



# College of Policing

## Promoting ethical behaviour and preventing wrongdoing in organisations

A rapid evidence assessment

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# Executive summary

This Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA), based on 57 studies carried out in policing and other professions, aimed to identify interventions, mechanisms and levers that might encourage ethical behaviour and prevent wrongdoing in organisations. Taken together, the evidence raises a number of possibilities for organisations for action, though no ready-made single solution was identified. The importance of strong and effective leadership – such as leaders being open, acting as role models, and also being ‘firm’ in terms of setting and enforcing standards – was highlighted as encouraging ethical behaviour, as well as being an essential ingredient for the successful implementation of interventions. Promising interventions tended to be broadly preventive or remedial in their approach, rather than focused on apprehending and disciplining those responsible for wrongdoing.

## Introduction

This report summarises the findings of an REA, the aim of which was to identify interventions, mechanisms and levers that might help to encourage ethical behaviour and prevent wrongdoing in organisations (i.e. comply with common professional standards or ethical principles). This review builds on the separate REA carried out by the College on the impact of codes of ethics on professional behaviour (see Brown 2014).

The REA is based on a total of 57 studies carried out in policing and other professions. The review used a clear protocol to search for, sift and bring together the most relevant research papers. It reports 39 studies identified by this method, plus an additional 18 studies identified by the College of Policing or at peer review.

While it was difficult to draw out overall conclusions from the literature, because the studies included in the review used a wide range of research methods to answer different questions in a variety of settings, the key findings are highlighted below. Evidence from existing systematic reviews is presented separately to that from single studies and case studies.

## What works and what’s promising

While the number of evaluated interventions and practices found during our literature search was fairly small, and sometimes not of the type required to make statements about ‘what works’, the evidence we did find suggested that organisations can take positive steps to encourage ethical behaviour and address wrongdoing.

### Evidence from a systematic review

- **Procedural justice policing** – The strongest intervention evidence we identified – based on a systematic review – explored the impact of a range of interventions on public perceptions of the police, a ‘positive’ measure of ethical behaviour, rather than a ‘negative’ measure of wrongdoing:
  - Overall, interventions that embraced the principles of procedural justice (i.e. fair decision-making and respectful treatment) – such as community policing, informal contact and restorative justice – improved public trust and confidence, and changed people’s perception of the police for the better.
  - The review concluded there was ‘overwhelming support’ for the police to introduce innovations that seek to advance citizen perceptions of legitimacy.

## Evidence from individual intervention studies or case study reviews

- **Body worn video cameras** – One US randomised controlled trial (identified by the College outside the search protocol) showed that body worn video cameras can lead to a significant reduction in the police use of force. The effect on public complaints also appeared to be positive, but was less conclusive.
- **Being held to account** – One quasi-experiment involving Dutch riot police suggested that reminding officers they would be accountable for their actions had a positive impact on reported attitudes (e.g. more moderate views about the police use of force).
- **Training** – Five studies were identified exploring the effect of training in both military and policing contexts. Though the content and delivery of the training differed, the nature of decision-making and interaction skills were common elements. Each study suggested training could have a positive effect:
  - Training in moral decision-making (military) – A quasi-experiment, involving the Swiss military, showed that a one-week training programme on resolving moral dilemmas was effective in improving the decision-making competence of officers.
  - Training in procedural justice (police) – A randomised controlled trial carried out in Greater Manchester Police showed that training in practical communication skills resulted in victims perceiving the police to be fairer and more respectful.
  - Training in personal responsibility and control (police) – Two related studies carried out in the Nigerian Police suggested that training aimed at raising awareness of officers' personal responsibilities could change attitudes towards corruption.
  - Conflict resolution training (police) – One US quasi-experiment showed that three-day simulation-based training gave officers an alternative way of managing encounters, reducing the frequency and intensity with which force was used.
- **Ethics programmes** – One before/after study carried out in an Israeli regional council suggested that the introduction of an ethics programme – in support of a code of ethics – resulted in changes to some, but not all, employee perceptions (e.g. improved perceptions of there being an ethical work climate).
- **Targeted problem-solving and early interventions** – can potentially lead to substantial reductions on the police use of force and complaints.
  - One international review of before/after case studies suggested there was plausible evidence that the adoption of a problem-oriented approach by the police could reduce excessive or unnecessary uses of force.
  - Several individual case studies were identified that suggested the scanning and analysis of police data as ways of identifying particular officers or hotspots for target prevention activity was potentially promising.

## When interventions are most likely to be effective

- Limited evidence was uncovered about the specific contexts in which interventions were most likely to be effective. However, studies pointed towards a need for both:
  - scanning and analysis of available police data, to ensure the intervention is well targeted and deals with the underlying causes of a problem; and
  - organisational commitment and leadership.

## What doesn't work and evaluation gaps

- No ineffective or counter-productive interventions were identified. However, there is a clear need for any intervention to be implemented thoughtfully and with care to help ensure it does not have any unintended negative consequences, and to put appropriate evaluation in place.
- Limited empirical evidence was found on a number of approaches used by the police or proposed in the literature for promoting ethical behaviour and preventing wrongdoing (such as proactive investigative techniques, recruitment screening). This finding points to the need for further testing to identify 'what works'.

## The factors influencing ethical behaviour and wrongdoing

We identified evidence from a number of empirical studies and literature reviews about factors associated with ethical behaviour and wrongdoing in organisations. By understanding these factors, practitioners may be better placed to design and implement more effective interventions or target them appropriately.

### Evidence from a systematic review

- Systematic review evidence – based on 136 studies from a wide range of professional and occupational settings – suggested that ethical choices in the workplace were influenced by a range of factors at the individual, situational and organisational level.
  - An ethical working environment and a belief among workers that a code of conduct was well-enforced both had a positive effect on ethical decision-making.
  - Overall, the context of the situation in which a decision is made, particularly in terms of its perceived immediacy and magnitude of its consequences for others, was associated with workers avoiding unethical behaviour.
  - The influence of individual characteristics on ethical decision-making was relatively small overall:
    - Workers who were concerned about others, less 'flexible' in their morality, less manipulative, and who took greater personal responsibility, tended to be more ethical at work.
    - Men and younger workers were more likely to make unethical choices overall than women and older workers.
    - Educational attainment was found to have no overall effect.
- The range of factors associated with ethical choices suggests action at individual, situational and organisational level may be required to deal with wrongdoing and that it would be insufficient to target 'bad apples', 'bad cases' or 'bad barrels' on their own.
- Interventions focused solely on officer attitudes and intentions may not lead to improved behaviour, as the systematic review evidence suggested unethical decisions were not always based on unethical intentions. The choices made by a worker were more accurately predicted by their past behaviour than by their reported intentions.

### Evidence from individual studies

- **Organisational factors** – The working environment, organisational justice and ethical

leadership were all found to be 'protective factors' against wrongdoing. Ethical leadership appeared to have a range of direct and indirect influences. While there was some consistency between studies on the value of role-modelling, other leadership behaviours and styles were also found to have an effect, such as openness or strictness (i.e. setting and enforcing standards). Thus, while it is clear that supervisors and leaders should – as a default – seek to be good role models through exemplary behaviour, and to encourage open discussion, there may be situations where it is important for them to set appropriate standards of behaviour and to sanction behaviour that falls short.

- **Situational factors** – Some evidence was found on the situational factors that increased the chances of officers using improper force (e.g. the suspect being agitated or antagonistic, and having been involved in a serious offence). There was some indication that officers could sometimes be unsure whether particular activities were unethical. Several studies were also found that pointed to the existence of a 'blue code of silence' – the informal pressure on officers not to report their colleagues – although its effect appeared to vary within and between organisations.
- **Individual characteristics** – A range of individual characteristics – such as being male, younger, less experienced – were found in the literature to be associated with some types of wrongdoing. Early career misconduct and a range of social and psychological risk factors were also found to be potentially important influences, although their impact was found to be difficult to measure. The implications for practice of these individual characteristics are perhaps less clear as they are potentially related to other confounding factors and arguably harder for practitioners to influence.

## Conclusions and implications

Taken together, the evidence in this REA raises a range of possibilities to take forward into practice. While the number of evaluated practices was fairly small, the evidence we found suggested that organisations can take steps to encourage ethical behaviour and reduce wrongdoing. Although there were no ready-made single solutions, a multi-pronged approach is likely to be needed. Notably, all the promising interventions that were identified were broadly preventive or remedial in their approach; none were purely focused on apprehending and disciplining those responsible for wrongdoing.

The evidence also underlined how important leadership was within organisations. The need for strong and effective leadership – such as leaders being open, acting as role models, and also being 'firm' in terms of setting and enforcing standards – was highlighted as encouraging ethical behaviour and as an essential ingredient for the successful implementation of interventions. This finding contains learning for individual leaders about how they should perform their role, but also has wider implications for the way leadership in the service is selected, promoted, developed and held to account. Moreover, leadership – and the organisational environment it helped create – were strong influences on the attitudes and (reported) behaviours of those working for them. Key here were the ideas of organisational justice (fair decision-making and respectful treatment internally) and ethical leadership.

However, despite its importance, leadership was only one of several influences on ethical behaviour. A range of factors at the organisational, situational and individual level were all found to affect wrongdoing in different professional settings. While it is not clear what initiatives will 'work', this finding highlights the need for action to be taken in combination at all three levels.

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# 1. Introduction

## Background

### Context

The police service in England and Wales finds itself in a difficult situation. On the one hand, reports of police wrongdoing seem to be increasingly common in the national and local media. Recent years have seen a number of high profile cases in which the integrity of the police has been brought into question, such as the Leveson Inquiry<sup>1</sup>, the Andrew Mitchell affair<sup>2</sup>, the suspension and investigation of several chief officers, and the death of Ian Tomlinson<sup>3</sup> to name a few. On the other hand, police complaints – which in themselves are a problematic measure of police wrongdoing – have not seen similar increases. Data from the Independent Police Complaints Commission showed that the number of recorded complaints more than doubled between 2001/02 and 2009/10, but have dropped by 12% since then (IPCC 2012a).<sup>4</sup> Similarly public confidence in the police does not appear to have been dented. The Crime Survey of England and Wales has shown that the proportion of the public who think the local police do a 'good' or 'excellent' job – the main measure of confidence – increased by 15 percentage points between 2003/04 and 2011/12; though the most recent figures point to a one percentage point fall in the following year (ONS 2014).

Recent reports on police integrity have also presented a rather mixed picture. Transparency International UK (2011) stated that 'systemic corruption' had probably declined across the police service, in part because of the mechanisms that forces had put in place in recent years (e.g. increased transparency, checking and information sharing, and national analysis). However, Transparency International UK also warned that the profile of police corruption was changing, partly driven by opportunities presented to corruptors by the growth of personal IT to contact police officers and staff (e.g. via social networking sites and online dating). The police service was also not given a 'clean bill of health' in a recent inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC 2011). While corrupt police relationships with the media and others were not found to be endemic, questions were raised about the adequacy of force governance, oversight and check arrangements for police relationships. HMIC (2012) identified gaps in police training and found that few forces and police authorities had policies on key integrity issues (e.g. media contact, gifts and hospitality, and use of corporate credit cards), but reported some progress in respect of monitoring and use of ethical 'health checks' (HMIC 2012). This inconsistency in implementation, coupled with the view that high standards of professional and personal conduct are core values of the police service, lead HMIC to conclude that there was 'more to be done'.

But what should forces be doing to encourage officers and staff to behave according to these high professional and personal standards, and to prevent wrongdoing in all its forms? The aim of this Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) is to provide policymakers and practitioners with an overview of the research literature to help inform their decision-making. In this review, we loosely define 'ethical behaviour' or 'wrongdoing' in terms of whether an intentional or

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<sup>1</sup> During which officers were alleged to have accepted bribes to leak information to the media ([www.levesoninquiry.org.uk](http://www.levesoninquiry.org.uk)).

<sup>2</sup> Where officers were found guilty of misconduct resulting in a public apology by a chief constable to an MP ([www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26277093](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26277093)).

<sup>3</sup> Who died after being pushed to the ground during the G20 protests ([www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-10728685](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-10728685)).

<sup>4</sup> Number of complaints: 2001/02 = 16,654, 2009/10 = 34,310, 2011/12 = 30,143.

unintentional act complies with common professional standards and/or ethical principles. The review has two broad objectives, namely to summarise the evidence on:

- interventions that might be effective or promising in respect of promoting ethical behaviour and preventing wrongdoing in organisations; and
- what factors have been shown to be associated with ethical behaviour or wrongdoing in organisations.

In preparing this REA, we have sought to use a clear protocol to search for, identify and bring together research literature on these topics. While we aimed for the review to be as comprehensive as possible, its time-limited nature inevitably meant that it was not possible to find and synthesise all the empirical research that might have been relevant. Nevertheless, this REA provides an introduction to that evidence base. The methods and limitations of our approach are described below (pages 9-12).

## The nature of police wrongdoing – a summary of key studies

It was beyond the scope of this REA to review the wider criminological literature on the nature and extent of police wrongdoing. This literature – some of the key references of which are briefly summarised below – nevertheless points to the problem being multi-faceted and having systemic as well as individual roots.

Newburn (1999), for example, has offered insights into police corruption drawing on UK, US and Australian literature (scholarly research and inquiry reports). Though apparently difficult to define, 'corruption' (as one particular form of wrongdoing) reasonably refers both to officers engaging in illicit practices for monetary or material advantage (typically involving a 'corrupter') and officers violating laws and rules to advance policing goals (e.g. securing convictions against suspects). Historical examples suggest corruption can be found across police ranks, is recurrent within police organisations, and is facilitated by the very nature of police work and the systemic characteristics of police organisations rather than individual 'bad apples'. In particular, high levels of discretion, low levels of visibility, 'secrecy', pay, and exposure to temptation, were constant features of policing that were, in part, to blame. Additionally, officers may be embedded in communities that promote corruption, work in organisations with corrupt cultures and/or lacking corruption controls, hold positions that involve significant opportunities for corruption (such as in drug, gambling, or prostitution enforcement), and/or become morally cynical on account of their exposure to the 'worst aspects of the human condition'. Punch (2009; Punch and Gilmour 2010) has also emphasized the systemic nature of police wrongdoing, based on lessons from USA, UK and the Netherlands. Seeing 'rotten orchards' as the appropriate metaphor to describe origins of police wrongdoing, he highlights a gap between the 'formal codes' of the police organisation (e.g. its announcements and policies), and their 'informal or operational code' that corresponds to how policing actually gets done. The latter provides a space in which deviant practices can emerge, particularly where there are inadequate controls in place.

Miller's (2003) description of police corruption in the UK adds further to the picture. Drawing on the experiences of professional standards units charged with proactively investigating corruption and misconduct, he highlighted how police officers and staff passing sensitive information to others outside the organisation represents a dominant component of contemporary corruption. His research also suggested that corrupt individuals often act alone within the organisation, and that corruption is perpetrated by civilian staff as well as police officers. In explaining corruption, his research emphasised the role of people's home and leisure environments as sources of corrupt relationships, alongside relationships formed through work.

There are a number of well-articulated strategies for preventing and responding to police corruption in this wider literature which will be built upon in this REA. According to Newburn (1999), for example, prior reform efforts have focused on human resources measures such as recruitment and training, along with attempts to foster a sense of responsibility and positive leadership in staff and managers, which have included formal ethical codes to govern police behaviour. Efforts have included internal prevention efforts, such as strengthening lines of accountability, increased supervision, and eliminating procedures that encourage corrupt practices as well as punitive measures including the proactive investigation of corruption through specialized units. Newburn also highlighted efforts to address wrongdoing by targeting outside influencers, such as members of the public seeking to bribe police officers. Punch (2000) has recounted a similar list of measures, and additionally highlighted promising recent models of external police investigation (Punch 2009; Punch and Gilmour, 2010). Miller (2003) highlighted similar strategies, while emphasising the importance of targeting both officer and civilian staff, and paying attention to information security. He also recommended that police agencies should systematically monitor their 'ethical health' through routine data collection and auditing, as a support to corruption control.

## **The Rapid Evidence Assessment**

### **Overall approach**

This report summarises the findings of an REA that was initially conducted in a four-week period. The purpose of this REA was to build on previous reviews on the extent, nature and reasons for police wrongdoing (see above) by focusing, more explicitly, on the interventions, mechanisms and levers that might help to prevent wrongdoing.

REAs adhere to systematic review principles (see Denyer and Tranfield 2009; Rojon et al. 2011) by setting out and following a clear protocol, including the search terms and databases used, inclusion/exclusion criteria, and quality check criteria. The use of these methods aims to ensure the review is relatively free of selection bias and is replicable. Unlike full Systematic Reviews (SRs) – which are more exhaustive – REAs set limits on the amount of material that is identified and reviewed due to reasons of resourcing and timing. In other words, this REA does not cover all that is known on the subject of wrongdoing.

### **Research questions**

The aim of REA was to identify, quality check, summarise and integrate the most relevant evidence – across disciplines and organisational contexts – to help answer the following interrelated questions:

1. Which interventions or practices (if any) have been shown to cause a reduction in unethical behaviour, or an increase in ethical behaviour, in policing and non-policing organisations?
2. Which interventions or practices (if any) are promising in reducing unethical behaviour, or an increase in ethical behaviour, in policing and non-policing organisations?
3. In which contexts are these interventions or practices most likely to be effective?
4. Which factors have been shown to be associated with ethical and unethical behaviour?

The first three questions sought to focus the review on empirical studies that assessed the effectiveness of interventions in order to identify 'what works' and promising practice. The last questions sought to orient the review more towards those mechanisms and processes that might give rise to wrongdoing (including the organisational and wider societal context)

and towards empirical studies that might inform the design and targeting of future preventive interventions.

Together these questions were intended to make sure the REA identified the strongest and most relevant evidence about wrongdoing in organisations, and what can be done to prevent it. Although the questions deliberately looked outside policing to other professional contexts, it is recognised that study findings may not readily translate between research settings.

## Defining 'ethical behaviour' and 'wrongdoing' for the review

We adopted broad definitions for both 'ethical behaviour' and 'wrongdoing' in this review. While typologies of police wrongdoing do exist – such as distinctions between 'corruption', 'misconduct' and 'crime' (Punch 2000) – we took a more inclusive approach because of the inconsistent way in which these terms have been adopted and their limited use outside policing research. As 'ethical behaviour' and 'wrongdoing'<sup>5</sup> appeared to be umbrella terms that did not seem to have a unified definition in the literature, in that they referred to a wide range of behaviours and outcomes, we sought to identify sources that referred to intentional and unintentional acts which had moral/legal implications, and more specific behavioural phenomena within wrongdoing (such as corruption).

## Review methods

Each stage of the review process is summarised below. The number of papers included / excluded at each stage is presented in Figure 1.

### Scoping

Our approach started with a scoping phase to help develop the search terms and overall protocol. This scoping involved examining a small sample of well-known published literature, policy/practitioner publications, and technical reports (e.g. Miller 2003 and Punch 1999). This process revealed the need for the review – in relation to identifying effective and promising practice – to consider proactive approaches geared more toward prevention and promoting ethical behaviour as well as reactive/remedial approaches to counteract and address wrongdoing. We also contacted a number of academics with subject matter expertise<sup>6</sup>, who provided guidance on our search terms and assisted in identifying relevant literature.

### Piloting

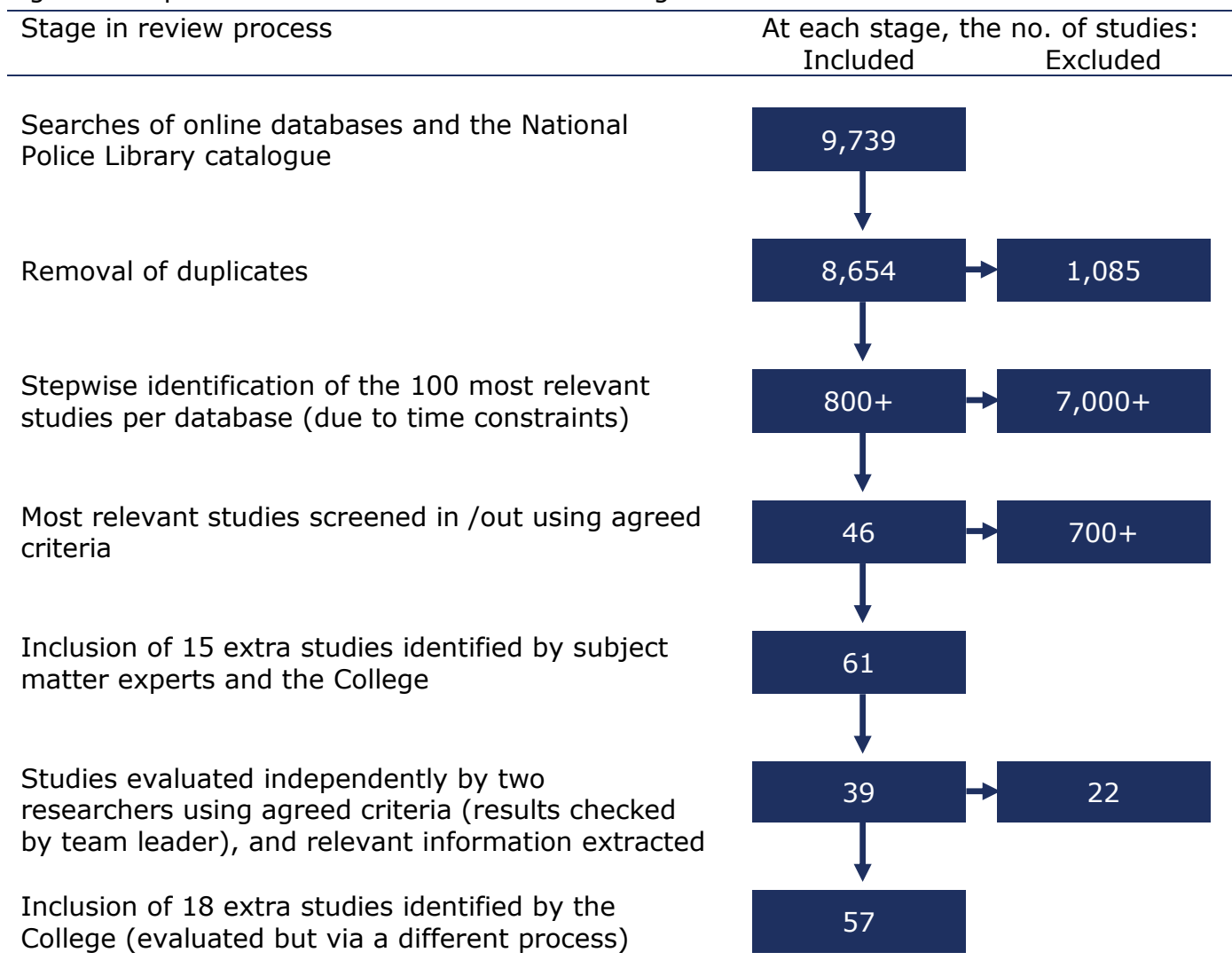
Preliminary search terms were developed following the scoping exercise. We initially developed a wide range of terms because of the different definitions used in the literature, and the varied terminology used in different disciplines and sectors. These were refined through piloting, which involved searches of literature databases. Terms that were not judged to be useful for eliciting hits were removed.

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<sup>5</sup> We have treated the terms 'unethical behaviour' and 'wrongdoing' as synonymous as they were used interchangeably in the literature. We have, where possible, used the language from the original source to prevent any definitional confusion.

<sup>6</sup> Including: Nigel Fielding (University of Surrey), Jean Hartley (Open University), Mike Hough (Birkbeck), Maurice Punch (London School of Economics) and Timothy Prenzler (Griffith University).

Figure 1. Papers included or excluded at each stage of the review



## Searching

Literature searches were then carried out using our refined search terms (see Table A1 and A2, Appendix A). This phase included searches of literature databases (including criminology, sociology, psychology, and management studies) and the National Police Library, as well as some manual searching for specific sources of policing grey literature. This process resulted in us identifying 4,127 sources across the databases, plus an additional 5,612 hits from the National Police Library (see Table AC, Appendix A).

## Initial sifting

After duplicates were removed, a step-wise approach was taken with the initial sift because of the large number of hits. This involved focusing on the results that most closely matched our inclusion criteria. For each search, we sifted the first 100 results for relevance and methodological rigour after they had been sorted by their match and relevance to our search terms (rather than other criteria, such as publication date). Additional hits would have been examined beyond the first 100 if this approach had not elicited relevant literature and if there had not been a drop off in relevance/rigour once sorted.

## Evaluating

The most relevant hits were exported into a database software package (RefMan), the abstracts of which were initially screened for relevance. Each paper was then read and evaluated by two research team members using a series of inclusion criteria.<sup>7</sup> Included sources had to be:

- relevant to one of the research questions;
- published in English in or after 1990;
- available for review with the timeframe for the REA; and
- based directly or indirectly on empirical evidence (e.g. either primary study or review).

Additional screening based on study design was carried out for studies relevant to the first research question about 'what works'. These studies had to be systematic reviews, use meta-analyses or be based on a controlled evaluations (at least pre/post design or multi-site). A summary for each reference was then agreed between two reviewers, using a data extraction tool, which was then checked by the team leader for detail and consistency. A total of 39 papers were included in the review following this process.

## Synthesising the literature

We integrated the results from the included studies via a 'narrative synthesis', due to their varied conceptual and methodological approaches. A further 18 studies were included in the REA at the drafting and peer review stages. These additional studies were identified by the College or one of the academic advisors as being particularly relevant to the research questions and were assessed to meet our inclusion criteria (though they were not subject to the same level of screening and review as the papers included originally).

## Overall assessment of the literature

When we assessed the overall standard of the evaluation studies included in the REA, it became clear that most studies were either high in relevance but low on methodological rigour, or low in relevance but in turn much higher in methodological rigour. For example, the one SR with a particular focus on policing was more about the quality of police/public interactions and public perceptions than police wrongdoing. In general, the research we found that was carried out in a policing context appeared to be overly reliant on data taken at one or two points in time, with very few longitudinal studies – they presented a 'snapshot' rather than change over the long term. Another common weakness of the research in this field was that it often used measures that potentially lacked reliability (e.g. they may not have been piloted) or failed to control for potentially confounding variables in their analysis (e.g. rank).

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<sup>7</sup> Any publications which did not fit clearly into the inclusion criteria but appeared to have some relevance were assessed individually by the research team.

It was evident that the field does not presently offer consistent approaches to defining and measuring 'wrongdoing', and to evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. Because individual studies sought to address different research questions, in different settings, using different definitions and measures, it was difficult to draw out overall conclusions from the literature. Greater consistency may, therefore, be necessary in the future to make comparisons across contexts and to track change over time. Of course, research on this topic is inevitably complex and sensitive because of its subject, not least because access to data may be problematic and is unlikely to represent the full extent of wrongdoing in an organisation.

## Limitations

This REA has a number of limitations:

- Its time-limited nature and relatively broad focus meant we had to limit our strategy from the outset by focusing on the most relevant results for each search. By sorting the results for relevance and applying criteria, we may have inadvertently excluded studies with some useful insights on the topic.
- The way the search terms were framed meant our searches would not have identified studies that used different language and terminology but which would, nevertheless, have been relevant to the research questions.
- Our approach to searching and screening meant that older studies and those not published in the English language would not have been reviewed. Books are also likely to be under-represented.
- While we carried out manual searches for grey (unpublished) literature, its limited nature meant we will not have picked up on the large number of local case studies that are very likely to exist internationally.
- The review did not seek to draw upon the much wider literature about the regulation and governance of police work, which may provide insights about police 'rule-bending' and its prevention.
- Finally, it must also be recognised that efforts to address police wrongdoing often involve organisation-wide reform (e.g. the introduction of civilian oversight), not least because such changes are frequently brought about because of political imperative. Organisation-wide reform is inevitably much harder to evaluate than smaller scale initiatives (e.g. because of the absence of control sites), meaning any research in this area may not have been identified and screened-in despite it possibly containing important learning.

## The structure of the report

Chapter 2 looks at effective and promising practice, and draws on those studies that sought to evaluate the impact of an intervention on wrongdoing in a professional setting. Chapter 3 explores the factors that studies have found to be associated with ethical behaviour or wrongdoing, and which are likely to be relevant when thinking about designing or targeting prevention activity. Chapter 4 summarises the main key findings from the REA and aims to draw out the implications from the evidence we have presented.

## 2. What works and what's promising

The evidence presented in this chapter points to a number of promising interventions:

- The strongest intervention evidence we identified, based on a systematic review, explored the impact of a range of interventions on public perceptions of the police; a 'positive' measure of ethical behaviour, rather than a 'negative' measure of wrongdoing.
  - Overall, interventions that embraced the principles of procedural justice (i.e. fair decision-making and respectful treatment) – such as community policing, informal contact and restorative justice – improved public trust and confidence, and people's perception of the police.
  - The systematic review concluded, therefore, that there was 'overwhelming support' for the police to introduce innovations that seek to advance citizen perceptions of legitimacy.
- Evidence from individual evaluations or cases studies suggested that:
  - body worn video can reduce the police use of force and, potentially, public complaints;
  - being reminded they are accountable for their actions may change officer attitudes;
  - training that focused on changing the way employees think and behave can be effective;
  - ethics programmes may encourage employees to perceive a more ethical work environment; and
  - targeted problem-solving and early interventions can potentially lead to substantial reductions in the police use of force and complaints.
- Limited evidence was uncovered on the context in which interventions were most likely to be effective, though there was found to be a need for:
  - scanning and analysis of available police data in order to ensure the intervention is well targeted and deals with the underlying causes of a problem; and
  - organisational commitment and leadership.
- While no ineffective or counter-productive interventions were identified, there is a clear need for any intervention to be implemented thoughtfully and with care to help ensure it does not have any unintended negative consequences.
- The chapter also summarises a range of potential interventions for preventing wrongdoing in organisations – either proposed in the literature or used by the police – for which we found limited empirical evidence.

This chapter sets out the evidence from intervention studies and related literature reviews on effective and promising practice. Conventionally, a discussion of 'what works' will tend to focus on interventions that have been shown to have a positive effect on outcomes across multiple high quality evaluation studies, while 'promising' interventions will rely on fewer studies using less rigorous evaluation methods but which still indicate positive results. Because the studies we identified varied markedly in terms of outcome measures, research setting and evaluation design, we have not sought to make a firm distinction between effective and promising practice.



The chapter is structured broadly around study/review types:

- It begins with a discussion of the SR evidence. While we can be reasonably confident that the interventions highlighted by the SR can 'work' in some contexts, the purpose of the SR was not directly to find out what could reduce wrongdoing.
- The chapter then presents findings from a range of individual intervention studies and case study reviews. While some of these studies may be 'stronger' than others in terms of their ability to attribute change, causally, to an intervention, they each present plausible evidence about impact.
- The chapter concludes with a brief discussion about the context in which interventions might be more likely to be effective, the evidence of what has been shown not to 'work', and the gaps we identified in the evaluation literature.

## Systematic Review evidence

SRs can provide an overall assessment of the effectiveness of interventions. These reviews are intended to be comprehensive and unbiased summaries of the evidence on a particular topic, and involve exhaustive searches for relevant studies, the use of explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria, and transparent methods for appraising and synthesising their results.<sup>8</sup> Some SRs also use meta-analysis – a statistical technique for combining the results of different studies – to determine the 'average effect' of an intervention. While SRs can highlight 'what works' overall (from the included studies), they do not always include all types of research or highlight whether an intervention is more or less effective for specific groups of people or in particular contexts.

Our literature search did not reveal any SRs focused specifically on the effectiveness of interventions designed to reduce unethical behaviour in organisations. However, we did locate two SRs; the first on factors associated with wrongdoing (page 32, Chapter 3), and a second on interventions that helped foster police legitimacy by increasing public perceptions of procedural justice (which in turn can encourage citizens to obey the law and cooperate with the police). As 'procedural justice' in this external policing context refers to how the officers treat citizens – specifically in terms of being fair and respectful – we have regarded it as a form of rightdoing.

## The impact of procedural justice policing

The SR by Mazerolle et al. (2013) brought together 41 different studies on the impact of interventions to enhance public perceptions of police legitimacy. Studies were only included if they used either a randomised or quasi-experimental design, and evaluated any policing intervention that incorporated at least one of the following components of procedural justice (see Tyler 1990):

- 'Voice' – the police allowing citizens to participate in decisions.
- Neutrality – the police making impartial decisions.
- Trustworthiness – the police displaying trustworthy motives.
- Respectfulness – the police treating citizens with dignity and respect during interactions.

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<sup>8</sup> Similar methods are used in REAs, though these are less comprehensive because the search for literature is more limited.

The review, therefore, looked at the impact of different approaches to local policing (e.g. reassurance, beat, community and problem-oriented policing), informal contact between the police and the public, alternative complaints procedures, and restorative justice conferencing.

The SR examined whether these interventions had an effect on a series of outcome measures. Meta-analysis was used to determine whether the overall effect was positive or negative across a range of outcome measures. We have summarised the results of the meta-analysis for the following outcomes most relevant to this review:

- **Perceived police legitimacy** – No overall effect was found (seven studies which tested community policing, informal contact, and conferencing).
- **Perceived procedural justice** – The overall effect was in favour of the interventions (14 studies which tested conferencing, and community, reassurance and problem-oriented policing).
- **Satisfaction and confidence** – A large overall effect was detected in favour of the interventions (29 studies which tested all the interventions).

While the SR did not look at whether the interventions helped to prevent unethical police behaviour, it found strong evidence that they can enable officers to act in a way that is perceived to be fair and respectful, and which helps improve public perceptions of policing. Thus, the authors concluded that “the story [from the evidence] is overwhelmingly one that supports the police undertaking training, directives or organisational innovations across a wide range of police interventions to facilitate the adoption of practices that advance citizen perceptions of legitimacy” (Mazerolle et al. 2013: 77).

## Evidence from intervention studies and case study reviews

### The impact of body worn video cameras

Outside the formal protocol we adopted for the literature search, the College identified a randomised controlled trial that tested the impact of Body Worn Video (BWV) cameras on the conduct of police officers. As many forces are looking to implement BWV, we decided to include the study in our review as it met the inclusion criteria (but noted it had not undergone peer review at the time).

Ariel and Farrar (2013) tested the impact of officers wearing BWV cameras to record police/public interactions in Rialto, a small US police department in California. The effect of BWV on public complaints and the police use of force was tested in a field experiment, which involved around 100 officers in the department being issued with cameras, and randomising whether they turned the cameras on/off on a shift-by-shift basis. Police/public interactions were recorded on the randomly selected treatment shifts, but not on randomly selected control shifts.

After 12 months, BWV was found to have had a significant effect on officers’ use of force. There were twice as many use of force incidents on control shifts than they were on treatment shifts (8 incidents compared to 17). A 50% reduction in the number of use of force incidents compared to the previous year was also reported.

The effect on public complaints also appeared to be positive, but was less conclusive. As complaints reduced markedly during both treatment and control shifts, no overall effect was found. The evaluation showed that, across the whole police department, the number of

complaints reduced from 28 to three<sup>9</sup> in the 12 months before and after implementation. While not conclusive, this department-wide improvement might point to behaviour change even when the cameras were not in use (because of prior exposure to the cameras), or the influence of another confounding factor.

Despite this issue and the small sample size, the study provides evidence that BWV can reduce the number of incidents where officers use force and, potentially, complaints from the public. It is not known, however, how and why these changes were brought about, for example, in terms of whether BWV had a deterrent effect, and whether the cameras influenced the behaviour of officers, citizens or both.

## The impact of being held to account

A quasi-experiment conducted by Kroon et al. (1991) with Dutch riot police, looked at whether making officers aware that they would be held to account for their actions would change their attitudes.

The study focused on public order officers who were taking part in a four-week training course. One group of officers was told, at the beginning of the course and again before the final assessment, that they would be held to account for their actions by a panel. A second group of officers went through the training without this reminder. Both groups of officers completed an attitude survey after the training.

The results of the survey showed that, on average, officers who were reminded they were accountable (relative to the comparison group) had greater self-awareness and were less likely to rate colleagues in extremely positive terms, be certain their actions were 'absolutely right', and support the police use of force.

Thus, the study provided some promising evidence that clear lines of accountability might lead to a change in reported attitudes. It is possible, though, that the intervention triggered officers to be more aware of the 'socially desirable' answers to the survey questions. Furthermore, the study design meant that other factors may have affected the results. Nevertheless, while the study did not look at behaviour, it is conceivable that valuing the public and holding more moderate views about using force might reduce the likelihood of some forms of wrongdoing.

## The impact of training

We identified four studies that suggested training interventions can be effective.<sup>10</sup> There was also some evidence that officers themselves shared this view. A large scale survey of US police officers, carried out by Weisburd et al. (2001), found they tended to think some form of training was useful in preventing abuses of authority. However, police training – particularly for new recruits – has previously been highlighted as being overly legalistic and not supporting ethical decision-making by officers. Conti and Nolan's (2005) observations of 70 recruits in a US police academy suggested that their initial training taught them to be dependent on, and defer, to superiors, and may overly institutionalise new recruits and foster an 'us and them' mentality with the public. Porter (2013) noted that, while training can help change initial behaviours and attitudes, subsequent reinforcement and supervision may be required if these changes are to be established within police culture and have lasting effect.

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<sup>9</sup> One complaint during control shifts, and two during treatment shifts.

<sup>10</sup> See Wheller and Morris (2010) for a review of the 'what works' literature on police training.

## Training in moral decision-making (military)

One of the stronger studies we located on training was conducted in a military context. Seiler et al. (2011) tested the impact of training introduced by the Swiss military on moral decision-making. The quasi-experiment involved 130 officers who were enrolled on various courses at the military academy. Of these, 44 were allocated on a non-random basis to the treatment group to participate in the new training programme, and 86 to the comparison group.

The programme consisted of one week of training, with six hours of teaching per day. The programme was designed to give the officers a strategy-based interactional approach for resolving moral dilemmas<sup>11</sup>, and consisted of five phases:

- Phase one involved participants being presented with a real-life scenario with a moral dilemma.
- In phase two, individual participants were asked to develop their own solutions to the dilemma, using a series of pre-defined questions.
- Phase three required participants to discuss their reflections, solutions, and justifications in small groups.
- During phase four, the small groups had to agree on the best group solution.
- Phase five involved the small groups sharing their experiences with each other.

Outcomes were measured before and after the programme. At both times, the 130 officers were given two scenario-based moral dilemmas, and asked to write a short essay on the situation and how they would resolve it. This exercise was also repeated six months later with the officers in the treatment group. The essays were assessed by two independent raters, who were blind as to who wrote them, in terms of:

- the moral content of a participant's decision-making (e.g. the number of different factors taken into account and the extent to which each has been balanced and compensated for); and
- the participant's moral processing (e.g. how they analysed the situation, and whether they developed alternative solutions and assessed their strengths/weakness)

Overall, the study showed that training in the strategy-based approach was effective in improving the decision-making competence of officers. The programme was found to have a positive impact on both the moral content and processing of decisions by the officers in the treatment group. Notably, officers in the treatment group were more able to apply a structured problem-solving process after the training compared to their colleagues, though they only tended to balance different moral values in 'higher stakes' ethical dilemmas (i.e. when there was risk to 'life and limb').

The training was also found to have a long term impact (though only 20 officers remained in the study). The effects for some (but not all) measures were sustained for six months. For example, participants' moral awareness and their ability to engage in problem-solving was significantly higher in the six month follow-up than before the training. It should be stressed, however, that there are important differences between a military and police context, which need to be taken into account when considering this evidence.

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<sup>11</sup> The course was informed by the 'interactional dual-process model of moral decision-making', a psychological model that focused on: moral perceptions; reasoning and intuition; moral judgement and decision-making; after-the-event reasoning; and social interactions.

## Training in procedural justice (police)

Building on the evidence set out in the SR on legitimacy in policing (Mazerolle et al. 2013), the College carried out a randomised controlled trial with Greater Manchester Police to test the impact of procedural justice training (Wheller et al. 2013). Like many other interventions on procedural justice, the aim of the training was to enhance the perceived fairness and respectfulness of police/public contact – a form of rightdoing – rather than to reduce wrongdoing or unethical behaviour.

The training programme sought to improve officers' practical communications skills when dealing with victims of crime, with a view to building empathy and improving the quality of the interaction. The programme consisted of a combination of class-room teaching (in which students were given a series of communication techniques) and scenario-based learning (which involved students using these techniques in realistic role-plays). Throughout the training, participants were given the opportunity to practice their skills, reflect on their approach with victims, and were given personalised feedback. For example, the role play scenarios were videoed and reviewed by both the student and a trainer to identify ways of improving.

Around 240 response and neighbourhood officers were allocated at random to the treatment group to receive the training, and 360 to the control group. Outcomes were measured after the training programme:

- **Officer attitudes** – A survey administered after the training showed that officers in the treatment group were more likely than their colleagues to place value on delivering quality of service, and to report building empathy/rapport and making fair decisions.
- **Officer behaviour** – The training was found to have a positive effect on officer behaviour in role play scenarios across a range of measures. For example, 48% were rated by a blinded assessors as 'good' or 'excellent' in terms of the quality of the interaction with a 'victim' compared to 22% of control group officers.
- **Victim perceptions of procedural justice** – Three to nine months after the training, around 650 victims of crime were surveyed about their experiences. Victims were significantly more likely to say they were treated fairly and with respect if they had contact with a treatment group officer than if they had contact with a control group officer.

Overall, therefore, the trial showed that the communication skills training programme, on average, had a positive impact, most notably in terms of public perceptions of procedural justice.

## Training in personal responsibility and control (police)

Our review identified two papers by the same authors which used survey measures to evaluate the impact of training programmes implemented by the Nigerian Police to counteract corruption by enhancing officers' sense of their own personal responsibility (Aremu et al. 2009 and 2011).

The first study (Aremu et al. 2009) tested the impact of a series of counselling/training sessions spread over a six-week period that drew on ideas and techniques from psychology. These sessions sought to make participants more aware that they were responsible for their own actions, and had control over the decisions they made. We inferred that the aim was for participants to develop a stronger 'internal locus of control' (i.e. accepting greater

responsibility).<sup>12</sup> The intervention, which consisted mainly of class-room teaching with some assignment work, covered: acceptable behaviours; the role of police officers in the community; and the role of the participants as agents of positive change.

The training was evaluated using a quasi-experimental approach, involving 200 Nigerian police officers allocated to the treatment and comparison groups on a non-random basis. Officers were surveyed before and after the training. They were asked 20 questions covering issues such as whether it was acceptable to receive gifts or to use their authority for personal gain. The results of the survey showed that, on average, the training had a significant, positive impact on officer attitudes about the acceptability of corrupt behaviour. This effect was reportedly stronger for women and for higher ranking officers.

The authors (Aremu et al. 2011) carried out a similar study to compare the effect of two different programmes designed to counter corruption in the Nigerian Police. In this quasi-experiment, 300 officers were allocated on a non-random basis to:

- a comparison group that did not receive any training/counselling;
- a treatment group that received the 'locus of control' training as described above; or
- a treatment group that received training in 'self-efficacy' (a person's beliefs about their own abilities) which focused on self-capabilities, motivation, enhancing thoughts and behaviour modification.

The survey findings showed that both the locus of control and self-efficacy programmes led to improved officer attitudes about the acceptability of police corruption. Despite this positive effect, the study's main purpose was to assess whether the emotional intelligence of officers – the extent to which they are able to monitor their own feelings and emotions to guide thinking and action – influenced attitudes towards corruption and the intervention's effectiveness. First, the authors reported that officers assessed to be 'high' in emotional intelligence across the treatment and comparison groups tended to be less tolerant of corruption than those assessed to have 'low' emotional intelligence. Second, emotional intelligence seemed to mediate the effect of the two interventions. Furthermore the authors found that officers 'high' in emotional intelligence benefited more from participating in the programmes in terms of their attitudes towards corruption.

Taken together, even though the studies were unable to rule out the influence of other confounding factors and did not seek to measure behaviour, they provided some evidence that efforts to raise awareness of officers' responsibilities can change attitudes towards corruption. They also highlighted the importance of understanding who might respond best to an intervention, which might help with its targeting.

### **Conflict resolution training (police)**

A case study review – identified outside the protocol at the peer review stage – summarised the results of an experiment carried out in Florida that tested the effect of conflict resolution training on the police use of force (Klinger 2010 cited by Prenzler et al. 2013). The US Police Foundation, in partnership with Metro-Dade Police, developed a three-day conflict resolution training course. The course involved simulations of potentially violent situations with role play actors (informed by observations of real life incidents). The training was delivered to

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<sup>12</sup> People with an 'external locus of control' reportedly do not feel responsible for their actions because they do not believe they can influence the situation, whereas those with an 'internal locus' tend to accept responsibility because they feel they have control over their own decisions.

treatment groups in three city districts (each with a corresponding comparison group from the same three districts).

Before the training, researchers carried out observations of police patrols (over 502 shifts) to provide an independent measure of the police use of force. During this period, a total of 1,148 incidents were identified that were classed as 'potentially violent'. Researchers also recorded whether officers used force and, if so, its intensity. After the training, further observations were carried out (375 shifts), during which 994 'potentially violent' incidents were observed. Comparisons were then made to assess the effect of the training.

Overall, the study showed that the training reduced the frequency and intensity at which force was used. Use of force by treatment group officers declined by 23% and 24% in two of the three districts (net of the comparison group). However, the training had no impact on the use of force in the third district (the area with the highest rate of violent crime). Subsequent analysis – which took the intensity of force, location, and underlying crime rate – showed that, overall, officers in the treatment group tended to use less force relative to those in the comparison group. While the study did not show that the police used force excessively, it provided evidence that training can be effective in giving officers an alternative (and less forceful and confrontational) way of managing encounters. The original authors also suggested that further reductions in the use of force might have been possible if the training also focused on the build-up and preparation stages of the encounter, in addition to the focus on the immediate situation.

## The impact of organisational ethics programmes

The REA did not specifically seek to identify evidence on the impact of codes of ethics, as the College of Policing carried out a separate review on this topic (see Brown 2014).

Nevertheless, the searches did locate one study that evaluated the introduction of an ethics programme by an Israeli regional council, in support of a new code of ethics (Beeri et al. 2013). The programme consisted of the following:

- Lectures on ethics.
- Development and launch of a new code of ethics.
- Related training and discussions of 'real present-day decisions'.
- Meetings and forums for staff to discuss ethical decisions and dilemmas.

The impact of the ethics programme on council workers was evaluated via self-report surveys and managers' assessments before and after the programme. In total, 192 workers replied to the survey administered immediately before the programme, and 108 one year after.

Inevitably, differences could only be compared before and after implementation as council-wide implementation precluded the creation of a comparison group.

Overall, the programme was largely considered a success, though the study design meant other explanations could not be ruled out.<sup>13</sup> One year after the implementation, the survey showed that 'ethical resources' in the organisation had improved. Employees were significantly more likely to:

- be aware of the code of ethics;
- report greater involvement in ethical decision-making; and
- perceive an ethical work climate.

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<sup>13</sup> The absence of any comparison group meant it was not possible to predict what would have happened if the programme had not been introduced.

Perceptions of ethical leadership, however, remained unchanged (possibly because they were assessing leaders to a higher standard). There was also no evidence that a series of 'ethical outcomes' had improved (i.e. organisational commitment, people's willingness to 'go the extra mile', and perceived quality of work-life). Thus, despite being associated with some improvements, the authors noted that ethics programmes were not a panacea to all organisational problems.

The study also explored how the programme might have changed employees' perceptions. Analysis was carried out that explored the effect the programme had on the relationship between the organisation's 'ethical resources' and its 'ethical outcomes'. Ethical leadership was found to be associated with ethical climate, organisational commitment, and work-life quality; associations that were stronger after the programme was implemented. The effect of other ethical resources was more mixed. This finding might, therefore, suggest that a code of ethics – by itself – may be insufficient to change an organisation's ethical climate (see also Chapter 3).

## Targeted problem-solving and early intervention

Previous literature on police wrongdoing has highlighted the potential value of forces using early warning systems or triggers to identify officers or areas of policing particularly at risk of unethical behaviour and in order to 'nip the problem in the bud' before it escalates (see, for example, Punch 2009 and Miller 2003). The studies summarised in this section met the inclusion criteria but were recommended at peer review rather than via the search protocol.

### Targeting interventions

Prenzler et al. (2013) reviewed a series of case studies where, in broad terms, a problem-oriented approach had been adopted by the police to reduce excessive or unnecessary uses of force. While the authors focused on initiatives that had been subject to some sort of evaluation (before/after), they noted that most of the evaluations did not include comparison or control sites and did not measure long term change (they were described as largely being 'natural experiments'). Due to the limitation of these study designs, the authors sought to increase confidence in their results by concentrating only on those cases where impact was plausible because of the level of supporting information on implementation.

The initiatives are described in summary in Table 1 below.<sup>14</sup> Together, the case studies provide some evidence that substantial reductions can be made in the police use of force. While the review pointed to a range of potentially effective interventions that variously sought to tackle issues at an individual, cultural and organisational level, problem-solving was a feature common of all the initiatives. In each case, initial analysis was reportedly carried out to identify and diagnose the nature and underlying causes of the problem, which was then subsequently used to tailor the intervention and target its delivery.

The authors also noted that an explicit commitment to improving officer conduct and 'progressive leadership' were consistent across the case studies. The latter was required for innovation and successful implementation of the initiatives, and to deal with any resistance to change. Indeed, the review presented evidence that suggested efforts to replicate some of the initiatives elsewhere, in other contexts, had failed.

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<sup>14</sup> Two further initiatives were discussed in the case study review (Prenzler et al. 2013). The Metro-Dade training intervention has been described in greater detail above because of its focus and study design. A second case study on deaths in custody from England and Wales has not been summarised as it was less relevant to the focus of this REA.



Table 1. Case studies on reducing the police of force (adapted from Prenzler et al. 2013)

<b>Case study</b>	<b>Trigger</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Reported reduction(s)</b>
Oakland (US)	Police-citizen conflict, alienation of African-American community	Reduce violence in police work and improve relations with the community	Established the Violence Reduction Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers required to attend a Peer Review Panel if involved in above average numbers of violent confrontations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrest-related instances of physical conflict</li> <li>• Incidents involving charges for resisting arrest</li> <li>• Citizen complaints</li> <li>• Citizen and officer injuries</li> </ul>
New York (US)	Firearms incidents	Assess and reduce shootings	Collected in-depth documentation of discharges during hostile encounters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of events in incidents</li> <li>• Feeding findings into procedures and training</li> <li>• More stringent guidelines on deadly force</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shots fired</li> <li>• Persons shot and injured/killed by police</li> <li>• Officers shot and injured/killed</li> </ul>
Portland (US)	Police shootings and excessive force allegations	Reduce police use of force	Established the Independent Police Review Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New policies</li> <li>• New use of force review board</li> <li>• Improved training</li> <li>• Use of force reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shootings</li> <li>• Use of force reports</li> <li>• Complaints of excess force</li> <li>• Citizen and officer injuries</li> </ul>
Tasmania (Aus)	Complaints	Reduce complaints	Commitment to reduce complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit screening test</li> <li>• Increased ethics training</li> <li>• Early intervention system</li> <li>• Improved complaint handling</li> <li>• Improved training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public complaints</li> <li>• Assault allegations</li> <li>• Excessive force allegations</li> </ul>
Victoria (Aus)	Fatal shootings	Reduce shootings	Project Beacon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved training</li> <li>• Use of force register</li> <li>• Introduction of OC spray</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fatal shootings</li> </ul>

\*Selected references cited in Prenzler et al. (2013): Toch and Grant 2005 (Oakland); Porter et al. 2012 (Tasmania).

## Targeting problems and people

In their discussion of complaints reduction strategies, Prenzler and Porter (in press) identified two approaches to targeted problem-solving (see also Punch 2009 and Miller 2003):

- **Targeting people** – Monitoring complaints data to identify potential ‘problem officers’ who have received complaints above a defined threshold. While focusing on individuals may fail to deal with wider organisational issues, the authors noted that early intervention increasingly looks at remedial action and wider organisational learning rather than discipline.
- **Targeting problems** – Understanding the nature, type and seriousness of complaints, and identifying areas of high concentration (i.e. hotspots) to focus prevention activity.

Several intervention studies were identified during the literature search that broadly followed these approaches, using risk assessment and early intervention to prevent problems growing:

- **Screening out ‘at risk’ applicants** – Sced (2004) reviewed 16 studies that sought to evaluate three standardised personality tests<sup>15</sup> as potential tools for screening out officers susceptible to ‘corruption’.<sup>16</sup> The review focused on their statistical ability to predict corruption, rather than their effectiveness in reducing wrongdoing in the field. The review looked at whether: test scores were correlated with subsequent corruption; tests differentiated between officers who were corrupt and those who were not; and tests were capable of predicting corrupt behaviour over time with a high degree of accuracy. The review’s main findings were as follows:
  - A weak to moderate relationship was found between officers’ test scores and their subsequent involvement in wrongdoing (a relationship that was stronger when multiple tests were used in combination).
  - Overall, the tests were able to differentiate between officers who were later involved in corruption and those who were not (i.e. there were significant differences in their pre-employment test scores), though there were some inconsistencies between specific personality tests.
  - However, there was marked variability between different tests in terms of their predictive validity or accuracy as a means of screening applicants for future corruption. Many tests performed no better than chance, while other tests were seemingly more or less accurate depending on the level of corruption in the organisation.

The author, therefore, concluded that personality tests have the potential to act as a screening tools for applicants, but that further work was required to evaluate their effectiveness alongside other screening methods.

- **Identifying ‘problem’ officers** –
  - Macintyre et al. (2008) evaluated the effect of the Research and Risk Unit (RRU) which was implemented in the Victoria Police (Australia) to reduce complaints. The

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<sup>15</sup> The three tests – the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, the Inwald Personality Inventory, and California Personality Inventory – each consisted of a range of measurement scales.

<sup>16</sup> These included a mixture of correlational (before/after) and matched controlled studies, which looked at a range of outcomes (including complaints, reprimands and disciplinary action) up to 13 years post-implementation (e.g. Macintyre et al. 2002).

RRU compiled profiles on 'flagged' officers who had received two or more complaints within 12 months. These profiles – based on a range of indicators – were then used in personal development meetings to discuss options for tailored support to prevent further complaints (e.g. counselling, training or alternate duties). The study pointed to a significant reduction in complaints for 44 flagged officers (from 15 complaints per officer to four).

- Charette (1993) described a similar process introduced in Metro-Dade (Florida, US) following two high-profile use of force incidents. Officers were flagged for additional supervisory support if they received two complaints or had been involved in three use of force incidents in a quarter. The average number of flagged officers declined markedly in the year after implementation (from an average of 38 officers per quarter in 1981, to an average of eight between 1982 and 1992).
- Case study research by Walker et al. (2001) found similar effects in other US police departments who adopted early warning systems as part of wider efforts to raise standards of accountability. For example, the average number of citizen complaints received by officers subject to early intervention in Minneapolis and New Orleans fell, respectively, by 67% and 62% one year after intervention.
- **Identifying hotspots** – In addition to identifying problem officers, Macintyre et al. (2008) reported that the RRU in Victoria also carried out location profiling. Nine police stations were identified as having a disproportionately high number of complaints or flagged officers, and received targeted activity (e.g. management training, revisions to policy and work with previously unflagged officers). On average, complaints fell in these stations from 61 to 25 per year.

## When interventions are most likely to be effective

### Replication, problem analysis and commitment

The studies summarised above have described a range of interventions that may be effective, or at least promising, in terms of preventing wrongdoing in organisations. However, there are always risks in practitioners simply replicating interventions that have apparently been a success in one place, with limited analysis of the problem they are trying to address or consideration of the context in which they are operating. As Prenzler et al. (2013) warned, attempts to replicate some of the case studies in their review resulted in failure. When, then, are effective and promising interventions most likely to be successful?

Limited evidence was uncovered during the REA on the context in which interventions were most likely to be effective. There was some indication from the studies included in the review that two factors were most relevant. First, the studies on problem-solving suggest that there is a need for practitioners to carry out initial scanning and analysis to ensure the intervention is designed to deal with the problem and its underlying causes, and is well targeted (see Prenzler and Porter, in press). Second, Prenzler et al. (2013) highlighted organisational commitment and leadership as common themes to their case studies on reducing the police use of force.

The following study, recommended at peer review, met the inclusion criteria and described the effect of an organisation-wide strategy in the New York Police Department (NYPD), which provided further supporting evidence for these factors.

## A case study in leadership commitment to respectful policing

Davis et al.'s (2005) case study explored whether an increase in public complaints was a consequence of the NYPD adopting aggressive enforcement tactics, but found that positive leadership and a commitment to respectful policing could ameliorate that relationship.

During the 1990s, New York City experienced sustained reductions in crime, while complaints against the police increased dramatically. The cause of the crime drop has been widely debated, but many speculate that the introduction of zero-tolerance policing – relentless order maintenance and law enforcement – was a root cause of the rise in complaints. Two police precincts in the Bronx, however, experienced large reductions in both crime and complaints. Between 1993 and 1998, complaints in the two precincts fell by 54% and 64% (compared to a 39% force increase). Drawing on time series analysis and qualitative interviews, Davis et al. (2005) suggested that the leadership styles and management practices of the precinct commanders were the most plausible explanations for these two precincts 'bucking the trend'.

The precinct commanders were described as critical to the success of the organisation-wide reforms introduced across the NYPD to deal with the rise in complaints.<sup>17</sup> In effect, they acted as a 'trigger', which enabled the reforms to 'work' locally in the two precincts. The organisation-wide reforms were seen as necessary, but insufficient without local leadership, to cause a reduction in complaints. While the two commanders had different leadership styles, both showed a strong commitment to respectful policing (e.g. placing high priority on courtesy, professionalism, and respect; speaking at local training; speaking to 'problem' officers; and telling officers they would lose special assignments if they received complaints).

In conclusion, Davis et al. stated: "We believe that the [commanders] in the two precincts... took a departmental policy and used it to further their vision of how police ought to interact with the public" (2005: page 243). In short, the effect of the reforms was seemingly made possible because of the leadership and management context in the two precincts.

## What doesn't work and what's harmful

Encouragingly, all of the studies described above reported plausible, positive results even though they used different methods and achieved different levels of methodological rigour which would affect how strongly their results could be attributed to the interventions. Furthermore, we did not find any evidence on interventions that had no effect or were counter-productive (i.e. they inadvertently increased wrongdoing despite intentions to the contrary). This is not to say that all interventions will be effective and risk-free. It is likely that ineffective and harmful initiatives do exist, but have not been evaluated or their results not published (due to publication bias).

## Evaluation gaps

Overall, our search for literature identified notable gaps in the 'what works' evidence. Prenzler and Porter (in press) have noted that police reforms on preventing wrongdoing have tended to be piecemeal and not been subjected to rigorous evaluation. This finding should be taken

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<sup>17</sup> The department-wide reforms included: a new 'courtesy, professionalism, and respect' policy; psychological and personality screening for new recruits; a focus on complaints and 'problem officers' in CompStat; a 'verbal judo' course to help officers resolve confrontational encounters peacefully; and monitoring programmes for officers with multiple complaints.

as a call for more and better quality evaluation work that seeks to assess effectiveness and understand how such reforms operate, given the paucity of robust long term evaluations.

For this reason, it is important that policymakers and practitioners do not just stick to a small number of 'tried and tested' methods, but engage critically with the research and apply new interventions carefully with a view to building the evidence base.

It is also important to note that efforts to reduce wrongdoing sometimes, inescapably, involve a package of organisation-wide changes because the process is often triggered by a high profile scandal that necessitates 'root-and-branch' reform. In these circumstances, it can be difficult to evaluate impact using an experimental or quasi-experimental approach because organisation-wide reform precludes the creation of comparable treatment and control groups. Nevertheless, while we have to be more cautious about the conclusions that can be reached, such reforms can still be evaluated using careful before/after designs that also look at the process of implementation, the mechanisms of change, and take account of mediating factors. Indeed, policymakers and practitioners should consider such an approach when introducing widespread reform.

On balance, given the evidence on problem-solving, it seems likely that interventions stand a much greater chance of success – especially in the longer term – when they are well-designed, seek to deal with underlying causal factors, and are well-targeted. In other words, blanket approaches that are not based on a good understanding of the problem and the related context could have no benefit (or even a detrimental effect). When developing these interventions, attention should also be paid to the evidence presented in the next chapter about the factors associated with ethical and unethical behaviour. Careful thought and planning will be required to ensure, for example, that any new intervention or initiative does not change the ethical climate within an organisation for the worse by, say, creating perverse incentives, encouraging officers not to report wrongdoing or being perceived as unfair.

## Untested interventions

During the REA, we identified a wide range of strategies and tactics that were recommended in the literature as potential solutions for preventing wrongdoing in organisations, which were informed by an empirical or theoretical insight about the nature of police wrongdoing, rather than because of rigorous evaluation evidence:

- **Independent oversight and investigation** – Increasingly, the level of citizen involvement in the oversight of the police and the investigation of complaints has been consistently recommended by researchers working in the field. Punch, for example, has argued that a 'golden rule' should be that "the police cannot and should not be responsible for investigating their own deviance" (2009: page 245). Prenzler and Porter (in press) have noted that police oversight has been a major and widely adopted innovation that has advanced accountability, but that oversight agencies have struggled to show they are effective in holding people to account or improving conduct overall. Transparency International UK (Pyman et al. 2012) have also advocated the involvement of citizen groups and independent oversight on the reform process aimed at dealing with police corruption. Drawing on ten international case studies, they suggested that: "Reform efforts are often limited and incomplete if undertaken without strong, independent external monitoring" (2012: page 5).
- **A 'holistic approach' to corruption** – McCusker's (2006) Australian review of anti-corruption strategies suggested that, given the multi-faceted nature of corruption, a holistic approach was required to deal with it, which included:

- Interventionism – reacting to corruption whenever it occurs to punish offenders.
- Managerialism – having appropriate procedures, systems and protocols to discourage corruption.
- Organisational integrity – changing norms about ethical behaviours within the organisation.

The author also highlighted the need for external ‘pillars’ – the media, civic society, and oversight agencies – to work together, particularly where one pillar may be weaker.

- **Enhanced vetting and recruitment screening** – While we found some evidence about the factors at the individual level that might put someone at increased risk of wrongdoing (see Chapter 3) and the predictive validity of pre-employment personality tests (above), we did not identify any evaluations that specifically tested whether the introduction of vetting or screening was effective in reducing levels of wrongdoing over time. Processes designed to screen out the ‘wrong sort’ of person found some support in the literature. For example, the IPCC (2012b) discussed how 54 cases of sexual violence perpetrated by members of the police service may have been predicted and prevented through a checklist of pre-employment questions and communication with previous employers during the police vetting process.
- **Police training on ethical dilemmas** – While we identified several studies that tested the impact of training, there remain gaps in the evidence about the effectiveness of particular types of training and their content. Bayley (2012), for example, recommended the use of ‘proactive’ rather than ‘reactive’ training, which seeks to give officers the tools to identify and avoid ethical dilemmas before they occur, rather than reacting to the situation after the event.

There is a wider set of interventions that are either currently used by forces or described in the wider policing literature, such as the following:

- Proactive techniques (e.g. covert surveillance, intelligence gathering and informants) by professional standards departments to investigate officers and staff suspected on serious wrongdoing (Punch 2009).
- Work-based integrity testing, which involves simulating misconduct opportunities for serving officers – on a random or targeted basis – to see how they respond; an approach thought to be an essential anti-corruption device (Prenzler and Ronken 2001).
- More intensive management, supervision and oversight of specialist units that might, predictably, have greater opportunities for serious wrongdoing because of their working environment<sup>18</sup> (Punch 2009).
- Alternative approaches to dealing with wrongdoing that adopt the principles of restorative justice and organisational learning (e.g. identify lessons about systemic issues). Young et al.’s (2005) quasi-experiment examined the effect of informal, restorative complaint resolution on officer and complainant satisfaction, but did not examine the effect on complaint levels and police practices over time.

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<sup>18</sup> For example: excessive use of force by public order units due to confrontational public contact; and corruption by crime squads due to contact with criminals, undercover work, and enforcement activities related to drugs and vice.

- Increased regulation of police work through legalistic rules, paper work, and technological accountability (e.g. the audio and visual recording of suspect interviews). Earlier research on the impact of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) has highlighted the challenges around 'rule-tightening'. Some aspects of PACE have been regarded as more effective than others in changing behaviour (see Brown 1997, Reiner 2010, and Sanders and Young 2007). While these controls have dramatically changed practices in the station (e.g. custody), they have arguably been less effective at regulating street policing (especially stop and search) possibly because of the: visibility and reviewability of police decisions in these situations; 'cost' of making a poor decision; and extent to which the rules accord with police work (e.g. Dixon et al. 1989).

## Summary

This chapter has sought to summarise the evidence we found on effective and promising interventions. Overall, we did not identify the number of rigorous studies that are ordinarily required to make a strong statement about 'what works'. The evidence was relatively mixed in terms of the designs of the evaluations and the questions they sought to address. While we found one SR, it was on a topic only tangentially related to wrongdoing in organisations. Nevertheless, that review concluded that there were a range of policing interventions based on the principles of procedural justice (e.g. community policing, informal contact, restorative justice and alternative complaints procedures) that could improve public perceptions of contact and their confidence in the police. Though the SR did not look directly at the effect of these interventions on wrongdoing, it did provide evidence that police practices can be made to be fairer and more respectful in the eyes of the public – arguably a key foundation of ethical policing.

A number of individual studies were also identified that provided evidence of a wide range of promising interventions. Their study designs, settings and use of different outcome measures, however, precluded strong overall conclusions being made (particularly as few looked at behavioural outcomes). Promising interventions included the following:

- **Body worn video** – Found in one US policing study to reduce the police use of force and, potentially, complaints from the public.
- **Reminding officers about lines of accountability** – Found in one Dutch policing study to be associated with a change in officer attitudes.
- **Training** – Found in several policing and non-policing studies to be effective in changing attitudes, self-reported behaviour and, in two studies, contact with the public (including reducing the police use of force). Notably, while the training varied markedly in terms of its content and delivery, the focus on giving officers practical tools to think or act differently was consistent to all.
- **Organisational ethics programmes** – Found in one Israeli non-policing study to be associated with improved employee perceptions.
- **Targeted problem-solving and early interventions** – Found in several policing evaluations and case studies to be associated with notable reductions in complaints and the police use of force (through detailed analysis, targeting problem officers and hotspots, and tailoring interventions to the underlying problem).

The patchwork of evidence identified by the REA meant it was not possible to say, with any degree of certainty, under what conditions interventions were most likely to be effective. The

evidence on problem-solving, however, suggested that problem analysis and committed leadership were likely to be essential ingredients. Further, one study exploring organisation-wide reforms introduced in the NYPD, suggested that commitment to respectful policing by local police leaders was required for the reforms to take effect and trigger a reduction in complaints.

While no interventions were found to be ineffective or counter-productive, this should not be taken as evidence that any intervention will reduce wrongdoing. The research discussed in the next chapter certainly suggests that the implementation of any new intervention requires careful thought and handling to ensure it does not have an unintended, negative consequence (e.g. as result of being seen by officers as unfair). Of course, a wide range of initiatives were discussed in the literature, or seemingly used by forces, for which there was limited empirical evidence (sometimes because they involved organisation-wide change). While their effect may be unknown, they have the potential to make a difference which suggests the need for policymakers and practitioners to engage critically with possible solutions, and apply them in a way that contributes to the development of a stronger evidence base.



# 3. The factors influencing ethical behaviour and wrongdoing

The evidence presented in this chapter points to a number of factors associated with wrongdoing and ethical behaviour in organisations:

- Systematic review evidence suggested that unethical decisions in the workplace were influenced by a range of factors at the individual, situational and organisational level.
- Beyond highlighting the complexity of the issue, this finding perhaps indicates that action at all three levels may be required to deal with wrongdoing and that it would be insufficient to target 'bad apples', 'bad cases' or 'bad barrels' on their own.
- The review also highlighted that unethical decisions were not always based on unethical intentions, and that choices a worker made were more accurately predicted by their past behaviour than by their reported intentions. One implication of this finding is that interventions focused solely on officer attitudes and intentions may not lead to improved behaviour.
- Evidence from individual studies found the following:
  - **Organisational factors** – The working environment, organisational justice and ethical leadership were all found to be 'protective factors' against different measures of wrongdoing. Ethical leadership appeared to have a range of direct and indirect influences and, while there was some consistency between studies on the value of role-modelling, other leadership behaviours and styles were also found to have an effect.
  - **Situational factors** – Some evidence was found on the situational factors that increased the chances of officers using improper force (e.g. the suspect being agitated or antagonistic, or having been involved in a serious offence). While no individual studies were found on how the perceived consequences of a situation could affect decision-making ('bad cases'), there was some indication that officers could sometimes be unsure whether particular activities were unethical. Several studies were found that pointed to the existence of a 'blue code of silence' – the informal pressure on officers not to report their colleagues – although its effect appeared to vary within and between organisations.
  - **Individual characteristics** – A range of individual characteristics – such as being male, younger, less experienced – were found in the literature to be associated with some types of wrongdoing. Early career misconduct, and a range of social and psychological risk factors, were also potentially important influences, though their impact was found to be difficult to measure. The implications for practice of these individual characteristics are perhaps less clear, as they are potentially related to other confounding factors and arguably harder for practitioners to influence.

We set out, in this chapter, the evidence from empirical studies and literature reviews on the factors that have been associated with wrongdoing and ethical behaviour in organisations. As we do not seek to make any claims in this chapter about the impact of an intervention (which would necessitate some sort of evaluation design), we draw on a much broader range of studies, including one-off surveys and qualitative research. While not ostensibly about effective or promising practice, by understanding the factors that influence wrongdoing in

organisations, practitioners may be better placed to design and implement better interventions, and target them appropriately. A note of caution is, however, required in assuming that findings from one organisation or location will automatically translate to policing context in England and Wales.

Again, the chapter has been structured broadly around study/review types:

- First, the results of a large and robust meta-analysis are described. This SR brought together 136 studies – from a range of professions and sectors – to look at the extent to which unethical decisions by employees could be explained by:
  - Organisational factors ('bad barrels').
  - Situational factors related to the moral dilemma ('bad cases').
  - Individual characteristics ('bad apples').
- The chapter then explores the factors associated with ethical behaviour or wrongdoing identified by a range of individual empirical studies and smaller reviews. For consistency with the previous section, the material has been organised around the same conceptual framework used in the SR.

The distinction between organisational and individual factors chimes with the previous policing literature. Police wrongdoing may be thought of as a result of individual failure rather than an institutional problem – committed by a few 'bad apples' in an otherwise healthy barrel. However, while research suggests the problem of serious forms of wrongdoing is not widespread and typically involves people operating in isolation, the literature suggests that a focus on 'bad apples' ignores the extent to which their behaviour may be fostered by a range of wider organisational and social influences (i.e. 'bad barrels') (Miller 2003, Punch 2009).

It has been argued that some aspects of policing, for example, are structurally conducive to rule-breaking and illegality, and that anyone in the same position would be equally tempted (Waddington 1999). A number of 'invitational edges' are said to exist that encourage wrongdoing, not least because officers regularly have contact with criminals and are under pressure to get results in a context when the internal rules are often ambiguous and not enforced. They also tend to operate within an organisational culture traditionally characterised by isolation, cynicism, and solidarity in which macho risk-taking is valued (Reiner 2010). Moreover, frontline activities are typically not visible to supervisors, meaning it is difficult for them to review officer practice and decision-making.

Of course, police integrity does not exist in a vacuum, and it has been argued that police forces and other organisations (including government) help create – or do not challenge – the conditions that support police wrongdoing. Policing also takes place in an even broader social, political, and economic context, meaning individual decisions may be partly influenced by external events. Punch (2009) gave the example of political pressure being applied on the police to achieve results in response to moral panics in the media. Similarly, the use of quantitative performance targets has often been recognised as encouraging perverse, and sometimes unethical, behaviour. Punch (2003, and Gilmour 2010) has also warned the development of more systemic failures ('rotten orchards'), whereby the organisation 'encourages' or even 'colludes' with deviant behaviour. He argued that favourable conditions for such failures included:

- a strong 'macho' culture with an 'operational code';
- a competitive spirit paired with disillusionment;
- an emphasis on solving crimes at all costs;
- a command-and-control leadership approach required by emergency work; and
- weak mechanisms for accountability and organisational learning.

## Systematic review evidence

As discussed in Chapter 2, SRs are based on an exhaustive literature search and can provide a comprehensive assessment of the evidence on a particular topic (where that evidence meets particular inclusion criteria). As well as bringing together the evidence about the effectiveness of interventions, this method can also be used to collate and appraise the research on what is known about the nature of an issue or problem.

Our search for literature on wrongdoing identified a large and robust review of the literature on the factors that predicted unethical decision-making in organisations (Kish-Gephart et al. 2010).<sup>19</sup> The authors used a transparent protocol to search for relevant studies (including data from national surveys). The 136 studies that were identified and included in the review covered a wide range of professions and occupations (including education, accountancy and hospitality). Two policing studies were included, meaning it cannot automatically be assumed the review's findings will translate into a UK policing context. The authors also conducted meta-analyses as part of the review; an advanced statistical technique that effectively pools the data for different studies to come up with an overall result.

For the purposes of the review, unethical decisions were broadly defined as "any organisational member action that violates widely accepted (societal) moral norms" (2010: page 2). A distinction, however, was made between:

- unethical intentions – what a study participant thought they might do; and
- unethical behaviour – what a study participant reportedly did do (e.g. measured by self-reports, co-worker reports or documentary records).

The review grouped the potential 'sources' of unethical decisions at work into three categories, discussed in more detail below.

### 'Bad barrels' – organisational factors

The review's meta-analysis found that an organisation's ethical climate and enforcement of a code of conduct can have a positive impact on ethical choices at work:

- **The nature of the working environment** – The ethical climate of a workplace was found to be associated with ethical decision-making:
  - Work climates that were thought to foster self-interest among workers were found to increase the likelihood of workers making unethical choices (12 studies).
  - Conversely, where workers judged their work environment to be more 'benevolent' and 'principled', they were found to make fewer unethical choices (ten studies).
  - Overall, the presence of a strong, positive ethical culture was associated with a reduction in unethical choices (12 studies).
- **Codes of conduct** – The review distinguished between the effect of an organisation simply having a code of conduct, and a code being actively enforced:
  - The mere existence of a code of conduct, on its own, was found not to have a significant influence on unethical decision-making (19 studies).

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<sup>19</sup> An updated version of the meta-analysis has been published since the work for the REA was completed and reports similar findings (see Treviño et al. 2014).

- However, when workers thought a code was well-enforced, it had a very strong, negative effect on unethical choices (7 studies).

## 'Bad cases' – situational factors about decisions

The review showed that the 'moral intensity' of a situation – the perceived immediacy and magnitude of its consequences – could affect the decisions made by workers, particularly in terms of their intention to act unethically and how they reasoned about their actions (five studies). It showed that, on average, a worker was more likely to avoid unethical behaviour when:

- there was high degree of consensus among peers on how to act in a situation (the strongest influence);
- the person affected by the worker's decision was known, familiar or physically close; and
- the potential impact of that decision was severe and immediate (e.g. the likelihood of negative consequences, how many people were judged to be affected, and the extent of possible harm).

Each characteristic, on its own, had a moderately strong effect on workers' intentions. However, when they were combined into an overall measure of 'moral intensity', there was an extremely strong, negative, association with unethical choices.

## 'Bad apples' – individual characteristics

The review's meta-analysis revealed that the following characteristics of individual workers were, on average, statistically associated with unethical choices at work. Overall, however, the influence of individual characteristics was found to be smaller than for the situational factors described above.

- **A worker's 'moral philosophy' and 'moral flexibility'** – Inevitably, personal morality was found to be associated with ethical decision-making:
  - Overall, if people were concerned about causing harm to others, they were less likely to make unethical choices (ten studies).
  - Workers who had flexible 'moral strictures' – meaning they were able to adjust their perceptions of 'right' and 'wrong' in different situations – were more likely to have unethical intentions and to behave unethically (12 studies).
- **Personality traits** –
  - Workers who were assessed to be highly 'Machiavellian' in their personality type (i.e. inclined to manipulate others and use them for personal gain), were also more likely to have unethical intentions and behave unethically (11 studies).
  - Workers who were reported to have an 'external locus of control' – in the sense that they were likely to link events or actions to factors outside, rather than under, their control – were, on average, more likely to behave unethically and have unethical intentions (11 studies). This finding mirrored the studies discussed in Chapter 2 (page 18) which evaluated the impact of police training which sought to minimise officers' external locus of control (Aremu et al. 2009 and 2011)
- **Demographic factors** – The meta-analysis showed that sex and age had independent effects on unethical decisions, though the size of these effects was small:

- Men were more likely to make unethical choices than women, though the effect was small (60 studies).
  - Younger workers were also more likely to make unethical choices than older workers but, again, the effect was small (35 studies).
  - There was no evidence that education attainment influenced unethical intentions and behaviours.
- **Job satisfaction** – Workers who were dissatisfied in their jobs were, on average, more likely to make unethical choices (20 studies).

## Predicting and tackling unethical work decisions

Overall, the systematic review concluded that ethical work choices were influenced by a range of factors at the individual, situational and organisational level. Beyond highlighting the complexity of wrongdoing, one implication of this conclusion is that to address the underlying causes of unethical intentions and behaviours, it would be insufficient to target 'bad apples', 'bad cases' or 'bad barrels' on their own. Instead, action at all three levels is likely to be required.

The authors also noted that the choices made by a worker were more accurately predicted by their past behaviour than by their reported intentions. In other words, unethical behaviour may involve a person acting impulsively or without much prior thought, rather than being a rational process. An implication of this finding is that interventions that focus solely on officer attitudes and intentions (such as training) may not lead to improvements in behaviour, and that additional follow-up support may be required for workers who have engaged in wrongdoing in order to 'break' any link to similar behaviour in the future.

In drawing out implications from their analysis, the authors ventured to suggest that the following interventions should be used in combination to enhance ethical behaviour:

- Immediate activities, such as gathering good quality data (e.g. surveys to understand the nature and influences on ethical choices).
- Medium-term activities, such as designing or revising processes for selecting, assessing, progressing and promoting staff, as well as auditing the extent to which ethical dilemmas are addressed in their training and education.
- Long term activities, such as changes to the organisational culture and climate, implementing a code of conduct, and providing feedback on how the code has been enforced to increase its visibility among employees.

## Evidence from individual studies

### The influence of organisational factors

Building on the SR evidence that suggested organisational factors could have a significant effect on wrongdoing, this section describes the findings from a range of individual studies to explore, in more detail, the influence of:

- the prevailing attitudes within an organisation (its 'ethical climate');
- organisational justice; and
- ethical leadership.

Taken together, these studies provide consistent evidence that organisational factors can have a positive effect and can be strong predictors of (reported) ethical behaviour.

### **Ethical climate and formal compliance practices**

Organisational factors were found to be stronger predictors of misconduct and job satisfaction than personal characteristics in one US study. This survey research was based on a sample of 145 students from a large urban university who went to work for private, not-for-profit, and government organisations (Andreoli and Lefkowitz 2009). The perceived presence of the following factors were found to have a positive and direct effect on perceived wrongdoing in the organisations:

- **Formal compliance practices** – The internal and external controls within the organisation (such as rules and codes of conduct).
- **The 'ethical climate' of the organisation** – The values and morals of leaders.

The negative effect of a poor ethical climate or pressure to compromise was also less pronounced when compliance practices were perceived to be in place. Thus, compliance practices may 'compensate' for other factors that might be weak within an organisation (but which would, otherwise, help reduce wrongdoing). Importantly, the study indicated that a combination of measures was most likely to be required to minimise wrongdoing because elements of an organisation's compliance practices and ethical climate had a collective impact on outcomes, but did not consistently predict outcomes on their own.

By contrast, personal characteristics were found to have no effect in this study. Wrongdoing was not predicted by age, sex, ethnicity, job status, or 'level of moral reasoning' (i.e. the extent to which a person considered any consequences when making moral judgements).

Taken together, the results suggested that – rather than focusing on individual characteristics – it is important to promote a 'moral organisation' through the words and actions of senior managers and supervisors, as well as through more formal mechanisms (e.g. codes of conduct). However, it should be noted that findings based on a sample of US students may not readily translate into other contexts.

### **Organisational justice and commitment**

'Organisational justice' is an umbrella term which comprises different theories and frameworks that relate to: how fairly decisions are made and communicated inside the organisation; how respectfully people are treated; and how equitably goods, resources and outcomes are distributed internally among staff. In broad terms, the wider literature suggests that when people perceive their employer to be fair, respectful and transparent, they are more likely to hold positive attitudes, have greater wellbeing and behave ethically (see Colquitt 2008 and Greenberg 2011 for reviews of this literature).

Three studies that specifically looked at these issues in a policing context are described below:

- **Organisational justice and police misconduct** – Wolfe and Piquero's (2011) survey of a random sample of 483 officers in the Philadelphia Police Department (US) explored the relationship between organisational justice and misconduct issues. Overall, perceptions of organisational justice were found to have a positive effect. Where officers perceived high levels of organisational justice:
  - the likelihood of them being the subject of a complaint or investigation, or of them committing violations, was significantly lower; and

- they were less likely to say they adhered to a 'code of silence' or believed the 'ends justified the means'.

The study, thus, indicated that the relationship between organisational injustice and (deviant) sub-cultural beliefs may be an explanatory mechanism for police misconduct. However, like all studies of this design, it is not completely possible disentangle cause-and-effect.

- **Organisational justice and self-legitimacy** – More recent survey research, carried out by the College of Policing, Oxford University and Durham Constabulary after the literature search for this REA was completed, has built on this US study. Bradford and Quinton's (2014) survey of officers showed the following:
  - Perceptions of organisational justice were found to be positively associated with officers identifying with –and being committed to – the force and feeling confident in their own authority (i.e. 'self-legitimacy'). In contrast, perceived unfairness by supervisors and senior leaders was associated with officer cynicism, and lower levels of self-legitimacy.
  - In turn, feeling self-confident as a police officer and, to a lesser extent, perceiving support from the public, were both found to be associated with greater commitment to democratic policing (e.g. support for suspects' rights, the use of proportionate over greater force, and fair treatment of the public).

The study, therefore, concluded that fair decision-making and respectful treatment within police organisations can shape officers' cultural orientations, and support for ethical policing practices (though it was unable to look at the effect on behaviour).

- **Organisational commitment** – Haarr's (1997) mixed-method field study carried out in one US police department did not look directly at the effect of organisational justice. Instead, it explored the association between organisational commitment among patrol officers (i.e. how much they identified with, and were committed to, the force) and different types of deviant behaviours. The study – which was based on over 580 hours of patrol observations and a face-to-face survey – found that officers with differing levels of commitment tended to engage in different types of misconduct:
  - High organisational commitment (the smallest group) – tended to engage in 'deviance for the organisation' (e.g. rule bending to achieve results), and accept informal rewards.
  - Low organisational commitment – tended to engage in work avoidance and manipulation (e.g. not responding to calls, avoiding paperwork), 'deviance against the organisation' (e.g. stealing, absenteeism), and accept informal rewards.
  - Medium organisational commitment (the largest group) – tended to engage in all forms of the wrongdoing listed above.

While based on a small sample and some unclear measures, the results nevertheless indicate that officers with differing levels of commitment might do wrong, but that their strength of loyalty might influence the type of misconduct they commit.

## Ethical leadership

In the previous chapter, we saw how leadership commitment to respectful policing appeared to be a key feature to successful interventions (Prenzler, et al 2013; Davis et al. 2005). In this section, we describe three studies that explored whether and how the principles of 'ethical leadership' can have more of a direct influence on wrongdoing in organisations.

Ethical leaders have been described as those who are “honest, caring, and principled individuals who make fair and balanced decisions” (Brown and Treviño 2006: page 597). In so doing, they may set and communicate clear standards of behaviour and take action against those who fail to meet those standards. Above all, they are positive role models to others in terms of how to behave.

- **Leading by example** – A US study (Resick et al. 2013) explored the relationship between ratings of ethical leadership and employee behaviours, using an innovative survey approach that paired individual employees with their supervisors. This approach was informed by Social Learning Theory (Bandura 1977); the idea that people learn how to behave by watching those around them. The results showed that employees who rated their supervisors as more ethical were also:
  - more likely to think ‘organisational citizenship behaviours’ (i.e. those that helped the organisation) and ‘pro-social behaviours’ (i.e. those that helped the group) were fair and just; and
  - less likely to think deviant or anti-social acts were fair and just.

Further, these positive attitudes were reflected in their actions, according to reports from their supervisors.

This study, therefore, provides support for the idea that leaders need to lead by example to improve behaviour and reduce wrongdoing within organisations.

- **Vertical and horizontal influences within a hierarchy** – Schaubroeck et al. (2012) used sophisticated survey analysis to look at the effect of ethical leadership in the US military. Based on a survey of 2,572 army personnel from randomly selected brigades deployed in Iraq, the study sought to explore the relationships between ethical leadership and ethical culture across different hierarchical levels (i.e. squad, company and platoon), and whether and how ethical leadership permeated through the organisation. The soldiers were surveyed about: attitudes on leadership and culture at different organisational levels, and their peers; and any unethical behaviour they had observed in their squad (e.g. colleagues mistreating or harming non-combatants, filing false reports or stealing).

Using multi-level statistical modelling, the authors identified that ethical leadership had a range of direct and indirect effects on reported behaviour at different levels. A complex set of ‘horizontal’ and ‘vertical’ influences were identified but, in summary, the main findings were as follows:

- Ethical leaders, at every hierarchical level, were found to have a strong, direct influence on the ethical culture at their own level within the organisation.
- Ethical culture seemed to ‘cascade’ down through the organisation.
- Ethical leadership at more senior levels also had a ‘tiered’ effect, as it was linked to a more ethical culture lower down the organisation.
- Senior leaders also had an indirect influence, which was ‘communicated’ through the culture at the higher level and junior leaders lower down in the organisations (who also ‘transmitted’ the leadership style of the senior leaders). In other words, ethical leadership at senior levels was linked to an increased likelihood of ethical leadership at lower levels.

Overall, this study highlighted the importance of ethical leadership within a military context, showing how ethical leadership at different levels can permeate an



organisation and influence behaviour. The authors, therefore, concluded that senior leaders should: adopt an ethical leadership style themselves; encourage leaders lower down the organisation to follow suit; and seek to create ethical cultures in their organisations. They also suggested that ethical leaders should:

- act as role models and coaches to those at lower levels;
  - use examples of ethical and unethical behaviour to provide teaching, guidance and feedback on standards and sanctions; and
  - support and improve staff understanding through a range of formal processes (e.g. selection, promotion, training, performance appraisals, speeches, policies) and more informal mechanisms (e.g. story-telling).
- **Leadership qualities** – The influence of different leadership qualities on integrity violations was assessed in one policing study from the Netherlands, based on a survey of 2,130 officers from five regional forces (Huberts 2007). The officers were asked a series of questions to measure their supervisors' qualities in terms of role modelling (setting a good example to officers), strictness (setting and enforcing ethical standards) and openness (discussing ethical issues and dilemmas). Survey respondents were also asked about perceived integrity violations committed by fellow officers in their immediate working environments (rather than their own behaviour).<sup>20</sup> All three leadership qualities were found to have an influence – for the better – on perceived wrongdoing by peers:
    - Role modelling had a positive impact on all types of integrity violations. A relatively strong effect was found on behaviour related to interpersonal relationships such as internal favouritism, unfair treatment of colleagues (i.e. discrimination, harassment, bullying and gossiping) and falsely reporting in sick.
    - Strictness had a positive effect on 15 out of 20 violations. These violations tended to relate to the misuse of organisational resources (e.g. fraud and theft). No link was found to violations directly related to police work and 'getting the job done' (e.g. violence and poor care of suspects).
    - Openness had positive impact on 15 out of 20 violations. Though a pattern of results was less clear overall, openness had a relatively strong effect on internal favouritism and discriminatory remarks to citizens.

Taken together, these results suggest that different leadership qualities may be required to prevent specific types of police misconduct. While it is clear that supervisors and leaders should – as a default – seek to be good role models through exemplary behaviour, and to encourage open discussion, there may be situations where it is important for them to set appropriate standards of behaviour and sanction behaviour that falls short.

## The influence of situational and cultural factors

The SR found that the characteristics of a situation could affect the decisions made by workers, particularly in terms of whether there was a consensus among peers about how to act, and how closely and severely the consequences of a decision would be felt (Kish-Gephart et al. 2010). Our literature search did not identify any individual studies that were directly related to these issues. However, research was found that looked at:

- situational factors that seemed to affect the police use of force; and

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<sup>20</sup> The survey identified 22 types of misconduct, under ten broad violation categories (e.g. corruption, theft, fraud, conflicts of interest, excessive violence, and resource wastage).

- whether police officers recognised certain behaviours as being unethical or against the rules, and the pressure on them not to report incidents of wrongdoing committed by peers (i.e. the 'blue code of silence')

## Use of excessive force

Harris (2009) conducted a systematic review of three studies on the causes of officers using improper force during police/public encounters (which was found to be a rare occurrence).<sup>21</sup> Despite there being a limited number of studies, the review concluded that situational factors had the most substantive impact on the improper use of force. The improper use of police force against a suspect was more likely when:

- the encounter took place in a location under 'police control' (such as a custody suite);
- the suspect had been involved in a serious offence (affecting both reasonable and excessive force);
- the suspect was agitated, antagonistic, resisted arrest or was drunk; and
- other (non-intervening) police officers were present.<sup>22</sup>

Factors at the individual level (i.e. length of service and work attitudes) and organisational level (i.e. collective attitudes, management priority on crime fighting, and bureaucratisation) were found to have a weak effect; they slightly increased the chances of improper force being used. Moreover, the review found some demographic patterns in terms of which officers were more likely to use improper force over multiple encounters (see below).

Whilst based on few studies, Harris's review nevertheless highlighted that the nature of a situation – and, to a lesser extent, organisational and personal characteristics – may make the occurrence of a particular form of wrongdoing more likely.

The relevance of situational and cultural factors to the police use of force have also been underlined in two other studies identified during the search:

- Reflecting on her own ethnographic research, and exploring whether and how to challenge police violence, Westmarland (2001) described a number of cases in which officers seemingly used excessive force:
  - because they misjudged the level of force that was required (particularly in highly stressful situations);
  - to sanction or 'punish' a suspect informally (e.g. for being 'lippy');
  - as revenge because they lost their temper; and
  - to reassert boundaries (e.g. 'saving face' and to prevent contact with others).
- Analysis by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (2012) of over 60,000 allegations of oppressive police behaviour<sup>23</sup> (2000-12), and more detailed review of case studies (2008-12), suggested that such incidents were likely to take place outside, during weekends, and at night. Demographic patterns were also identified (see below).

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<sup>21</sup> The systematic review is included in here due to its specific focus and the small number of studies upon which it was based.

<sup>22</sup> Use of force may also be more likely in higher crime areas (Prenzler et al. 2013).

<sup>23</sup> Including, for example, harassment, sexual and non-sexual assault, and unlawful arrest.

## The 'blue code of silence' – acknowledging and reporting wrongdoing

The meta-analysis by Kish-Gephart et al. (2010) pointed to the 'moral intensity' of decisions, and the extent to which colleagues agreed on how to act, as being influences on wrongdoing. While the search identified no further literature on these issues, related research was found on the extent to which officers recognised specific behaviours as wrongdoing, and their likelihood to report such behaviours.

One study was found that suggested there was some uncertainty amongst officers as to whether particular activities were unethical. A survey by Gonzales et al. (2005) of over 3,000 officers from 30 US police agencies revealed that many did not know what the department's rules of appropriate conduct were. For example, more than 10% of respondents were unsure whether an officer exploiting their authority for personal gain would be in breach of the rules, and nearly 15% were uncertain about cover ups.

Several studies were found that explored the idea of the 'blue code of silence'; the informal pressure within the police on officers not to report misconduct committed by fellow officers (see, for example, Miller 2003). While such normative codes will inevitably shape how much, and what types of, wrongdoing come to light, they could also influence whether some behaviours are even seen by the police to be problematic – making its prevention potentially more challenging.

- **Perceived severity of behaviour** – Survey research has pointed to the existence of a 'blue code', but suggested that it may affect some types of misconduct more than others. Westmarland's (2005) survey, carried out in one force from England and Wales, presented the sample of 275 officers with 11 scenarios, each containing a different unethical behaviour.<sup>24</sup> The officers were then asked to rate how serious each behaviour was, and whether they would report it. The results were as follows:
  - Overall, the survey respondents were found to know the 'rules' and displayed high levels of understanding of the standards expected of them.
  - Officers also distinguished between different behaviours in terms of their perceived seriousness. Acquisitive corruption – behaviour motivated by financial gain (i.e. accepting a bribe or taking property) was regarded as very serious and not tolerated. Respondents were most likely to report this type of behaviour (even when the monetary values involved were fairly small).
  - 'Noble cause corruption' – where the 'ends justified the means' or involved 'street justice' (e.g. helping a colleague avoid a drink-driving charge or assaulting a suspect) – was generally regarded by respondents as serious, though was less likely to be reported.

Westmarland attributed these differences in reporting to the tension that existed, particularly with noble cause corruption, between personal integrity and the group loyalty and solidarity that are sometimes present in police culture.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The survey was derived from earlier US research and has been used to measure police attitudes to corruption internationally (see, for example, Klockars et al. 2003; Ivkovic and Shelley 2005).

<sup>25</sup> The influence of peers on police complaints was explored in survey analysis carried out in one US police department by Chappell and Piquero (2004). They showed that officers who felt that peers considering excessive force to be 'less serious' were more likely to receive complaints (the opposite effect was found for theft). The relevance of in-group solidarity was highlighted by another study that examined the individual and organisational factors

- **Ranks and roles** – Other studies using a similar approach have pointed towards some differences between ranks and roles. Studies carried out in South Africa and Croatia found, respectively, that the 'blue code of silence' was stronger among non-supervisors (Ivkovic and Sauerman 2013) and low-ranking officers (Ivkovic 2012).
- **Gender** – Based on a study of officers in Queensland, Waugh et al. (1998) found few differences between male and female officers in their views on ethical conduct and their willingness to report colleagues for doing wrong. Few below the rank of sergeant said they would complain about a fellow officer.
- **Organisational size** – Survey research by McDevitt et al. (2011) in seven US police departments suggested that organisational size might affect the 'blue code of silence'. Officers in smaller departments were more likely than those in bigger departments to say that colleagues would report corrupt behaviour, perhaps indicating a lower tolerance for wrongdoing.
- **Fear of consequences** – A national telephone survey of 900 US police officer conducted by Weisburd et al. (2001) found that 25% of respondents said whistle-blowing was not worth doing and that, if they did so, that they would receive 'the cold shoulder' from other officers.
- **Solidarity** – One study on police bullying based on interviews with UK officers (Miller and Rayner 2012) found that some actions traditionally labelled as 'bullying' were seen as a sign of solidarity. Other behaviours not usually considered 'bullying', such as being isolated, were more likely to be interpreted negatively and reported.

## The influence of individual characteristics

This final section describes the studies we found that identified characteristics of officers and staff that, on average, seemingly increased their propensity for wrongdoing. It should be noted that these characteristics may not be causally associated with unethical behaviour. These factors, particularly those related to demography, are very likely to be closely related to other confounding variables which may hold greater explanatory power. Perhaps more importantly, policymakers and practitioners arguably have less direct influence over these individual characteristics, meaning the findings may have more relevance in terms of targeting initiatives to potentially higher risk groups.

- **Role** – Analysis by the Police Ombudsman of Northern Ireland (2012) pointed to differences in complaint rates for different operational roles:
  - Allegations of 'oppressive behaviour' – disproportionately response and neighbourhood officers, and those in tactical support groups.
  - Allegations of 'rudeness' and 'incivility' – disproportionately those on response and neighbourhood teams, as well as traffic officers.
- **Gender** – In line with Kish-Gephart et al.'s (2010) meta-analysis, there was additional evidence to suggest men were more at risk of wrongdoing than women (though this association may not be causal, particularly with bivariate analysis, which does not account for other factors such as role and policing style):

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influencing misconduct in the military (Weber and Gerde 2011). The survey research suggested military personnel may be more likely to behave unethically in order to protect themselves if they thought they or their group were under threat.

- Harris's (2009) systematic review on the improper use of force found that male police officers were more likely to use excessive force and receive complaints over multiple encounters (see also: Prenzler et al. 2013; Chappell and Piquero 2004).
- A similar gender pattern was identified in misconduct rates amongst police officers in an Australian study (Waugh et al. 1998).<sup>26</sup> The authors suggested that the results did not mean female officers were 'inherently more ethical', and that differences could be attributed to their roles in force.
- **Age and experience** – Analysis of police complaints by the Police Ombudsman of Northern Ireland (2011) showed that officer younger in age (18-34) and with less experience (less than five years) were over-represented among those who had three or more complaints.<sup>27</sup> Profiling work by Harris (2012) based on a sample of over 700 US officers suggested that the likelihood of misconduct reoccurring after a complaint declined as officers gained experience. Prenzler et al.'s (2013) review also suggested younger, less experienced frontline officers were more likely use force and attract complaints (see also Paoline and Terrill 2007), though other studies have pointed to length of service being associated with increased complaints (Chappell and Piquero 2004).
- **Education and prior employment** – US research indicated that officers' level of education and prior work experience were related to how much coercion they used in encounters with the public. Paoline and Terrill (2007) found that college-educated officers used significantly less 'verbal force', and officers with four-year degrees used significantly less physical force than those educated to a high school level. Harris's (2010) work on 'offending trajectories' showed that officers with the highest rate of complaints were the most likely to have prior military service, and the least likely to have a college degree. A study carried out by Manis et al. (2008) in one US police department suggested the subject studied by officers to a degree level made no difference to their subsequent rate of complaints.<sup>28</sup>
- **Early onset behaviour** – Drawing on ideas from criminal careers research, Harris (2010) looked at the 'offending trajectories' of a cohort of 1,138 officers from a US police department throughout their service. The analysis pointed to a relatively small group of officers who accounted for a disproportionately high number of complaints. These officers tended to receive complaints earlier, average a higher number of complaints per year, and take longest to desist from problem behaviours. Harris concluded that "early onset was a significant risk factor for prolonged and involved deviance" (2010: page 224).
- **Social and psychological risk factors** – Studies were identified that pointed to the potential influence of social and psychological factors on wrongdoing. In broad terms, these studies were supported by the evidence that the scores from standardised pre-employment personality tests have been correlated with corruption (see Chapter 2):
  - Caless's (1999) examination of 123 police misconduct cases pointed to the following factors as potentially increasing officers' vulnerability to wrongdoing: financial status (debts), how closely officers worked with each other, and marital status

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<sup>26</sup> There were 12 misconduct complaints and 22 disciplinary breaches per 100 female officers, compared to 17 complaints and 27 breaches per 100 male officers.

<sup>27</sup> For example, 55% of officers with three or more complaints had less than five years' service, compared to 23% of all officers.

<sup>28</sup> Comparisons were made between officers with 'criminal justice' degrees and those who studied other subjects.

(marriage breakup). As the analysis was not complete and the methods not transparent, it is not clear how strongly associated these factors were with misconduct.

- Miller's (2003) review of case files found some evidence that police corruption was rooted in a range of institutional, individual and social factors, but did not identify any that reliably predicted corruption. Examples of individual and social factors included officers and staff who:
  - had previously been involved in unethical behaviour;
  - appeared disaffected or demoralised in their job;
  - (conversely) displayed apparently high-levels of performance;
  - had poor awareness of security issues, were inadequately supervised, and had ease of access to sensitive information;
  - were experiencing domestic problems (in terms of relationships, drinks, drugs and personal finances); and
  - had social networks and longstanding relationships outside work that provided opportunities for corruption.

## Summary

This chapter has sought to describe the evidence we identified on the factors associated with ethical and unethical behaviour in organisations. Overall, and in line with the SR we found, there was consistent evidence to suggest factors at the organisational, situational and individual level were all relevant. This finding is important to those looking to deal with the problem of wrongdoing in organisations, not only by stressing the complexity of the problem, but also by underlining the need to adopt a multifaceted approach that seeks to address the influences at all three levels. Efforts to deal solely with the 'bad apples', 'bad cases' or the 'bad barrel' are very likely to be insufficient and not offer a long term solution.

The organisational context was found to play a crucial role in wrongdoing – the weight of evidence might also lead to the conclusion that the nature of the organisation has the strongest influence on the behaviour and attitudes of its employees. The SR highlighted that workers in 'principled' or 'benevolent' organisations were less likely to make unethical choices than those in workplaces that promoted 'self-interest'. Enforcement of codes of conduct was also found to be associated with workers making fewer negative decisions. In broad terms, these findings were consistent with the large number of individual studies we identified. We found consistent evidence, from a range of policing and non-policing studies, that an ethical work environment, organisational justice (i.e. being fair, respectful and transparent), and ethical leadership (i.e. those who were honest, caring and led by example) were powerful predictors of (reported) ethical behaviour.

The SR evidence also pointed to the influence of situational factors. Based on the results of several studies, the review concluded that characteristics of a situation – particularly its 'moral intensity' and the level of consensus among peers – could shape workers' intentions to behave ethically. Comparatively few studies were found that enabled detailed exploration of these points, though we found evidence that the improper use of police force was seemingly associated with contextual factors to do with the environment and suspect. Further research was found on the 'blue code of silence' – the informal pressure on officers to not report their peers. While no studies were found that linked the 'blue code' to wrongdoing, its existence within police occupational subcultures – which may not be universal – will inevitably shape how much and what type of wrongdoing comes to light.

Finally, the SR pointed to the effect of individual characteristics on wrongdoing. The overall influence of these factors at the individual level was found to be fairly small compared to those at other levels. Factors associated with unethical work decisions included:

- workers' morality – not caring about harming others and being able to reframe what was right and wrong;
- their personality – being inclined to manipulate others for personal gain and seeing events as being outside their control;
- their demographic profile – being a man and younger in age; and
- being dissatisfied at work.

A number of individual studies in policing were found that provided supporting evidence of the influence of individual officer characteristics, though their design meant that cause-and-effect could not be clearly established. In addition to the points highlighted in the SR, there was some indication that signs of early career misconduct could be relevant. Of course, the ability of organisations to change the profile of its workers – apart from hiring, training and firing – is relatively limited in the short term and may – on its own – be unlikely to offer a sustainable solution.

## 4. Conclusions and implications

Taken together, the evidence presented in this REA raises a number of possibilities for organisations to tackle wrongdoing and enhance ethical behaviour. While the number of evaluated interventions and practices found during our literature search was fairly small, and sometimes lacking in the level of rigour required to make statements about 'what works', the evidence we did find suggested that organisations can take steps to encourage ethical behaviour and address wrongdoing. There were no ready-made solutions however, and a multi-pronged approach is likely to be needed.

The SR evidence we found, which was arguably the most appropriate for making claims about cause-and-effect, was on a topic that was only indirectly related to wrongdoing. Nevertheless, the SR demonstrated that the police can improve community perceptions of procedural justice – fair decision-making and respectful treatment – and public confidence by focusing on: the quality of local policing; encouraging informal police/public contact; and by making use of restorative justice and informal complaints procedures. While procedural justice is no guarantee against police misconduct and may sometimes mask unlawful practices (Meares et al. 2014), fair and respectful treatment of the public by the police is usually regarded as an essential component of ethical policing and 'policing by consent'.

The separate studies we identified that sought to evaluate the impact of interventions were varied in focus, design and context which, again, made the job of identifying effective and promising practice more challenging. Nevertheless, we found some encouraging evidence (though rarely in terms of behaviour change). At an individual level, there were studies that found that body worn video cameras, holding officers to account for their actions, and training focused on changing the way officers thought about, and approached, situations could make a difference to outcomes. At a more organisational level, we found case study evidence that organisation-wide ethics programmes, targeted problem-solving and early interventions were also plausibly linked to a change in outcomes. Given the strength of evidence as to the effectiveness of problem-solving and hotspots policing in other contexts (e.g. crime and disorder reduction, see Weisburd et al. 2008 and Braga et al. 2012), it is arguably the case that problem analysis, the development of tailored responses, and proactivity should all play a central role in any attempt to reduce wrongdoing. The interventions to identify people and places responsible for a disproportionality high number of complaints or use of force incidents – and which were underpinned by these principles – were consistently associated with large reductions after implementation. Importantly, all the promising interventions we identified were broadly preventive or remedial in their approach; none were purely focused on apprehending and disciplining those responsible for wrongdoing. While we aimed for the REA to be inclusive, we will inevitably have missed some studies and overlooked interventions unsuitable for controlled evaluations, to say nothing of the wide range of untested practices that could be effective.

What was perhaps most striking was the consistency with which leadership featured throughout the REA. In Chapter 1, the need for leadership commitment was highlighted as a common theme in the successful problem-solving case studies. Furthermore, there was some evidence from New York that suggested efforts to introduce a respectful policing model – in line with the ideas of procedural justice – were much more likely to be successful when senior leaders were fully committed to the approach, took personal responsibility for the problem, and led by example. These findings were surprisingly consistent with those we reported in Chapter 2 which looked at the factors associated with wrongdoing. Leadership – and the organisational environment it helped create – was found, overall, to have a strong influence on the attitudes and (reported) behaviours of those working for them. Key here were the ideas of organisational justice – fair decision-making and respectful treatment internally –



and ethical leadership, which were associated with a range of benefits, such as reduced complaints and increased commitment to the principles of ethical policing. The importance of leaders being 'firm' in terms of setting and enforcing ethical standards of behaviour was also highlighted. Moreover, these leadership approaches seemed to have multiple influences – both direct and indirect – and that it was not simply a question that 'those at the top' sent messages to 'those at the bottom' about how to behave. There was evidence to suggest that fair, ethical leadership at different levels of the organisation could help shape workers' commitment to the organisation and their own sense of authority, as well as having a 'tiered' effect on culture. A consistent finding from across a range of studies was the importance of leaders being 'authentic' in their approach by setting clear standards of behaviour and also acting as good role models. While these research findings contain important learning for individual leaders in terms of how they should perform their roles, there are also more far-reaching implications for the way leadership within the service is selected, promoted, developed and held to account.

Despite the clear value that committed, fair and ethical leadership has in supporting the implementation of interventions and encouraging ethical behaviour in organisations, we found it was only one of several influences. The strongest and most generalisable evidence we found on the factors associated with unethical work choices was the meta-analysis carried out by Kish-Gephart et al. (2010). This SR highlighted that a range of factors at the organisational, situational and individual level could each play a part in wrongdoing in different professional settings. While it is not possible to infer from this study what initiatives will 'work' at each level, it does provide policymakers and practitioners with some ideas about the types of interventions that might be effective, and the issues that may need to be taken into account. Importantly, the review and the individual studies that were also reported in Chapter 3 points to the need for action to be taken in combination at all three levels. While the influences at the organisational level were arguably the strongest – and potentially the most amendable to reform – this should not preclude activity to deal with 'bad cases' or 'bad apples'.

While we identified some promising examples and can point to a range of influences on wrongdoing, we found some notable gaps in the evidence. We are unable to state clearly 'what works' as we did not come across any interventions that had a positive effect on consistently measured outcomes across several high quality evaluations conducted in a range of different settings. Some, but not all, studies had a comparison group, and few shared similar outcomes that measured self-reported or observed wrongdoing. While we recognise that organisation-wide reforms can be difficult to evaluate and is often driven by political imperative, there is a need for better impact studies that look at change before and after implementation, and also explore the process of implementation. For those smaller scale initiatives, there is much greater scope for the police to conduct a greater number of controlled evaluations – supported by qualitative research – to enable stronger conclusions to be made about effective practice.

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# Appendix A. Literature searches

Table A1. Search terms for online literature database searches

Tier	Negative terms	Positive terms
1	(police OR policing OR law enforcement)	(police OR policing OR law enforcement)
2	AND (corrupt* OR misconduct OR transparen* OR legitima* OR organi* justice OR whistleblow* OR integrity OR crim* OR report* OR polic* culture OR abuse OR complaint OR wrongdoing OR compliance OR *competence OR accountability OR brutal* OR organi* culture)	AND (organi* justice OR organi* citizenship OR ethic* OR role model* OR transformational leadership OR good governance OR moral* OR integrity OR polic* culture OR organi* culture OR *competence)
3	AND (management OR intervention OR reform OR oversight OR disciplin* OR training OR development OR outcome* OR sanction OR punish)	AND (Satisfaction OR performance OR engagement OR management OR training OR awareness OR incentive OR proactive OR outcome* OR development OR intervention OR facilitat*)
4	AND (meta analysis OR meta-analysis OR rapid evidence assessment OR systematic review OR randomised controlled trial OR controlled trial OR field experiment OR quasi experiment)	AND (meta analysis OR meta-analysis OR rapid evidence assessment OR systematic review OR randomised controlled trial OR controlled trial OR field experiment OR quasi experiment)

Table A2. Search terms for National Police Library searches

Tiers	Negative	Positive
Keywords	POLICE_CRIMES, POLICE_DEVIANCE, POLICE_CULTURE, ORGANIZATIONAL_CULTURE, POLICE_ETHICS	POLICE_CULTURE
1	police OR policing OR enforce*	police OR policing OR enforce*
2	corrupt*, misconduct, tranparen*, legitima*, whistleblow*, integrity, wrongdoing, compliance, brutal*, incompeten*, competen, complaint, accountab* abuse, culture, ethic	ethic* OR role model* OR governance OR moral* OR integrity OR culture OR *competence
3	manage* OR intervention OR reform* OR oversight OR discipline OR training OR development OR outcome OR sanction OR punish	satisfaction OR performance OR engagement OR manage* OR training OR awareness OR incentive* OR proactive OR outcome* OR development* OR intervention* OR facilitate
4	analysis OR rapid OR systematic OR controlled OR experiment	meta-analysis OR review OR controlled OR trial OR experiment OR systematic

Table A3. Literature databases and related hits

<b>Database</b>	<b>No of hits</b>
<b>Online literature database</b>	<b>(4,127)</b>
• ASSIA	500
• Business Source Complete	452
• Criminal Justice Abstracts	618
• IBSS	537
• Psychology Cross Search	574
• PsychInfo	517
• Scopus	529
• Sociological Abstracts	473
<b>National Police Library</b>	<b>(5,612)</b>
• Library catalogue	5,612
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,739</b>

Further details is available in a separate technical report.