Organization Theory and Behavior</i> .	Peer-reviewed Paper	Low
19	Jensen et al (2013), Leading Our Most Important Resource: Police Personnel Issues in the Year 2020	Grey Literature	Medium
20	Langham B. (2017). Millennials and Improving Recruitment in Law Enforcement.	Magazine Article	Low
21	Lauer (2020), The impact of Police Officer Age on Leadership and Workplace Preference	Phd Thesis	Medium
22	Lynch & Tuckey (2008), The police turnover problem: fact or fiction? <i>Policing: An International Journal</i> .	Peer-reviewed Paper	Medium
23	Mason, M. L. (2016). Recruiting, hiring and retaining qualified law enforcement officers.	Grey Literature	Medium
24	McKay (2017), Law Enforcement Facing Unique Challenges in Recruitment and Retention of Officers, <i>Government Technology Magazine</i>	Magazine Article	Medium
25	Moore (2017), Searching for Recruits: Understanding the New Generation of Potential Rural Police Applicants.	Masters Thesis	Low
26	Oliver, P. (2016). Hiring for the 21st Century Law Enforcement Officer: Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategies for Success. <i>History and Government Faculty Presentations</i> . 190.	Grey Literature	Medium
27	Orrick, D. W. (2008). Recruitment, retention, and turnover of police personnel: Reliable, practical, and effective solutions. Charles C Thomas Publisher.	Book Chapter	High

28	Paterson, C. (2011) Adding value? A review of the international literature on the role of higher education in police training and education, <i>Police Practice and Research</i> , Vol 12:4:286-297.	Peer-reviewed Paper	Medium
29	Petersen, J. (2020). Recommendations for retention strategies in correctional agencies in order to decrease staff vacancies with a specific focus on younger generations of candidates.	Seminar Paper	Low
30	Police Executive Research Forum (2019), <i>The Workforce Crisis, and What Police Agencies Are Doing About It</i>	Grey Literature	Medium
31	PoliceOne.Com (2017), <i>Recruitment & Retention Crisis: The Struggle to Hire – and Keep – Good Cops</i>	Magazine Article	Medium
32	Price Waterhouse Coopers, <i>Policing in a networked world</i>	Grey Literature	Low
33	Ra'oof (2014) <i>Expanding the Qualified Candidate Pool to Meet Police Recruitment Challenges: A Multiple-Case Study</i>	Phd Thesis	Low
34	Roe (2020), <i>Effective Officer Retention Practices: A Systematic Review</i>	Masters Thesis	Medium
35	Rough (2018), <i>Why Police Departments Are Facing Recruitment Problems</i>	Magazine Article	Low
36	Sharp (2016), <i>Job Satisfaction in Law Enforcement Officers According to Generational Cohorts</i>	Phd Thesis	Low
37	Skibba (2019), <i>Recommendations for Law Enforcement Retention Practices and the Impact of Generational Differences</i>	Seminar Paper	Medium
38	Stapleton (2013), <i>Servant Leadership in Today's Law Enforcement and the Millennial Generation</i>	Grey Literature	Medium
39	Strenslund (2018), <i>Police Administrators should prepare their departments for the millennials.</i>	Grey Literature	Medium
40	Sylvester (2007), <i>Police Recruitment in Today's Environment</i>	Grey Literature	Low
41	Taylor et al. (2006), <i>Cop Crunch: Identifying Strategies for Dealing with the Recruiting and Hiring Crisis in Law Enforcement</i>	Grey Literature	Low
42	Vargas (2014), <i>Modifying Police Recruitment and Retention Practices: Strategies to Address the Millennial Generation</i>	Grey Literature	Medium
43	Washington Post (2018), <i>Who wants to be a police officer? Job applications plummet at most U.S. departments.</i>	Newspaper Article	Medium

44	White, M. D., & Escobar, G. (2008). Making good cops in the twenty-first century: Emerging issues for the effective recruitment, selection and training of police in the United States and abroad. <i>International Review of Law, Computers & Technology</i> , 22(1-2), 119-134.	Peer-reviewed Paper	Medium
45	Wilson (2009), <i>Police Recruitment and Retention in the Contemporary Urban Environment</i>	Seminar Paper	Medium
46	Wilson (2010), <i>Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium</i>	Grey Literature	Medium
47	Wilson (2012), <i>Articulating the dynamic police staffing challenge, Policing: an International Journal of Police Strategies & Management</i> . 35(2); 327-355.	Peer-reviewed Paper	High
48	Wyllie (2018), <i>How the Bond between Cops and Kids Might Help Solve the Police Recruitment Crisis</i> .	Magazine Article	Low

Figure 1: PRISMA Flow Diagram



Online Table 1: Boolean Search Table

“police recruitment” AND “graduates”
“police recruitment” AND “millennials”
“police recruitment” AND “younger workforce”
“police recruitment” AND “Generation Y”
“police recruitment” AND “Generation Z”
“police recruitment” AND “graduates” AND “retention”
“police recruitment” AND “millennials” AND “retention”
“police recruitment” AND “younger workforce”
“police recruitment” AND “organisational demography”
“police recruitment” AND “future workforce”
“police recruitment” AND “experience and policing”