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Police Public Relations in the Age of Social Media

By

Victoria McIntee

Canterbury Christ Church University

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Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

TERM	DEFINITION
APCOMM	The Association of Police Communicators
ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
AUDIOBOOM	Website and app which allows users to share record, share and listen to sound files online.
COP	College of Policing
FACEBOOK	An online social networking site launched in 2004 which encourages users to generate and share updates, photos, ideas and interests with each other.
FLICKR	Image and video hosting website.
FOI	Common abbreviation for an information request made under the Freedom of Information Act (2000)
HASHTAG (#)	A function on Twitter which allows people to group ideas, conversation topics or objects together so that they can be easily tracked and joined in with. Hashtags can also be used to brand a tweet; e.g. #bobbyonthetweet
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
INSTAGRAM	An online mobile photo and video sharing social media service which allows users to cross post digital content across a number of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr.
LINKEDIN	An online professional networking site designed to facilitate contact between professionals across the world.
MPS.	Common abbreviation for the Metropolitan Police Service
NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency
NYPD	New York Police Department
ONS	Office for National Statistics

PINTEREST	Photo sharing website
PR	Common abbreviation or acronym for public relations.
SOCIAL MEDIA	An online, computer mediated tool which allows users to generate and share content, ideas, conversations, pictures and interests instantaneously through the internet.
	Kaplan and Haelein (2010, p61) define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.
TUMBLR	Microblogging social network website where users can post short multimedia blogs for other users to follow, read and comment upon.
TWITTER	An online micro blogging social networking site which allows users to broadcast information and respond to other users in 140 character posts called tweets.
	Created by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Biz Stone and Noah Glass in 2006, Twitter has over 645 million registered users across the world (Twitter, 2015).

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Abstract

This research examines the concept of public relations in the English police; what it is, how it has changed and the problems police forces now face with regard to communications. The last two decades has seen a transformation within police public relations as it has become increasingly standardised, corporatized, professionalised and more open, playing a key part in the police transparency agenda. Police officers have been replaced by civilian experts as the departments have grown in size which has led to changes in the structure, strategy and ideology as these departments have adapted to the new challenges posed by social media, severely restricted budgets, apparent loss of public confidence and public cynicism. Since 2009 England's police forces have become increasingly active online. There is very little research, however, into how and why social media is being used by the police, how it fits into the broader communication strategies, and how this is changing traditional police public relations.

During this study a national comparison of police forces was undertaken to investigate these issues. What emerged was a picture of dynamic tension between change and continuity within police communications around identity, ideology, form and function. Once an understaffed, ancillary function, affiliated to but not part of 'real police work', most police public relations departments are now considered an "operationally essential" part of modern policing in their force. Social media has enabled police forces to communicate directly to and with large segments of the populous for the first time. This research has also identified strong evidence of the emergence of a new model, that of 'direct and digital' within police communications. This new approach appears to be moving police communications from primarily a reactive service to a proactive dialogical one that is increasingly looking to engage with audiences directly online rather than through conventional methods.

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It takes a village to research and write a doctoral thesis and I would like to thank all those who have contributed to this project – especially the interviewees who not only gave up their time to assist in this endeavour but who made it a pleasure to work on. I would also like to extend a special thank you to my supervisory team who were a fantastic and indefatigable support through the process, particularly Tom Cockcroft who not only inspired me to start this project but has been instrumental in its eventual completion.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the people I love most in the world who have supported, encouraged, badgered and bribed me through four long years. In particular, I would like to dedicate this to my long suffering parents, Paul and Julia, who not only started me on my life of crime but whose unwavering support has meant so much; to the best friends anyone could ask for, Allie and Lucy, who have been tireless cheerleaders no matter how much I moaned; and to Andrew, who picked probably the worst time to get to know me but made it the best of times instead and showed me that there was life after submission to look forwards to.

Introduction

*"Communications in policing informs, deters, engages, affects change and **s**upports delivery of… strategic objectives and operational priorities… [it] is about having the right conversation at the right time with the right people".*

(Bedfordshire Police Communications Strategy, 2015 p.2)

It has long been thought that there is a connection between 'effective policing' and public relations. According to Terris (1967 p.61), "the police simply cannot operate effectively as long as they are viewed with scepticism or hostility by much of the population… such attitudes mean that crimes are often not reported, that witnesses often refuse to identify themselves or to testify in court, and that suspects resist arrest with the tacit or even physical support of bystanders". This belief has been a recurrent theme and a popular concern in academic discourse since the 1950s (McManus, 1955; Hough, Jackson and Bradford, 2011; Sindall, Sturgis and Jennings, 2012; Wentz and Schlimgen, 2012; O'Neill, 2013b) and for those involved in policing (HMIC, 2001; 2014).

The origin of this concern arguably lies in the notion of there being a historic relationship between the public and their police. This relationship confers upon the police a quasi-moral authority and legitimacy by intertwining the police and general public into one inseparable entity (Beetham, 1991) and has, somewhat ironically, succeeded in embedding a sometimes fiercely contested institution in a philosophical model of consent (Reith, 1956; Keane and Bell, 2013).

At its heart, this concept is founded on the premise of popularity and image (Ignatieff, 2006; Philips and Storch, 2007). How the police are perceived and understood by their public is considered the bedrock of both their continued legitimacy and effectiveness (HMIC, 2011a). Loader (1997, p.14) observes that there is an almost unique relationship between the police and public in England which has placed the "lowly village bobby" at the centre of "national iconography". It is a subject which evokes polarising opinions from large sections of society and often dominates political debates and yet the difficulty is that only a select minority of the population ever come into direct contact with the police (Leishman and Mason, 2003). As a consequence, what people know about the police principally comes from two sources: what is

said about the police ('Cultivation Theory', Dirikx and Van Den Bulck, 2014) and what the police say about themselves (Greenwood, Chaiken and Petersilla, 2005; Huey and Broll, 2012).

How the police communicate with the public then plays an integral part in both the production and reaffirmation of the police image and is therefore of central concern to police forces; particularly in an era of social media and synopticon-like scrutiny of public organisations (Zavattro and Sementelli, 2014). With sites like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube enabling news to travel vast distances instantaneously, the production of 'news' is no longer the sole province of journalists but of anyone with internet access (Greer and McLaughlin 2010). Harnessing, or at least managing, this hyper-mediated environment has become essential for the success of any public organisation (Lovell, 2002; Brainard and Edlins, 2015), but particularly so for police forces who are now not only expected to have an active presence on these sites but increasingly to provide core services online as well (NPIA, 2010).

Police public relations departments have changed significantly over the last century as have their names and functions within policing. The first official police press office was established in 1919 in order to manage enquiries from the press. Since then this department has become increasingly centralised, standardised and corporatised as it has evolved into what is now commonly called Corporate Communications. It was during the 1990s that a trend towards professionalisation in police forces was first observed (Morgan and Newburn, 1997; Mawby, 2002). Professionalisation can be understood as the development of specialist roles within general policing and the placing of professional experts into these roles that had previously been performed by non-professionally trained police officers. From the late 1980s onwards police forces both in England and America started adopting not only the specialised managerial language of the private sector (Wright, 2002), but also gradually replacing police officers in backroom functions (such as communications) with civilian experts (Surette, 2001; Mawby, 2002; Reiner, 2010).

Professionalisation, however, is only part of the story. Along with the civilianisation of these departments, the late 1990s also saw the beginnings of a cultural change towards communicating with external audiences and in how the department was viewed and used within the wider policing context. Instead of avoiding the media as in the past (Benson, 1981; Kingshott, 2011), police forces are now using the press as one channel of many in order to communicate regularly with their audiences (Brainard and Edlins, 2015).

The concept of police public relations no longer consists of grudgingly given press conferences and a community's relationship with the local 'bobby on the beat' (Jones, 1996). Once a forgotten, understaffed and underfinanced facility, affiliated to but not part of the police, this department has now seemingly become a central aspect of the police-public relationship and an essential part of modern policing (Wright, 2002).

The advent of social media has been a fundamental driving force in this transition, as police forces have had to adapt quickly to new challenges and a very different communications landscape from that which characterised police communications for most of the 20th Century. In an era of "information politics" and 24 hour media, "the option of silence has (sociologically speaking) been closed off" (Loader and Mulcahy 2001a p.254). The police can no longer afford to hide in the shadows or retreat behind a protective, obfuscating wall of 'no comment' (Greer and McLaughlin, 2010). Nor can police forces hope to maintain control of how the media and the general public frame events or knowledge in the unprecedented environment created by social media (Warren, Sulaiman and Noor, 2014). The police may have a "corporate identity" and a "corporate image" to go with it, as Mawby (2002, p. 1) suggests, but these images and how the police are maintaining them is changing, as are the threats and opportunities now facing police forces.

For the first time police forces are able to communicate directly to and *with* members of the public on a mass scale – engaging the public in discussions about policing and mobilising information networks to help solve crimes and action police agendas (see section 1.3). The first official police Twitter account in England was launched in December 2008 by West Midlands Police. Since then England's police forces have become increasingly active online. Every police force now has at least one registered Twitter account and Facebook page; with many forces maintaining a routine presence on other sites as well (3.1.6). As Crump (2011) points out, social media and the rapidly advancing technologies available present police forces with unprecedented opportunities for communication, engagement and publicity. Such a change is not without problems however, especially in the current economic climate which is requiring police forces to make substantial savings and continually demonstrate the effectiveness of departmental activities on a national platform.

This question of effectiveness, what it looks like and how to measure it, has become a central concern to police forces and the search for it is a dominant theme running through the literature. So far, however, there has been little research into the area of police public relations in the age of social media. What studies there are that look at this subject either predate the introduction of social media (Mawby, 2002), focus on public confidence (Bradford, 2012), are based in a foreign country (Surette, 2001; Lee and McGovern, 2014), or only look at police social media output, separating it from the other activities and roles of police communications (Crump, 2011; Conner, 2015).

Research looking at how, why and what police forces are communicating is not only topical at the moment with the increasing activity police forces have on social media but also because there has been an apparent reversal in the trend towards corporatisation identified by Morgan and Newburn (1997). Over the last decade police forces have increasingly distanced themselves from public relations terminology, the most visible example of which is the removal of the term from their department name (Mawby, 2007; section 1.2). Such a move poses the question of whether public relations can still be considered relevant in policing. Given the central importance communication has now gained, understanding how and why police forces are communicating is essential especially in light of the limitations and gaps in our knowledge of this area.

This thesis set out with three interconnected aims to explore the phenomenon of public relations in the English police:

1) To provide a picture of the current state of public relations in the English police;

2) To explore how police public relations has changed and continues to change in the age of social media; and

3) To investigate whether the concept of public relations is still relevant for the police today.

Over the course of this study representatives from 27 English police communications teams were interviewed. This thesis is divided into four parts; literature review, methodology, results and discussion. The following chapter (Chapter 1) explains the history of public relations in the police, the literature which informed the direction the project has taken and the context in which this research has taken place. This is then followed in the second chapter by a break down and analysis of the methods used, the rationale behind the decisions made and the

methodological difficulties faced during the research itself. Chapter 3 details the results of the research; the findings and key themes from which are then discussed in Chapter 4 before the conclusions are summarised in Chapter 5.

The central theme that emerged from this research was one of change and continuity. The field work carried out in this project confirms that there have been significant changes within police public relations over the last two decades with regard to strategy, structure, operational position and staffing. It is a function continually in a state of transition and challenging circumstances that has had to adapt quickly in a rapidly evolving area and environment that is often hostile, unpredictable and is driven by ever increasing expectations.

Mawby (2002, p.7) proposed four periods of public relations in the English police: "Informal Image Work", "Emergent Public Relations", "Embedding Public Relations" and "The Professionalization of Police Image Work". In addition to these four eras, however, the data suggests that there is now compelling evidence of a fifth periodisation – that of 'Direct and Digital'. Social media and the internet has radically redefined the what, where, when and how of communication, the traditional communication channels and the relationship between individuals and public institutions.

In conjunction with these changes there appears to be a corresponding ideological shift that is emerging in police public relations. This 'new' ideology is seeing a growing number of forces moving away from reactive, defensive communication to a proactive, inclusive model that actively seeks to build networks and relationships with outside communities. And yet, for all the evidence of change there is also strong evidence of continuity – that the more things change, the more they stay the same. These departments may have elected to drop 'public relations' from their names but as this study found the concept of public relations remains an essential part of modern police communications. *How* police forces communicate maybe changing to take advantage of new technologies but many of the core messages and problems faced by these departments, such as control of the 'police voice' remain relatively unchanged from their first appearance nearly a century ago.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Part One: What is Public Relations?

1.1 What is Public Relations: The Great Definition Debate

Silverman (2013) suggests that the starting point for any research topic is to define the research problem. Without such a definition it is a challenge to isolate the research parameters or to know what it is you are looking at or indeed for. The starting point for this research was in finding a suitable definition for public relations. On the face of it this might appear a fairly simple matter as it is a well-known term with a prevalent, almost ubiquitous presence in modern society and an intuitive understanding associated with it (Corneliessen, 2011). One only has to dig a little deeper, as this chapter will discuss, to discover that there is nothing simple or straightforward about trying to explain this particular concept (Bolger, 1983), particularly when it relates to the police.

Definitions serve at least two purposes: "To help us understand the world around us and to argue for a particular world view of how one concept relates to other concepts" (Broom and Sha, 2013, p.29). Consequently, the way in which a phenomenon like public relations is defined does not just tell us what public relations is, or does, but how it relates to the industry it is attached to and to the wider social environment in which it operates. Crucially it also reveals how the definer perceives 'public relations'.

The definition of public relations used in this study is that given by Grunig and Hunt (1984, p4) namely "public relations is the management of communications between an organisation and its publics".

This is not, however, the only accepted definition of public relations. The difficulty begins with the fact that there is not currently a definitive definition of what 'public relations' actually is. Harlow (1976) reported that during the 1970s there were 472 different, and frequently contrary, definitions of public relations - a number that only seems to have grown over the intervening decades as the practice of public relations has evolved and expanded (Morris and

Goldsworthy, 2012). The root of this problem is that public relations is not a new practice although the name 'public relations' is a relatively new term; appearing in popular usage around the beginning of the twentieth century (Tench and Yeomans 2006). Indeed, Smith (2004) argues that "what we now call public relations is an essential and natural aspect of human society… whenever we look at social interactions we find elements of today's public relations: information, persuasion, reconciliation, cooperation". As such it has become difficult to distinguish and separate from our social history (Bernays, 1928). Indeed, according to Bates (2006 p.5, "much of history can be interpreted as the practice of public relations". The methods might have changed as technology has evolved but informing, persuading and integrating, the three core elements that underpin all social interaction, have remained the same.

Connected to this is a second, and arguably greater, issue that of how public relations is perceived and the often notorious reputation it has gained. According to Fisher (2012), public relations "has a PR problem". Miller and Dinan (2008, p.2) argue that in the absence of an agreed definition "spin has become the ubiquitous term for public relations". The problem is that in a democratic society that prides itself on freedom of information and where the public believe it is their right to be involved in the governance of their society, perceived control of information can be deeply unpopular and backfire spectacularly (Stauber and Rampton, 1995; Motion, 2000).

With such prevalent examples as the BP oil spill in the Mexican Gulf (Warner, 2010), the infamous actions of the tobacco industry during the 1950s and 1960s (Proctor, 2008) and the current public relations battle over climate change (Oreskes and Conway, 2008, 2010) it is perhaps not surprising that public relations has gained a reputation for obfuscation and corruption nor that it is commonly conflated with spin and propaganda (Eisenberg, 1990; Carson, 2006). The confusion around PR, propaganda and spin has engendered a distrustful view of public relations practice and practitioners in wider society and has led to words like rhetoric, sophistry and propaganda being labelled taboo encouraging professional communicators to avoid any implied association with these terms (Morris and Goldsworthy, 2012). The binary association of words as relating to either 'good' or 'bad' communications practices, however, has obfuscated the central point that all communication is about negotiating reality and how we understand and experience it.

Paget (1990, p.2) points outs that the "modern man worships 'facts' – that is, he accepts 'facts' as the ultimate reality". 'Spin', and by association public relations, is disliked because it is seen as 'not truth'; a deliberate attempt to mislead, misinform and conceal the truth in order to achieve organisational objectives (Welch, 2013).

Gelders and Ihlen (2009) suggest that in conjunction with this during the twentieth century there was a distinctive tendency to view all forms of power with overt suspicion - which combined has acted to reinforce suspicion and dislike of public relations. The prospect of an "invisible government" that 'moulds our minds, forms our tastes and suggests our ideas' (Bernays 1928 cited in O'Shea 2008) seems to be the antithesis of the democratic ideal and poses a serious threat to the quixotic fantasies and ideologies that underpin democratic national identity (Tench and Yeomans 2006).

While there is a compelling argument that interpretation is, in essence, 'spin' as it is the altering of the 'truth' and any reproduction of 'fact' or 'truth' will necessarily place a unique twist on how it is delivered and received (Berger and Luckman, 1966[1]) such an approach does little to reconcile the negative associations around the concept. Associations which, as Daymon and Holloway (2011) point out, often make it a difficult subject to research or to define.

Over the course of this research nearly a hundred different definitions were considered (see Appendix 1.1). According to Broom and Sha (2013) most definitions of public relations tend to fall into one of two categories:

1) **Outcome based**. Public relations is defined by what it does – the observable effects, operations and outputs. For example, reputation management and media relations (Table 1, Appendix 1.1).

2) **Ideological definition**. Public relations is defined by aspiration, purpose or intention. This is the type of definition used by Bernays (1928) and Lee (1906 cited in Goldman, 1948). These definitions often focus on behaviour change, strategy, targeted information sharing or relationship management (Table 2, Appendix 1.1).

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[1] See also Foucault (1997), McHoul and Grace (1993), Baudrillard (1994), Grattan (1998) and O'Malley (2001).

As Broom and Sha (2013) point out however, neither type of definition is without problems or significant limitations. Most definitions (see Appendix 1.1) focus on the outcomes and are phrased in terms of these outcomes. Such definitions are usually narrow in scope and imbued with the emotionally charged language which has fostered a negative perception of public relations (Miller and Dinan, 2008). This approach, while it shows what public relations 'does', does not allow the researcher to look at the purpose behind the outcomes or provide a framework for analysing public relations activities in a public facing organisation like the Police.

The difficulty with defining public relations by outcome or activity was highlighted during an international consultation held by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 2012. The aim of this consultation was to create a universal, easy to understand, modern definition of public relations that could be used to start tackling widely held misconceptions about the practice. During the consultation period for this research, the PRSA (2012) asked members to explain the functions and responsibilities they thought their jobs entailed. This survey found that there were seventeen commonly cited elements or aspects of public relations (Fig. 1.1).

Fig: 1.1 Functions of Public Relations	
Advertising	Marketing
Community Relations	Media Relations
Counselling	Minority Relations/Multi-cultural Affairs
Crisis Management	Public Affairs
Government Affairs	Public Participation/Engagement
Industry Relations	Publicity Management
Internal Communications	Research
(Employee/Employer relations)	Special Events
Issues Management	

The problem, as the PRSA (2012) discovered, is how do you condense an area as broad, as flexible and as multi-dimensional as public relations into a pithy and easily intelligible concept without necessarily losing key aspects or limiting the definition to an error inducing extent by focusing on single elements? Outcome based definitions all demonstrate the same limitation that the PRSA (2012) found during their research; that this approach tends to focus on specific aspects – often in isolation.

Part of the attraction of this sort of definition is that it is easily understood and summarised. In the absence of a clear understanding of what public relations is the tendency has been to try to explain it using tangible examples of its practice. There is the difficulty, however, that "most effective public relations efforts are not visible outside the organization and therefore are not incorporated into popular perception of public relations" (Shaw and White, 2004 p.494). Historically, public relations might have concentrated principally on publicity, reputation and marketing (Bates, 2006), but as times have changed so too has the practice of PR; as Table 1.1 shows these aspects are no longer all that public relations involves (PRSA, 2012). In emphasising a few of the more popularly recognisable operations elements, like reputation management, you necessarily ignore other less visible features, such as internal communications. Outcome based definitions also tend to avoid any discussion over the raison d'être behind the public relations activity thus rendering them rather one dimensional and incomplete (Morris and Goldsworthy, 2012). This can, and has, led to a rather distorted and inaccurate understanding of the profession that, Miller and Dinan (2008) believe, has compounded the poor image public relations has in modern society.

The reverse is also true of strategy/ideology based definitions. In this case, where the former definitions were too specific and limiting the latter are often too vague and confusing. A good example of this is the PRSA's (2012) new definition: "Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics". David C. Rickey (2012), secretary for the PRSA, found that despite months of careful research that had gone into crafting this definition people who saw it were still confused about what PR is and does. Referencing "communication processes" and "beneficial relationships" sounds definitive and self-explanatory but it actually describes very little; what are 'communication processes'? What constitutes beneficial relationships? And perhaps more importantly, beneficial for whom?

George Orwell (1945) remarked that there was a concerning trend developing in the twentieth century to obscure difficult issues through a mixture of vagueness and long, complicated, official sounding words that made the writer sound clever and well informed but which concealed a worrying level of meaninglessness. A similar problem has been noticed by other writers when it comes to definitions (see Klockars, 1985); particularly in contentious subjects where it is not always in the interests of the parties involved to have an unambiguous answer (Eisenberg, 1990). This point was picked up by Morris and Goldsworthy (2012) who propose

that underpinning the majority of definitions is a curious reluctance to draw attention to the mechanics involved in public relations which leads to longwinded and unclear explanations.

According to Shaw and White (2004, p.501), part of the problem is that "the entire existence of the public relations profession rests on the assumption that positive attitudes contribute towards favourable behaviour". The majority of ideological definitions, however, tend to avoid any suggestion, implied or otherwise, of behaviour modification which has long been associated with propaganda (Gelders and Ihlen, 2009). Morris and Goldsworthy (2012) argue, that this has led to words like rhetoric and sophistry acquiring negative connotations and falling into disuse as public relations professionals seek to distance themselves further from the contentious history of their profession.

Eisenberg (1990) proposes that far from being a problem, ambiguity is often an essential part of public relations as a means of avoiding conflict by concealing confusion, increasing adaptability and allowing multiple interpretations and understandings to co-exist uncontested. Ambiguity, however, is not particularly helpful when attempting to research the topic in question. Ideology based definitions provide a 'starting point' to understand what public relations aims to achieve, but in trying to cover everything they are often too vague and non-specific to be of much practical use.

One of the recurring themes with regard to definitions is the emotionally charged nature of public relations and the negative reputation the practice has gained over the last century. The problem identified by Morris and Goldsworthy (2012) has led to many practitioners distancing themselves from any implied association with the negative elements of their reputation. This has led to a positive biasing in the way some definitions have been constructed. Terms like 'beneficial relationships' and 'public interest' have an implicit bias which reduces the possibility that public relations activities can be anything other than positive or good (see Appendix 1.1). Such emphasis is understandable but ultimately unhelpful from a research perspective as it seeks to colour how one interprets the evidence; which renders these definitions unviable.

Maloney (2000 cited in Tench and Yeomans 2006) argues that public relations is too multifaceted and has too many subtle nuances to be adequately conveyed in one explanation and that it is a mistake to even attempt to. As the above discussion shows, there is some

credence to Maloney's (*ibid*) argument; definitions are usually either too narrow (Outcome based) or too vague (Aspirational/Ideology based) to be considered complete or accurate. A few scholars and practitioners, like Harlow (1976), have tried to address these problems and create definitions which include both operations and ideological elements these definitions tend to be long winded, complex and too confusing to be useful (Daymon and Holloway, 2011; Table 3, Appendix 1.1).

Grunig (1989) suggests that part of the difficulty with creating one definition is that public relations is better understood as an umbrella term covering a wide variety of activities, ideologies and ideas than as a singular concept. For Grunig (1989) public relations can be broken down into four basic models which account for the visible differences in practice and operations:

1) **Press agency / publicity**: this is one way, top down communication aimed at 'pushing' positive images of a company/organisation/individual. This is the model most commonly confused with propaganda as it is primarily about control of an image, or reputation, through control of the story.

2) **Public information**: Sometimes known as the journalism model, this approach promotes truthful, accurate information but does not volunteer negative information about the company. While it is also one directional, this model differs from the Press Agency model by emphasising truth over half-truths and targeted communication in order to yield results rather than a blanket approach.

3) **Two way asymmetrical**: This model is all about persuasion to trigger a transaction. While 'two way asymmetrical' involves a dialogue between the organisation and its public, the goal is anything but balanced. In this model the organisation uses strategic engagement to manage their presence in the public sphere; it is a model designed to 'manage' situations and to protect the organisation through a dialogue.

4) **Two way symmetrical**: This model involves two way communication between the organisation and its public. Public relations, in this model, plays both mediator and persuader in order to negotiate the continued relationship between all the parties involved. This model encourages information flow between a company and its public; promoting bargaining and negotiating in order to facilitate open communication and

foster understanding. This is the most balanced of Grunig's (1989) models and the one to which both Lee and Bernays aspired (Smith, 2004).

For Grunig (*ibid*), rather than one model dominating, modern public relations ebbs and flows between these models as necessity, circumstance and environment requires. Attempting to encapsulate all of the facets into one definition is, therefore, inherently problematic; particularly given the rise of social media and instantaneous global communication.

If the challenge during the twentieth century was to harness the power of the mass media in order to ensure the success of organisations and politicians alike (Glickman, 1960; Robinson 1996); then the challenge in the twenty-first century is how to communicate directly with and motivate the individual (Paek, Hove, Jung and Cole, 2013). The advent of freely available mobile internet and social media sites has significantly shifted the nexus of communicative power from organisations and corporations to the individual (Gurmilang, 2012).

Given the sensitivities and confusion around the concept of public relations what is required for this research is a value neutral definition with a broad, but manageable, scope which simultaneously covers both outcomes and purpose. During the preliminary information gathering stage of this project over one hundred different definitions of public relations were considered. While many of the definitions matched one or more of the above criteria the only definition which fit all four was the one created by Grunig and Hunt (1984) who defined public relations as "the management of communication between an organisation and its publics". This definition was chosen for four reasons:

1) **Flexibility of scope**. Most definitions were either too vague to be of use or so specific that they were too restrictive to allow a truly holistic and comprehensive examination of police communications departments. To complicate matters further, many definitions also simplified public relations to an unhelpful extent by focusing on only one or two aspects, such as reputation management. It became apparent early on in this project that flexibility was going to be essential in any workable definition given the variety of practices and differences between police departments.

2) **Value neutral language**. Quite a few of the definitions, while technically correct, used emotionally charged terminology which encouraged the negative associations commonly linked to the concept of public relations. Silverman (2013) and other

methodology experts (see Cho and Trent, 2006; Klockars, 1985) all warn about the hidden dangers of prejudice and bias in research. Some prejudice and bias is unavoidable (Chapter 2.8); however, starting off with a value laden definition is neither helpful nor likely to encourage unbiased results.

3) **Simple to understand**. A common issue raised by the PRSA (2012) during their consultation was that there was a tendency to over-complicate the definition; including everything in order to try and convey the esoteric concept of public relations to non-practitioners. This often resulted in longwinded and confusing definitions that did little to enlighten the uninitiated as to what public relations actually is.

4) **Avoids tautology**. The final, but by no means least, reason for using Grunig and Hunt's (1984) definition is that it is not prone to the same tautological difficulties of many other definitions. By not defining the subject purely by the output it produces the definition also avoids the narrow scope of many other definitions which are often limited only to the visible elements of public relations.

The lack of accurate definition within the wider industry itself posed a considerable difficulty at the start of this research; particularly as there seems to be similar confusion over what public relations entails within the police forces as well. As will be discussed in the next section, the findings from the HMIC 'Open All Hours' report (2001) and Mawby and Worthington's study (2002) reveal an almost systemic confusion around public relations within police forces. These reports were also predictive of some of the findings and issues that became apparent during the interviews (Chapter 3); in particular the confusion around defining or explaining public relations, the consequent corporate distancing from public relations terminology and the rebranding of these departments as 'Communications', or some variant thereof.

1.2   Public Relations in the Police

In 2001 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC 2001) published the report 'Open All Hours: a thematic inspection on the role of police visibility and accessibility in public reassurance'. The purpose of this inspection was to assess the levels of public reassurance, visibility and accessibility against performance indicators, identify problem areas and suggest best practice in how to improve these levels. The inspection identified public relations activities as a key aspect of improving the police-public relationship and essential for police legitimacy in an increasingly hyper-mediated world. The report concluded, however, that police understanding and practise of public relations was patchy, inconsistent and that there was evidence of widespread confusion over the difference between public relations and marketing.

Similar results were found by Mawby and Worthington (2002) who reported that of the 58 police forces surveyed across England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man only 15 forces had a specific definition for marketing and PR while 14 forces did not define marketing at all, 9 said that marketing was the same as public relations, three replied that marketing was badly defined in their force and three forces were currently in the process of redefining these terms. In the last section it was argued that one of the reasons public relations is so difficult to understand and define is because we now recognise that public relations consists of activities and practices which are natural aspects of social life (Smith, 2004). The same is true of public relations in the police.

It has been previously thought that police public relations is a new phenomenon; one born of modernity and need in an increasingly hostile, consumer driven, mass mediated environment (Cooke and Sturgis 2009). Yet there is considerable evidence that the practice of public relations has been at the centre of policing in England since the inception of Peel's New Police (Flanders, 2011; Churchill, 2014); an idea which was confirmed in this research (see Chapter 4).

When Robert Peel introduced his "blue locusts", the New Police were born into a society that was deeply distrustful and fiercely resentful of the change (Tobias, 1972, p.8; Silver, 2005). Reforming the old watch based police system had been dismissed in 1785, 1818 and 1822 due to unpopularity and wide spread concerns over the implications to liberty (Emsley, 1987). Despite support from the broadsheets, for many years after their introduction the new

Metropolitan Police force (hereafter the MPS) was intensely unpopular with many people (White, 1983; Wood, 2013) who feared the rise of a continental style police regime and increased government regulation (Emsley, 1991; Worsley, 2013).

From the start the New Police were, arguably, dependent upon public relations strategies (Mawby, 2002). Every detail, from their uniform to their manner when dealing with the public, was carefully crafted to create and maintain the image Peel wanted for his new police force to aid with their integration and acceptance with the London populous (Emsley, 1987; Reiner, 2010).

Most importantly, Rawlings (2002) argues, the success of these strategies demonstrate the importance of public relations in not just ensuring the gradual societal acceptance of the police but in how the English 'bobby' has been elevated to a beloved national symbol that has come to represent the core of 'Englishness'; an ideal for freedom and justice (Loader 1997). This is a somewhat ironic outcome when one considers that the riots at their introduction were spawned from fear of a repressive, French-like, state police that would rob them of "that perfect freedom of action that is the great privilege and blessing of society in this country" (Select Committee 1822 cited in Tobias 1972 p.204). Young (1966, p.195), however, argues that it is essential to distinguish between what he called "uncoordinated" and "planned" police public relations activities. For Young (1966) and others (see Gregory, 1970; Hodges, 1987; Mawby, 2002; Motschall and Cao, 2002) there is an important difference that needs to be recognised between the 'what works', unstructured approach used by everyday police officers and the structured, intentional activities of professional departments.

Mawby (2002, p.7), suggested that it is useful when looking at this subject to think of public relations in the English police as divided into four conceptual periods, or phases:

1) "Informal image work" (1829 – 1919);
2) "Emergent public relations" (1919 – 1972);
3) "Embedding public relations" (1972 – 1987);
4) "The professionalisation of police image work" (1987 – present day).

The first period was unstructured, informal and aimed at legitimising and normalising an unwanted and unpopular new regulatory body. As Mawby (2002, p.7) explains; the "modern language of image management was not in existence and activities now recognisable within the

spheres of corporate identity, marketing and public relations were not distinct activities with their own objectives" but inseparable from the measures used to make the New Police acceptable to a distrustful public.

This phase then, falls within Young's (1966) "uncoordinated" strategies. Young (1966) proposes that the start of "planned" public relations began with the creation of the New Scotland Yard Press Bureau in 1919 by Commissioner Macready. The introduction of the Press Office heralded a change in image management and public relations to a more formal communications enterprise run from the a central point. This change led to the second period of "Emergent Public Relations" (Mawby, 2002, p.7). For Mawby (2002) this era is characterised by a formalisation of police-press relations and the start of official image and information management. Macready's intention was "to set aside one room in Scotland Yard where, at any hour of the day, Press Representatives will be interviewed by a responsible official, be given information on matters on which they seek it, and be supplied with such police information as it may be of advantage to make public" (1919 cited in Rock, 2014, p.29).

The Press Bureau originally comprised of one civil servant who issued on average two press releases a day (Mawby, 1998). The remit of this office was to liaise with the media, respond to media queries and to confirm stories that journalists had already sourced (Young, 1966). It was fundamentally a reactive service designed, Gregory (1970) suggests, as more of a fact checker than a tool for communication. It was also, according to Wood (2013) sporadic, unstructured and mostly informal and created, at least partly, because of the rising number of complaints and scandals that dogged the MPS during the interwar years. The Press Bureau, however, was not considered to be the same as public relations by the MPS as a letter from Metropolitan Police Secretary Howgrave-Graham to Commissioner Philip Game made clear:

> "The work of a Public Relations Officer is publicity – i.e. publicity by means of liaison with the Press, Films, Advertisement, and so on. We have, as you know, our press organisation here and the assistance of the Home Office Press Officer is also available to us. We don't need advertisement in the same way as a big "business" like the Post Office." (1937 cited in Rock, 2014, p.45).

As Rock (2014) points out, Howgrave-Graham, and later Commissioner Game both stated that the MPS was not in need of public relations as that was something which belonged to the

corporate world, not the police. By the 1962 Royal Commission, however, that view had changed (Clarke, 1965).

The 1960s saw the end of the so called 'Golden Age of Policing' of the 1940s and 1950s and in its place was an increasingly critical, anti-establishment movement which challenged the established 'Dixon of Dock Green' image of the police that had been cultivated during this period (Reiner, 2005; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke and Roberts, 1978). The first head of public relations at the MPS, G.D. Gregory (1970, p.282), suggested that public relations in the police grew out of a need to compete with all the other "public voices clamouring for recognition in the press… radio and television… to inform our public about what we are doing, how we are doing it and how well". Gregory (1970) believed that the creation of these departments was a reaction to the realisation that the police were no longer the principal voice in an increasingly literate and news-aware society and that there were now conversations taking place from which the police were excluded. Over the coming decades relations between police and certain sections of the public would deteriorate, culminating in the Brixton Riots and the Scarman report (Hodges, 1987; Reiner, 2010), and leading to successive political moral panics over public trust and confidence in the police (Wood, 2011). In the 1960s, however, the cracks were only just beginning to show (Jones, 1996).

The 1962 Royal Commission emphasised the need for "cultivating good relations between the police and public", and suggested that chief constables should "make whatever local provision is appropriate to the needs of a particular area" in order to accomplish this (cited in Young, 1966, p.197). While the Commission made no definite recommendation on this subject it did lead to renewed police interest which culminated in a report by Chief Constable George Scott[2] and Commissioner Sir Joseph Simpson which was presented to the Association of Chief Police Officers in December 1964 (Young, 1966). The report recommended that "in most, if not all, forces one or more officers should be allocated to public relations duties and should have proper training for the purpose" (ibid, p197). Following a pilot course in February 1965 the first official Public Relations department was established in West Riding Constabulary in May of the same year to be run by a Chief Inspector.

The new department based in Wakefield was formed to "coordinate the public relations work already being done by various departments to provide a speedy source of accurate information

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[2] Chief Constable of West Riding Constabulary

to the press, and generally to make deliberate, planned and sustained efforts to establish and maintain mutual understanding between the West Riding Constabulary and the public" (Young, 1996, p.198). Other work included publicity material, crime prevention literature, and recruitment adverts.

The introduction of the first official 'Public Relations' department heralded the watershed of professional public relations in the English police and marked a significant change in how police forces communicated with the public. According to Kingshott (2011) and Wood (2014), the 1962 Royal Commission achieved the Home Office's long held ambition of centralising the English police; transferring powers and control from constabularies to the Government. A similar centralisation was also occurring in police communications. Up until the introduction of the Scotland Yard Press Bureau, image management and keeping the public informed was primarily carried out by individual officers interacting with the public (Mawby, 2002). The arrival of the press office saw the start of centralisation in police communications; as first the press office and then the public relations department became the official voice of the police and individual officers were discouraged from talking to the press (Kingshott, 2011).

Following the successful introduction of a public relations department in West Riding Constabulary other police forces soon established their own (Gregory, 1970), which lead to the start of Mawby's (2002) third phase. 'Embedding Public Relations' began with the appointment of Sir Robert Mark in 1972. Mark, the first Commissioner of the MPS to have risen through all the ranks to attain the position of Commissioner, was responsible for radically changing the relationship between the MPS and the press. Under Mark's governance, the MPS apparently moved from "the principle 'tell them only what you must'… to 'withhold only what you must'" (Mark 1977 cited in Mawby 2002, p.21). The police however, balanced their new openness with strict control of information (Chibnall, 1979).

As Mawby (2002, p.22) explains; "information facilities were only open to card holders and the cards were issued at the discretion of the MPS, thus ensuring that they controlled the flow of information". In taking an active rather than passive role in the dissemination of information the MPS were able to assume a more powerful position in the police-press relationship and thus have more of a say in the message; thus further skewing what some academics consider was an already asymmetrical relationship more in their favour (Chibnall, 1975b; Shpayer-Makov, 2010).

During this period, public relations departments across constabularies continued to grow and embed themselves within the everyday operational life of policing (Lee and McGovern, 2014). The communication strategy was characterised by what is sometimes called a 'press agency/publicity model' (Grunig, 1989) or a 'push' mentality (Mergel, 2014); communication was one-directional with the aim to present the police story without engaging in dialogue or discussion and has in the past been closely associated with propaganda (Grunig, Grunig and Dozier, 1992).

The next significant change with police public relations came with the appointment of Sir Peter Imbert as Commissioner of the MPS in 1987 and the report he subsequently commissioned from corporate image consultants, Wolff Olins (Mawby, 1998). Sir Peter Imbert's appointment marked the start of the fourth and current period, 'Professional Public Relations' (Mawby, 2002); it is this period that is of particular interest with regard to my research.

The Wolff Olins report (1987) was arguably the catalyst for the professionalisation of police public relations. Previously, these departments had been staffed by internally trained police officers. From 1987 onwards, however, police forces increasingly looked to employ external specialists to these posts (Hodges, 1987; Mawby, 2008). Now police public relations departments are almost exclusively staffed by non-warranted police staff with professional qualifications in public relations, marketing or journalism. This change in police communications and the professionalisation of police public relations was not restricted to the English police. Similar transitions were observed in America (Surette, 1995, 2001; Pearlmutter, 2000; Brainard and McNutt, 2010), Canada (Ericson, 1989, 1994; Ericson and Haggarty, 1997; Brodeur and Dupont, 2006), Australia (Lee and McGovern, 2010; 2014), Israel (Lahav, 2014) and France (de Maillard and Savage, 2012) during the 1980-90s.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Mawby's fourth period, however, is not the professionalisation of police public relations but the gradual distancing of these departments from public relations terminology. The 1980s and 1990s had demonstrated a growing degree of corporatism in police forces generally and in the MPS in particular (Morgan and Newburn, 1997). This cultural shift was reflected in the corporate terminology that became common place in policing vernacular – one example of which was the incorporation of 'Public Relations' into the name of the 'Press Office'.

Mawby (2007) commented in his survey of police public relations departments in 1996/7 that the most commonly used names were jointly 'Press Office' and 'Press and Public Relations'. Four years later this had shifted slightly to 'Press and Public Relations' and 'Media Services'. Mawby's 2006/7 survey, however, showed a distinct national move with most departments dropping the public relations element. Mawby (2008, p.14) concluded that "the change in name indicates the aspirations of these departments and the direction of professionalism in which police communications has been moving over the last decade": 'Press', 'Media' and 'Public Relations' had given way to 'Corporate Communications' departments.

In the 2006 survey, Mawby (2007) recorded that 17 of the 37 English police forces which answered his survey were using 'Corporate Communications'; as of May 2015 this had increased to 25 of the 39 police forces in England with the remaining 14 forces using a variety of different names. It is interesting note that while 'Public Relations' is no longer present in any department title (see 3.2.3) it is still used in some job titles (Appendix 3.2).   There has been a clear transition in the official strategic practices of these departments over the last few decades (Ericson and Haggarty, 1997; Ericson, 2006). As will be discussed further in part 3, the police seem to have moved away from the 'Press Agency' approach apparent during Mawby's (2002) second and third phases and towards Grunig's (1989) 'Public Information' and 'Two-way Asymmetrical' models.

Researching a phenomenon that started with one name and then distanced itself through rebranding can be something of a minefield of unexpected difficulties and did pose a challenge at times during this study. It was suggested during the research process by several of the interviewees that the title of this study should drop the public relations element as outdated (PI.17 and PI.27) and focusses on the wrong aspects of their work (PI.2 and PI.26). There was also some concern raised that by using the term public relations the aim of this research was to focus on 'police spin' and portray them in a negative light (PI.3 and PI.7).

It is important to note that this concern is not one restricted solely to communications professionals in police forces but reflective of what is arguably an industry wide anxiety (Morris and Goldsworthy, 2012; Wright, 2015). It is also not without foundation given the reaction by some of the press; with news titles such as 'Police Spending £100,000 a day on Press Officers' (Whitehead, 2011), 'Police Spend £32 Million on Media 'Spin Doctors' as

Bobbies are Cut' (Davis, 2015) and 'Despite Cuts, Image Conscious Police Forces Still Spending £32 Million on 'Spin Doctors' (Lane, 2015).

There were three main reasons for keeping the public relations focus in the title in the face of these concerns. Firstly, there is the historical element which bears consideration. Departments have only recently moved away from identifying themselves as public relations departments. While the name might have changed, the core responsibilities and activities of these departments have remained constant, although tactics, such as communications techniques, have evolved. Thus, public relations remains the most accurate and practical umbrella term to describe the various activities of departments in the absence of new terminology particularly as the focus is on the 'public' aspect of their activities. Secondly, placing the focus within public relations provides a useful and necessary framework from which to investigate and analyse police communications activities and processes. Finally, while 'communications' and public relations' are now considered virtually synonymous in common vernacular, communications is a much broader term within policing and one which has multiple uses. As well as being used in relation to the 'Corporate Communications Department' it is also often used when talking about the CCR (Communications Control Room) which handles the 999 and 101 calls as well as the phone infrastructure. As such, and the public relations element was kept in the title to clearly identify the area of investigation.

In order to avoid any subsequent confusion in the following chapters, however, as many of the official documents and interviewees (see Chapter 3) refer to their departments as 'communications' and 'comms', the departments will be referred to as 'corporate communications', 'police communications' or public relations department.

The question remains, however, what is public relations in the context of the police? The HMIC (2001, p.117) proposed a definition of public relations in order to "aid consistency" in understanding between police forces. According to the HMIC (ibid) public relations "involves providing information to the public, producing documentation in the form of leaflets and posters, and running campaigns for specific initiatives. Unlike press and media work, it is not necessarily topical and can be planned weeks or months in advance. Although generally outward facing, PR does also encompass some internal communication."

As discussed in the previous section Outcome based definitions, like the one put forward by the HMIC (2001), have several rather significant limitations; particularly in light of the technological and ideological changes examined above. By enumerating the activities involved in public relations activities the definition necessarily excludes certain aspects which limits the field of research. Reputation management has been, and arguably still is, vitally important to the police; presenting the right image was an essential part of the gradual acceptance of Peel's New Police during the 19th century (Shpayer-Makov, 2010). However, it is by no means the only, or primary, concern of modern police public relations – as the majority of those interviewed in this study were keen to make clear.

Most practitioners and definitions agree that at its heart, public relations is about "meaning management" (Bernays, 1928, p3). However one choses to define public relations, it involves managing communications with various, often competing, audiences in order to negotiate the health and survival of the organisation, company or brand (Broom and Sha, 2013). Social media, as Part 2 of this chapter explores, has radically altered the communications landscape for police forces.

Internet sites and social media have not just created the opportunity for, but also encouraged, governments and organisations to communicate directly with individuals and opened the potential to engage with their audiences in a real-time dialogue (Zerfass and Schramm, 2013). Every police force in England now has at least one Facebook page and Twitter account with many forces maintaining local accounts as well as their corporate pages (see 1.4.1). Social media has changed our relationship with information and each other in a profound manner (Hamsley and Mason, 2013). It has also had an equally significant impact on public relations (Zerfass and Schramm, 2013), changing the classic communications model from a B2B[3], where the primary audience is the media (who then disseminate information to the public), to one where public relations departments must cater to both the B2B model as well as to the B2C model[4]; where corporate bodies communicate directly with their audiences (Ford and Mason, 2013). Grunig and Hunt's (1984) definition provides a flexible and robust framework for investigating this area and exploring the impact the advent of social media has had upon police public relations.

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[3] Business to Business model
[4] Business to Customer Model

Part Two: Understanding the Literature Landscape

The purpose of this section is to examine the existing research into police public relations in order to set the context within which this project was conducted and highlight some of the problems which this study sought to address. Police public relations is not a straightforward subject but one which is entangled with a number of other contentious and complex areas that come with a mountain of associated literature. Fig 1.2 shows one interpretation of how this subject sits within the wider literature landscape. While it is an artificial and speculative conceptualisation it does provide a useful illustration of how the different tangential areas overlap and coexist and the close inter-relationship.
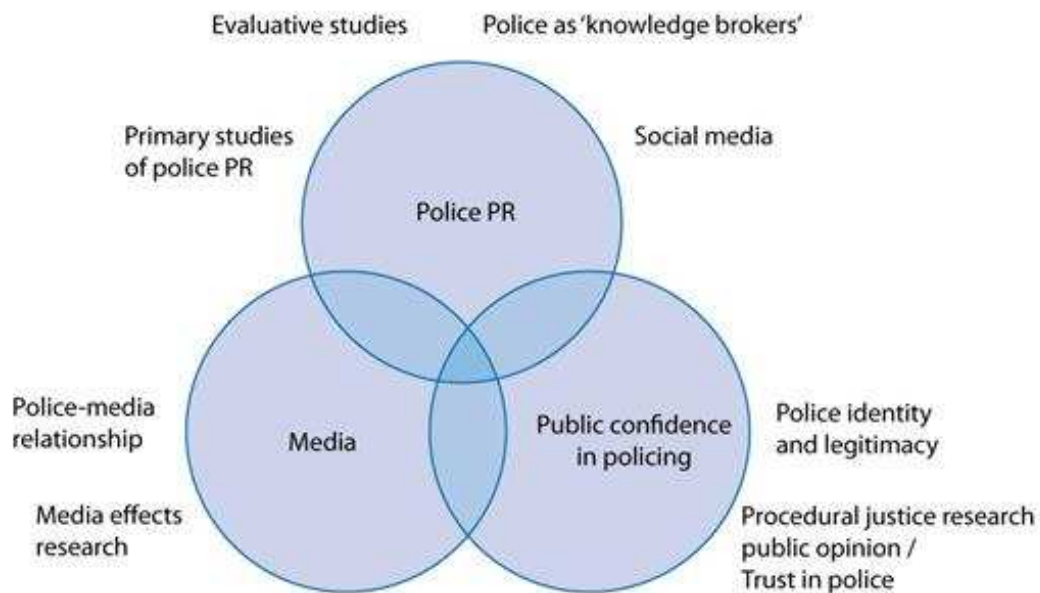
Fig 1.2

Research into police public relations has predominantly looked at this subject either from a desire to improve public confidence in the police or to understand the police-media relationship. The few studies which have directly examined police public relations are now several years old (Mawby 2002;2007) or research from other countries (Ericson and Haggarty, 1997; Surette, 2001; Lee and McGovern, 2013b). There is also now the question of social media. According to Mergel (2010), social media has revolutionised the way people and organisations communicate and has fundamentally changed expectations of service provision and delivery and how users relate to the world around them. Such a profound move in

communication has by necessity had an impact on public relations professionals and practice (Zavattro and Sementelli, 2014); the degree to which this has affected police public relations needs to be addressed (Connor, 2015). Prior research into this has tended to view social media as part of police communications and subsequently positioned it as a subsidiary of the public relations area. What the interview data from this study suggested, however, is that social media can more comfortably be placed in the centre of Fig 1.2. Social media is often considered now as an essential part of the public confidence question and has had a significant impact on the police-media relationship.

During the course of this project over five hundred research sources were consulted, covering more than 50 journals. Due to the amount of space available, however, the following review concentrates only on the literature directly relevant to this area and the central process based interest that guided this research project. The review is divided into three sections; the first looks at public confidence and media related research, two areas which have tended to dominate academic attention and which also set the context and initial impetus for the start of this project. The second section looks at the primary studies that have been conducted into police public relations; while the third discusses the impact social media has had on how police forces are now communicating.

1.3   Public Confidence and the Media

Academics have long been interested in the peculiar relationship between the police and public in England (Tobias, 1972; Manning, 1980, 2005) which has seen the "cultural metamorphosis" of the once fiercely resented English 'bobby' elevated to a beloved national symbol that has come to represent the core of 'Englishness' (McLaughlin, 2007 p.3). The lowly British bobby has become an icon for freedom and justice rather than repression (Ignatieff, 2006; Bayley, 2005). However disliked the police were when first introduced (Silver, 2005; Philips and Storch, 2007) the post war period (1945 - 1955) is often considered the 'golden age' of policing in England; a halcyon era during which police and public supposedly worked together with mutual respect and deference towards authority and the law (Reiner, 2005). The pinnacle of this was represented by the enduring success of 'Dixon of Dock Green', one of the first police shows and the second most popular television programme at the time regularly drawing fourteen million viewers (Leishman and Mason, 2003).

Policing occupies a fundamental, almost unique, paleo-symbolic position in England. The English police have over the last two centuries "inserted themselves into our social subconscious as facts of life" (Ignatieff, 2006, p.25). Not only are the police a source of control and regulation but they now also play a prevalent part in everyday entertainment (Sacco, 1998; Greer, 2004; Lee, 2007; Callanan and Rosenberger, 2011). From fictional shows, such as 'Life on Mars' and 'DCI Banks', to documentaries like 'Traffic Cops' and '24 Hours in Police Custody'; the police are, in one way or another, seldom out of the media spotlight or far from public attention.

Loader (1997, p.2) argues that one reason for the English police's enduring popularity, in fiction if not always in fact, is that "they remain one of the principle means by which English society tells stories about itself". The time has gone, however, when the police, like the Royal Family, were above and beyond criticism or reproach (Reiner and Shapland, 1987). The last half of the twentieth century marked a move towards what Loader and Mulcahy (2001b p.262) call "detraditionalisation"; "the decline of the sacred and the emergence of multiple (secular) authorities, the withering of deference and the emergence of citizenship rights and entitlements" which have all contributed to the erosion of the unquestionable legitimacy that such institutions enjoyed previously (*ibid*).

This change has marked a deeper and more widespread shift in both policing practice and in the public's relationship with its police service. Following the scandals of the 1960s and the social unrest of the 1970s public confidence is often thought to have plummeted to the extent that it created a "crisis of confidence" in the police (Morgan and Newburn, 1997 p.1; Reiner, 2010); particularly with the regard to the most famous of the English police forces – the MPS (Wilson and Ashton, 2006).

Successive findings in the British Crime Survey from the 1980s and 1990s seem to support the assertion that there has been a general decrease in public trust and confidence towards the police (Skogan, 1996; Jackson and Bradford, 2010; Bradford, 2011, 2012; Sindall et al, 2012; Jackson et al, 2013; Sindall and Sturgis, 2013;) although longitudinal research by YouGov (2013; Humphreys, 2014) found the opposite. The apparent decline of public confidence in the police has become a key issue both politically and academically and has led to numerous research studies (for example - Bennett, 1991; Goudrian, Witterbrood and Nieuweerta, 2009; Holh, Bradford and Stanko, 2010; Tankebe, 2010) and political initiatives such as Labour's One National Target.

The 'One National Target' was introduced in 2009 by the Labour Government in reaction to an alleged decrease in public confidence levels. The aim of the target was to replace all preceding targets with the overreaching aim of improving local public confidence levels in each of the police forces (Flemming and McLaughlin, 2012b). Although this target was later removed in 2010 by the incoming Coalition Government, it is a useful example of the level of concern that the issue of public confidence can, and has, generated in recent years.

One of the concerns underpinning this issue is the possible impact public confidence has on the continued legitimacy and effectiveness of the police. This concern has led to the proliferation of a great body of research into the 'Procedural Justice Model' of police - public confidence (Tyler, 2001; De Vries and Van Der Hooftvan Der Zigil, 2003; Hough et al, 2010; Myhill and Quinton, 2011; Myhill and Bradford, 2012; Tyler and Jackson, 2014). The origin of this link to legitimacy comes from what is commonly referred to as 'Peel's Nine Principles of Policing'[5] which were set out in the General Instructions given to every police officer in the newly formed Metropolitan Police (Kingshott, 2011 p.245). Police officers were instructed to:-

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[5] A complete copy of Peel's Nine Principles is available in Appendix 1.2

1. "To recognise always that the power of the police to fulfil their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour, and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect".

2. "To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police, the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence".

The argument is that a decrease in public confidence will lead to a corresponding decrease in the cooperation police officers receive from members of the public and in the number of crimes reported by the public as they will not have the confidence in the police that their problem will either be addressed or resolved (Tsfati, 2002). This will make the police less effective not only in their roles as guardians of the law but also their public order and reassurance work (Tyler and Jackson, 2014). Harkin (2015 p.608), however, argues that "the model of legitimacy offered by Beetham and procedural justice often fails to account fully for the unpredictable and peculiar reactions to police malfeasance".

What Harkin (2015) is referring to is the phenomenon recorded by YouGov (2013) and other polls (see Duckford 2011, 2012; Friedman, 1998; Job, 2005) that demonstrates how the public often fail to react in a consistent manner when confronted with police scandals and evidence of malpractice; when a scandal involving policing occurs the expectation is that there will be a corresponding downward shift in public confidence levels over that period. YouGov (2013), however, report the opposite - that in spite of scandals such as 'PlebGate' public confidence has remained steady over the last decade; a result counter to that reported in the British Crime Survey and the predictive model of Procedural Justice (Bradford, 2012). Why, or whether, there has been this loss of public confidence remains subject to debate.

Chandek and Porter (1998), for example, proposed that one reason confidence in police forces might have decreased is due to disappointed expectations. Chandek and Porter (1998) found in their study that crime victim expectation was an accurate predictor for victim satisfaction and confidence in the police.

Everyone has set expectations of the police whether they stem from childhood, direct or vicarious experiences, political beliefs or fiction (Surette, 1998; Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins and Ring, 2005). By the end of the First World War the police had achieved an "almost heroic reputation" in newsprint and fiction (Shpayer-Makov, 2010 p.672). With the proliferation of instant access media in the latter half of the twentieth century the police are rarely absent for long. If people have expectations of the police which are not met – either through direct experience or learnt about through other means (e.g. newspapers or social media) Expectancy Disconfirmation may occur resulting in loss of confidence (Chandek and Porter, 1998).

Alternatively, advocates of the Media Effects model propose that one reason for the downward trend in recorded public confidence levels is due to the hyper-mediatisation over the last century which has challenged the authority and credibility of the police voice. Policing may have emerged in the 1960s as the "interpreters of the crisis" who "possessed a powerful emotive appeal for large numbers of besieged and anxious ('respectable') citizens" (Loader and Mulcahy, 2001b p.261). But they are not now the only voice, nor, necessarily, the most popular or the most credible (Gregory, 1970; Greer and McLaughlin, 2010).

Some academics have suggested that society has become increasingly conscious of risk over the last sixty years to the point where people have left public space (Ericson, 2005; McCahill, 2003; Campbell, 2004; Brodeur, 2005; Ericson and Leslie, 2008) and society is now in a state of "national agoraphobia" (Box, 2004 p.272). This absence combined with the decline of social interdependence has led to people becoming isolated in their secure fortress-like homes (Lee, 2007). In this new environment the media has become the principle source of social news, conveyer of culture and essential for establishing a sense of communal solidarity through shared knowledge and "virtual collectiveness" (Greer, 2004 p109; Davis, 2005; Peelo 2005).

This has facilitated the creation of "a hyper reality in which media domination suffuses to such an extent that the distinction between image and reality no longer exists" (Baudrillard, 1981 cited in Jewkes 2004 p.26). The media, because of this, has become the custodian of 'truth' and 'facts'; they control to a significant degree what the public knows and thus the perceptions and opinions of the public (Powdermaker, 2002). The mdia's influence over public opinion is thought to be even more profound than it otherwise might be because proportionally few people actually come into contact with the police (Skogan, 2006) and therefore the principle

source of information for society on the police is through the media, whether in the news or in fictional programmes (Mawby, 2003).

The media has long been thought to have a "definite and powerful influence over the thoughts and actions of people, either individually or in groups" (Strinati 2000, p.179). The Media Effects, or Hypodermic model, is premised upon the assumption that audiences are passive, uncritically receptive sponges who absorb the views, opinions and information expressed in the media, films and television (Lang and Long, 1986; Mutz, 1989; Dirikx and Van Den Bulck, 2014). The extent to which this knowledge is absorbed and then assimilated depends upon the age, race and gender of the watcher, their interest in the programme, the level of trust/believability they accord the source of information (Sacco, 1998; Baumeister, Bratslavaky and Finkenaur, 2001; Callanan and Rosenberger, 2011) and whether they have experienced directly, or indirectly, anything which corroborates or discounts what they are being told (Becker, 1967; Chiricos, Eschholz and Gertz, 1997). The Media Effect model proposes that as people are inundated with an increasing number of negative images of the police concentrating on police corruption and failures so the traditional image of the police has been challenged and eroded, resulting in people feeling less confident and satisfied with policing in general (Swindler, Rapp and Scysal, 1986; Dowler, 2002; Chiricos, Eschholz and Gertz, 1998; Greer, 2004; Dowler and Zawilski, 2007).

Although the Media Effects model is subject to a number of criticisms and inherent limitations, which are beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss in detail, it does highlight several important points; one of which is that there is a difference between what the police do, what they think they do and what the public think they do (Bittner, 2005.). If asked what the police do most people would cite the ubiquitous media portrayal of the police as "first and foremost crime fighters" (Ericson and Haggarty, 1997 p.20). That the police do not spend the majority of their time and resources on the detection and prevention of crime is, according to Bayley (1994, p.3), "one of the best kept secrets of modern life… experts know it, the police know it, but the public does not know it". All the time 'the police' were the dominant voice in criminal justice matters they could maintain this illusion and promote a comforting myth that like the Mounties they 'always got their man' (Salmi et al, 2005). In the hyperreality of modern society, however, there is no 'single' voice. Instead, people are constantly and consistently bombarded by a bewildering montage of issues, whether fact or fictitious, conflicting information and competing views (Baudrillard, 1994).

Reiner (2000 p.87) argues that this process of demystification has undermined the traditional image of the police as infallible 'good guys' who represent justice and always get their man. Instead the public now sees the institution with "warts and all". Many academics have commented over the years that policing in Britain has always been as much a matter of image as of substance (Manning, 1997; Mawby and Reiner, 1998; Mawby, 2010b; Klockars, 2005; O'Malley, 2005). The central issue, Sillince and Brown (2009, p.1832) suggest, is that organisations like the police "are socially and symbolically constructed using rhetoric to achieve identity transformation and management. Organisational identities are, thus, phenomenological, socially constructed, rhetorical constructs, concerned with what organisations stand for and what senior managers want them to become".

As such, positive reputation and image management are essential components for their continued success in society (Mawby, 2002). According to McLaughlin (2007) the image of the humble British bobby has been nurtured with great care since the late 19th century; starting with Charles Dickens (Shpayer-Makov, 2010) and carrying on through early attempts during the 1920s to actively foster public support (Wood, 2013), to the culmination of cinematic success with the Blue Lamp (Leishman and Mason, 2003). Bittner (1970 cited in Klockars, 2005) points out that a certain degree of circumlocution is necessary with regard to policing in order to reconcile people to an institution that is fundamentally at odds with them. This circumlocution enfolds the police in signs, symbols and myths that act to mystify and legitimate the organisation and protect it from critical scrutiny (Klockars, 2005; Reiner, 2010).

The "symbolic dimension" of the police, however, "has been eroded by disillusionment" and thus the public no longer trust that the police will save them from the horrors of society, thereby increasing their 'fear of crime' (Mawby 2002, p.16; Lee, 2007). Bottomley (1989, p.87) astutely remarked that happiness and trust in societal institutions can only be maintained in the absence of knowledge – that the "more we know or infer... the more injustice will appear where once it was assumed justice was being done". In a similar vein, Sorokin (1937 cited in Schneider, 1962 p.492) suggested that knowledge can "prove exceedingly injurious to many illusions which are necessary for the existence of values in a group". Knowledge, for Sorokin (*ibid*), is the antithesis of faith and faith is the foundation of confidence - you can have one but not both, and the more you know about something the less confidence you will have in it.

The difficulty, as Proctor (2008) and McGoey (2007) point out, is that ignorance can now be more easily challenged. The advent of instant internet access has fundamentally changed how individuals and organisations communicate and redefined the traditional role of information gate-keeping (Hemsley and Mason, 2013). Information that could previously be contained is now freely available and it is now much more difficult to either keep secrets from the public domain (Zavattro and Sementelli, 2014), or to manage the consequences of their discovery (Greer and McLaughlin, 2010).

Social media, in particular, has revolutionised the communications industry and has had a profound impact upon public sector organisations like the police (Paek, et al, 2013); allowing police forces "to bypass the traditional media and deliver… messages directly to the public, without the filter or editing applied by journalists." (New South Wales Corporate Communications Unit, 2013; Lee and McGovern, 2015). Prior to the advent of social media sites, the news media was the primary means of mass communication for the police (Warren, Sulaiman and Noor, 2014). Social media has significantly altered the dynamics of this relationship; skewing what some academics consider to be an already asymmetrical power dynamic further in the police's favour (Shpayer-Makov, 2010; Schneider, 2014) by encouraging the police to cut out the middle man and talk directly to their audiences at a time and in a context which they control (Heverin and Zach, 2010). The advent of free, immensely popular and easily accessibly technology has changed the way news is produced and disseminated. In essence with the rise of the 'citizen journalist', social media has challenged the monopoly of the print press; news producers are no longer necessarily affiliated with a news outlet but potentially anyone with a smart phone (Greer and McLaughlin, 2010). In this environment police public relations gains a new online importance.

The question remains, however, what role does public relations play in modern policing? As the previous chapter discussed, effective communication is a skill that lies at the very heart of forming relationships; in motivating, educating and reaching an audience, and is crucial to the survival of all public organisations in a hyper-mediated, globally connected world (Gurmilang, 2012). From the introduction of the first official police Press Office in 1919, professionalised public relations departments have become an essential, if often overlooked, aspect of modern policing. Public relations in policing is no longer a simple matter of broadcasting the information and official story they wish known (Loader and Mulcahy, 2001a; Mawby, 2002); police forces now have an "obligation… to engage with the public" (ACPO, 2012 p4).

Indeed, according to the HMIC (2011a, p.28) it was "as a result of this and of the need to enhance public confidence in the Service through reassurance and engagement with increasingly diverse communities, the police communications function has evolved. Force press offices have become corporate communications departments which manage the internal communications and corporate marketing and identity, as well as media queries".

Engagement, confidence and transparency are now key objectives for police forces and central to the success of this is the public relations department (HMIC, 2011a). Yet, as sections 1.4 and 1.5 will discuss, there has been comparatively little research into these departments and even less into how they are managing the public relations issues and challenges facing their police forces in the digital age.

1.4   Police Public Relations Research

What then is known about public relations in the English police? The answer is not a great deal. Other than the detailed history of public relations in the MPS pieced together by Mawby (2002) (see 1.2) and Mawby's ethnographic study of the public relations department in the South Yorkshire police, research on this topic is sparse, patchy and now mostly out of date. The research in this area can be separated into three basic types; 'primary' studies of police public relations, 'evaluative' studies looking at one specific communication scheme (e.g. newsletter drops) and 'discussion' articles.

Mawby (2002) argues that public relations is essential to the legitimacy and continued legitimisation of the police. The previous section briefly discussed the idea that there is a crisis of confidence in policing in England. Indeed, Loader (1997) suggested that by the late 1990s the situation had reached the point where the police were permanently in crisis; nearly 20 years on and this fear is still a recurrent theme in political speeches and news articles (BBC, 2014a; BBC, 2014b).

According to Kingshott (2011) police forces' have traditionally relied upon a silent, no-comment approach when dealing with difficult situations. As Wilson et al (2011) point out, however, in a hyper-mediated world where there are a multitude of independent voices the police can no longer afford to remain aloof from the conversations going on around, or about, them.

Considering, then, the central importance public relations has played in the success of the British police since their inception in 1829 (Rawlings, 2002), it is interesting to note that it has received only sporadic academic interest. Raymond Clift (1949), a captain in the Cincinnati Traffic police division, was one of the earliest commentators on police public relations and published an article aimed at educating officers as to the importance of these activities in 1949.

For Clift (1949, p.667), "of the many activities in police departments today few are more important that those which aim to better the press and public relations for the police service. These activities are the very root of police efficiency. They engender the kind of public co-operation without which the police service could not function." Clift noted that while the

"fundamental" importance of public relations in policing had not been recognised in the past, there was growing understanding and attention being paid to the practice now (*ibid*).

Clift's (1949) article was the first of several 'discussion' articles during the 1950s – 1970s from both American (Gourley, 1954; McManus, 1955; Terris, 1967) and British authors (Pulling, 1962; Young, 1966; Gregory, 1970; Tobias, 1972; Hilton, 1973; Hunt, 1973); and marked the start of 'academic' interest in this topic. The interesting thing about these articles is that they were all written by serving police officers or police staff who either had an interest in raising the profile of public relations or were working in the department and wished to promote the necessity for police communications.

In terms of academic interest in police public relations, this began during the 1980s. Surette (2001) remarked that when he started researching this area there were only two prior studies which looked directly at public relations in American police forces rather than obliquely mentioning them in connection with something else; Surette and Richard (1993) and Chermak and Weiss (1997). In England a similar situation had also developed. There has long been interest in the unusual, sometimes unhealthy, co-dependent relationship between the police and news media (Lovell, 2002; Powdermaker, 2000) and, as such, there has been considerable attention paid to it over the years – particularly in the work of Steve Chibnall (1973, 1975a, 1979) who has been considered the authority on the police – press relationship for much of the last forty years (Mawby, 20010a, 2010b). Other seminal studies in this area include the work of Hall et al (1978), Schlesigner and Tumber (1993), Innes (1999; 2006), Mawby (2003; 2012), Reiner (2010) and Wilson, et al (2011) in England; Hollins and Bacon (2010), McGovern and Lee (2010), Baker and Hyde (2011) and Lee and McGovern (2014) in Australia; and Skolnick and McCoy (1984), Chermak, 1995, Cottle (2003) and Chermak and Weiss (2005) in America.

This thesis is primarily concerned with police public relations from the police perspective, as such the following section concentrates only on those studies which have examined police public relations departments.

1.4.1 Primary Research

In terms of studies examining the operational and strategic aspects of police public relations, however, there has been considerably less academic interest. With the exception of Mawby's work (1998; 2002; 2007; 2014), which will be discussed later, there have been few other

studies of police public relations; for example, Cooke and Sturgis (2009) in England, Ferret and Spenlehauer (2009) in America, Lee and McGovern (2014, 2015) in Australia and Ericson and Haggarty (1997) and Brodeur and Dupont (2006) in Canada.

Cooke and Sturgis' (2009) study looked at communications in Derbyshire and Leicestershire police and how it has changed with the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act (2000). While Ferret and Spenlehaur (2009) and Brodeur and Dupont (2006) concentrated on testing Ericson and Haggerty's (1997) theory that the police have become contemporary knowledge workers; collecting, collating and distributing knowledge about crime, risk and victimisation to people and partner organisations.

According to Ericson (1994, p.149), the police have become "knowledge brokers; expert advisors and security managers to other institutions". Ericson and Haggarty's theory suggests that risk is now the dominant framework and language by which companies and individuals are governed (Ericson and Leslie, 2008). For Power (2004 cited in Ericson and Leslie, 2008), organisations like the police are not only processing uncertainty but also causing it, which creates a mutually reinforcing cycle. The result is the amplification of risk management in order to raise more awareness of these risks and to promote preventative behaviour. Lee (2007) commented that a paradox has arisen in modern society where the more officials try to control crime and reduce the fear associated with it the more fearful people seem to become.

Ericson and Haggarty (1997) argue that understanding and controlling risk provides the foundation for the public to accept the police as the credible voice of expert knowledge on risk and crime. As such, in the risk society communication becomes vital to the continued success and survival of policing. Police public relations promotes not only the police voice but is the primary means by which police forces sell themselves, their services and retain credibility in order to continually legitimise their position in the hierarchy of control (Lee and McGovern, 2013a).

Brodeur and Dupont (2006), however, point out that while Ericson and Haggarty's (1997) theory has become accepted as an orthodox reality there is little evidence to support it. In their study of American and Canadian police forces, Brodeur and Dupont (2006) found that the police were not yet the central hub of knowledge collection, production and dissemination that Ericson and Haggarty (1997) hypothesise. Nor did Brodeur and Dupont (2006) find

evidence to support the idea that the police were considered the dominant authority on criminal matters. Similar findings were reported by Ferret and Spenlehaur (2009) in their meta-analysis of policing across seven countries. Ferret and Spenlehaur (2009) concluded that Ericson and Haggarty's theory was too all encompassing to be sustainable in practice: principally because while the police might try to raise awareness of risk and promote preventative advice many people are either unaware of these campaigns or chose to ignore them (Elder et al, 2004).

Lee and McGovern (2015, p.1), counter to Brodeur and Dupont (2006) and Ferret and Spenlehaur (2009), argue that "risk as an organising logic has strongly influenced the nature of contemporary police/media/public communications". For Lee and McGovern (2015), how the police in Australia are using social media is proof positive of Ericson and Haggarty's (1997) risk based communications with the majority of police messages on these channels being about public safety and communicating information either about risk or how to avoid it. The language of risk has become more subtle but, according to Lee and McGovern (2015), it is also undeniably present in how, what and why police forces are communicating and is one of the central reasons why public relations has become so important to police forces in recent years.

In America, Surette's research (1995; 2001) remains one of the most detailed and important studies into police public relations. Surette (*ibid*) in his articles noted an increasing professionalisation of the police public relations departments during the late 1980s. Surette believed that this was due to cost cutting measures which encouraged police forces to replace warranted officers with civilian staff in backroom functions, like communications. The most interesting point that, according to Surette (2001, p.108), came out of this study was evidence of "the existence of a structural division" between civilian staff and warranted officers within these departments; both in terms of gender, age, education level and the degree of proactivity in the department.

Surette's (2001) surveys showed that warranted officers tended to be older, male, with educational backgrounds in criminal justice and with little media related/communications experience prior to joining the public relations department. Civilian staff, however, tended to be female, in their thirties with a university education in communications, public relations or marketing and with significant experience of working with the media.

Surette (2001) also observed that the departments run and staffed by civilians were more proactive and progressive than those managed by warranted officers. Given this, Surette (2001) contended that the professionalisation of these departments first observed by Chermak and Weiss (1997) was most likely to have been driven by the increasing number of civilian employees. A similar trend was noted by Mawby (2007), Mawby and Worthington (2003) and Kingshott (2011) in the English police.

Gundhus (2013) suggests that the professionalisation of these departments developed in tandem with the police desire to control knowledge production. From the late 1980s onwards police public relations gained a new degree of professionalism (HMIC, 2001; Mawby, 2002). The 1980s saw the introduction of corporate terminology, such as 'corporate identity', 'reputation management' and 'corporate image', into the language of the British police (Mawby, 2002). Indeed, it was remarked upon by the HMIC report 'Open All Hours' (2001) that backroom policing functions were becoming increasingly professionalised and corporate – both in appearance and function. The police occupy a privileged position in terms of being in demand by the media and other agencies to provide news and information on crime, risk and insecurity (Ericson, 1990). As the demand has grown so police public relations departments have had to evolve to cater to it (Wilson et al, 2011).

Mawby's (2007) research into police public relations is unusual in the sense that not only is it the only longitudinal study on the subject, starting during the mid-1990s and continuing through to 2007, but it also includes an in-depth ethnographic case study of public relations in the South Yorkshire police. Over the course of his research, Mawby (*ibid*) has noted a general increase in both the size of these departments and in the ratio of civilian to warranted officers employed in them. According to Mawby (2002), prior to the Wolf-Olins report in 1987 most public relations departments were staffed by warranted officers. During the early 1990s, however, police forces increasingly started replacing warranted officers with civilian staff to the point where by 2001 82% of forces were recruiting civilian staff, 87% of department staff across the country were civilian experts recruited from journalism, marketing and public relations backgrounds and 85% of department heads were now civilians. In 32 of the 50 forces canvassed (64%) by his survey, Mawby (2002) found that all public relations staff were now civilians; compared to the 52% reported in the 1996/7 survey.

While Mawby (2002; 2007) did not go into quite the same level of comparative detail between civilian and warranted staff as Surette (2001), he did note that police public relations departments were developing at different rates and in different ways across the police service in England. Such an observation is particularly interesting in light of Surette's (2001) theory that departments staffed and run by warranted officers would show discernible differences in how proactive and innovative they were when it came to communication and public engagement.

From his research, Mawby (2002, p.177) concluded that there were three emergent, or "plausible possibilities" regarding the current and future significance of public relations ('image work') in policing.

1. **Marginal**: Public relations as a marginal or insignificant part of police work; there to provide the police with a buffer against potential public back-lash from unpopular police work but still distinct from 'real police work'. Public relations activities are restricted to department staff and the departments themselves occupy a low position in the organisational hierarchy.

2. **Supportive**: Public relations as supportive image work. Image work is considered more significant by the organisation and has a higher position within the hierarchy. It is "formally recognised and harnessed by the police service to assist forces in coping with their external environment which the mass media pervade" and as a consequence is allotted more resources (ibid, p.179). However, image work is still considered separate and distinct from police work with the heads of these departments occupying an 'advisory' role within the senior management of the police force but with no real power or influence.

3. **Core**: "Police work becomes image work". This scenario is the most comprehensive and far reaching: public relations departments become embedded within the organisation hierarchy while communications work becomes an integrated facet of the police force. In this scenario staff and officers will work together, "collapsing the demarcation between operational policing and 'bolt-on' image work, such that *all* are image workers, who shape what policing is in the mass-mediated environment" (ibid p.181).

Mawby (2002, p.181) argued that while there were traces of all three, police public relations is predominantly a mixture of the first and second scenarios; albeit weighted more towards the second. He concluded that there was, at the time of his research, "toe-holds of the 'core' scenario", but thought that further development of this scenario was "organisationally unfeasible at present".

Mawby (2002, p.184) proposed that the evidence of all three scenarios in modern policing "highlights the complex nature of image work and the scope for convergence and divergence in the practice of forty-three organisation". He further hypothesised that given the growing importance around the "management of visibility" it was possible police forces would move increasingly towards the third scenario and pursue an approach which would "involve the development of press and public relations offices not as optional 'bolt-on' auxiliary departments which 'manage' the media and undertake public relations tasks" when needed but to use communication in an "integrated manner across policing functions to… allow for consultation and dialogue" (Mawby, 2002 p.198).

It is interesting to note that over a decade later a similar disparity was found in a survey commissioned by APComm (ACPO, 2014). This survey was intended to find how the 684 members "viewed their role in police communications both currently and going forward" (*ibid*, p5). The survey found that the value placed on communications and the operational position of these departments varied significantly across different police forces. While 87% of respondents felt that their force valued their work "to some extent" a fifth said that "they didn't believe specialist communication was appreciated by their organisation" (Ibid, p.3) and nearly half (48%) felt that they were unable to influence changes or had no impact. A common complaint across most respondent groups was the lack of support from police officers and the view that police officers "know best" (*Ibid*, 2014 p.14). It is also interesting that despite a move away from public relations terminology, 59% of respondents said that 'PR' was still one of their regular areas of responsibility (ACPO, 2014 p.7).

1.4.2   Research Limitations

One of the reasons why there is such limited understanding of what public relations is in a policing context is due to the skeletal history we have of its evolution in the English police – particularly with respect to constabularies other than the MPS Mawby (2002) observes that of all the police forces in England the MPS is the best known, the most researched and the best

documented; this has led to it being used as the model, or dominant story, through which academics look at the history of the police. In comparison, the experience and development of public relations in the other, smaller constabularies, has tended to be overlooked or forgotten (Wood, 2013).

Part of the reason for this has been the frequent reorganisations and changes the county forces have undergone over the last one hundred and fifty years. In 1900 there were 243 separate forces across England, Wales and Scotland. Following the Police Act of 1946, and then later the Police Act of 1964, this number reduced to 47 forces in England and Wales as many of the smaller town forces merged with county constabularies in the pursuit of greater efficiency[6]. There are currently 39 constabularies in England, although several of the interviewees during the course of this research expressed the view that it is possible that more forces may follow West Mercia constabulary's lead and merge with their neighbours in the future given the economic problems they are facing (PI.17, PI.22 and PI.23). In the process of merging and restructuring aspects of these forces, historical information has been lost or confused. The absence of this information can make accurately tracing the development of something like public relations rather difficult. An example of this, is that many of the police forces can only estimate when they first established these departments; several only identifying the decade (Appendix 3.2).

The difficulty, Cooke and Sturgis (2009) point out, is that while the 'police' in England are often spoken of as a homogenous, unified agency, in truth the forces are individual units akin to separate cogs in a much greater machine. The incomplete history we have of public relations in county forces has contributed to the MPS becoming the dominant storyteller; however, the MPS is also a force like no other (Reiner, 2010) which raises questions over how applicable the experiences and practices of this force are to other constabularies. For Miller (2005), the history of policing is naturally contentious and difficult to study and should be recognised as such. Each force has its own unique history based on an individual socio-historical context and development responding to local problems and tensions. As such, Miller (2005) argues, it is unwise to assume that what applies to one force necessarily applies to all the others; how and why public relations developed in the MPS may not be the case elsewhere and as Mouzelis (2008) warns, not all data can be generalised . Lack of research in this area and the information

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[6] http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/laworder/policeprisons/overview/nationspoliceforce/

that has been lost through mergers and poor record keeping, however, have resulted in just this generalisation occurring.

This dearth of research has also led to another issue which should be acknowledged. Due to the patchy knowledge base we have of police public relations in England, literature from other countries was consulted in order to act as an alternative. While it is interesting to note that public relations in the police seems to be a global phenomenon, rather than uniquely British, there is a question over how applicable foreign research and ideas are when applied to a different police force, like the English police. Surette's (2001) observation that there was a difference between civilian and police led public relations departments is a good example of this. Similarly, there must also be a question over how applicable Lee and McGovern's (2014) analysis of Australian police forces' relationship with the news media is to the situation with English police forces.

The lack of research has only further exacerbated the methodological limitations of the research that has been carried out. Most studies, with the exception of Mawby (2007), have concentrated on a limited number of forces. Cooke and Sturgis (2009), for example, compared the public relations departments of Derbyshire and Leicestershire police forces; while Mawby (2002) in his ethnographic case study of police public relations concentrated primarily on South Yorkshire police. Equally, the evaluative studies of Steenhuis (1980), De Vries et al (2003), Weitzer and Tuck (2004), Bradford et al (2009), Wunsch and Holh (2009), Holh et al (2010), Hough et al (2010), Mazerolle, Bennet, Manning, Gerguson and Sargeant (2010), Huq, Tyler and Schulhofer (2011), Holh, Stanko and Newburn (2012) and Murphy, Mazerolle and Bennett (2014) all concentrate on small, isolated geographical areas from which general hypotheses are then drawn.

The reasons for this are both practical and sensible as it would be unfeasible to devote the level of time and attention to every force in England as one can in a limited study looking at only a small number of police forces or a specific geographical area. The corollary of this is that, just as with the history of public relations, we are left extrapolating generalisations from a small sample group which are then applied to all the forces in England. There is always the problem with research of the stone left unturned. Research by its very nature must be self-limiting, otherwise it would never be finished (Silverman, 2011). The difficulty here is the number of stones not yet looked under – thirty-four (87%), in fact, if you discount Devon and Cornwall

police (Kingshott, 2011), Derbyshire and Leicestershire (Cooke and Sturgis, 2009), South Yorkshire (Mawby, 2002) and the MPS (Mawby, 2002; Holh, Bradford and Stanko, 2010; Hough et al, 2010); which is a significant number.

The most significant difficulty with the existing research in this area, however, is that most studies are now several years old with some, in the case of Mawby's (2002) seminal case study of South Yorkshire police and Surette's (2001) survey of public relations officers in America, conducted over a decade ago. The problem is that communications is a fast changing area. Lee and McGovern (2014, p.213) point out in their research into public relations in Australia police forces that "the world of police media and public relations is ever changing, expanding and highly volatile" which within a few years will probably not resemble the situation discussed in any research now.

There is a need for updated information on how and what police forces are doing with regard to 'image work' and public relations – particularly given the recent inclusion of social media in the police communications arsenal; a development which is discussed further in the next section.

1.5   Social Media

"Effective engagement is at the heart of policing. The revolution in digital technology means that people are engaging with services at their convenience and in the manner, medium and at a time which suits them. The police service is starting to engage and be engaged in ways that are unprecedented in the history of UK policing"

(Nick Kean cited in Engage, (NPIA, 2010, p.4).

One of the most significant developments in the communications industry over the last decade has been the advent of social media. A recent study by the Parliament Street Research Team (2014) concluded that "Facebook and Twitter are the defining products of our age, tools that have changed the way we interact, communicate and live". According to Hemsley and Mason (2013), social media has drastically altered the way information travels, how knowledge is managed and the way relationships are formed and maintained. The consequence of this has been a new dimension to the power of 'vox populi' and a growing demand for demonstrably open and accountable governance (Brainard and McNutt, 2010; Goldsmith, 2010). This has led to companies, organisations and people with public personas or offices facing increasing pressure to embrace this new technology and build digital support and information networks (Ayres, 2011; Warren et al, 2014).

The term 'social media' refers to a set of online platforms designed to encourage social interaction between different and diverse audiences who might never meet or engage in the real world (Fisher, 2009; Information Age, 2011)[7]. The last five years has witnessed a significant uptake in the use of digital and social media technologies. Data collected by the Office for National Statistics suggests that approximately 78% of adults in England are now accessing the internet and just over half are using social media on a regular basis (ONS, 2014). It was estimated by Twitter in 2012 that there were approximately 140 million Twitter users worldwide with 10 million living in the UK (Arthur, 2012). By 2014 the number of accounts registered in the UK had increased to 15 million (Twitter, 2015). Similarly, Facebook reported that they had 31 million active accounts in the UK (McGrory, 2014). As of 2015, research suggests that Facebook is the favourite platform globally and in the UK is thought to have 43% of the population using the site compared to Twitter's more modest 19% (McGrory, 2016).

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[7] See the glossary for further information on these sites

Four years before Mark Zuckerberg first launched Facebook and six before the first tweet was sent, West (2000, p.2) predicted what he called the rise of "E-government". For West (2000), the growing use and usefulness of the internet was not just as a repository of knowledge but a potential vehicle through which governments could increasingly provide low cost services and information online to a far greater audience than they could usually reach. Nearly a decade after West's research the first police force in England created a corporate Twitter account.

Recognising the growing importance and practical uses social media has, the NPIA[8] released the first official national police guide in 2010. The aim of this document was to help police forces, and individual officers, use social media as a means of communication. Engage (NPIA, 2010, p.20) called for a change in strategy from "simply publishing information into social media spaces, to fully engaging with our online communities" through the use of social media. As Fisher (2009) explained "social media seems to provide an essential conduit between the police and the public. As a reflection of the world around them, police need to communicate with the public with greater frequency, speed, and informality. People want to hear from, and talk to the police whenever they are, in a way which suits them".

1.5.1   A Brief History of the English Police and Social Media

By December 2008 seven forces had a Facebook page while one (West Midlands) police force had a registered corporate Twitter account. By July 2011 all police forces in England had a corporate Twitter account while 33 had a Facebook page (Fig 1.3).

Jeremy Crump (2011), however, in his study of police use of Twitter noted that while there were a few notable exceptions police adoption of social media was slow, and in some forces obviously reluctant. According to Proctor, Crump, Karstedt, Voss and Cantijock (2013) the main catalyst for police digital activity was the London Riots in August 2011. In their research, Proctor et al (2013) reported that prior to the riots the MPS had around 3000 followers on Twitter. Between August 6th and 21st this number increased to over 30,000 with similar results being recorded in other forces.

The riots in 2011 highlighted the importance of an active police presence online – not just from a surveillance and operational policing perspective (Wall and Williams, 2013) but in order to

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[8] Now the College of Policing (COP)

manage the flow of information, correct misinformation and rumours, reassure the public, improve police visibility, and keep the public informed about trouble areas, road closures and what they were doing. During this period the police became the go-to source for information; replacing the media as the primary provider of breaking news (Reicher and Stott, 2011). Proctor et al (2013) also point out, however, that how the police used social media during this period was not always effective or consistent in order to combat misinformation and reassure the public.
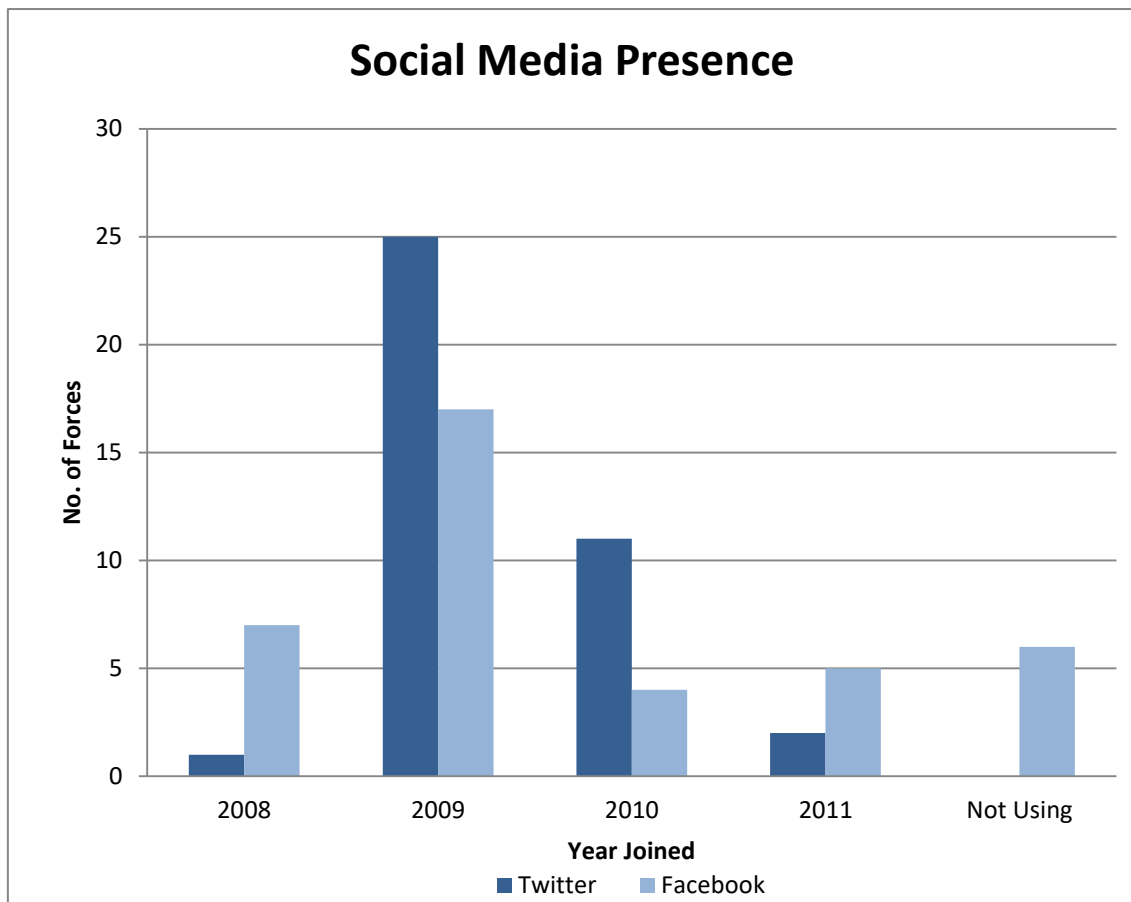
Fig 1.3

A similar point was raised by the HMIC in their report on the riots. The report suggested that one of the contributing factors in the outbreak of the riots was that the MPS had "stalled in its communications both with the local community and with the national press in the immediate aftermath of the shooting of Mark Duggan on Tuesday 4th August and did not recover until disorder had become established" (HMIC 2011b, p.69). The HMIC (2011) investigation found that rumours of a police execution had been circulating from the morning of the 5th of August but that this was not challenged until the IPCC made a statement late on the 7th. Hough et al (2011) in their analysis of the London Riots found much the same: lack of communication, poor

community engagement and a difficult relationship with the police helped escalate the tensions which led to the riots

"The police", HMIC (2011b p.30) concluded, "have much to learn about social media, and the quickly shifting modern communications of today. With some notable exceptions, the power of this kind of media (both sending out and receiving information) is not well understood and less well managed". One such exception identified was West Midlands police who created a dedicated area on their force website "to provide a one stop shop for disorder related messaging" which according to HMIC figures "On its first day it received 300,000 visits – about the same as their combined web and mobile sites normally receive in a month (HMIC 2011b, p.31). In the main, however, police forces across the country, and particularly in the affected areas, were slow to respond and adapt to using social media effectively. Proctor et al (2013) found in their analysis of police online activity during the riots that there was a general lack of dialogue and engagement from the police and that many officers and forces failed to use the hash tag function[9] which excluded them from many of the conversations taking place online and limited the audience who received, and paid attention, to police messages.

Meijer and Thaens (2013, p.1) argue that social media is the way forward for police forces facing increasing budget constraints. "Social media", they suggests, holds "the promise of increasing the effectiveness and legitimacy of the public sector by facilitating communication and coordination between a variety of internal and external stakeholders". Similar thoughts have been expressed by Connor (2015) and Brainard and Edlin (2015).

The previous section (1.4) discussed the extent and limitations of research into police public relations. Social media is of particular interest in the study of public relations as it is the first technology which not just offers but encourages users and organisations to move away from traditional one-way broadcasting communication models and towards a dialogue (Heverin and Zach, 2010) or what Grunig (1989) called two-way models of public relations. For Mathauer (2010, p.80), "the social media newsroom is a dynamic information and communication platform on which the company combines classic public relations content with the contents of various web 2.0 services aggregated to build a comprehensive and sustained dialogue with its target groups". Social media has revolutionised the communications industry and yet, as with

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[9] Hashtag refers to a function on Twitter which allows people to group ideas, conversation topics or objects together so that they can be easily tracked. Hashtags can also be used to brand a tweet; e.g. #bobbyonthetweet

police public relations in general, there has been so far little interest directed at understanding how the police in England are adapting to the challenges of using this new technology; or, if it is working (Connor, 2015).

Given that social media is an emerging area of academic interest; it is, perhaps, not surprising that there are only a few studies looking at it. In terms of research looking at the English police there is the work of Crump (2011) and Proctor et al (2013) which examined police use of Twitter during the London riots in August 2011; Goldsmith (2010; 2013) who looked at the dangers of social media in a policing environment, police misuse and abuse of social media and the implications social media has for police visibility; Greer and McLaughlin (2010) who discussed the rise of citizen journalism and how this has affected the police – media relationship; and Wall and Williams (2013) who studied the feasibility of using social media to monitor tensions within specific neighbourhoods to predict future civil unrest.

1.5.2 Police and the News Media

Lee and McGovern (2013a, p.166) believe that "police organizations have become increasingly adept in managing and controlling their media image, heralding a new era of police-media communications, one that is proactive in nature".

One of the most interesting consequences of social media is the change it has wrought on the relationship between police forces and the news media. Before, the news media was the primary means of mass communication for the police (Peelo, 2005). Chibnall (1979), in his seminal studies of police – press relations, argued that while the power dynamic in the police – press relationship was skewed firmly in the favour of the police as the legitimate providers of crime news, there were two redeeming aspects which helped to re-balance the relationship: firstly, the investigative abilities of the crime reporters to locate and publish information the police did not want them to have and secondly, the fact that the police needed the press in order to communicate with the public (Skolnick and McCoy, 1984).

This is no longer the situation. Social media allows the police to talk directly to their audience at a time and in a context which they control (Brainard and McNutt, 2010). As the New South Wales Corporate Communications Unit (2013) explained; social media "allows us to bypass the traditional media and deliver our messages directly to the public, without the filter or editing applied by journalists." In adopting this approach, New South Wales police have essentially cut

out the middle man and thus significantly altered the dynamic of the relationship between police and press. Lee and McGovern (2013) found in their content analysis of crime reporting in Australia that in one month 67% of all crime related stories came from the police public relations office and were reported almost verbatim.

A similar change in crime reporting has been noted by Chermak and Weiss (2005), by Mawby (2014) and Boyle (1999). This change has been partly explained by the increasing financial constraints on journalists which restrict their activities and has led to a decline in the number of dedicated crime reporters. In such a climate it is significantly easier and quicker to print the official police story (Lee and McGovern, 2014).

According to Greer and McLaughlin (2010), however, social media should not be viewed as an unqualified positive for the police - as the events surrounding the death of Ian Tomlinson during the 2009 G20 Summit demonstrated. The rise of citizen journalism has been, and continues to be, one of the most significant threats to the hegemony of news production. The advent of mobile phones, digital cameras and a culture of social networking and posting online means that there are now millions of potential journalists already present at every event where once there were clearly demarked 'press' who could be managed and kept out of the way (Greer and McLaughlin, 2010; Wilson et al, 2011).

Lee and McGovern (2013, p.105) point out the irony that "as policing has developed increasingly sophisticated models of shrivelling the public, it has simultaneously come under increasing scrutiny from interested audiences – open through the very same new surveillance technologies". Social media might give the appearance of allowing police to dominate news production but it also focuses the spot light on police forces in a new and unprecedented way; enabling what Mathiesen (1997) referred to as a synopticon society - where the many watch the few (Trottier, 2015).

One area that would benefit from further research is in looking at how police forces are adapting to this change; both in terms of visibility and in the altered dynamic with their long standing 'frenemy', the news media. In the absence of research the implication is that this change is one that will have benefited police forces – this might not, however, be the case.

1.5.3 Policing and Social Media

Traditionally, police communications has been one-way broadcasting aimed at pushing information into the public sphere (see 1.1; 1.3). This raises the question - how are the police in England using social media and has this changed since Crump (2011) and Proctor et al (2013) completed their studies? The difficulty in attempting to answer this question is the lack of recent research looking at communication in the English police. There have been several recent studies looking at social media in police forces across America, Canada and Australia which have yielded interesting results. Given the dearth of information in this country, the following discussion primarily looks at these studies in order to provide a comparison and highlight some of the research gaps.

According to Meijer and Thaens (2013, p.343) social media is now being used by the police in America to "enhance citizens input in police investigations, to strengthen the public image of police departments, to control crowds, to tackle crisis situations, to obtain better input in police-making processes and to attract new police officers." In Canada, Schneider (2014, p.14) argues, social media has become the means by which police officers and forces are reinventing themselves for the modern age in order to "encourage symbolic support" from an increasingly disenfranchised community. And in Australia, Lee and McGovern (2013) found evidence of significant engagement between police and public with police officers regularly posting updates on crime risks, recent arrests and crime prevention tips. The aim, Lee and McGovern (2013, p.115) suggested, was to create "a virtual presence to let the community know that the local police are successfully performing their policing".

Following an in-depth analysis of government e-communications in America, Mergel (2012) proposed four strategies for social media use based on Grunig's (1989) public relations model:

1) **Push**: one-way, non-interactional communication which positions citizens as the audience. In this model, social media is simply a broadcasting channel for official discourse. Focused on reputation management and brand message it is closely associated with Grunig (1989) Press Agency model.

2) **Pull**: this model seeks to improve the organisations image and build good relations with citizens in order to create and maintain an audience. With Pull communication audiences are encouraged to start interacting with the organisation by answering

questions and giving it information; such as customer feedback surveys and complaint forms.

3) **Network**: highly interactive, this model encourages engagement in a group/network discussion. On Twitter this is often facilitated by use of hashtags which allows users to quickly find, categorise and join conversations on a particular topic. This approach allows organisations to listen passively, or become involved, in audience conversations. It is a useful source for fact-checking, monitoring opinion and building trusted relationships in an online community.

4) **Transaction**: this model builds upon the previous three to position the audience as the business partners of the organisation. Social media in this model becomes an environment for actual transactions between the organisation and the individual.

Meijer and Thaens (2013) in their study of social media in American police departments concluded while there was no evidence of Mergel's (2012) 'Transaction model' most police departments showed a combination of 'Push', 'Pull' and 'Network' strategies in their online interactions and behaviour. The authors also found, however, that the evidence of Push, Pull and Networking communications was more often the result of individuals reacting to different circumstances and audiences than as a consequence of formal strategic plans.

Brainard and McNutt (2010) and Brainard and Edlins (2015) found similar results in their studies into how police were using social media. According to Brainard and McNutt (*ibid*) there was very little evidence of engagement or collaborative problem solving between police and public in Yahoo! groups and that the NYPD[10] was mostly using them as a channel for 'pushing' information into the public domain. Five years later and Brainard and Edlins (2015) reported findings consistent with Brainard's original study (Brainard and McNutt, 2010). Brainard and Edlins (2015, p.728) concluded that "while PDs have and use social media and while citizens are responsive, there is much less interaction in part due to the non-responsiveness of PDs themselves". According to Brainard and Edlins (2015), Facebook showed some positive signs of sustained interaction and network building the majority of police departments remained set in 'push'.

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[10] New York Police department

These observations were further supported by a survey conducted by Market Research company LexisNexis (2012) into social media in American law enforcement. The report by LexisNexis (2012) found a strong emphasis on 'push' communications, mixed evidence of engagement and a sometimes uncomfortable relationship between social media and serving police officers; with police officers reluctant to use the new technology. Across the border in Canada, an IACP (2011) survey into how Canadian police forces were using social media found that just under half of the forces surveyed (42.9%) were using social media for public relations purposes while 49.9% were using it as a means of notifying the public about incidents, crime updates and road closures.

One interesting difference highlighted by both the IACP (2011) and LexisNexis (2012) surveys when compared to Jeremy Crump's (2011) research was regarding police forces' favoured social media sites. There was a clear preference for Facebook that was shown by both Canadian and American police forces in 2011; with 75% of Canadian forces using Facebook compared to 33.6% using Twitter (IACP, 2011). Crump (2011), however, found the reverse was the case with English forces who used Twitter more often.

Leiberman, Koetzel and Sakiyama (2013) suggest that this difference might be partly due to how police forces are using social media. IACP (2011) reported that 71.1% of respondents were using social media as part of criminal investigations; similarly, LexisNexis (2012) found that 69% of respondents were using social media for criminal investigations with only 26% using social media sites for community outreach, public relations activities or community engagement. In England, however, police use of social media began as a means of community engagement, taking off during the 2011 London Riots as a means of crisis communication and public order management (Proctor et al, 2013); it was only later adopted as a tool for investigation (Williams et al, 2013).

From an investigative point of view Twitter can be much more difficult to monitor, due to the volume of tweets, and the disjointed way conversations appear on the screen. During the 2011 London riots Proctor et al (2013) noted that one of the problems facing the police was in trying to sift through and keep up with the extraordinary amount of information and conversations taking place on social media. Facebook, in comparison, is more static and similar to a conventional message board in the sense that posts and responses stay grouped together, which makes it an invaluable tool for investigations (Leiberman et al, 2013).

Social media is a very fast moving environment and due to the volume of information available for researchers, research tends to focus on one or a small selection of police forces (Brainard and McNutt, 2010; Crump, 2011; Meijer and Thaens, 2013). As Proctor et al (2013, p.413) explain "where once the main problem facing social researchers was scarcity of data, they must now cope with its abundance"; and the age of Big Data, with its enormous data sets has its own problems (Parks, 2014). The most problematic of which is an often unmanageable amount of information that then hides the data actually required and distracts researchers from the fact that these data sets are still representative samples, albeit very big ones, and prone to the same questions about generalisability that smaller sets are. As Gallison (2008) points out, an abundance of data can make it as difficult to 'know what you know' as a lack of data can. The danger here is what is sometimes referred to as 'paralysis by analysis' (Kolakowski, 2015); or, to use a popular idiom, not seeing the wood for the trees. With so much readily accessible data it is not always easy to know the right questions to ask or who to address them to (Silverman, 2011); which could partly explain why there are currently so few studies looking at this aspect of social media.

1.5.4   Problem Areas

Social media has come to be considered by some as something of a communications panacea for the police with multiple operational uses and benefits (Stevens, 2010; NPIA, 2010; Williams et al 2013). Platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, are increasingly viewed as an attractive means of strengthening public relations as they are cheap to run, fast and easy to use with potentially a large ready-made audience (Meijer and Thaens, 2013). Others, however, have pointed out that social media can often be a double edged sword, particularly with regard to policing (Goldsmith, 2010; Ayres, 2011; Leiberman et al, 2013).

The first potential problem with social media, which was touched on earlier, is the level of scrutiny and visibility it has placed the police under. According to Schneider, 2014 p.15) "Twitter, and social media in general, represent the most recent communication technology that turns all police matters, including those private and off duty matters into 'organisational products'"; especially as social media is increasingly available to all officers as a means of public communication rather than remaining under the sole purview of the public relations department (Goldsmith, 2013). As the HMIC (2011a, p.11) report makes clear, however; "the nature of policing makes information disclosure very high risk". The visibility, speed and intrusive nature of social media challenges past approaches to knowledge management.

Hemsley and Mason (2013) point out that traditionally, knowledge belonged to the organisation that produced it and that there were systems in place to manage its flow and who could access it. According to Ford and Mason (2013), social media has created an unprecedented knowledge ecosystem which requires redefining the capabilities of traditional gatekeepers when it comes to ownership and control of information (Ford and Mason, 2013). Information is now totally uncontrollable once the genie is out of the bottle (or in this case online) as "once captured, the internet offers a 'generative' system that takes away a fundamental means of controlling the flow of information and images from those traditionally in charge of broadcasting" (Li, 2009 cited in Goldsmith, 2010, p.919).

This is a particular problem with regard to indiscretions made online by police officers. Goldsmith (2013) noted in his study of police use of social media that there was an increasing number of scandals associated with police indiscretions either becoming known online or through mistakes made when posting. There have been numerous news articles over the past few years detailing the politically incorrect behaviour off duty police officers have been involved in (Goldsmith, 2013; Miller, 2013), inappropriate social media messages and wrongful disclosure of information/data protection breaches to journalists through social media sites (HMIC 2011a). One of the dangers with social media, as Goldsmith (2013) observed, is that it encourages, and rewards, familiarity and for users to pursue popularity through the cultivation of an online persona as a 'micro-celebrity'. When used correctly, social media can be an effective means of communication, the corollary of this is that when things go wrong there is a large audience to witness it and this can have consequences for police reputation and their relationship with the public.

This increased visibility is also problematic in another way for the police. Tester (1994 cited in Goldsmith, 2010 p.918) argues that the root of police power and "sovereignty" is based in their relative anonymity and distance from society. The wide scale use of social media across all levels of police forces renders both individual officers and their organisation more knowable to the outside public. Schneider (2014, p.12) suggests that social media use by the police creates a "legitimacy conundrum" as, on the one hand, police legitimacy requires micro level acceptance – which social media facilitates – while on the other, at the core of police legitimacy is the premise of impersonal authority and therefore knowing the 'men' behind the uniform might act to deconstruct that image. This concern closely aligns with Reiner's (2010) point about the demystification of the police over the last fifty years that the more visible and

known something is, the less mythical and more fallible that thing becomes (see also Bottomley, 1989). Such a concern is not without merit considering the level of attention and apprehension surrounding the question of police legitimacy at present (Hawden, 2008).

Secondly, there is a long standing belief that "there is a comforting emotional security in seeing that the police are ever present" (Duckfoot, 2012, p.9). But as Lee and McGovern (2013b) point out, so far little is known about how virtual encounters impact on public perception. There is an increasing body of evidence (see Decker, 1981; Brandl, Frank, Warden and Bynum, 1994; Bridenball and Jesilow, 2008; Bradford, 2011) which suggests that citizens with the highest satisfaction/confidence levels with the police are those who have no direct contact with them. In light of the above, increased virtual visibility of the police might in fact increase fear of crime, generate feelings of insecurity and decrease levels of public confidence rather than provide reassurance, by making people more aware of problems and crimes than they were before (Leiberman et al 2013); particularly if the experience is unpleasant or does not meet expectations (Chandek and Porter, 1998; Skogan, 1996, 2006, 2012).

There is also the question of how to measure the success or efficacy of organisational use of social media (Paek et al, 2013). Police use of social media for awareness campaigns such as Greater Manchester Police's 2014 rape awareness drive (#noconsentnosex) are increasingly popular but, as Gregory (1970) observed, there is not a great deal of point in devoting resources to campaigns if you cannot measure or assess the outcome.

Mergel (2014) in her analysis of how Government organisations were using social media in America suggested that one of the problems people often found with analysing social media was that it is very easy to get distracted away from meaning by the large amounts of measurement data there is available on audiences. For Mergel (2014), the number of followers, the number of reposts or likes, engagement or the reach of a post is considerably less important than ascertaining whether the original message has achieved the desired outcome – which is normally some form of behaviour change from the target audience. Measuring behaviour change, however, can be rather challenging (Paek et al, 2013); particularly when it comes to crime and policing (Elder et al, 2004), as will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

Manning argues that "the ways in which the police obtain, process, encode, decode and use information are critical to understanding their mandate and function" (1992 cited in Goldsmith, 2013 p.1). Social media has made organisations, and their staff, more knowable and far more visible on a much larger stage (Stevens, 2010; Schneider, 2014). Sites like Facebook and Twitter also make it easier to communicate with some difficult to reach audiences (Haverin and Zach, 2010), reduce communication costs (Leiberman et al, 2013) and help to create the potential for a "dialogical" approach to public relations (Mawby, 2002 p.196),

Along with these potential benefits, however, social media also brings new risks, particularly for police forces (HMIC, 2011b) and are not necessarily a magic bullet answer to communication problems (Donovan, 2016). Information about the police may be a commodity in constant demand (Goldsmith, 2013) but Brainard and McNutt (2010) and Proctor et al (2013) found very little evidence of engagement or conversation in their studies of police use of social media. Crump (2011) found much the same in the English forces and concluded that police use of social media in England was inconsistent and that police forces had not yet attained the aspirations set out by the NPIA (2010) in Engage.

Given that the use and study of social media is still in its infancy it is not surprising that there are methodological teething problems or concern over how and what to use these new tools for. What is apparent, however, is that it is increasingly important to understand how the police are using social media, whether this is working, and how the adoption of social media has changed police public relations.

1.6　Chapter Summary

This chapter set out to address two questions: what is public relations and, what role does it play in modern policing?　The first part of this chapter discussed some of the underlying difficulties and contentions surrounding the study of public relations; beginning with the recurrent problem of definition (Harlow, 1976) and ending with the patchy history we have of what public relations has meant to the police in the past (Mawby, 2002). The purpose of the second part was to explore through the existing literature what is currently known about public relations in the police and to set the context in which this research is set.

The introduction of the first official Press Office in the Metropolitan Police Service in 1919 heralded the start of a general trend towards the centralisation of communication within police forces (Young, 1966; Boyle, 1999). Centralisation, however, has not always been a smooth, accepted or transparent process. Kingshott (2011, p.251), who served with the Devon and Cornwall police as a Media Advisor for several decades, remembers that for a long time "the golden rule was 'never ever' speak to a reporter". Junior officers were discouraged from engaging with journalists as there was a pervading sense that police spokesmen were often seen as "bumbling and inarticulate" which only served to confirm public concerns of police incompetence and reinforced the sense of isolation and distance between police and public. Information was not a resource to be made publically available and communication was a necessary evil to be endured but not welcomed. This culture, Kingshott (2011) believes, only started to change with the introduction of community policing during the late 1990s which allowed for a review of the police-media relationship. Following this review "all officers were allowed to talk with the 'press'" so long as the information was "factually within their knowledge" and that they "did not express any opinion or compromise any on-going investigation" (*ibid*, p.247).

It was noted in part one that over the course of the twentieth century there was a trend towards centralisation in policing both locally and nationally (Wood, 2013). Since the introduction of community policing, however, there has been a consistent and interesting reversal in certain aspects of this with the devolution of communications away from the professionals and back to the frontline. Police officers, regardless of rank, are now actively encouraged to connect and communicate with members of the public directly through social media sites and to maintain a visible online presence (NPIA, 2010). Alongside the official

corporate sites, individual officers and Safer Neighbourhood Teams now often have their own local social media pages which they are responsible for. There are also a growing number of blogs by police officers about their professional lives which have started to attract wide readerships and popular acclaim; such as Mental Health Cop who has won multiple awards for his blog on mental health and policing[11]. It is important to note, however, the presence of police officers online is not always received positively and there have been a number of scandals involving police personal and professional use of social media which has reinforced cynicism around police culture (Goldsmith, 2010).

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of effective police communication there has been comparatively little research into police communications or public relations in the age of social media. There has been a great deal of research into the history, practices and problems facing the police over the last century. With respect to the area of police public relations, however, research since it was first discussed nearly sixty years ago has been quite limited. Interest in this subject has waxed and waned since the mid twentieth century when the first flurry of scholarly articles and research was published. The first commentators on this 'new' phenomenon were principally serving police officers who were eager to explain, and justify, the growing importance of effective communication with the public and media management in order to safeguard the police image from increasing scrutiny (see Clift, 1949; Gourley, 1954; McManus, 1955; Young, 1966; Gregory, 1970; Hilton, 1973; Hunt, 1973;).

While there is a smattering of research that looks directly at public relations in the police from the police perspective, the majority of research which has been conducted in this area has been output rather than process based; looking at either -

1. The public confidence aspect; principally concentrating on understanding what motivates public opinion towards the police and how to improve it. Research in this group is usually centred around evaluating the effectiveness of one scheme or intervention in a specific area and over a set period (see for example, Bradford, 2012; Wentz and Schlimgen, 2012) or looking at the influence of various types of media on public opinion (see Media Effects model).

2. The relationship between the media and the police. This area came to the fore during the 1970s and has traditionally been based in a critical sociological perspective;

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[11] https://mentalhealthcop.wordpress.com/

primarily looking at the police-media relationship in terms of power dynamic, hegemony and control and usually places the police as the dominant party in the partnership (Chermak, 1995; Chibnall, 1981; Sacco, 1998). There are, however, different interpretations (Brown, 2008; Lee, Lewis and Powers, 2014) and there is certainly some question over whether the police see themselves as the ones in control (Surette, 1998; Huey and Broll, 2012). The situation has changed since Chibnall's pioneering work. The rise of 24 hour news, the widespread use of social media, the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) to improve the transparency of public organisations and the new rules guiding police-media relations after the Leveson Inquiry (Mawby, 2014) have significantly altered the police-media landscape.

With the introduction of social media as part of police forces' communications strategy a new avenue for enquiry has become available for research and there are a growing number of studies examining police use of these platforms for communication purposes both in England (Goldsmith, 2010; Greer and McLaughlin, 2010; Crump; 2011; Goldsmith, 2013; Proctor et al, 2013) and America (Brainard and McNutt, 2010; Heverin and Zach, 2010; Meijer and Thaens, 2013; Leiberman et al, 2013; Schneider, 2014). Social media has profoundly altered how people, businesses, organisations and governments communicate with each other.

In 2008, seven police forces had a Facebook page and only one had a registered Twitter account. Today each police force in England has an active web presence with constabulary run websites and multiple social media pages. Now, all 39 police forces in England have at least one Twitter account and a corporate Facebook page, 30 have their own YouTube channel and just under half of the constabularies are using at least one other online medium such as Audioboo or Flickr (3.1.6). Police adoption of these new technologies, however, has not been straightforward, consistent or incident free; and there have been significant concerns raised over the possible implications of social media with regard to controlling the flow of information, protecting the reputation of the police and whether using social media diminishes the authoritarian perception of the police (Lexis Nexis, 2011; Schneider, 2014; Connor, 2015). There is also wide spread debate about how to measure the success, failure and effectiveness of social, and digital, media use (Mergel, 2014).

The area of police public relations is important because how police forces communicate with their publics shows not just 'what' they are saying but also what conversations they want to be

a part of, the image they wish to project, who they perceive to be their audiences and, in many respects, shape our understanding of who the police are and what they do (Manning, 1997). Yet studies explicitly and comprehensively looking at police communications from the police perspective, that combine both department functionality, relationship with the media and use of social media, are few and far between.

The purpose of this section has been to give a critical overview of the research and studies in the area of police communications. In examining the existing knowledge base questions arose, highlighting important gaps in understanding and information which needed to be answered. For example:

1) Do police communications departments agree with the popular and academic assessment that there is a 'crisis' of confidence in policing?

2) How has the adoption of social media changed police communications and public relations?

3) How do the police think their relationship with the media has changed with the rise of citizen journalism and social media?

4) Mawby (2002) concluded in his research that there was so far evidence of four eras in police public relations. With the advent of social media is there now evidence of a fifth?

5) Lee and McGovern (2015, p.1) identified "risk as an organising logic" which has driven the development of police public relations in Australian police forces. Is there evidence that this is the situation in English police forces?

6) Is there a discernible difference between police staff and police officer led departments as suggested by Surette (2001)?

7) Do public relations strategies differ between policing environment or is communication the same irrespective of police force?

8) How does the public relations / communications department fit into the operational side of policing in modern police forces?

9) How has police public relations evolved over the last decade? Has it reached the point where "police work is image work" as Mawby (2002, p.184) hypothesised?

10) Is it possible to measure what, or whether, police communication strategies are having an impact?

11) What is the purpose of the police public relations / communications department in a modern police force and has this role changed over the last decade?

The principal objective of this research project is to look at police communications in the modern police force from the police perspective. The points identified above formed the basis of this study; informing the research questions, the initial focus and the methods used during the research. The next chapter examines the methodology utilised and discusses the evolution this project has undergone from the knowledge gaps raised during the literature review to this doctoral thesis.

Chapter 2:   Methodology

Accurate and credible data is of vital importance in research. Data does not speak for itself and no research method is infallible or perfect (Coleman and Moynihan 2000). In addition, there is the potential for significant methodological problems when researching anything as complicated and emotive as the police (Reiner, 2010) or as new and fast paced as communications in the digital age (Zavattro and Sementelli, 2014).

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the theoretical, analytical and conceptual processes that have informed and directed this research, the challenges experienced and the rationale behind the decisions made. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first (2.1 – 2.3) covers the research questions underpinning this project and the methodology used for exploring them. The second part (section 2.4 – 2.8) discusses the scope and limitations of this research and the methodological considerations that must be addressed when undertaking any form of qualitative research. The final part (sections 2.9) examines the story of this project; mapping the evolution it has undergone from a simple research question asking why police forces have 'Corporate Communications departments' to a doctoral thesis.

PART ONE: Methodology

2.1   Methodology

Most research into police communications in the last decade has focused almost exclusively on the public confidence element (1.3). In doing so, most studies have taken a narrow and contextually isolated view of these questions in order to address a specific issue; such as evaluating the effectiveness of a specific scheme for improving public confidence levels. Such studies have a marked tendency to ignore wider aspects of police communication or overlook that the phenomenon they are testing is not isolated but part of an inter-connected and interdependent whole.

In order to answer the research questions (2.2) in an integrated way this study utilised a combination of semi-structured interviews with the heads of police Communications departments (or their nominated representatives), Freedom of Information requests (hereafter FOI) and an in-depth literature review. In total 21 heads of department, one deputy-head, six managers, two Chief Constables and a PCC were interviewed as part of this research with interviews ranging from 40 minutes to over 120 minutes. The interview data was then analysed using the framework analysis approach suggested by Ritchie and Spencer (1994)[12]. The findings from the interviews were then compared against a comprehensive literature review covering English, American, Australian, Canadian and European studies on policing, communication and public opinion, FOI requests made to each of the 39 police forces and official government documents pertaining to police communication.

It has long been held that using multiple methods can help to protect and reduce threats to the validity of the research (Cho and Trent, 2006). This research used a combination of methods to discern the difference between intended (official) organisational outcomes and unofficial (departmental/personal) outcomes in order to add vital contextual data about the work and position of police communications departments and to mitigate some of the concerns raised by the sample (2.4). Such an approach, however, is not without problems of its own. These methodological issues and how they are dealt with are examined in depth in the second part of this chapter (2.4 – 2.8).

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[12] See Appendix 2.7

2.2   Research Questions

Weber (1949 cited in Turner, 2013 p.161) argued that people need to "ask questions about those things which convention makes self-evident". This is the approach adopted in this research. The research questions are divided into two groups: primary and secondary. The primary group are what Ritchie and Spencer (1994, p.182) term 'contextual questions' that seek to establish the "form and nature of what exists"; in this case the role and purpose of police communications. The secondary group is a mixture of 'diagnostic', or 'why' type questions that examine the reasons and causes for what exists and 'evaluative' questions which compare communication across different policing environments, measurements of effectiveness and how police communications have changed with the introduction of social media (*ibid*).

Primary Questions

1.1   What is the purpose of police communications?

1.2   What are police forces trying to communicate?

1.3   How are the police communicating?

1.4   With whom are the police trying to communicate?

1.5   What are the threats and challenges currently facing policing communications?

Secondary Questions

2.1   Is the concept of public relations still relevant in the modern police force?

2.2   To what extent do public relations strategies differ between policing environments?

2.3   What position does communications hold within the operational side of policing?

2.4   Is it possible to measure what, or whether, police communication strategies are having an impact?

2.3   Originality and Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis has been inspired and shaped by the research that has come before it and began with three basic questions:

1) What are the police trying to communicate;

2) How are they trying to communicate it; and

3) What is the purpose of police communications.

There has been remarkably little research, or interest, in gaining an integrated contemporary view of what research has shown to be a complex and often contradictory area. The work of Mawby (2002; 2007), Crump (2011), Wilson et al (2011) and Proctor et al (2013) have made the most significant inroads into the area of police communication but each of these studies also has considerable limitations in regard to the extent of the research; either because they have been geographically restricted to one or only a handful of forces (Meijer and Thaens, 2013), are dated now at several years old (Surette, 2001, Mawby, 2002, 2007), or in terms of the subject matter under investigation (Cooke and Sturgis, 2009; Crump, 2011; Proctor et al, 2013).

The contribution this research makes to this area is three fold:

1) **Breadth**: During the course of this research interviews were conducted with representatives from 27 police forces. This data was then compared and evaluated against a comprehensive analysis of the output from their Corporate Communications departments. Similar research has been conducted looking at Australian police Corporate Communications by Lee and McGovern (2014) but nothing on this scale has as yet been attempted in England using a similar methodology.

    This breadth proved to be an essential aspect of this research as it has demonstrated that while 'the police' are usually discussed as a homogeneous entity (albeit country specific), 'the police' in England consists of 39 separate police forces that are historically, culturally and geographically different. Each police force in England is distinct from the others with, at times, little commonality or consistency in approach, strategy or practice when it comes to communications. These differences, therefore, need to be both considered in conjunction and independently from one another in order to create an accurate picture of police communications.

2) **Traditional and Digital Communications:** As mentioned above, one of the limitations in existing research literature is that it has tended to focus either on the traditional (e.g. Press, TV) or on digital technology (e.g. social media sites). No research into the English police currently published has examined both of these facets together as part of a cohesive investigation into police public relations and communications. This research incorporates both aspects in order to understand how and why communications has changed over the last few years and how these two different, and at times competing, platforms coexist within police communications strategies.

3) **Updated Knowledge:** One of the first things that became apparent during the interviews was how much police communications had changed since Mawby's (2002) study of South Yorkshire Police. Within the first five minutes of one of the early interviews, the Head of Communications (PI.3) returned the participant information sheet (Appendix 3.4a) with the recommendation that it be rewritten as almost everything was wrong: "Overt manipulation and image making aren't what we're about anymore", he said "we're not here to cover up police mistakes but to bridge the gap between police and public so they can engage in dialogue". This repositioning of the communications department was a recurrent theme frequently brought up during the interviews. It is particularly interesting in light of the recent Hillsborough inquiry and the allegations that have continued to persist around police forces that 'spin' (Conn, 2016).

This research particularly builds on the work of Mawby (2002, 2007, 2009) in order to update our knowledge of police public relations. Mawby (2002) suggested that in his research that there was evidence of four eras (or periodisations) within police public relations (1.2). This study asks whether with the introduction of social media there is now evidence of a fifth periodisation in police public relations. This is discussed further in Chapter 4.

PART TWO: Credibility, Limitations and Methodological Considerations

Interviews and observation based studies are particularly problematic when researching an essentially esoteric and closed institution like the police. Research is a constant balancing act between what is desirable for validity and thoroughness and what is possible in terms of cost, time, politics and access. This "research bargain" can pose significant problems for the scope, validity, reliability and generalisability of the research findings (Hughes, 2006 p.241). The following sections critically examine the issues and dilemmas that inevitably arise during practical research and how they were dealt with; starting with the challenges associated with gaining access to institutions like the police before discussing the perennial topics of transcription, scope and validity.

2.4 Participants and Access

2.4.1 Participants and Sampling

Participants for this research were selected using 'purposive sampling' (Silverman, 2011). Interviewees were chosen based upon their position within the department. As participation was on a voluntary basis of a small, non-probability sample there is a concern over the impact of self-selecting bias on the results. Collier and Mahoney (1996) argue that self-selecting bias can result in the sample not being representative of the population being studied due to the inherent bias and agenda of the participants (2.7 and 2.8). Randomised and proportionate sampling of police communications departments were considered to mitigate this issue but dismissed as inappropriate in the context of this research as it was expert knowledge that was required rather than quantity.

The heads of the Communications department were identified as the individuals best placed to be able to give in-depth, accurate overviews of police communications and to answer the research questions. In some cases the heads of these departments nominated a representative to be interviewed rather than taking part themselves. These representatives were all senior

members of the communications team and were confirmed by their head of department as having sufficient expert knowledge to take their place in the research.

Heads of department were approached via a letter to their Chief Constable in January 2014 (Appendix 2.1). Invitations for police forces to take part in this research were restricted to the 39 territorial public police forces in England (2.5 and 2.7). Of these police forces there were, in 2014, 37 Communications departments. Suffolk and Norfolk police forces had merged their communications departments in 2010 while West Mercia police and Warwickshire police had merged their respective communications departments in 2012. The letter was addressed to the Chief Constable of each of these forces with a participant information sheet included for additional information. This letter clearly stated the aims and methods to be employed in the research and requested an interview with the head of the Communications department. The letter also offered a copy of the research findings to all police forces who participated.

From the first invitation letter sent in January 2014 15 forces replied that they were interested in this research and would like to participate. Five forces sent holding replies acknowledging receipt of the letter stating that an official response would shortly follow. Of these forces only three later agreed to take part. 17 forces did not respond to the letter at all, one force sent a holding letter with no follow up and only one force sent a letter of refusal.

A second round of letters was sent out in April 2014 to the 17 forces who had not responded to the first letter. As a result of this letter an additional 10 forces agreed to participate while a further seven again did not respond or acknowledge the letter. The reason given by most of the forces who replied to the second letter was that they had not received the first.

In July 2014 a third letter was sent to all police forces who had either not responded to either of the two previous letters or who had sent holding letters with no further contact. After this letter a further four forces agreed to an interview bringing the total up to 29 participants out of a possible 37. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen difficulties with restructuring two police forces later withdrew from the research prior to their interviews and a further two heads also left their jobs before their interviews could take places; in both cases the new heads preferred not to take part as they felt they lacked sufficient experience. In total then, representatives from 25 communication teams (out of a possible 37), including two joint teams, were

interviewed achieving a 68% sample with two forces undecided, four who withdrew, five who did not respond and one 'No'.

2.4.2 Access

One of the most difficult challenges in fieldwork is gaining access to the subject matter you want to study. There is a considerable amount written about the thorny issue of access (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Silverman, 2013). What is less often discussed is maintaining this access. As Wolcott (1995) points out, negotiating access does not stop once an interview is agreed, it continues for the length of your association with that person. Indeed Hughes (2006) argues that access to the police is an ongoing and constantly evolving process and one which is precarious because it can be stopped at any time by the police. Awareness of these issues can affect how researchers proceed in their research, the questions asked and the decisions made.

Academia is by nature a public affair where the end result is to publish your findings. The police, it could be said, are the opposite; the police have in the past been characterised as an institutionally closed organisation (Hughes 2000), who rarely "welcome the spotlight" (Fleming, 2010 p.144) and who have tended to guard their secrets and resent any intrusion (Jupp, 1989). From the 1990s onwards there has been a general trend towards increasing openness, transparency and accountability in police forces (Mawby, 2002; Kingshott, 2011), with the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act (2000), the government's publication scheme and the popularity of police documentaries. However, tensions remain as academics are often seen as 'professional strangers' (Agar, 1996 p.1) "who specialise in asking awkward questions and criticise because that is what researchers are trained to do" (Fleming, 2010 p.144).

Perhaps the crux of the matter is that research by outsiders will be perceived as a betrayal no matter how well intentioned or sympathetic the researcher, as "one makes public the private and leaves the locals to the consequences" (Miles and Huberman 1984 cited in Wolcott 1995 p.147; Breen, 2007). Such concerns can act as gatekeepers to block or minimise the level of access potential researchers are granted to the organisation. Access may start with the management's formal acceptance of the research proposal but just because the Chief Constable has authorised your presence does not mean that other police employees will accept your presence or participate fully in the research (Marks, 2004). Such behaviour often leads to informal gatekeeping and lacklustre or deliberately obstructive cooperation (Reiner,

2010). In addition to this, the threat of losing access is omnipresent in police research (Yin, 2011); this knowledge creates a power imbalance between the research subject and the researcher which can lead to research bargaining and strained relationships (Hughes 2000).

How to engage the various police forces in order to obtain access is then a fundamentally important question. Without their desire to participate the information gleaned would be of questionable practical value and significantly less textured and detailed. According to Wolcott (1995, p.124), when negotiating access there is often a "temptation to make too many promises while selling the idea of a research project"; this can lead to unrealistic and ultimately disappointed expectations regarding the nature of the research. The difficulty with promising the moon and then throwing in the sun and sky for good measure is that there is often a wide gulf between the ideal research plan and the reality of what can actually be accomplished. Incompatible or disappointed expectation is one of the greatest causes of problems between police and academics (Kelty and Julian, 2012).

Becker (1982, p.103) proposed that "patrons pay and they dictate - not every note or brushstroke, but the broad outlines and the matters that concern them. They choose artists who provide what they want". There might not be patrons, as such, in social science but it would be a mistake to believe that there are no equivalents (Wolcott, 1995). Anyone with an active interest in, or has contributed to, the project can be considered a stakeholder – that is, someone who invested in the outcome. As the old saying goes, there is no such thing as a free lunch, and this is particularly important when dealing with large, powerful organisations like the police.

Initially, the question of access was approached by trying to formulate a proposal which simultaneously met my research interests and appeared attractive to police forces. In practice the pilot force was unsure about the research methods and only peripherally interested in the research questions (2.9). However, when I presented research aims and questions based upon my interpretation of the underlying problems and knowledge gaps the attitude changed. Apparent disinterest became enthusiastic interest; not in all police forces but in the majority as demonstrated by the number of positive responses and engagement exhibited. Consequently, there are significantly more police forces participating than first anticipated.

People often want something in return for their time; particularly experts (May, 2002). As Wolcott (1995) points out, you need to understand what the participants want in return and whether it is a gift you are able to give. In some cases this might be monetary compensation, in others they may request a copy of the results. Some, however, may wish to become stakeholders or patrons in your research in order to obtain some control or influence over the direction or results of your work. It is this last group which can be particularly problematic.

All police forces were offered a copy of the research findings if they agreed to participate. This seemed to be sufficient inducement for the majority of forces to agree to an interview. Cooperation both during and after the interview from these forces varied although a noticeable, if unsurprising, trend emerged where the more interested the interviewee was in my research the more cooperative, helpful and engaged they were with the interview process and in keeping in contact afterwards. Conversely, in the forces where the interviewee appeared to be almost humouring the research the interviews were harder, engagement strained and the interviewees disinterested in receiving a copy of the findings or participating in follow up questions.

Only two interviewees sought to renegotiate this offer. One interviewee wished to alter the research parameters to include several additional aspects which he was interested in, while the second one wished to see the results section ahead of publication so that he could ensure his force was represented accurately.

This raised an intriguing dilemma: how far should one compromise and comply with demands in the quest of obtaining access? There is no simple answer to this question as every piece of research is different and the source of funding often plays a large part in how flexible the research aims and methods can be. This research was funded by a university scholarship which avoided some of the potential conflicts of interest and the politics associated with government and research council funding (Fleming, 2010).

In both the above cases the desires motivating the requests were discussed with the participants in order to ascertain what they were actually looking for. In the second case the interviewee was concerned about the accuracy of the transcript and being misquoted or misrepresented. Rather than an advance copy of the results the participant was seeking reassurance that the information he gave in the interview would be dealt with fairly and

faithfully. In light of this I offered to send him a copy of his interview transcript so that he could suggest amendments if he was unhappy with something. The offer was accepted and the participant emailed an annotated version back with his corrections (2.5). The former case was more difficult to resolve as the direction the participant wished to include did not fit with the research aims or methodology settled on. There was also a concern raised that allowing this level of influence from one police force could be damaging to the data collection process and results. In the end, after a long discussion about the practicalities, the participant accepted that his request was not possible and agreed to continue with the research as stated in the invitation letter. In both cases the situation was resolved quickly and with minimal impact on the research however such issues can escalate into serious conflicts between the researcher and participants and need to be carefully monitored (Silverman, 2007).

2.5   Transcription and Reliability

According to Silverman (2011) there are three main threats to validity in qualitative research.

1. The impact of the researcher on the interviewee and interview environment (sometimes known as the Hawthorne effect);
2. The values of the researcher – what they consider important or not important, their views of the phenomena being studied and credibility as narrators, interpreters and commentators on the data; and
3. The accuracy and truthfulness of the respondent's account.

The central problem, as Bosk (1979 cited in Wolcott, 1995, p.127) shrewdly observed is that "all field work done by a single field-worker invites the question, 'Why should we believe it?'" Transcription is a weak point in any methodology. It is the bridge between the raw data from the field work and the interpretations reached and requires that anybody using these conclusions can trust the integrity and credibility of the researcher. If the researcher appears untrustworthy then the reader will not trust the findings and that would pose a serious problem.

Silverman (2011) argues that accurate transcription is about more than getting the word order right. It is about capturing the emotions and nuances of communication which is often best conveyed through body language and tone rather than verbal speech, and therefore not as easy to record, capture or describe in the transcription process. Murdock and Scutt (2003), for example, estimate that only a very small part (7%) of communication is made up of the words actually used the rest is conveyed through body language (55%) and tone (28%).

An unknown amount of data is lost in the transcription process due to the inherent limitations with transcription (May, 2002). Tone of voice, proved to be particularly important in the three telephone interviews carried out as without visual cues I was left to judge the receptiveness and attitudes of the other person based on tonality. Murdock and Scutt (2003) argue that tone can change the meaning of a comment from a threat to a joke, or from advice to a criticism. It can change a statement of fact to a conjecture and can alert the interviewer to when the participant is nervous, or excited; cautious or candid. Tone can also affect how we interpret and react to new information and whether we believe it or discard it. Yet capturing and conveying these vital contextual details are incredibly difficult (Silverman, 2011). Bryman

(1988) suggests that in order to avoid the pitfalls of academic anecdotalism and taking interview data out of context full transcripts and recording should be made available by researchers so that others can check the accuracy, credibility and the veracity of their interpretation[13].

Leaving aside the obvious ethical problems around participant confidentiality in offering open access to the interview data (2.6.4), Bryman (1988) raises a valid point; how can qualitative researchers claim validity for their findings when so much vital contextual data is either lost in the process, not recorded, not reported or not made available to the readers? Pink (2004, p102) suggests that one possible way of resolving this difficulty is to use respondent validation.

As Pink points out "informants do not always agree with our analysis of them and their comments". By sending a copy of the transcription and our interpretation of it to the participants to see if they agree with the analysis, researchers can gain vital insight and information into the conceptual framework and perception of the participant and increase the probability of faithful and accurate interpretations and conclusions.

Respondent validation offers a simple method of avoiding some of the difficulties raised by Bryman (1988). One of the great dangers of qualitative research is of mistaking unintentional interpretations for the intended message (Morgan 2000). Scott points out that "in interpreting texts three aspects of meaning should be recognised. Three moments in the movement of the text from author to audience…the intended content, the received content and the internal meaning" (1990 cited in Mawby 2002 p.80). Respondent validation can mitigate to an extent some of the risk of this as it gives the interviewee the opportunity to correct the researchers interpretations. However, it is by no means an easy or clear-cut solution to the fundamental problem of conveying highly textured experiences in a way that translates into written language. In much the same way as a film might convey more information than the radio, it remains incapable of actually translating an object, event or experience in its totality and imagination or experience can only partially compensate for this.

Furthermore, respondent validation has two fundamental limitations which render the concept significantly more attractive in theory than in practice. Firstly, it requires the agreement and cooperation of the participants to give up their time to check their transcript

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[13] Excerpts from the transcript data are available in Appendix 2.5b. See 2.6.4 for more information.

for errors or misinterpretation; such a task can be a frustrating and ultimately futile effort as proved to be the case in this research. Secondly, as Cho and Trent (2006) warn that relying on the respondent to act as a self-check for validity is only appropriate in those situations where the researcher can unreservedly trust the respondent to answer truthfully. Given that it is quite common for people to say things in interview situations which they would later prefer to be erased or readjusted to be less contentious, or fear being censured for, respondent validation far from improving the validity of the interpretation could act to undermine the credibility of the research.

At the beginning and end of each interview the interviewees were asked if they would like a copy of the transcript, or recording (if they agreed to one) both for their own records and to ensure they were satisfied with the interview data. All but one of the participants refused outright and said that they saw no need "for such a time consuming activity" (PI.7). One participant (PI.15) replied when asked about respondent validation that she trusted my integrity as a researcher and therefore this was not something she thought was either necessary or helpful. The only respondent who did request a copy of the transcript emailed back within a week requesting an amendment to one of their answers as they thought on reflection that the response was not appropriate as it was outside his area of expertise. As the comment had no bearing on the research topic it was removed.

This experience raised three interesting questions: firstly, once the participant has agreed to validate the transcript how long do you give them to do it; secondly, how do you get them to return it within a reasonable amount of time so that the waiting does not have a negative impact on your project. It became increasingly clear during this research that police communications departments are exceptionally busy and the heads of these departments often have tight and demanding schedules. Checking a transcript can be exceedingly time-consuming and difficult for participants to fit into their lives (Silverman 2007). The question is what constitutes a reasonable length of time and how do you chase respondents without becoming what Gillham (2005 p.24) calls a 'nuisance factor' - the inconvenience to be avoided which can have a negative impact on any future working relationship with that person? Fortunately for this research the only 'respondent validator' returned the transcript quickly; however it did demonstrate a potential time management problem with respondent validation. The request to make an amendment also raised a third question one - which potentially poses a significant threat to the validity and credibility of the research.

Hammersley (1990, p.57) defines validity as "the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers". The question is, does allowing the participant the authority to change what they said after the fact improve the validity of the results by giving the participants the responsibility for how they are recorded and interpreted, or does it undermine the validity of the findings because the account is no longer faithful to what happened but to what the participant wishes to be presented?

There is no easy or obvious answer to this dilemma as both sides have valid points. Perhaps, as with all such considerations regarding a concept as intangible as validity there is nothing to do but be aware that the problem exists and take steps to make the process as transparent as possible so that any mistakes or flaws can be identified (Wolcott, 1995).

Moisander and Valtonen (2006) argue that there are two ways of improving reliability in qualitative research. Firstly, by making the research process as transparent as possible through creating an audit trail the audience can follow to understand how and why decisions were made; and secondly, by explicitly stating the theoretical and conceptual framework which informed the interpretation of the data and how this affected the results.

Spradley (1979) likewise proposed that the best method to improve reliability, accuracy and validity of qualitative research is for the observer to create a transparent audit trail of ideas and thinking by keeping four sets of notes in addition to the usual interview transcript.

1. Short notes made during the interview;
2. Expanded notes made as soon as possible after each interview or field session;
3. A record in a field Journal of any problems, ideas or unusual events that occurred during each stage of fieldwork; and
4. An initial, or provisional, record of analysis interpretation (annotated transcripts).

Each set of notes brings an additional layer to the transcript to help researchers separate what they thought, when they thought it, how the ideas connect to the raw data and what influences there might be on their interpretation. Keeping separate notes is time-consuming but it does produce an auditable narrative and conceptual trail. "Research does not occur in a metaphorical germfree, antiseptic zone" (Hughes, 2006 p.247), it does not exist independent of the researcher who designed and collected it or the knowledge base which informed and

directed it. Being able to trace the provenance of the ideas and theories directing the research is of vital importance for protecting the validity of the findings whether it is qualitative or qualitative research methods.

Fundamental to this approach is the need to differentiate between what Pike called 'etic' and 'emic' analysis (1954 cited in Silverman 2011, p.366). Etic analysis is based on, or identifies, the researcher's concepts and interpretations while emic analysis is grounded in understanding the conceptual, theoretical, social and structural framework of those being studied. In essence by separating these two approaches Pike was trying to get researchers to acknowledge that how the outsider/observer understands, codes and interpret social phenomena is often quite different from how local/insiders perceive, categorise and interpret the world around them and that in transcripts and analysis these two aspects need to be considered independently of the other as well as together as part of the whole experience.

In recognition of the above, this research adopted a tripartite approach similar to the one suggested by Spradley (1979). Where possible interviews were recorded (2.6.3). The transcripts of the early interviews were typed up within a month of the interview date. However, due to a car accident midway through the fieldwork I was unable to transcribe all of the interviews myself as intended. The remaining recordings were instead transcribed by a reputable transcription service who specialise in post graduate academic transcription. All recordings were subject to a legal confidentiality agreement and were uploaded onto the company's secure cloudbase. These transcriptions were then checked against both the original audio recording and the notes. Annotations were added as necessary using different colours to denote which set of notes was the source of the alteration.

Short notes of ideas, new concepts or questions were taken during the interviews. Immediately after the interview concluded expanded notes were written recording my interpretations of how the interview went, what worked, what did not, initial impressions of rapport with the interviewee and how this may have affected the answers and if there were any problems.

The expanded notes were then reorganised and typed up for inclusion in the force's case file. At this time any additional thoughts/concerns would be included in the typed notes with annotations to show if I made amendments to my initial impressions and thoughts. By

organising transcriptions this way I could compare as much contextual data as possible in an auditable way to show how my thinking and theories developed over the course of the project while also ensuring a report as accurate and faithful to the process as possible.

Transcribing telephone interviews was more complicated due to there being no recording of the interview to refer to later. Accurate transcription in such cases is virtually impossible; in light of this in these situations detailed notes were taken during the interview. Due to the more informal nature of telephone interviews these notes were then reordered when typed up into two sets: one chronological, detailing the order of comments made, and the second reordered the comments thematically in a table. Additional notes relating to my perception of the interview, ideas and problems followed the same system as used in the face-to-face interviews.

In doing this, the intention was to mitigate as far as possible the limitations of not recording the interview. Telephone interviews rendered significantly less contextual, or deep data, than the in-person counterparts. Body language and the nuances one can capture in a face-to-face interview are absent in telephone conversations which can raise significant concerns over accuracy and interpretation. Tone presented a further issue as it has been well documented that electronic forms of communication (e.g. Skype or telephones) can distort voices and tonal variation which can lead to misunderstanding and faulty interpretations (Murdock and Scutt, 2003). This difficulty is further compounded by the loss of visual cues. In light of this it was strongly suggested to the interviewees that they read a copy of the thematic transcript to ensure that my interpretation of their comments was as accurate a representation of their views as possible. As discussed earlier, however, only one of the three telephone interviewees agreed to this.

2.6   Ethics and Data Protection

2.6.1 Ethics

All interviews were conducted in accordance with the British Society of Criminology's standard of ethics (2015) and with approval granted by the University of Canterbury Christ Church's Research Governance Manager (Appendix 3.2).

2.6.2 Disclosure and Informed Consent

Problems have arisen in the past from researchers either covertly studying the police or not fully disclosing their research aims which has resulted in a difficult relationship characterised by friction and concealment between the academic community and the police (Hughes, 2006). Fleming (2010) suggests that one of the most significant and long standing tensions present when academics are conducting research on or with the police is in managing the expectations of everyone involved. Failure to do so can cause considerable problems during the research and lead to misunderstandings and dissatisfaction for both the police and the research team. The tension arises, Kelty and Julian (2012, p.414) observe, because expectations "are idiosyncratic which in a research team means it is possible to have as many research expectations for the project as there are police practitioners, industry partners and academics". Fleming (2010) suggests that the solution to this difficulty is to ensure good communication of the research aims and offering full and open disclosure to the participants so that they can make an informed decision about whether or not to take part in the research.

This raises the question, however, of what constitutes 'informed consent'. The common assumption is that asking for and receiving consent at the beginning is sufficient and can thereafter be forgotten about (May, 2002). There is an argument, however, that consent, like access, is something which must be continuously renegotiated over the course of the research project. Silverman (2011) disagrees with this simplistic understanding of informed consent. Instead he argues that interviews can be so different from one another that it would be impossible explain comprehensively to the interviewee what you will be studying which calls into question the notion of 'informed' consent.

Furthermore, there is the problem that most people are not familiar with academia or academic practice. Concepts such as publishing research findings, conferences and academic jargon can act

as a barrier between researchers and their participants. What people think they are agreeing to can be only a part of what they are actually consenting to allow the researcher to do (Wolcott, 1995).

With regards to this research police forces were offered a copy of the research findings if they participated in the research. It was, however, made clear to them in the initial letters and again prior to the interview that this research was part of the field work for a doctoral thesis which would be published in academic circles. At this stage all participants were offered the opportunity of withdrawing their consent. No participant chose to withdraw from the study due to this reason.

In recognition of the sometimes difficult history between the police and academics (Reiner, 2010), full disclosure of the research aims and methods was made in the initial letters sent to the Chief Constables so the participants were fully aware of the research aims, questions and methods employed before agreeing to this research. Prior to the interview this information was again made available in the form of the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 2.4b). This document was sent to each interviewee upon receipt of their email confirming their agreement. A paper copy was also given to each interviewee at the start of their interview. Given the evolving nature of research questions all participants were warned at the start of the interview that while the research subject would remain the same the research questions would likely change over the course of the process to reflect the data received during the interviews.

2.6.3   Recording Interviews and Data Protection

Recording and transcribing data can pose a serious problem for research validity and credibility (2.5). To mitigate this as far as possible the majority of interviews were recorded using a digital recording device and all participants were offered the opportunity for respondent validation to check their transcripts for errors or misinterpretations.

At the start of each interview, the interviewee was asked if they would prefer to opt out of being recorded. 23 interviewees agreed to being recorded and signed the consent form (Appendix 2.3). Each interviewee was offered a copy of the transcript at the beginning and end of the interview.

With regard to the data itself, all interview sound files, transcript data and research data was kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) on a secure cloud system and one password protected laptop.

2.6.4 Anonymity and Results

One of the concerns with regard to interviews is that what people are willing to say, and what they are willing to be quoted on, can be two very different things (Gillham, 2005). In the course of an interview, particularly one where there is good rapport, the interviewee might be more candid and open and say things that they would later wish they had not said. The opposite is also true; participants can become guarded and suspicious of the interviewer's intentions and how they are going to be portrayed which can affect how honest they are and, therefore, the validity of the results you receive.

One method of limiting these challenges is to anonymise the results (Silverman, 2013). Anonymity, in effect, grants people in interviews a free pass on what they say because it cannot be attributed or traced back to them. While promising anonymity can reduce the likelihood that participants will lie, obfuscate, evade or regret their answers it does not guarantee truthfulness, honesty or good faith.

Prior to the start of the interview participants were given a consent form to read and sign (Appendix 2.3). The consent form explicitly stated the rights of the interviewee to anonymity, a copy of their transcript and their right to withdraw from the research at any time. Each interviewee was given a unique id code during the transcription process (e.g. PI.1). Information about the interviewee such as gender, age, position with the department, job description and general location were kept as important contextual data. All potentially identifying details such as the name of police force, job title and the name of the interviewee were removed.

12 of the interviewees requested that the full transcript be available only to the primary researcher as some of the contextual background information they wished to talk about and opinions expressed were of a sensitive nature. Three interviewees stated that their consent was conditional upon this. As such, only interviewees who did not request this have been included in the excerpts available in Appendix 2.5b.

2.7 Scope, Generalisability and Limitations

2.7.1 Scope

It is often the temptation when undertaking a project of the scope and length of a PhD to try to incorporate as much as you can. Silverman (2013) suggests that this is partly to give the illusion of validity to the research but mostly because of the excitement and enthusiasm new projects generate and the desire to find something of importance.

As discussed later (2.9), this project has taken several unanticipated and sometimes scenic detours before arriving at the final structure and research questions; and with these meanderings the scope of this research has continuously shifted. The intention in the final methodology was to interview the heads of as many police Communications departments as possible. This research was restricted to the territorial English police forces for two reasons. Firstly, time: there are 39 police forces in England at present[14] with 37 individual communications departments. Given the depth and breadth of the research and the expertise of people to be interviewed it was estimated that interviews would likely be between 60 and 90 minutes. With this in mind the focus was restricted to police forces in England as there were travel, time and cost implications with including Welsh, Scottish or the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

Secondly, there is also to consider the culture and organisational setup. Despite their many and varied differences every English police force is based on the same model: they all answer to the same laws and authorities, have the same hierarchical structure, operate in broadly similar ways and face similar problems. Internal cultures and histories may be subtly different but fundamentally the 39 English police forces are comparable organisations. The same cannot be said for the Police Scotland nor the PSNI. The police forces in these countries have unique historical and socio-political tensions vastly different to the situation in England. Other non-geographic police forces were considered but discounted due to their dissimilarity in structure, organisation, power, visibility and iconographic status to the territorial police. As such, to include culturally different entities would likely prove more of a hindrance than a help and only confuse the object of the study.

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[14] Not including non-geographic police forces such as The British Transport Police, The Ministry of Defence Police and the National Crime Agency.

Chapter 1 observed that police public relations is a global phenomenon. Given globalisation and the socio-political situation here in England[15], an international comparison of how different police forces across the world are managing and improving their public communications in the age of global communications is much needed. Such an ambition is however beyond the scope of the current study.

2.7.2 Generalisability

What constitutes *enough* in research? As Gertz (1973, cited in Wolcott 1995, p127) points out researchers may console themselves that "it is not necessary to know everything in order to understand something", but the nagging doubt remains that "we are neither nor could ever possibly be 'thorough enough'". It is difficult to accept that no matter how accurate the transcriptions, or how faithfully we try to capture the phenomenon under investigation, that our research is only ever partial knowledge at best.

This raises the question of what counts as a representative sample when talking about a phenomenon as complicated as the British police? The previous chapter touched on the point that the English police are not a homogenous organisation but a national concept made up of individual and often fiercely independent units that can have widely different demographics, geographic, social, historical, organisational and financial experiences (Miller, 2005). When researching such organisations it is not simply a case of selecting a reasonable number of police forces and then generalising the themes, data, results across the rest since one force's experience and use of public relations might be completely different than another forces. One interviewee (PI.13) raised this problem at the start of their interview: "I'm not sure what use your research will be to me and [my police force] as we're not like other forces and I can't see what works in other places necessarily working here".

May (2002) remarked that qualitative researchers often seem to want their research to be simultaneously unique and universal; to be both subjective explorations of the individual experience and also generate generalisable data which can use inductive logic to build nomothetic rather than ideographic theories (DiChristina, 2006). Gillham (2005) explains this dichotomy by using a builder as a metaphor: A builder, he suggests, may be very similar to any other builder and have near identical experiences to others in his trade and yet what the

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[15] See for example The Times article 02/02/2015, p2

individual builder brings to the research is a unique perspective to the situation as he is the difference rather than the job.

The same is true of the police. This research demonstrates that the experiences, direction and strategies used in police communications departments can vary considerably. As such it is recognised in this research that, despite the large sample covering 68% of police forces in England, the findings may not be generalisable to other police forces; particularly those who did not take part in the project (2.4.1). Furthermore, this study restricts itself to the police forces in England and hence can make no claim with respect to non-territorial police forces or other police forces outside England.

2.8   Validity and Bias

2.8.1   Validity in Qualitative Research

Historically, validity is a positivist concept more closely aligned to quantitative than qualitative research. Recently, however, there has been a move to adopt the principles of validity in qualitative methods. As a result of this a number of difficulties have arisen for qualitative researchers who are increasingly expected to 'prove' validity in their research.

Part of the problem, however, with adopting quantitative principles like validity is in how they can be applied to something that is inherently unverifiable in an objective sense. Validity is a concept that has an intuitive rallying appeal and yet is also one which continues to frustrate researchers in how to demonstrate its presence. Maxwell (1996, p.79), defines validity as "the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other source of account". Demonstrating that something is correct or credible is challenging at the best of times but it is particularly complicated when applied to interview data (2.5). Interviews are fundamentally subjective and unique in nature and cannot be objectively verified in the same way as statistics. As such it is easy to get stuck trying to prove the unprovable (Silverman, 2013). This subjectivity, however, is one of the unique strengths of qualitative research.

Qualitative research celebrates the individual, the idiosyncratic and the singular and allows researchers to understand phenomena through the interpretative lens of the research subject and investigate how people perceive and react to their environment. Wolcott (1995) argues that interviews are better understood as an art rather than as a science and that they need to be treated as interpretative or surreal performances. Charmaz and Bryant (2011 cited in Silverman 2011 p.204) agree with Wolcott (1995) and suggest that all interviews are a "performance whether stories tumble out or are strategically calculated and exacted" and have to be treated as social artefacts rather than facts that can be verified. Such an approach renders 'validity' of dubious applicability in qualitative methods by focusing on documenting perception rather than 'social facts'.

Cho and Trent (2006) suggest that, at its heart, the culture of anxiety over validity which has grown in qualitative research in recent years has less to do with whether the research is 'valid' and more about trying to demonstrate the credibility and trustworthiness of the researcher

themselves. This observation taps into two of the greatest potential weaknesses of qualitative methods: namely (1) researcher reliability/credibility, and (2) subject honesty.

One way of improving the apparent credibility of the data is by improving the accuracy of the data collection methods. The most common means of achieving this is to record the interview. Recording interviews provides a record that can be verified of what was said by other parties – particularly if the transcripts are made available as well. This is the approach used in this research (see 2.5). While using this strategy gives you a factual vocal account, however, it does not mean that the information or opinions expressed were either an accurate representation of the interviewee or the reality of the situation. This is one of the perennial concerns with qualitative research: why should we believe the interviewees?

Interviewees are naturally going to be concerned over how they are represented; particularly it could be said with regard to the police. Prior experience with researchers and journalists has, according to Reiner (2000) fostered a negative and distrustful relationship between the police and potential researchers. Police officers have become reluctant to open themselves and their institution to examination. This can have a profound impact on the results collected from interviews in two ways (Hughes 2006). Firstly, it can motivate interviewees to lie, conceal or omit information they believe could have a detrimental effect on their job and workplace. Secondly, it can create 'informal gate-keepers' so even though the researcher has gained access to the institution they are still barred from understanding the "micro-politics" and thus the culture and nuances they are observing (*ibid*, p241). Both of these points can bias the results or the conclusions drawn from them.

Some bias is unavoidable (2.8.4). However, the crux of the matter is that qualitative research requires trust to work properly. The participant needs to feel that the interviewer is a trustworthy person to confide honestly in and the interviewer needs to trust that the interviewee is being as honest and candid as possible in their answers. The question of honesty is further compounded by the difficulty that interviews are by nature a cross-sectional snapshot of knowledge and opinions which can and do change very quickly.

Knowledge, Raynor (2012) points out, is a complicated concept. It is not simply a question of knowing what we know, but also knowing where and how we learnt it, and being aware of what we do not know. Copernicus famously observed: "to know that we know what we know, and to

know that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge" (1473-1543 cited in Proctor, 2008 p.28). Copernicus (*ibid*) highlighted one of the central difficulties in research, that there is no such thing as certain or complete knowledge (McGoey, 2012a). One of the challenges facing the interviewer is interpreting the answers given to determine the relevance, truthfulness and credibility of the interviewee. This suggests an unavoidable and deeply problematic epistemological bias with knowledge production and raises the concerning implication that the conclusion taken from the internal meaning could be wrong because the picture formed by the evidence may be incorrect.

Foucault (1994, p.131) described this dilemma as the "political economy of truth". According to Foucault there is a paradox surrounding truth as it is in "circular relation with the systems of power that produce and sustain it" (*ibid*, p.132). As such 'truth' is in a way unknowable except through the limited and corrupting discourses with which we understand it. Foucault's approach to knowledge is closely aligned with constructionism (Cho and Trent, 2006).

Constructionism argues that social phenomena and their meaning are constructed through the interaction and interpretation of the actors involved or those observing it. It rejects the positivist and objectivist approaches which hold that there is an objective 'truth' to be discovered and instead proposes that 'truth' is what people believe at the time (Berger and Luckman, 1966).Given the personal and nuanced nature of interviews this is the ontological approach that was deemed best suited to analysing the data collected.

Validity is a difficult and often contentious topic for researchers – even from the constructivist stand point. That there is not 'one' truth but many truths dependent upon subjective understanding is not necessarily a serious problem to the validity of academic argument (Jewkes 2004). According to Cho and Trent (2006) there is a troubling preoccupation with validity in modern research. They argue that in focussing on the possible validity of the research we will be constantly trying to prove the unprovable. The difficulty is that both sides have valid points. Research that is erroneous, untruthful or lacking in credibility is not just useless it can do a great deal of damage in propagating fallacious information and it can have profound consequences on decision making and governmental policies (Smithson, 2008). However, debating the eristic nuances involved in validity and what constitutes a valid conclusion has the potential to paralyse academia in a sea of epistemological doubt.

Silverman's (2011) solution to this dilemma is to be highly critical of any source unless it appears to be corroborated by outside information. Mergel (2014), for example, in her research into Government online communication in America used a triangulated method of comparing the answers given in the interviews against the observable behaviour of the departments in order to compare what they *said* were doing and against what their policies said they *should* be doing.

Perhaps, the crux of the difficulty is that research requires a leap of faith from both the researcher, the research subject and also the reader. Numerous safeguards and techniques were used in order to try to improve the credibility and trustworthiness of this research. In recognition of the point raised by Silverman (2011) and Mergel (2014), a combination of different sources and methods were used as a means of comparison and corroboration. Interview data is compared to organisational intent to give focus and context to the perceptions and decisions discussed during the interview.

2.8.2 Surveys, Statistics and Official Documents

Surveys and the statistics they generate also have limitations and problems associated with them (Moulton, 2013). Coleman and Moyihan (2000) observe that statistics are open to manipulation and misrepresentation as they are records of interaction and are dependent on counting rules and the questions asked. Indeed, Hough et al (2010) conclude, surveys, and by extension statistics, are inherently problematic because the researcher cannot know what is influencing the way respondents are answering questions.

The above point is a particularly pertinent and important reminder when dealing with any government affiliated organisation. Tombs (2000) warns that the data and information made available to those researchers who gain access to the police will be subject to personal, organisational and political agendas, security clearance, the integrity of the original collators and, in the case of qualitative research, the openness and lack of concealment in those observed or interviewed. There is, therefore, the inherent possibility that our knowledge and understanding of this area is either incomplete or mis-constructed. Difficulties around official statistics and information are further complicated by the fact that the Government and government institutions, like the police, have much to lose if their authority and legitimacy is undermined which means it is often not in their interest to publicise anything which could potentially show them as corrupt, untrustworthy or ineffective (Morgan, 2000). Use of these methods, however,

are unavoidable in academic work. Hughes (2000) argues that the only possible compromise to reach is to use these methods with caution while making it clear what the parameters are.

This research uses a combination of official reports, policies, guidance documents and statistics recorded and interpreted by local police forces as a yard stick by which to assess the officially expressed strategy against what the police forces think they are doing and what they are actually doing. Using the statistics and documents in this way reduces some of the risk associated with them because they are not being used as an objective measure or as an accurate representation of reality but as a comparison point to look at how people are interpreting and acting on their perceived social realities.

2.8.3   Literature Review

While the problems discussed above cannot be completely avoided and must be taken into consideration, the risk they pose can be reduced. In order to minimise these risks a diverse range of sources to compare interpretations and ideas were selected from multiple reputable institutions, publications, journals and websites. The previous chapter touched upon the global nature of police communications. Public relations practices are not restricted to the English police but present in most, if not all, police forces across the developed world. As such, due to the limited research that has been conducted on this in England, American, Australian, Canadian and European, as well as English research on police communication and connected areas were systematically examined. Although there are embedded cultural and ideological differences between the English police and foreign police forces the international aspect is highly intriguing and provides a valuable point of comparison (1.3).

America was chosen as it is similar enough to Britain that a comparison is both interesting and practical. Given that the practice of professional public relations originated in America it was important to examine their understanding of police public relations particularly as there is an observable trend that where America leads the UK often follows (Bratton, 2005). Indeed, Radzinowicz once astutely described America as "the experimental laboratory of criminological science and Britain is its Hovis bakery" (1964 cited in Garland, 2002 p.7). Australian, Canadian and European research was included to provide a wider, global context. The social, cultural and legal differences between the countries examined in the literature review also highlighted the universal nature of some of the issues and points raised during the interviews.

2.8.4 Bias and Researching the Police

One of the problems with researching an organisation like the police is that it is virtually impossible not to have preconceived ideas about the police - who they are, what they do, how they are going to behave and what you can expect from them (Bayley, 1994). Indeed, Gourley (1954) argues that this is a vital aspect of policing – and that one of the main functions of the Communications team is to build and maintain a public image. It is here that the strength and benefits of qualitative methods becomes apparent.

The very concept of the police particularly, it could be claimed, in Britain is steeped in historical, cultural, social and emotional symbolism (Loader, 1997). They are not just another government agency but part of an intricate, pervasive and arguably hegemonic web entangled in and around our lives and in the way we think. One only needs to look at the number of books, TV shows and films focused on the police to see how deeply embedded the institution is in our society (Peelo, 2005).

This fascination with the police, however, creates an interesting set of difficulties when it comes to research. There is a good deal of information and misinformation circulating about the police (Reiner, 2010). As researchers around the world have lamented over the last thirty years – popular culture has created a myth around policing which has led to the public having an unrealistic expectation of what the police actually do and what they can achieve (Leishman and Mason, 2003).

To complicate matters still further, the police are rarely out of the news. Whether it is in relation to an appeal for information, a good publicity story or a scandal; the police, and by extension policing, is continuously kept in the everyday lives of people in the UK. According to Loader (1997) and Manning (1971) public awareness of and interest in the police exists at a peculiar, almost visceral, level in England. This is particularly interesting, if problematic, when one is studying one of the most outward facing police departments – 'Corporate Communications'.

Critical theorists, such as Becker (1967) argue that objective, value free knowledge is a myth and that the actual threat to validity originates not in the presence of bias but in the pretence that it does not exist. Indeed, it could be argued that bias is essential to provide focus, drive and a lens through which to interpret phenomena without which the researcher would

flounder and ultimately drown in a sea of data (Wolcott, 1995). Daymon and Holloway (2011) concur with this argument and but suggest that what is more important is accounting for researcher bias in order to protect the credibility of the research. Qualitative methods allow researchers to explore the question of bias (our own and the subject's) in a way and to a degree that is not possible in quantitative methods.

Qualitative researchers are taught that the best way to mitigate the dangers posed by bias is to be as transparent about the conceptual framework and methods as possible. In practice, however, this often proves to be quite challenging and can, at times, work against the instinct to protect the superficial integrity of the research and ourselves as apparently objective researchers by demanding a greater amount of public introspection and reflexive criticality than might be comfortable (Wolcott, 1995). Gillham (2005, p.6) believes that this drive to conceal the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of research has led to the researcher distancing, themselves in their findings as if they were an unseen observer in research that is "curiously anonymous" rather than a variable which must be considered.

The impact of the researcher on the research is commonly called the 'interviewer effect' or observers paradox (Jupp, 2000). This theory posits that the very act of observing something inherently changes the nature of the phenomena under observation (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). The interviewer themselves is an integral part of the interview process to which the interviewee will respond; the gender of the researcher, how they present themselves, the clothes they wear can all influence how the interviewee perceives and interacts with the researcher (Johnson, 2013). This convoluted, and arguably tautological, paradox surrounding the researcher is compounded by what Klockars (1985, p.8) terms "norm derivative" bias. Klockars (1985) argues that all research is fundamentally biased. It is determined, defined and driven by the researcher's interests and opinions and ultimately tells you more about the researcher than about the subject being studied. Daymon and Holloway (2011, p.1) observe that there is a fundamental difficulty "in tackling the thinking that drives the research question in the first place… because how we structure our ideas concerning what we query determines firstly, what we find to be relevant or what we discard and, more importantly, the answers we get (as well as those we overlook)".

The questions asked and directions taken in this research were informed by the gaps identified in the existing body of literature discussed in Chapter 1 and new insights gained through the

interviews. Perhaps more importantly, however, this project was driven by my long standing interest in all things criminological and police related which inevitably played a part and was commented on by several of the participants during the interview stage. For example, both PI.11 and PI.16 initially expressed their reluctance to agree to a face-to-face interview. After discussing their concerns and talking about why I was interested in this topic, both interviewees not only agreed to an interview but also offered tours of their departments and to set aside several hours for the interview as they both professed excitement about an interview they had hitherto shown reluctance about.

Appreciating the impact the researcher has had upon their research is of vital importance, however, it is often complicated and obscured by the more apparent difficulties in an interview situation around obtaining truthful answers from the participants. Reiner (2000, p.225) asks how do you "get information from people who [are] (often rightly) suspicious of your motives, [have] much to hide, and much to lose from its discovery". It is easy during an interview to form a sympathetic rapport with the participants as people tend to respond positively to an interested or sympathetic interviewer. "Scepticism may be absolutely essential to all aspects of fieldwork", as Wolcott (1995, p.118) rightly observes, but it can be difficult to apply rigorously in interviews where you spend time building rapport and getting to know the people involved. Qualitative research textbooks all talk about the importance of the interviewer building rapport and trust with the interviewee to make them feel comfortable and more likely to answer questions candidly and truthfully. Few of these texts, however, discuss how to manage the consequences of having built this rapport after the interview when analysis requires a level of criticality and objective reporting that can sometimes feel like disloyalty towards the interviewee.

This was one of the aspects I struggled with most during the research. It is much easier to be critical from a distance than it is to a person's face or in the research findings. The temptation was at times to soften some of the comments and concerns because it felt like a betrayal of the participant with whom I had spent time building rapport and a level of trust. A trend the interview notes revealed is that the interviews I initially felt went better were where I got on well with the participant and felt that the interview had progressed smoothly and honestly. The interviews with the better rapport were also the interviews where I found it more difficult during the analysis stage to be objectively critical. This difficulty was further compounded by a respect for the police as an institution and as a concept; which again made scepticism and

criticality a challenge at times as my baseline view of the police was fundamentally positive and therefore prone to optimistic rather than hyper-critical analysis of events and information relating to them.

As discussed above there is no getting around or avoiding bias. There are, however, techniques I found which helped to manage them. The primary method used was leaving transcription and analysis of the interview data for a few weeks after each interview occurred so that there was emotional and intellectual distance from the interview itself. Doing so allowed me time to reflect on the interview, how it had gone, the problems which occurred to me after it had finished and where the weaknesses were in the interview technique. Most importantly, however, the time gap allowed me to listen to the interview with fresh ears as sufficient time had passed to dull some of the recollections and emotions associated with that interview.

2.8.5 Interview Techniques and Method

The interviews were conducted between January 2014 and February 2015 and lasted between 40 and over 150 minutes with the average length around 90 minutes. The majority of the face-to-face interviews took place in the interviewees office in their force's headquarters and involved only the head (or representative) and myself as the interviewer. In four cases, however, the interviews were not conducted in an office environment; three were held in the canteen and one off site completely in a coffee shop.

It is difficult to accurately determine the effect location has on an interview. Quiet, private office type environments are the ideal recommended in books on qualitative research because they reduce the possibility of distractions and ensure a level of confidentiality for anything participants might say which can encourage them to be more open. Conducting those four interviews in noisy, busy public areas certainly proved to be challenging at times; however, all four of the participants remained relaxed and quite candid throughout their interviews. They clearly felt comfortable and confident in their surroundings and if the interviewees were concerned about the loss of privacy they made no mention of it and did not seem overly concerned when asked. Indeed, two of the interviewees (P1.11 and P1.21) told me that they felt more comfortable talking about their work outside of their department and away from their colleagues who might overhear or interrupt.

The noise of being in a public environment did undeniably cause a few issues; it made hearing questions and answers more difficult for both parties and the presence of other people walking around, and in one case dancing, music and televisions were distractions I had not previously anticipated or experienced. The distractions caused by the above meant that there were times in the interviews where either the interviewee or myself were interrupted while we were talking or the interviewee stopped midway through an explanation as they were distracted by something and needed prompting to return to what they were saying. The background noise and sometimes disjointed sentences made it difficult in places to accurately transcribe the interview.

A semi-structured approach was used during the interviews. The questions used during the interviews can be found in Appendix 2.5a. The same basic questions/topics were discussed in each interview but the method of gaining the information often differed depending upon the rapport developed with the interviewee. 2.9 discusses how research does not spring from the ether fully formed – but is a constant process of change, evolution and (re)negotiation. The same is true of the questions you ask during the research. It seems to be a natural, if at times frustrating, part of any study to realise that you are heading in the wrong direction. The result is that often the questions you answer at the end of the project are not the same ones you set out with at the beginning (Silverman, 2007).

I found early on that trying to impose the same structure on each interview was ultimately unhelpful as often the most interesting nuggets of information that came out of these conversations was not the result of my rattling through the question sheet but by listening to the connections the interviewee was making and adapting my responses to coax and tease out answers rather than demanding them. As a result, as the interviews progressed and new avenues were discovered and my understanding of police communications developed the questions/prompt sheet was reviewed and revised to reflect this.

Over the course of these interviews I found they could be summarised into three basic types; 'Conversational', 'Direct Questions' and 'Participant Directed'. In the first, the interviewee responded much better to a loose structure and just being allowed to talk with a few prompts to guide them. The tone was conversational and kept informal which seemed to relax the respondent and help them feel comfortable and maintain a good flow of information. One of the unexpected benefits of this more unstructured and grounded approach was the wealth of

additional information and connections or ideas I had not previously considered. As Fig 2.1 shows this was the approach used most frequently and seemed to work better with the female interviewees than the male ones. In some situations a combination of fully formed, structured questions was required initially but once the ice was broken the structure became looser as the interviewees warmed up to me and I settled into the new interview dynamic.

Male respondents, on the whole, seemed to respond better to the second approach; preferring direct, structured, properly articulated questions rather than relying on conversational prompts. It is interesting to note that of the three female interviewees who required this approach two of them were telephone interviews. These interviews proved to be more like a question and answer session rather than a conversation and could feel quite stilted and overly formal at times. In these situations I generally found that, unlike the 'Conversational' approach, further information was not offered by the interviewee when answering; if I wished for clarification or a more in-depth answer I had to specifically request what I was interested in.

At the beginning of the interview process I thought it was either because of a lack of interest in my research or some deficiency on my part which was alienating the interviewee or causing them to dislike me. Over time, and from several follow up conversations, it became apparent that this was not the case. What I had initially interpreted as frosty dislike was their attempt at helping my research by letting me control the interview to get what I needed out of it. As one interviewee (PI.4) told me at the end of their interview "men tend to like the direct approach"; as PI.4 explained - I knew what I was looking for and so left it to me to find it by asking him the questions. The idea that I was looking to him as the expert to offer some guidance in this area had not occurred to him.

Such an approach was not always easy or comfortable, particularly when the interviewee was evasive on a topic. However, structured questions proved very useful for telephone interviews where there was only a disembodied voice rather than facial cues and body language to help keep a conversation progressing. Silverman (2011) and Yin (2012) suggest the use of a more structured style of questioning for telephone interviews precisely because they are lacking in the wealth of visual data and the emotional connection you can forge during an in person interview as without these two things carrying a conversation with a stranger over the phone can be very difficult.

Fig. 2.1	Interviewee Analysis Table			
Police Force Code	**Gender of Interviewee**	**Interviewer Directed**		**Participant Directed**
		Informal/ Conversation	**Formal/ Direct Question**	
PI.1	M			Y
PI.2*	M		Y	
PI.3	M		Y	
PI.4	M		Y	
PI.5	M		Y	
PI.6	F		Y	
PI.7	F		Y	
PI.8	F	Y		
PI.9	F	Y		
PI.10	F	Y		
PI.11*	M	Y		
PI.12	M	Y		
PI.13	M			Y
PI.14	M			Y
PI.15*	F	Y		
PI.16	F	Y		
PI.17	F	Y		
PI.18	M		Y	
PI.19a# PI.19b#	F and M	Y		
PI.20a# PI.20b#	F and M	Y		Y
PI.21*	F	Y		
PI.22	M			Y
PI.23	F	Y		
PI.24	M		Y	
PI.25a# PI.25b#	F and M	Y		Y
PI.26	F		Y	
PI.27	M			Y
PI.28	F	Y		
Blue background = Telephone interview White background = Face-to-Face interview				
* = Interview took place in public place (Canteen/Coffee shop)				
# = Multiple person / group interview				

The final typology also proved to be the most difficult. These were the interviews where the interviewee tried to control the direction of the interview and questions I should be asking; or, as was the case with PI.22, the interviewee was so excited and passionate about his subject that his enthusiasm made asking questions very difficult through sheer talkativeness. Through trial and error the best method I found for coping with 'Participant Directed' interviews was to 'go with the flow', allow these individuals to direct the interview and slip in the questions at an opportune moment if they did not cover them. This approach was not ideal, as it often left me feeling wrong footed during the interviews and gave far greater control to the interviewee; it proved to be, however, an example of what Hughes (2000) terms necessary compromises as engaging in an all-out battle of wills was unlikely to have been conducive to building a good working relationship or encouraging forthcoming answers.

My experience with 'Participant Directed' interviews echoed a warning made by Gillham (2005) on the difficulties associated with what he called 'elite' interviews. As Gillham (2005) points out getting truthful answers out of people is an omnipresent challenge in any research but it can be particularly difficult when interviewing experts or 'elite interviewees'. Gillham (2005, p.54) defines elite interviewees as people in positions of authority or power by virtue of their experience or job and identified five potential problems that can occur with elite interviews.

1) The participants are political creatures more aware of the implications of the questions asked which will colour their responses;
2) Access is usually contingent upon them seeing a use for the research;
3) Hidden agendas may underpin what they say and how they try to construct information;
4) Elite interviewees are more likely to require concessions from the researcher in return for their time;
5) It can be significantly more difficult to challenge what someone says when you view them as an authority, authority figure or in a position of control over your research.

The sample group selected for this research fit Gillham's criteria (2005) for 'elite' interviews. The participants were chosen precisely because of their 'expert' knowledge of police communications and their position of seniority with the police Communications department (2.4.1). It is interesting to note that while all those interviewed during this research technically

fall under the typology of 'elite' interviews the problems identified by Gillham (2005) were not present in all interview situations. There were, however, several occasions where the power/knowledge imbalance and its associated problems were particularly problematic; most notably problems 1, 3 and 5 were experienced in the Participant Directed and some of the more structured interviews.

In most interviews, the interviewer is in control and the dynamic is clear cut in the sense that the interviewer asks questions and the interviewee responds. This is not always the case with elite interviews where the expert in question might have decided on how they wish the interview to play out. Maintaining or regaining control in these situations can be very difficult particularly as it can mean having to corral an uncooperative authority figure.

This proved to be the case with the Participant Directed interviews. Challenging an authority figure is not always easy, even when the individuals concerned are not being deliberately obstructive, and combined with the expert knowledge of the interviewee these situations proved difficult to manage and, at times, highly frustrating. Interviews PI.13 and PI.27 were particularly challenging albeit for different reasons. With PI.27 the interviewee was forceful, used to being listened to and used to controlling the direction of conversation. He would frequently interrupt while I was asking a question in an attempt to redirect my interest to where he thought it should be. PI.13, however, was quite a different experience. While there was no overt attempt to control the direction of the interview PI.13 was increasingly negative, obstructive and surly during the interview. This behaviour was particularly interesting as prior to the actual interview PI.13 had been cheerful, overly helpful and accommodating in the emails and telephone exchange to set up the interview.

Social psychologists argue that it is a natural result of life-long conditioning that humans find it difficult to refuse commands from authority. Milgram's (1963) highly controversial obedience studies during the 1960s showed that even when the participants thought something was ethically questionable the majority of them obeyed the authority figure instigating the behaviour. Problems with challenging authority might be common place but it does have implications for the reliability of the answers gained in qualitative research which need to be acknowledged.

In an ideal interview situation the participant will answer all questions regardless of how sensitive or critical they are in honestly. In reality, however, communication is a labyrinth in which it is easy to get lost. Evasion, partial explanation, tangents, redirection and terse short answers designed to make you back off from a topic are all common conversational tactics. The question is, how far do you go to get the participant to answer the questions?

This is a crucial dilemma in interviews. In pushing for answers participants do not wish to give on one topic it might adversely affect how they respond to you in the rest of the interview and if follow up information is required. There is also to consider that under pressure participants might be more inclined to untruths, part-truths or obfuscations. In such a situation the real question seems to be: does it really matter if this is actually how the participant perceives things or if it is how they wish to be seen?

Earlier in this section the constructivist approach was discussed. Gillham (2005 p.6) believes that "in an interview, the interviewee is 'constructing' themselves in what they say… but so also is the interviewer". One of the most important qualities of qualitative research is its ability to be flexible with the concept of 'truth'.

Constructivism suggests that by recognising the performance-like nature of reality what is more important is *how* people wish to portray or represent things rather than *what* they are actually saying. This is the approach which has been used in this research. Anonymity is thought to be one possible solution to this problem as that people are more likely to answer without reservation if they perceive there to be no consequences to what they say (Silverman, 2013). In light of this, all results in this research were anonymised to prevent identification; the assurance of which did seem to visibly affect the openness and engagement of some of the participants (2.6.4).

A further complication was that three of the interviews conducted involved multiple participants. It had always been the plan to conduct the interviews in person where possible and on a one-to-one basis. The concept of interviewing multiple people in a group interview had not occurred to me as particularly viable considering the reaction of the pilot force to interviewing their junior members of staff (2.4.2 & 2.9). As such, it came as quite a surprise that three forces arranged, without prior consultation, for two members of their communications team to be present in the interview.

These multi-person interviews were an unexpected windfall in many ways. Talking to both the head of the department and/or several of their managers added considerable contextual data and unusual perspectives to the wealth of information they were able to give me about various aspects of their work which made for a more comprehensive understanding of their department and aims.

Group interviews did, however, pose some interesting new challenges.

1.) **Personalities**: in a one-on-one interview the only dynamic is between interviewer and the interviewee. In group interviews there are multiple personalities playing off and interacting with each other which can create a challenging dynamic. This is where personality types come into play and becomes particularly important (Belbin, 2010). In one-on-one interview you can adjust your style to balance or counteract difficult, dominant, shy, reserved and challenging personalities in order to build the rapport necessary for a successful interview – it is much harder to manage people in groups.

In two of the group interviews I had an interesting dynamic develop between the interviewees which required careful handling. In the first case, PI.19a was very quiet and subdued during the initial part of the interview while PI.19b was very loud, boisterous and prone to interjecting or interrupting her when she was talking. The pair evidently got on well together and had an established working dynamic but it was difficult to balance the two personalities so that PI.19a answered the questions as well as her colleague. In the second case the second respondent (PI.20b) was reluctant to talk very much in the presence of his boss (PI.20a). After PI.20a left part way through the interview PI.20b was much more open and candid about answering questions and talking about their work. As to whether these interviews would have been different had I known and prepared beforehand for a group interview is a difficult question to answer. Ultimately a good level of rapport was built with all of the interviewees in the group interviews, but the dynamic was different and challenging.

2.) **Air time**: The more people there are the more careful you have to be about making sure that all participants have a chance to answer the questions and raise the topics they need to. Otherwise there is the danger that participants might feel left out or marginalised, as occurred at times during interview PI.20. Alternating the questions between the interviewees and aiming for a conversational rather than structured Q&A

approach seemed to work very well in encouraging a fluid and inclusive discussion that involved all the interviewees and prevented anyone from feeling alienated or left out.

3.) Time: multiple people answering questions takes significantly longer than if there is only one person being interviewed. The multi-person interviews were longer than the average one-to-one interview (120 minutes on average).

4.) Transcription and data analysis: the process of transcribing the content of an interview is something of a weak link in the process, even with a good quality audio recording (2.4). All the multi-person interviews were recorded which proved to be essential as transcribing one-to-one interviews are complicated and time consuming enough without adding in the further complexity of multiple speakers, at times speaking over each other, and interacting with each other. Accurately capturing the interviewees opinions and interactions for analysis proved to be one of the most significant challenges with group interviewing particularly during analysis.

To complicate matters further, there were also difficulties around the terminology used on two occasions. In both cases the terms originally used were either considered "inaccurate" (PI.1), or "too difficult to understand" (PI.14), and were subsequently altered. The first example involved the three models of public relations in the police suggested by Mawby (2002, p181): 'Marginal', 'Supportive' and 'Core' (1.4.1). After consultation with the pilot force, the terminology and models were adapted slightly following advice from various interviewees to become:

1) **'Optional'**: police communications is considered non-essential or an optional extra by police officers. This is reflected in lack of inclusion at senior levels and avoidance or a dismissive attitude from investigating officers.

2) **'Complementary**: police communications is considered important and is used/accepted by most police officers although there remains a sense of exclusion and not being a part of operational policing.

3) **'Embedded'**: police communications is considered an essential part of operational policing and is included at all levels of police management (e.g. has a seat on the management board).

The second case involved communications terminology. The Interviewees were asked to choose which term they felt best described their department's current communication strategy; 'Push', 'Pull', 'Networking' or 'Transactional'. The terms themselves were taken from Mergel's (2012) analysis of social media use in government institutions (1.5). This model was initially chosen as it was specifically designed to accommodate social media and has been used as an evaluation tool before in police communications research (Meijer and Thaens, 2014).

It quickly became apparent however, that it was not the most accurate or suitable model for discussing communications in the English police. While interviewees quickly understood and identified elements of 'Push', 'Pull' and 'Networking' the interviewees felt that the 'Transactional' model was both confusing and not appropriate for their police force. PI.16 suggested during her interview that a more appropriate model would be transformative, or behavioural change based, as for her the foundation of all police communications was to effect a change in the behaviour of their audiences; whether this was through prevention, witness appeals or reporting crimes that they might otherwise not have. Similar ideas were expressed by PI.25b, PI.8, PI.11 and PI.17 who all thought that the central aim of communications should be behaviour change (3.2.4). Given the confusion surrounding the 'Transactional model', this was substituted in later interviews for a new 'Transformative' model; which was based on PI.16's suggestion of including a behavioural change element.

PART THREE: Tracing the Research Story

Research does not spring fully formed from the ether – nor do the questions asked or the thinking which drives it (Silverman, 2013). The following section discusses the conceptual framework underpinning this project; mapping the evolution it has undergone from a simple research question asking why police forces have Corporate Communications departments to a doctoral thesis.

2.9   Conceptual Framework

The poet Robert Burns (2011, p.110) once famously commented that "the best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft agley" (do often go astray). The same could be said for doctoral research.

Upon starting this research further reading quickly demonstrated that the predominant methodologies used in this area were divided neatly into two types: ethnographic type observation examining police public relations departments, and quantitative based surveys and regression analysis for public opinion, public confidence and research looking at the impact of specific strategies on these two variables (1.3). The popularity of these methods in investigating this subject area seemed to confirm the direction and plan I had selected in my thesis proposal[16]

The emphasis in this first draft was twofold. The first part was designed to determine what the police public relations departments actually do (continuing Mawby's (2002) research). The second was aimed at finding out whether these efforts and activities were effective. 'Public confidence' came to the fore in academic and political discourse during the late 1990s culminating in 2009 in New Labour's 'One National Confidence Target' which made public confidence the common measure (for a time) by which policing, and police forces, in England were to be judged (Fleming and McLaughlin, 2012). Given the close theoretical alignment between public confidence initiatives and police public relations it seemed at the time like the

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[16] See Appendix 2.6 for a comparison of methodology plans considered.

best possible measure by which to assess the impact of police communications in relation to public opinion (1.3).

The plan was to use a broadly ethnographic approach, involving short periods of observation and semi structured interviews with key members of the communication team, in three police forces. Ideally these police forces would be a mixture of rural, urban and metropolitan so as to provide insight into how police communications worked and differed across different policing environments and different audiences.

Ethnographic research has long been considered something of the gold standard in qualitative academic research. Gillham (2005) believes that the appeal of ethnography is that it appears to be the most naturalistic of all the approaches and lets one investigate how, what and why a phenomenon exists. Such an approach, according to Gillham (2005) provides the researcher with a more comprehensive understanding of the wider context than can otherwise be reached, even by in-depth interviews (Silverman, 2013).

The trade-off for such depth is the cost – both in terms of time and money – that ethnography requires. For this reason the number of police forces to be examined was restricted to three with the acknowledgement that such a restriction would have a significant impact on the generalisability of the findings. The findings from the ethnography would then have been contrasted against a statistical analysis of public confidence and satisfaction levels in order to determine if the actions and strategies of the departments were having a discernible effect on confidence and satisfaction levels within these areas. This method of statistical analysis is very popular and has been used to some success by the advocates of the Procedural Justice model of public confidence (Bradford, 2011).

It was also becoming increasingly evident, however, that there were several significant concerns about the quantitative aspect of my methodology. Regression analysis has traditionally been used in this area to try to demonstrate causal or correlative links between a specific stimulus (e.g. newsletters/media reporting) and public opinion. As a research method it has dominated the area of police public relations for the last decade. Consequently, attention has shifted away from the 'diagnostic' and 'contextual' questions (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994) examined in the work of Mawby (2002) and Terris (1967) on understanding the role and purpose of these departments. Instead research has focused almost exclusively on the

'strategic' and 'evaluative' questions (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994) aimed at assessing the effectiveness of a specific strategy in improving public confidence.

Understanding trends in public opinion, however, is notoriously difficult (Roberts, 1992; Friedman, 1998; Warr, 1995; Salem, 2000; Nir, 2011; Harkin, 2015) even without the added complication of attempting to understand such a nebulous concept as confidence (Decker, 1981; Frank, Smith and Novak, 2005; Waddington, Williams, Wright and Newburn, 2015). This difficulty is further compounded by the inherent limitation of regression analysis in being able to account for, or even acknowledge, all of the variables and influences which might be influencing respondent's answers (Harkin, 2015).

Cavadino and Dignan observe that "in principle, at least, multivariate modelling can be carried out to test for the presence or absence of the proposed relationship… In practice, it is still difficult to establish a comparative database with sufficient observation points and sufficient variables to allow a clear picture to emerge" (cited in Hough 2012, p.337). This poses a considerable challenge for the results of these methodologies. If you cannot be sure of what it is you are testing then can you be sure of the correlations and conclusions you draw from the results (Bamford, 1993).

Furthermore, according to Ditton, Farrall, Bannister and Gilchrist (2000) there is a characteristic problem with using quantitative surveys as there is no way to determine the reliability of the answers you receive or to determine whether how respondents say they would feel/react in a situation is an accurate predictor of how they would actually behave in real life. Statistical relationships are particularly problematic when it comes to understanding something as complicated and uniquely individual as human behaviour (Roberts, 2010; Friedman, 1998; Jobs, 2005). Silverman (2011, p.368) argues that a common mistake in quantitative research is to assume that "just because X seems always to be followed by Y, it does not mean that X necessarily causes Y. There might be a third factor, Z, which produces both X and Y. Alternatively, Z might be an 'intervening variable' which is caused by X and then influences Y". The difficulty is that there is always the potential for Z and this renders it impossible to know exactly what you are measuring, or why, without thorough, contextual understanding of both the situation and of the individual respondent (Sturgis and Smith, 2010).

Hough (2012, p.337) concedes that understanding public opinion "is probably more of an interpretative art than a social science". However, the lure of this sort of research and the ephemeral answers it gives has led to a marked change in the wider research community. As my primary interest in public opinion was in trying to understand these influences I decided to move away from regression analysis and towards a more qualitative approach to gauging public opinion.

Version 2, like version 1, was centred on an ethnographic approach. I decided to increase the number of forces to be included in the case studies in order to generate a better data set for comparison purposes. Regression analysis was replaced by an online survey that was aimed at exploring the public's expectations of the police, awareness of police communications activities and whether they thought these activities had an impact on their opinion of the police. The focus of the research was now firmly centred on what people knew, what they were aware of, what people's expectations/views of the police were. Effective communication relies on both parties engaging in a dialogue. To this end the aim at this time was to address the two greatest research gaps I had identified through my reading: namely understanding (1) the police PR department and (2) public expectation of the police – the former through interviews and participant observation and the latter through an online survey.

One of the biggest challenges during this process has been learning when and how to say no to other people influencing my research interests and direction. This particular challenge was highlighted when in January 2013 I approached a constabulary in order to test the likely probability of police forces agreeing to take part in my research.

The intention behind this meeting was to ascertain:

1) Whether the pilot Constabulary were interested in my research questions and ideas;
2) If they were, would they agree to my proposed research methodology; and
3) The likely reaction of other police forces and possible uptake.

A letter was sent to the Chief Constable of the pilot constabulary in January 2013 and subsequently a meeting was arranged for later that month. The answer to all three questions was 'no'.

This was my first experience talking to a Chief Constable about my research ideas and I was aware of the necessity of gaining his interest and support if I was to be allowed access. This combined with the long-standing desire to ensure my research had a practical use meant I went into the meeting eager to be directed into avenues that would benefit the police.

The Chief Constable had his own ideas about what research they wanted and the methods that would be most useful to them - my original interest in exploring the public relations department through ethnographic observation and interviews did not coincide with this. The pilot constabulary were more interested in the business community; their relationship with the police, their interests and expectations and how to improve this partnership.

During that meeting it was made clear to me that the constabulary would be more likely to grant access if I incorporated an examination of the police-business relationship in my research design. This raised an interesting question over the extent to which I should attempt to satisfy police agendas in order to gain access to that particular constabulary.

At the time it seemed prudent to accommodate as much of the police agenda as possible in order to gain access and ensure that the results could be of practical value to the participating forces; this is reflected in the direction taken in version 3. In hindsight by trying to satisfy this agenda it changed the direct of the research and broadened the focus to an unmanageable degree. This problem was picked up during a supervisory review in April 2013 which led to version 4. Where version 3 was overwhelmingly dominated by the public opinion element aimed at understanding the differences between online, offline and business audiences, version 4 had a far tighter focus and restricted aims. Public opinion had been limited to an examination of online audiences using police social media sites and the principle aim was once more on understanding the role and purpose of the police Communications department albeit with the new addition of a social media lens.

Version 4 was sent to the pilot force in June 2013 and in July I received a response rejecting my research proposal. The reason cited was that the ethnographic component was too time-consuming for them to commit to and that the social media survey was unnecessary as they already recorded some of this information through Google analytics.

This refusal was probably the single most useful event of my first year. It was a much-needed impetus for me to realise four key things: firstly, that this was my research project and giving a police force too much influence could and almost certainly would lead to problems (Bottoms, 2000). Secondly, my project was getting too ambitious and the research questions too nebulous. The research gap I had initially identified when I first began looking at this area in 2009 was in understanding what these departments do and what they are actually trying to achieve – and this was where the focus of the study should remain.

Thirdly, that while replicating Mawby's (2002) highly successful ethnographic observation of South Yorkshire police in other police forces would be interesting it was not a necessary strategy for answering my core research interests. And finally, that I was more interested in a national comparison of how different police forces were communicating than an in-depth but isolated examination of one or two constabularies. This new awareness is reflected in versions five, six and seven which reverted back to my core questions; what do police communications departments actually do? Why do they do it? And, are they achieving the desired outcomes?

There are three key differences between versions five and six: firstly, version 6 removes the limit on only nine police forces being examined in the case studies; secondly, in version 5 one of the people to be interviewed is the Chief Constable of the participating force - this is removed in version 6 as it became apparent that not only was it difficult to get Chief Constables to agree but that they had limited knowledge about the topics covered in my research questions; and thirdly version 6 introduces the use of in-depth questionnaires/email interviews with other department staff members.

What also became clear with the versions 5-6, however, was that my original interest in understanding what these departments do and why was not only an interesting question to me but was also an important one for the police. For a department which specialises in, and is meant to manage, internal and external communications awareness of what other police forces are doing and whether it works is sporadic at best. It has created a disparate patchwork of communications related activities and strategies across England with little to no commonality or consistency between different areas; and sometimes even within the same police force (3.2.4). This disparity became the focus of version 6 - particularly regarding social media and other Internet based platforms.

One of the most significant shifts in the direction this research has taken was the inclusion of police use of social media as a core focus. In 2009 all police forces in England had a website but only 26 police forces had a Twitter account and 24 had a Facebook page. By 2012 the online landscape had changed considerably with all forces increasing their online presence (1.5 and 3.1.6). The inclusion of social media as one of the central aspects of this research reflects the importance that online communities and communications now have for the police forces in England.

It was while drafting V6 that I started wondering about the potential for questionnaires or email interviews in order to access the junior members of the Corporate Communications team/PR Department. The idea was to canvas their views on the apparent shift in the official documents which showed an increasing emphasis on social media. Increasing the sample to include the views of junior staff promised an interesting and previously unexplored source of contextual information which could then be compared to the answers given by the heads of these departments during their interview.

There comes a point, however, in all research where you have to compromise between "what is desirable… and what is practical in terms of cost, time, politics and ethics" (Jupp, 2000 p.10). The necessary balance every researcher has to juggle between the ideal and the actually achievable. Due to a series of unfortunate events during 2014 involving family illness and a car accident it became necessary to refine my focus further in order to create an achievable plan; the result was version 7 (Appendix 2.6).

In essence version 7 is very similar to version 6 in that the focus, case study element and document analysis remained the same. The difference lies in the research questions and the questionnaire. The research questions were rewritten to give a much tighter focus and to separate what I had come to consider the primary and the secondary questions which followed on from them.

The questionnaire and survey element was removed entirely and replaced by a series of FOI requests submitted by email to each of the police forces in England (Appendix 3.1). This decision was made for five interconnected reasons:

1) Given how busy Police Communications departments are the likelihood of receiving a representative response for these questionnaires was quite slim without a lot of time

consuming chasing. The additional concern here was the danger of becoming a nuisance factor in the department (Gillham, 2005) which would likely have a negative impact on my working relationship with the heads of department I was interviewing.

2) Further to this, the data analysis from the questionnaires would require an unfeasible amount of time given the significantly higher number of police forces engaging with this research than had originally been estimated. When V6 was written the anticipated number of police forces agreeing to take part was between 10 and 15 out of the 39 available in England. By May 2014 27 forces had confirmed that they wished to take part with a further five forces still deliberating and five forces who had not yet replied. Given that the interviews were expected to last between 60 and 90 minutes and the estimated time for transcription and analysis, trying to incorporate more data in the form of questionnaires seemed unnecessarily problematic; especially when considering the low average response rate for questionnaires (Silverman, 2010).

3) While it would have been an interesting source of contextual data the questionnaires were not essential for answering the research questions; particularly in light of the interviews with the heads of department which were generating significant amounts of rich data far exceeding initial expectations.

4) Most of the factual information I required about the departments (e.g. budget, staff levels and training) could be obtained under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) which would, in theory at least, guarantee the data within 20 working days of receipt of the request.

5) Due to the unlimited number of FOI requests you can make, replacing the survey with FOIs meant that I could request further information or clarification as and when it became relevant rather than trying to anticipate what information I would need in advance of sending the survey to the police forces.

It is important to note, however, that while the reasoning above appeared sound in theory, in practice there were unanticipated difficulties with using this resource which had to be managed. Under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) all requests should be dealt with within 20 working days of submission. Three rounds of FOIs were submitted to each of the 39 police forces in England between February and July 2015 which should have yielded 117

comparable responses. As Fig. 2.2 shows, however, this was not the case. Of the 117 requests only 96 replies were received; with 16 responses either incomplete or only partly answered, and 14 late responses – some by several months. 20 police forces acknowledged receipt of the request but then failed to send the information or answer follow up emails, while one force refused the request under section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act. Fortunately, with regard to the missing FOI data, most of the information required was available from previous FOI requests stored in the missing force's disclosure logs; while not ideal, as this information was not as up to date as the actual responses from the FOI request, it still yielded useful context.

Fig 2.2	Freedom of Information Request Response table						
	Reply On Time	Reply Late	No Reply	Request Refused	Part Answered	Total Replies Received	Response Rate %
1st FOI Feb 2015	32	4	3	0	0	36	92%
2nd FOI March 2015	20	6	13	0	10	26	67%
3rd FOI July 2015	30	4	4	1	6	34	87%

Bourke, Worthy and Hazell (2012) warn about the difficulties regarding how the questions are interpreted and the disparity in record keeping between different government bodies. While the individual police forces are independent geographical units united under a common name they are also held to account with the same rules and run in broadly similar ways. Given this, and the factual nature of the information requested, the hypothesis was that the FOI requests would yield broadly similar data. This held true for several of the questions. However, for others such as budget and staff numbers quite a few of the responses came back with 'no information held' – which was surprising given that other forces had this information available. The degree in variation with how the questions were interpreted was also surprising on some occasions – with some forces giving far more detail than requested and others providing information for a different question entirely.

A further complication with using FOI data became apparent when writing the results chapter. Despite the legislation coming into force over a decade ago and the popular uptake it has had

in the academic community no system or established practice for how to reference this data has yet been created (Bourke et al, 2012). Including individual FOI reference numbers in the aggregated data in Chapter 3 quickly became cumbersome and impractical. As such, a full copy of the FOI data was included in the Appendix complete with the FOI reference numbers and name of the police force it originated from so that the results chapter remained a brief summary of overall trends and themes.

Version 7 then, draws on a combination of semi-structured interviews, FOI data and official documents to create a case study level of information about the participating forces. Interview data was at first analysed in Nvivo 10; however, it became apparent during the early stages of analysis that Nvivo was proving more a hindrance than a help when it came to understanding the trends and themes. As such, interview data was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet where analysis was completed using a combination of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis and Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) framework analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006, p77) argue that thematic analysis is a "rarely-acknowledged, yet widely used qualitative analytic method… that offers an accessible and theoretically-flexible approach to analysing qualitative data". It is an approach which explicitly recognises the implicit bias present when researchers code and present data. The greatest strength of this approach is that it allows for a combination of inductive and deductive analysis. Inductive analysis is a process of coding the data without trying to fit the data into a pre-existing framework or set of ideas. By comparison, deductive analysis is a top down approach where the researcher codes the data into a set of themes/framework already established.

Framework Analysis, on the other hand, was specifically designed for applied policy research. Srivastava and Thomson (2009 p73) argue that while it is conceptually similar to grounded theory, framework analysis is:

> "better adapted to research that has specific questions, a limited time frame, a pre-designed sample (e.g. professional participants) and a priori issues (e.g. organizational and integration issues) that need to be dealt with. Although framework analysis may generate theories, the prime concern is to describe and interpret what is happening in a particular setting".

Fig 2.3		
Braun and Clarke (2006) Six Phases of Thematic Analysis		**Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) Five Stages of Framework Analysis**
1	**Familiarising yourself with the data:** The first phase requires the researcher to immerse themselves in their data in order to search for themes, patterns and meanings.	1	**Familiarisation:** This is usually completed during the transcription/reading of the data. During this, researchers become familiar with their data and start to identify themes.
2	**Generating initial code:** Once the researcher is familiar enough with their data to have identified preliminary areas of interest a coding framework is produced.	2	**Identifying a thematic framework:** This is where the initial coding framework is developed from a combination of a priori and emergent themes identified during the first stage.
3	**Searching for themes:** Phase three involves making sense of the coded and collated data to analyse the codes and consider how the data may fit together.	3	**Indexing:** Also known as coding during this phase the data is applied to the thematic framework established during phase 2.
4	**Reviewing themes:** During this phase the themes identified in 3 are interrogated to see if the theme withstands testing. If the theme does not withstand this then either the theme itself or one of the data sets needs to be re-evaluated. The end result of this stage should be a thematic map of the coded data.	4	**Charting:** Headings from the thematic framework are then used to create charts to aid easy comparison of the whole dataset. It is a very useful way of identifying the relevant passages from the transcripts which you might want to include in the writing up.
5	**Defining and naming themes:** This phase begins once the thematic map has been completed. The themes going forward to be analysed are then defined and further refined.	5	**Mapping and interpretation:** During the last stage the researcher looks for patterns, associations, concepts and explanations in the data. Ritchie and Spencer (1994) advocate the use of diagrams, graphs and charts as means of simplifying complicated patterns in an easy to understand way. The central aim of this phase is to identify and then test developing interpretations.
6	**Producing the report:** The final phase is the writing up of the report. During this the coded themes identified from the data are analysed and discussed.		

As Fig 2.3 shows, Framework Analysis is more streamlined than thematic analysis. This is due in part to the fact that it is designed to meet research aims and provide outcomes or recommendations within a short time scale. Although the general approach in this method is inductive like thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) it also differs in that it allows for the "inclusion of a priori as well as emergent concepts" (Lacey and Luff, 2007). While these two approaches are conceptually very similar (both having their roots in grounded theory) there are sufficient differences between them that combined they offer a complimentary and more robust method for analysing interview data.

Given the purposive sample used in this research, the early identification of a priori issues that needed to be factored in and the specific subject area under examination, this approach seemed ideal; especially as it has been used with great success in similar areas (Silverman, 2011). By merging Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic approach with Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) framework the result was a flexible and organic way of collating, coding and making sense of a large body of complicated information while allowing for both a priori and emergent concepts (Lacey and Luff, 2007).

Official documents and reports produced by the NPIA, College of Policing, HMIC and the Home Office were then analysed to extract what Mergel (2014, p.30) calls "formally articulated organizational intent" to compare against the perceptions of the interviewees and the observable behaviour of these departments to see if they are conforming to official expectations.

Version 7 produced a highly flexible methodology which combined the most effective elements of the previous versions of the methodology in a practical, versatile and achievable way while not compromising on the depth, quality or research focus. A similar methodology has been used by Meijer and Thaens (2013) in their study of social media strategies in North American police departments and by communications expert Mergel (2010) in her work over the last decade into government online engagement in America.

The path this research project has taken can best be described as diamond shaped (Fig. 2.4). It started in the proposal (V1) with a narrow scope intending to focus on three police forces. As I learnt more about the area the shape of my proposed research evolved and grew (V2-4),

before time, practicalities and other considerations required me to focus on my core interests in order to design an attainable methodology (V6 and V7).

Proposal (V1)

Reading

V2 - V4

Reserach Bargain

Practicalities

V5 & 6

Final Methodology (V7)
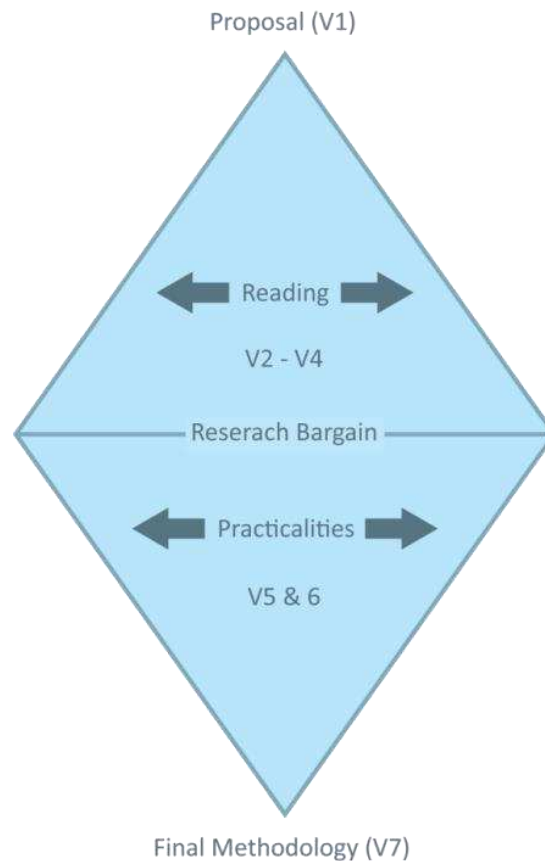
Fig 2.4

The American philosopher, William Durrant (1965), wrote that "education is the progressive discovery of our own ignorance". This proved to be particularly appropriate when researching an area as convoluted and contentious as the English police. Policing, particularly perhaps in England, is a subject on which everyone seems to have a ready opinion (Wright, 2002). However, as Benson (1981) points out while there is a lot of information available about the police there is an equal, if not greater, amount of misinformation interwoven in popular and academic knowledge. The challenge is to separate the two; a task which is often far more complicated than it might seem at the outset (Galison, 2008).

The more I read and learnt about the English police, public relations, public confidence and communications the bigger and more complicated the area became. What started out initially as a small under-researched area became a cog in a much larger and far more complicated machine. With this increased understanding came a corresponding shift in my research questions and methodology as they expanded to incorporate new interests and the connections revealed by a systematic review of the published literature and developments in the field research (V1 - 3). Versions 4 - 6 by contrast show a distinct funnelling to a much tighter focus resulting in version 7; which, in a sense, has come full cycle returning to the fundamentals in the original research questions (V1) only with a different methodology better suited to tackling this area.

Two important, albeit difficult, lessons learnt during this process were not to be too ambitious, and to not allow myself to get distracted or persuaded into researching other people's interests at the expense of my own. It is interesting to note that it was only at the end of this funnelling process, when I had abandoned the well-worn public opinion path and reduced my research ambitions back to the fundamental questions I started with as an ignorant outsider, that police forces became interested in my research and started granting access.[17]

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[17] More detail on how the methodology and research questions have evolved is included in Appendix 2.6.

2.10   Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the methodological and conceptual framework underpinning this research and critically analysed the associated problems and limitations of using these methods. As 2.9 showed, the planning involved in how to undertake this research has developed through a mixture of trial and error, practical limitations and "research bargains" (Hughes, 2000, p.241).

The second part of this chapter (2.4 – 2.8) discussed these methodological limitations and the problems experienced during the course of this research. The scope of this project is one such limitation which must be acknowledged. 25 police communications teams, covering a range of policing environments (3.2.1), were interviewed as part of this research; but the extent to which the data gathered from these policing environments, the lessons learned and the ideas generated can be generalised to other police forces (both in England and abroad) or different policing environments such as the British Transport Police is debatable. There will always be the question of the 'stone left unturned'; of whether a deeper, better understanding or essential knowledge is just around the next corner – it is this quest which drives all research.

The question of transferability is a recurrent problem for qualitative research which is, by its nature, subjective and open to interpretation (Mouzelis, 2008). Denscombe (1998) and Stake (1994) argue, however, that while each case might be considered 'unique' on an individual level it is also part of a wider phenomenon which means that some degree of generalisation is possible. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), as the researcher can only know the context of his or her own research the responsibility for generalisation lies with the reader who is in a much better position to judge the extent to which "the prevailing environment is similar to another situation with which he or she is familiar and whether the findings can justifiably be applied to the other setting" (Shenton 2004, p.63). Ryle (1949) and later Lincoln and Guba (1985), proposed that one way of improving the potential for generalisation would be to include sufficient 'thick data' to provide a thorough understanding and context for the reader so that they can make this decision. Where possible, this is the method that was adopted in the collection, collation and writing of the results.

Every effort was made during the course of this research to guard against possible problems around the reliability and credibility of the data. Multiple methods were used in order to cross

reference and act as a comparison point for the data gathered from the interviews, FOIs and literature review. Most of the interviews were recorded on a digital recording device and a three stage notes system similar to the one advocated by Spradley (1979) was used to capture as many contextual and emotional details about and from the interviews as possible.

No method is fool proof, however, and no matter how accurately one tries to record or convey the interview experience such measures will inevitably fall short in describing the situation with total precision and truthfulness. Transcription and analysis are always a matter of interpretation and perception of relevance (Daymon and Holloway, 2011). This means that there can be as many different versions of the same event or data set as there are interpreters looking at it (2.5).

There has been a considerable amount written regarding the fundamental importance of methodological transparency and in declaring any bias, prejudices and influences that have guided and affected the research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Gillam (2005) argues that it is often only in the telling of the story that you can start to appreciate the way different developments, experiences and ideas during the course of a project influence the thinking and direction that the researcher takes. This narrative aspect of the research story was addressed in the third part of this chapter which chronicled the influences and changes this research has undergone and the rationale behind them as well the problems and hiccoughs experienced along the way.

All research begins with questions. Whether they are the same questions you answer at the end of the project is another matter entirely; particularly in seldom researched areas where little is known as the 'right' questions may not be immediately apparent. In a sense this is what occurred during this research. It started in one place and then, informed by the literature and field research, took several interesting detours before ending up in a conceptually very similar place to where it started but with a significantly different methodology.

The project began with an idea to look at police communications through the lens of public confidence (V1). It then grew and developed as my understanding of the area changed through reading about and interacting with experts working in this field. The final methodology (V7) is the culmination of 18 months of confusion, planning, research, evaluation and revision upon revision in order to pin point the most important questions and focus on these areas. V7 offers

a practical and integrated methodology that proved to be attractive to the police, workable with the large number of forces who wished to participate, sensitive and robust with regards to the issues surrounding validity and a more than acceptable compromise between what was ideal and what was actually achievable.

The data generated from this research is examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 3:   Results

The following chapter presents the findings from this research. In total 31 people were interviewed as part of this research. As discussed in the previous chapter, 25 police communications teams were interviewed over an 11 month period between February 2014 and January 2015. The interviews included 25 one-on-one interviews and three group/joint interviews. The interview data was analysed using Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) Framework Analysis.

Given the amount of data collected during this project the results have been organised into two thematic parts.

1) Background data, and
2) Interview data.

The first part sets out information gathered from police force websites and FOI requests. A total of 117 FOI requests were sent to English police forces receiving 96 replies (2.9). The FOIs were designed to gather essential background information about each of the police forces in order to provide a context for the interview data in part two. This included gathering information on:

- Staffing: number of current and past employees, job posts and paygrades, staff training/experience and whether the department was staffed by civilians or warranted staff.
- Budget: what the department budget was 2009-2016, whether this was expected to increase or decrease over the next three years and a breakdown of how this budget was used (e.g. marketing).
- Name of the department: current and previous names including year of any name changes.
- Website: Year the current website was launched, how much it cost to develop and whether it was designed in collaboration with any other forces/organisations.
- Policies: whether the force had in place a media policy and/or a social media policy.
- Strategy: whether the force had a communications strategy in place and since when.

- Operational Position: where the department sits within the wider structure of the force, who line manages the head of department, whether the head of department sits on the force executive command team.
- Head of department: how long they have been in post.

Due to the amount of data gathered, only the aggregate data has been included in Part 1 and only a small selection of quotes has been included in Part 2. The full FOI results and references are available in Appendix 3.1 and 3.2 and full quotations are available in Appendix 3.8.

3.1   Part One: FOI Data

3.1.1 Department Names

The FOI data shows that 25 departments (64%) are currently using the name 'Corporate Communications' with a further eight departments referencing 'Communications' as part of their name; five forces use 'Media' and only two include 'Marketing'. No departments now make reference to 'Public Relations' or 'Press' in their name (Fig 3.1). It is interesting to note that while 'Public Relations' has disappeared from department names seven forces still have public relations in their job titles (FOI 1 Appendix 3.2).

What is the Department that Deals with Communications and Public Relations Called?
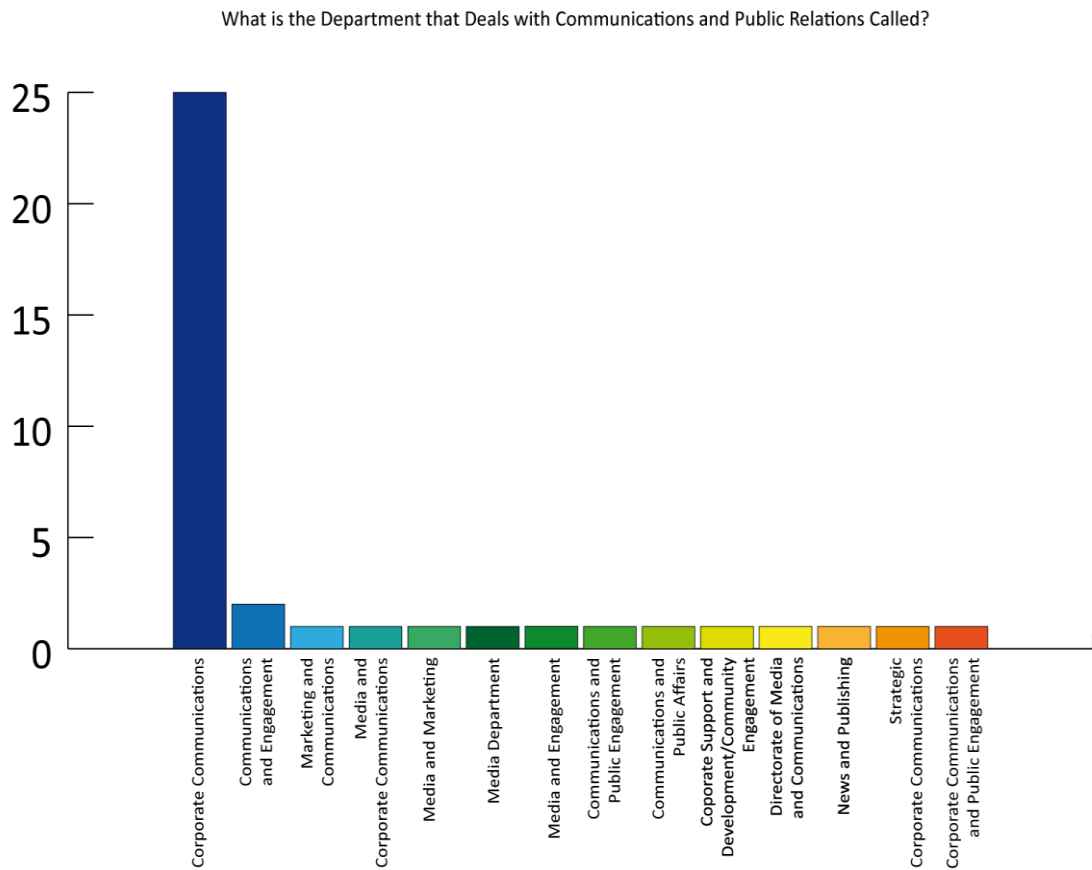
Fig 3.1

3.1.2 Staff and Staffing Levels

In March 2015 two thirds of English police communications teams had between five and 20 members of staff, with most departments employing between 11 and 15 full time equivalent (FTE) positions. Only four departments had more than 30 FTE staff in their current structure and one department reported that they are currently operating with vacant posts (Appendix 3.3).

The largest communications department was the Metropolitan Police Service with 98 FTE posts; followed by West Midlands Police with 36.6, Greater Manchester Police with 35 and Devon and Cornwall Police with 31. The smallest communications departments were in rural forces Durham Police (5.6 FTE) and Cumbria Constabulary (6 FTE).
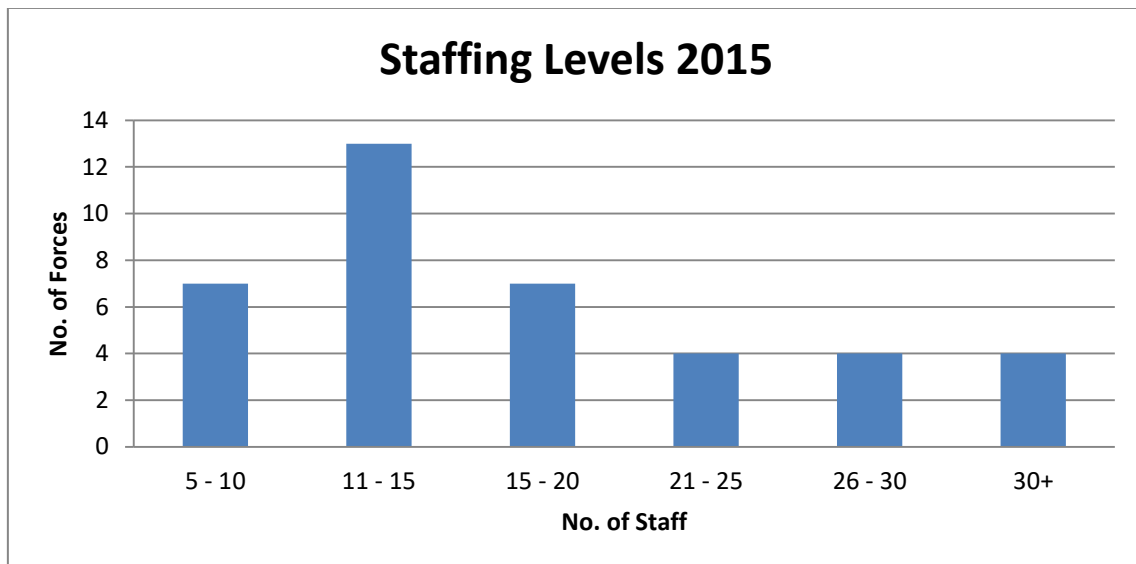
Fig 3.2

The most common department size was 14 (4 forces) followed jointly by 13 (3) and 12 (3) with no departments having fewer than 5 FTE. Although the data is incomplete, as several forces did not answer this question, Fig 3.3 does suggest a general pattern of growth across police communications departments from 2004 to 2010; particularly when the 2004 data is compared against the staff numbers from 2015 (Fig 3.4).

Size of department 2004 - 2010

Increased
30%

12

Decreased
3%

1

2

Stayed the Same
6%

Not Answered
61%

24
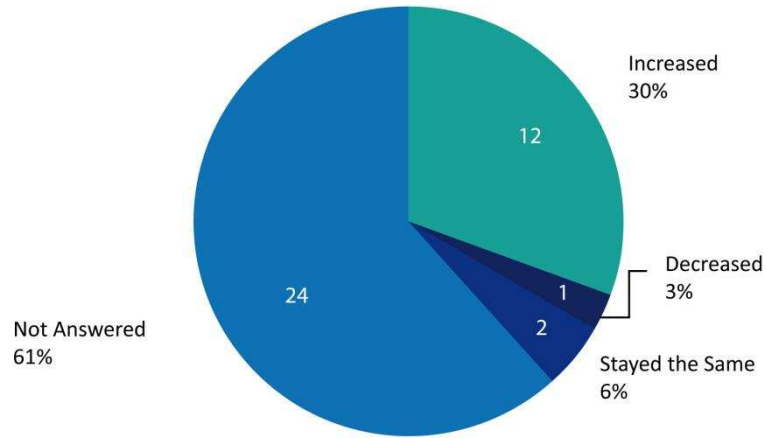
Fig 3.3

Size of department 2004 - 2015

Increased
36%

14

Not Answered
49%

19

4

2

Decreased
10%

Stayed the Same
5%
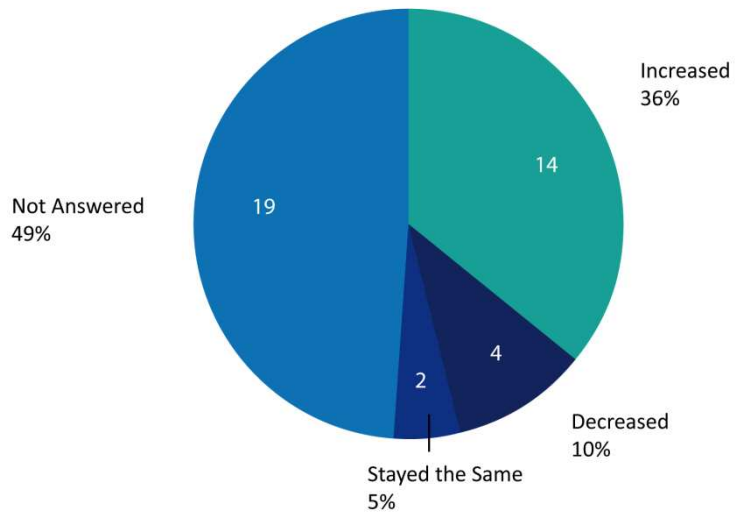
Fig 3.4

From 2010, however, the growth of these departments slowed considerably – with only four forces replying that their number of staff had increased (Fig 3.5). In comparison, 61% of respondents reported that their departments had decreased in size from the 2010 Figures, often by a substantial number.

Size of department 2010 - 2015
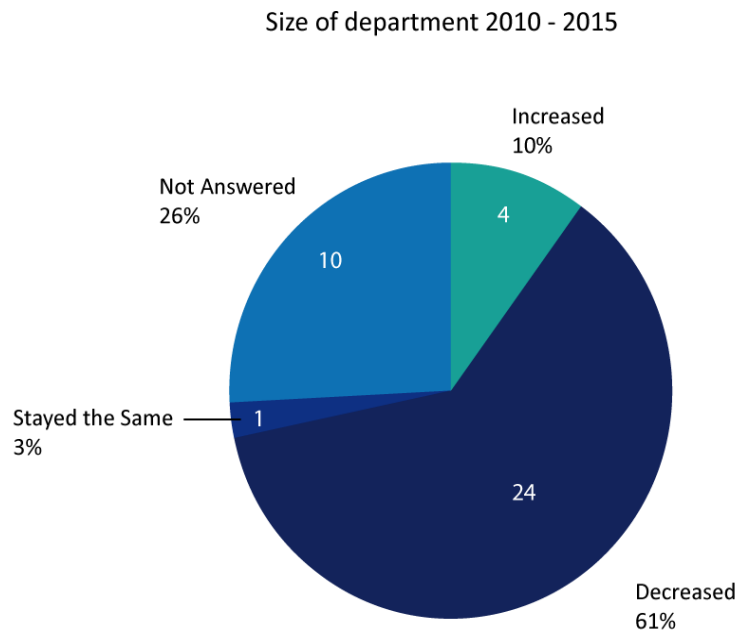
Fig 3.5

The decrease in department size ranged from 3.7% in the case of Sussex Police (27 FTE to 26 FTE) to 54% in Derbyshire Police, where their department was reduced from 17 FTE down to 7.8 FTE. 11 forces reported a decrease of between 20% and 35% (Fig 3.6). A further five forces indicated that they expected further reductions in staff levels of their communications departments for budgetary reasons. Only two forces said that they expected this number to increase, and one of those was in order to fill several currently vacant posts and return to normal operating levels.

Overall, the number of staff employed in police communications has increased since the 1990s and even with the budget cuts has not returned to pre-2004 levels. Part of the reason for this, however, could be the result of centralisation; as most forces have relocated their externally based communication staff, such as those out in the divisions back to the police headquarters.
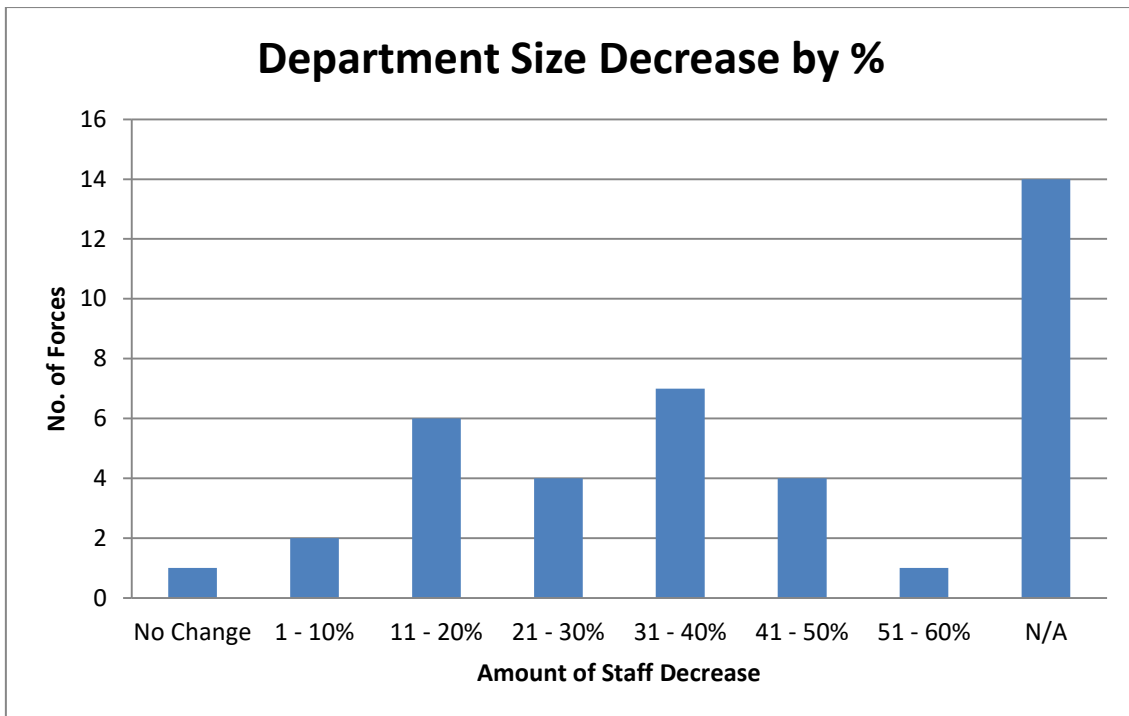
Fig 3.6

There has also been a change in who is employed in these departments. Historically, the departments have been staffed and run by warranted officers with limited communications training (1.2). Fig 3.7 shows that of the 30 forces who answered this question all current heads are civilian staff and only two forces report warranted officers currently in their communications department.

Fig 3.7 Civilian and Warranted Staff			
	Yes	**No**	**Not Answered**
Are there any warranted police officers currently working in the communications relations department?	2 (5%)	32 (82%)	5 (13%)
Has the position of head of the communications department ever been held by a warranted police officer?	16 (41%)	16 (41%)	7 (18%)
Is the current head of the communications a warranted officer?	0	32 (82%)	7 (18%)

3.1.3 Department Heads

The current heads of the communications department have been for between nine months and over 10 years, with one head being in post since the 1980s. Over half of the current department heads (59%) have held their position between 0 and 3 years which is an increase from Mawby's (2007) findings of 38% in 2006. There has also been a corresponding decrease in the number of heads who have been in post for longer periods. This change is in keeping with the pattern of restructuring since 2010 (3.1.4).

Fig 3.8	Length of Time in Post						
<1 Year	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 – 9 Years	10+ Years	Post Vacant	Not Answered
4	9	6	4	5	3	3	5

In 17 forces the head of department reports to the DCC, with a further 10 reporting to a Superintendent (7) or a fellow civilian head of department (3). In four forces the head either reports directly to the PCC for that force or to both the PCC and their Chief Constable (Fig 3.9).

Who does the head of the communications department report to?
(E.g. Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, Superintendent)
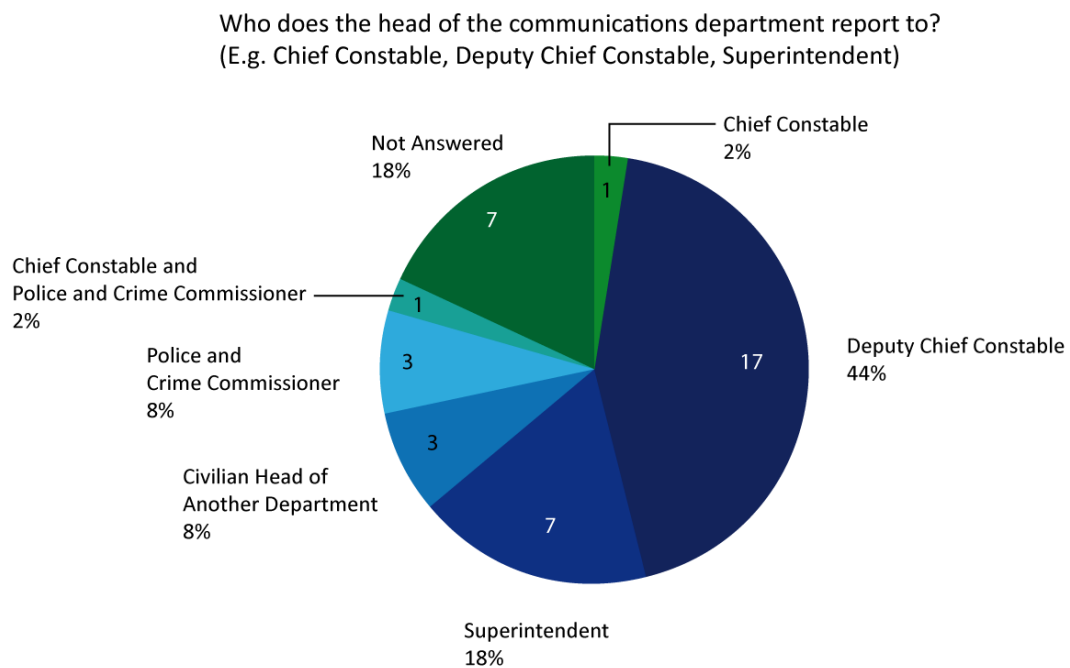
Fig 3.9

In 21 forces the head of the communications department sits on the force executive command team with six of these heads there as a voting member (Fig 3.10).

Fig 3.10 Command Team			
	Yes	**No**	**Not Answered**
Does the head of the communications department sit on the force executive/command team?	21 (54%)	12 (30%)	6 (16%)
If yes, is this as a voting member or in an advisory capacity?	6 (voting) (16%)	15 (advisory) (38%)	18 (46%)

3.1.4 Oversight and Current Structure

Nine police forces were sharing their communications department either with another force (10%) or with their PCC's office[18] (13%) (Fig 3.11). Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies announced the merger of their communications departments in 2010 and West Mercia and Warwickshire finalised the merger of their departments in 2013. While the majority of departments (77%) have remained independent several interviewees expressed considerable concern over the future of police communications departments (3.2.13).
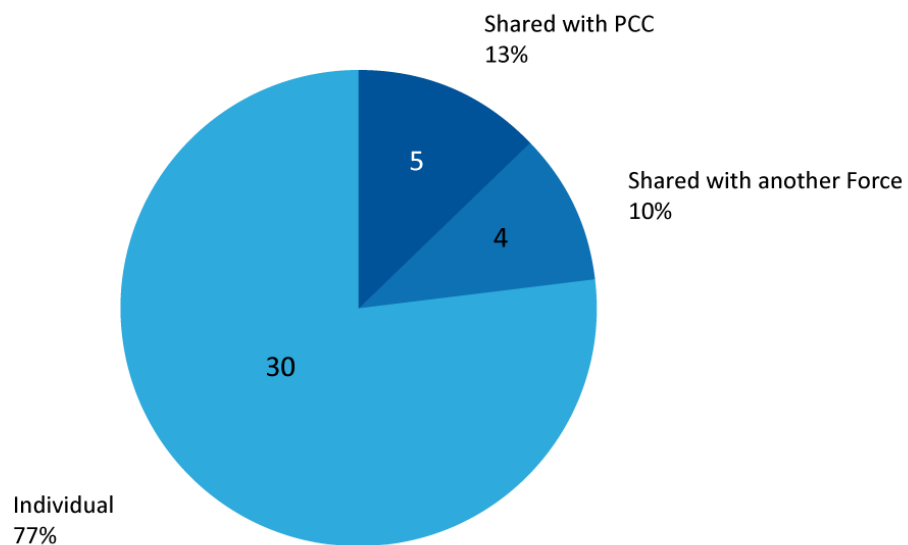
Fig 3.11

As Fig 3.12 shows, the majority of communications departments (77%) have gone through a restructure since the budget cuts were announced in 2010; only three forces have a department structure that has remained unchanged since 2010.

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[18] Data collected from FOI data and information available on force websites.

In Which Year Was The Communications Department Established in its Current Structure?
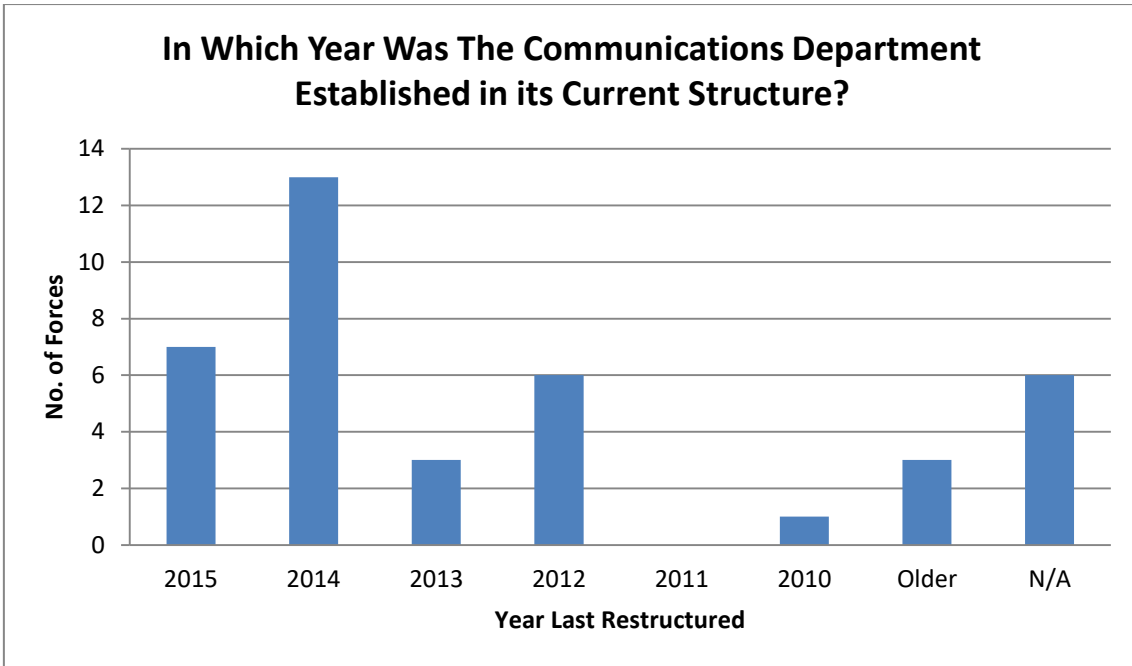
Fig 3.12

Department structure is not the only aspect to have changed in the last few years – the question of who has operational control, or oversight, of the communications department has also been revised in some forces (Fig 3.13). FOI data from 32 forces in England shows that while the majority of departments sit within the traditional structure, three forces are now managed by the PCCs office and five departments are shared between the Chief Constable and PCC (see 3.2.11).

Who Has Operational Control / Oversight Over the Police Communications Department?
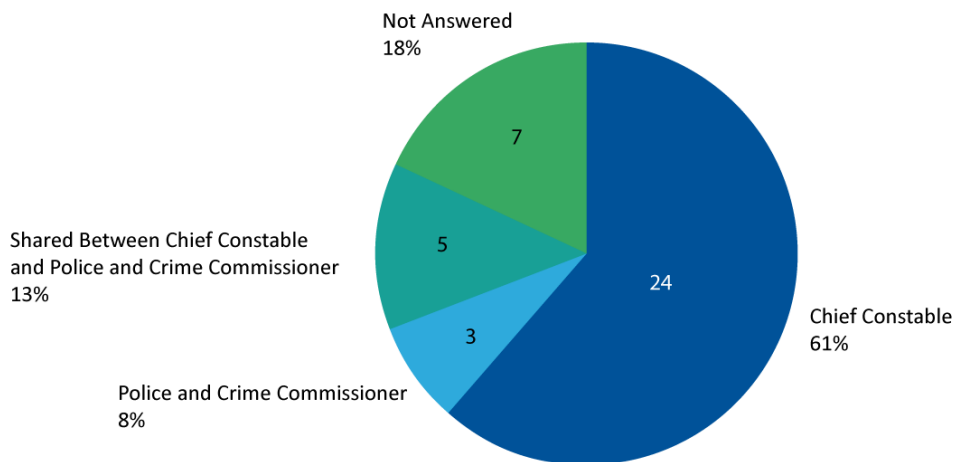
Fig 3.13

3.1.5 Department Policies and Strategy

Over two thirds (72%) of police forces confirmed that they have a current media policy or are in the process of drafting one (see Fig 3.14). While six forces did not reply to this question, five forces stated that they did not have a media policy – a reduction from the HMIC (2011a) report of at least 13%.

Does Your Force Have A Media Policy?

Not Answered
15%

No but draft in progress
3%

No
13%

Yes
69%

6

1

5

27
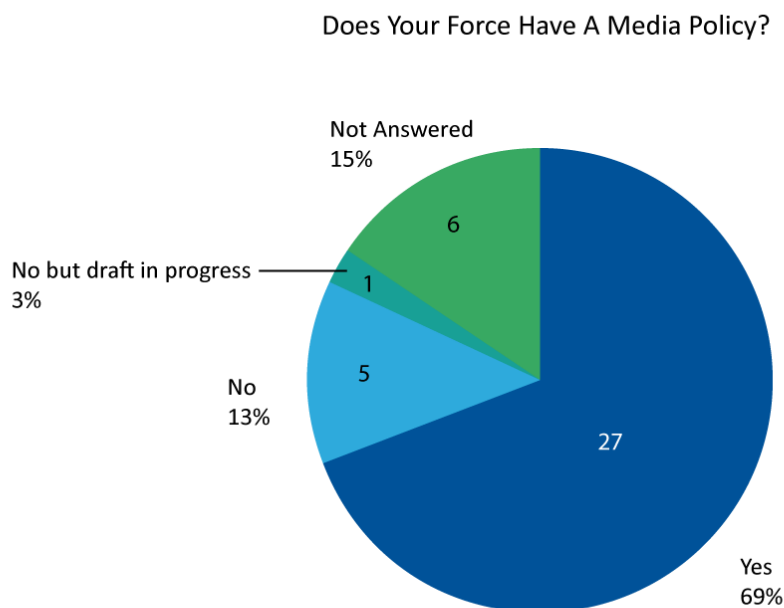
Fig 3.14

With regards to social media, 77% stated that they have a policy on social media use and one force replied that they are in the process of drafting a policy (Fig 3.15). Given that four forces did not answer this question it is possible that more forces have created social media policies; however, at least four forces still do not have a policy on social media use.

Of the 30 forces who said that they had a social media policy, 27 made these publically available either including a copy with their FOI response or by publishing the policies on their

websites. The policies ranged in length from two pages[19] to 30 pages[20] covering a variety of points in varying levels of depth and thoroughness (Fig 3.16). Some policies, like those from Derbyshire, Durham, Norfolk, Suffolk and Wiltshire police were very detailed - covering a lot of information and practical advice for staff; while others such as Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire and Leicestershire contained considerably less detail (See Appendix 3.4).

Does Your Force Have A Social Media Policy?
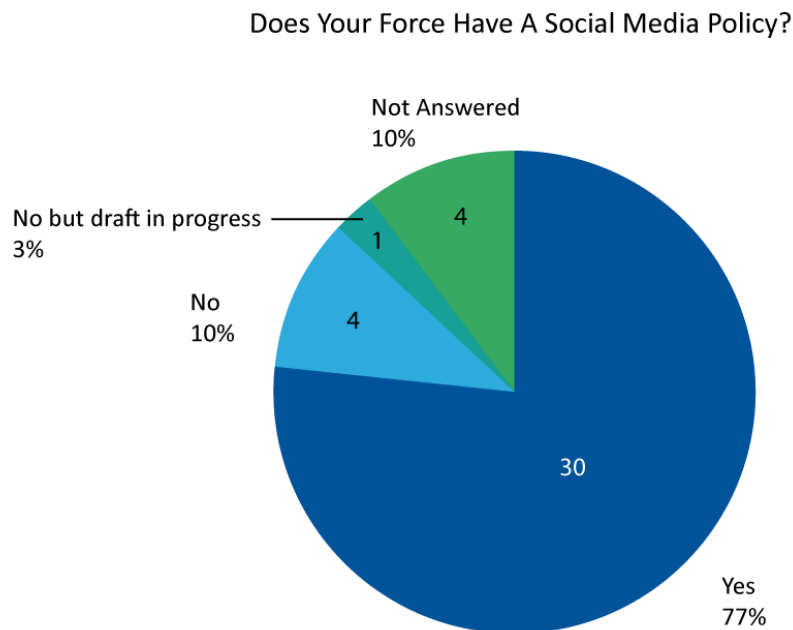
Fig 3.15

Most policies (22) outlined the purpose of the policy, 8 had specific guidance on Twitter, seven on Facebook while five had guidance on other social media sites. 21 policies had detailed guidance on acceptable posts, 17 on the legal restrictions on post content, 15 discussed the potential risks of social media in a policing context and seven had a section on what to do in the event of a mistake or an online situation going awry. Nine policies, however, did not mention rules/guidelines for officers using social media as part of their professional duties.

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[19] Avon and Somerset Police
[20] Durham Police

Discussion on the increasing public trust and confidence (20) and protecting the brand/reputation of the force was also present in just under half the policies (49%); suggesting that these aspects are a concern for police forces.
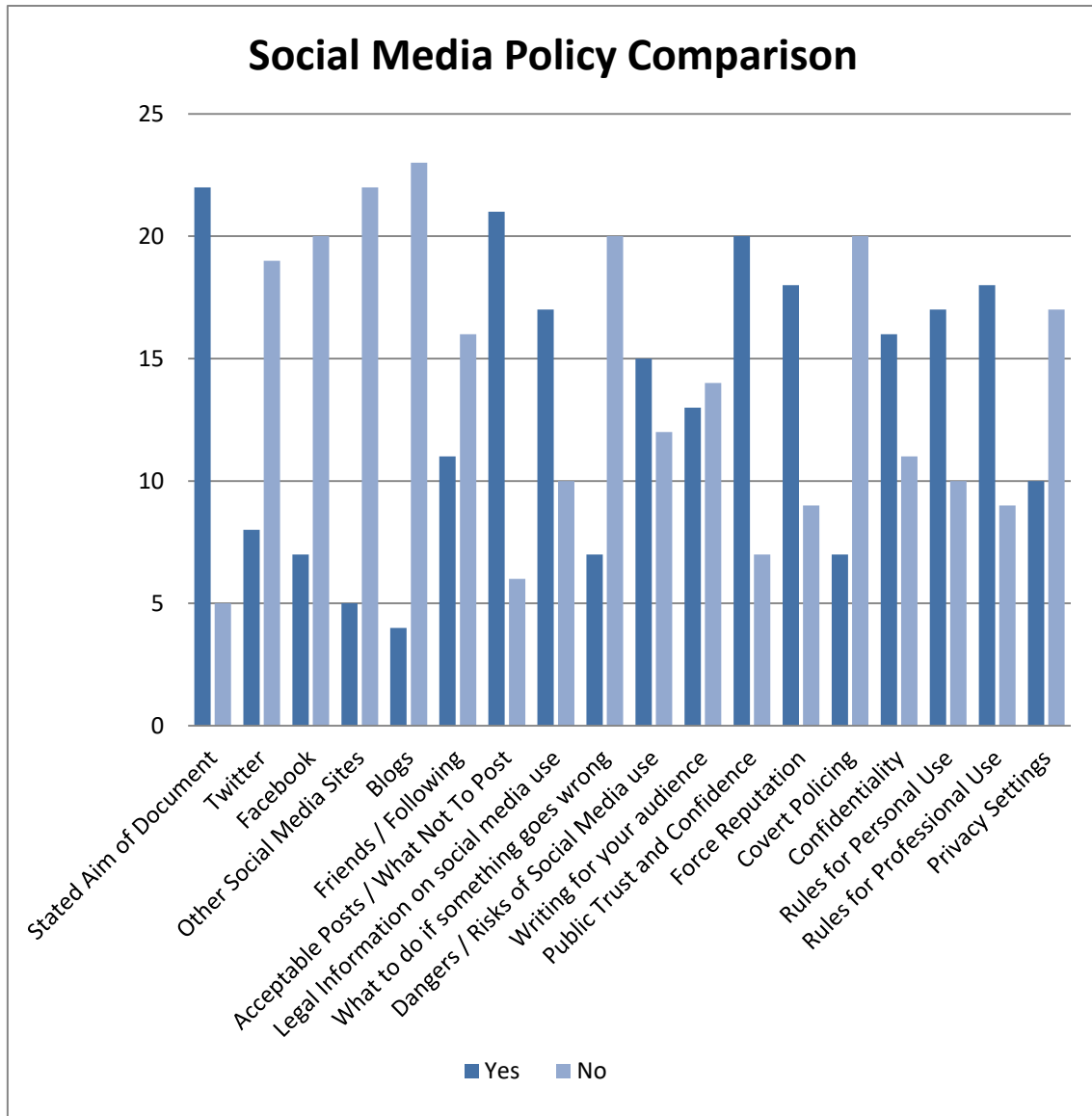
Fig 3.16

14 forces confirmed that their communications department has a written document which sets out long term objectives and aims for communications activities (including public relations, media, marketing and internal communication). An additional four forces stated that their strategy document was either under development or being redrafted (Fig 3.17).

Does your force have a written document that sets out long term objectivesfor communication, media and public relations activity?(e.g. a communications strategy)

Not Answered
21%

8

Yes
36%

14

No but draft in progress
10%

4

13

No
33%
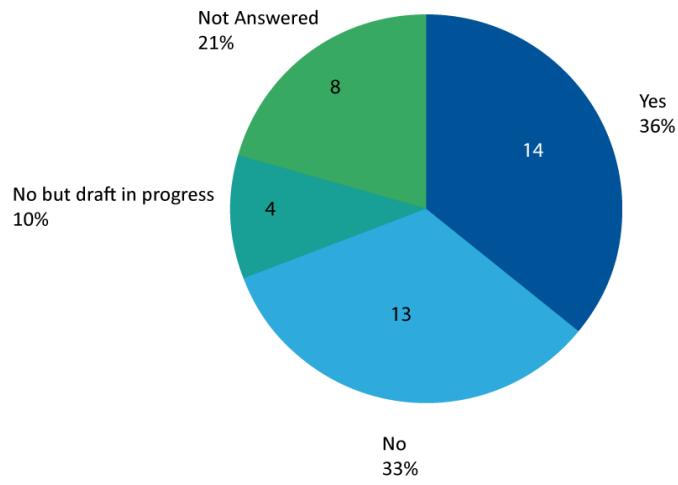
Fig 3.17

3.1.6 Social Media Sites

Data captured from the social media accounts of all English police forces show how social media use has evolved since the first official police Twitter account launched in 2008. As discussed in Chapter 1, police adoption of this new medium has been sporadic and inconsistent at times. In December 2008, seven forces had Facebook and YouTube accounts while only one force was maintaining a Twitter account (Fig 3.18).
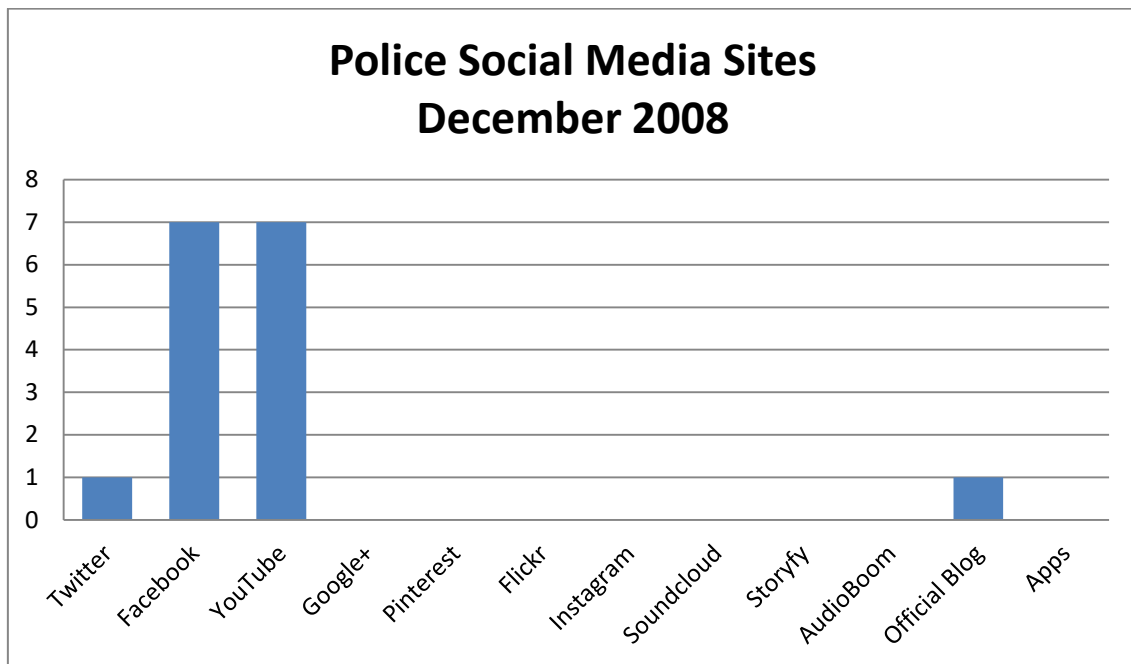
Fig 3.18

This number grew considerably over the next two years, so that by December 2010 the vast majority of police forces (95%) had a registered corporate Twitter account, 72% (28 forces) had a Facebook page and over half (64%) had a YouTube channel (Fig 3.19). It is of note that while Facebook and YouTube appeared to be the more popular social media sites in 2008 the uptake for these sites between 2008 and 2010 was considerably slower than the growth of police Twitter accounts. It should also be noted at this point that police creation of police social media sites is not indicative of the level or type of use. Crump (1.5) found that while police forces might have social media accounts many of them were either rarely or inconsistently updated. By 2010 police forces were also starting to branch out and experiment with other social media sites – such as Flickr (9 forces) and AudioBoom (4 forces). Two police forces also published links to official blogs on their websites.

Police Social Media Sites
December 2010

Chart showing number of police forces using each social media platform in December 2010. Y-axis ranges from 0 to 40. Twitter: ~37, Facebook: ~28, YouTube: ~25, Google+: ~1, Pinterest: 0, Flickr: ~9, Instagram: 0, Soundcloud: 0, Storyfy: 0, AudioBoom: ~4, Official Blog: ~2, Apps: 0.
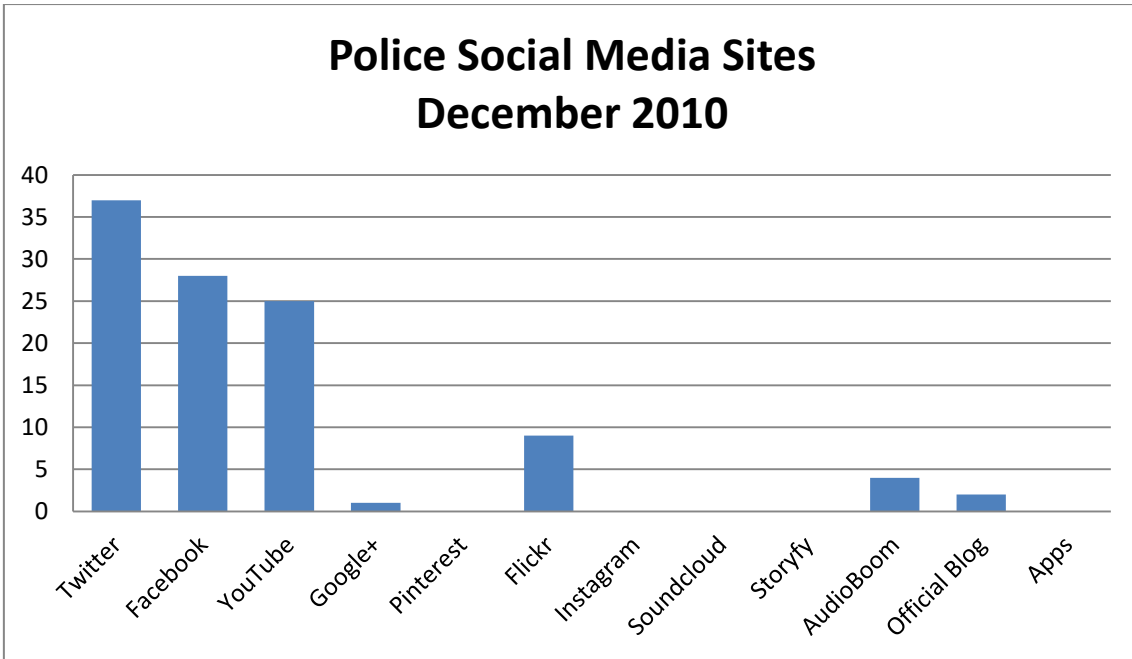
Fig 3.19

Social media use continued to grow between 2010 and 2012 with the final two forces joining Twitter in 2011, and more forces joining Facebook and YouTube (Fig 3.20). More forces also started using alternative social media platforms in audience specific ways; such as advertising lost/stolen property on Flickr and uploading audio clips in pod cast format for people to listen to on AudioBoom and Storyfy. The number of official blogs also increased from two in 2010 to five in 2012 and five forces launched their own Apps for mobile users.

Police Social Media Sites
December 2012

Chart showing number of police forces using each social media platform in December 2012. Y-axis ranges from 0 to 45. Twitter: ~39, Facebook: ~38, YouTube: ~33, Google+: ~6, Pinterest: ~6, Flickr: ~18, Instagram: 0, Soundcloud: ~1, Storyfy: ~3, AudioBoom: ~6, Official Blog: ~5, Apps: ~5.
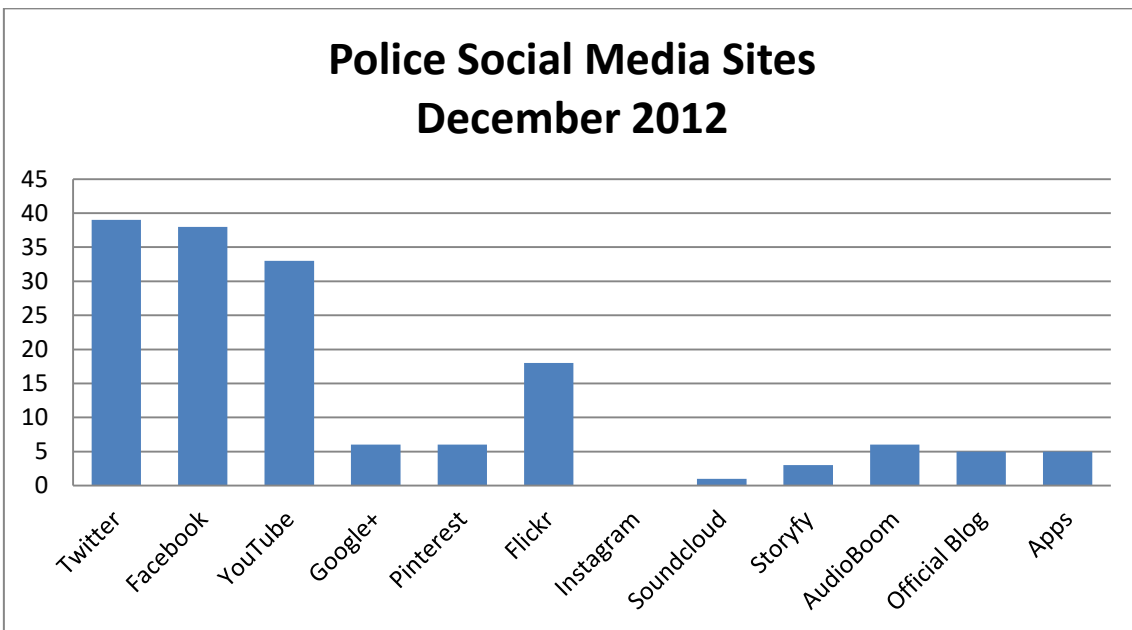
Fig 3.20

As official use of social media evolved, police forces also started encouraging individual officers and local policing teams to maintain their own local Twitter accounts so that they could communicate directly with residents. This was seen as a significant shift from the previous communication system where all communication was meant to be managed by the communications team (4.3). However, there is evidence that this also represents a continuation of the historic tensions in policing around who controls the flow of information.

In 2014 the number of local twitter accounts ranged from one account (e.g. Merseyside police) to over a hundred (e.g. West Mercia) with most forces operating between 30 and 80 area specific Twitter accounts (Table 4 part 2 Appendix 3.2). Locating these local police accounts, however, is not always straightforward with over half of police forces only providing a direct link to their corporate pages on their websites.

In December 2015 all police forces had at least one corporate Twitter account and Facebook page with 34 forces using at least one other social media site (Fig 3.21). Police presence on other social media sites has also grown since 2012 with the exception of YouTube which has remained steady at 33 forces.
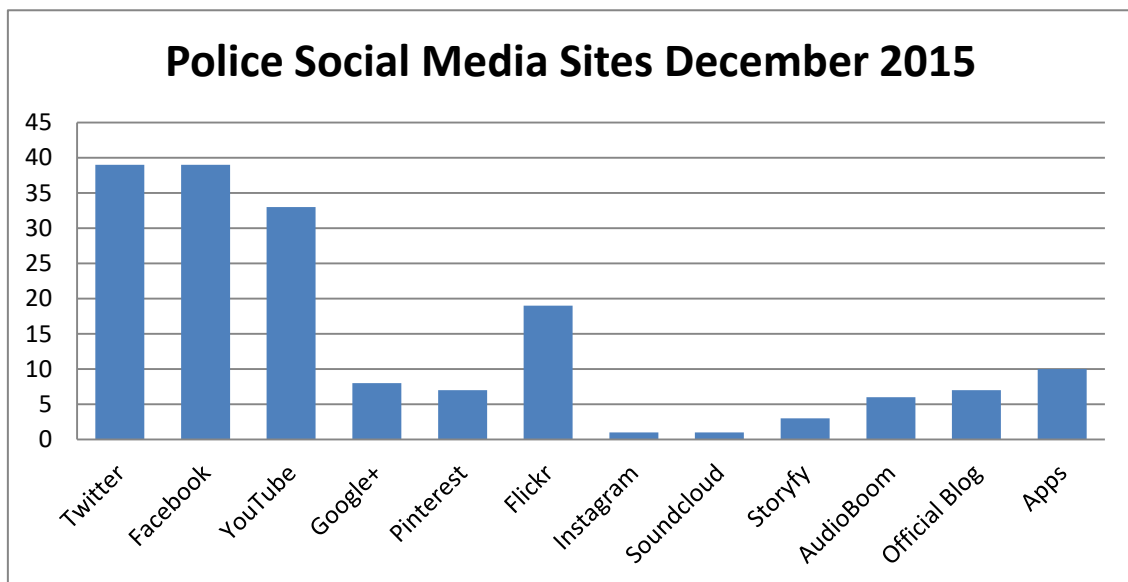
Fig 3.21

3.2   Part Two: Interview Data

3.2.1   Interviewee Information

The 31 interviewees held a range of senior posts within the police force; including that of Head of Department, Deputy-Head and Manager; and in the case of two interviewees, Chief Constable (Fig 3.22). It is important to note, however, that while in 20 cases (64%) it was the Head of Department themselves that was interviewed, in four cases (13%) this was delegated to a member of their management team as the most appropriate person to talk to.

Fig 3.22 Position in Department			
Heads of Department	Deputy Heads of Department	Managers in the Department	Other
20	2	6	3

Gender and Ethnicity

The gender of the interviewees was almost evenly split with 15 female interviewees (48%) and 16 male interviewees (52%) (Fig 3.23). Gender was again fairly evenly represented in the senior positions in the department both with the Heads of Department and the Managers interviewed (Fig 3.24). There was no variation in ethnicity in the interviewees; all participants were white British.

Gender

3.23

Gender by Position
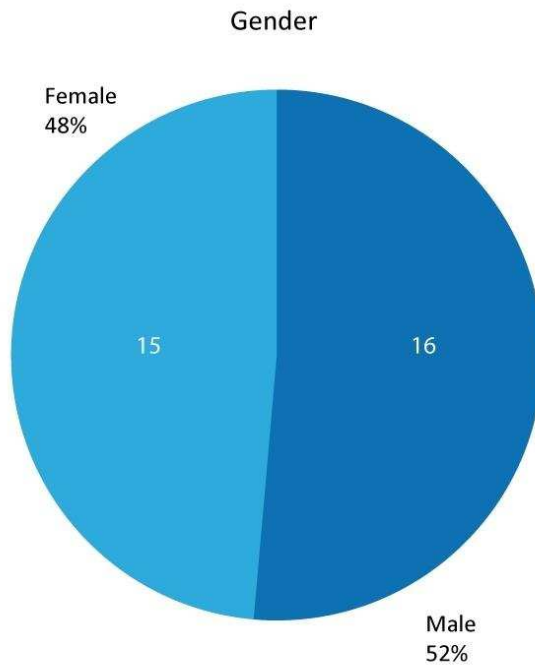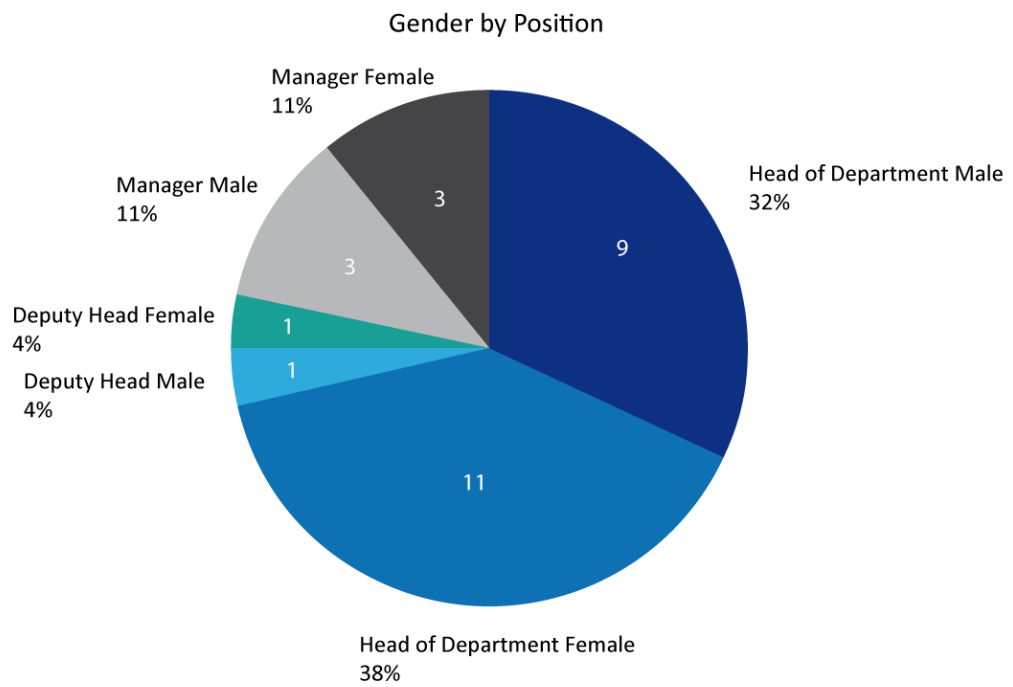
Fig. 3.24

Warranted Officers and Police Staff

As discussed earlier, there has been an observable trend in police communications departments in recent years which has seen these departments increasingly run and managed by civilian professionals rather than warranted officers (1.4.1). In keeping with this movement, the majority of interviewees (87%) were civilian police staff. Only four interviewees were warranted officers; however only two of the four interviewees actually worked in the department, in the other two cases the interviewees were Chief Constables and therefore not responsible for the day to day running of the communications department (Fig 3.25).

It is important to note that at the time of interview, 23 of the 25 (92%) communications teams interviewed were managed by civilians while two (8%) were still managed by warranted police officers. The FOI results discussed in 3.1.2 show that within nine months of these interviews these two forces had employed civilian staff to run their communications departments. With regard to warranted officers working in the department 92% of the forces interviewed said they employed only trained professionals to work in communications. Two forces (PI.9 and PI.15), however, said that their departments did occasionally have police officers on secondment to cover maternity and long term sick leave.

Police Staff or Warranted Officer
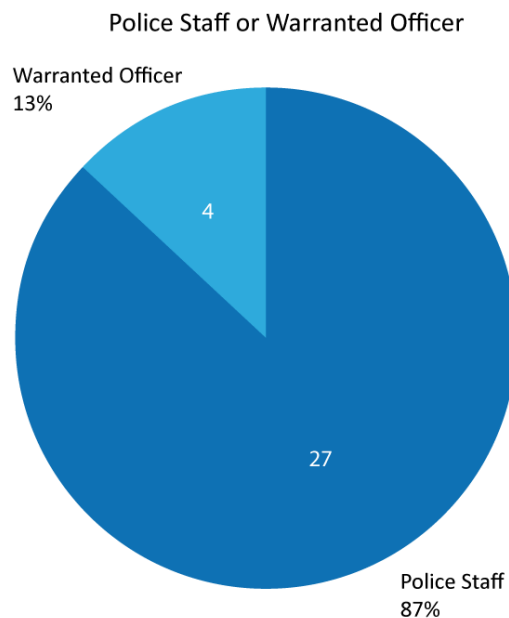
3.25

Number of years in post

The length of time the interviewees had been in post at the time of the interviews ranged from under a year in five forces to over 15 years; with the two longest serving having been in post since the 1980s (Fig 3.26).

In keeping with the trend identified in the FOI results (3.1), just under half (45%) had been in post between 0 and 2 years and over half (61%) had been in post since 2011. This change is in keeping with the pattern of restructuring that occurred after 2010 (see 3.1.4) and the results from the APComm survey (2014).
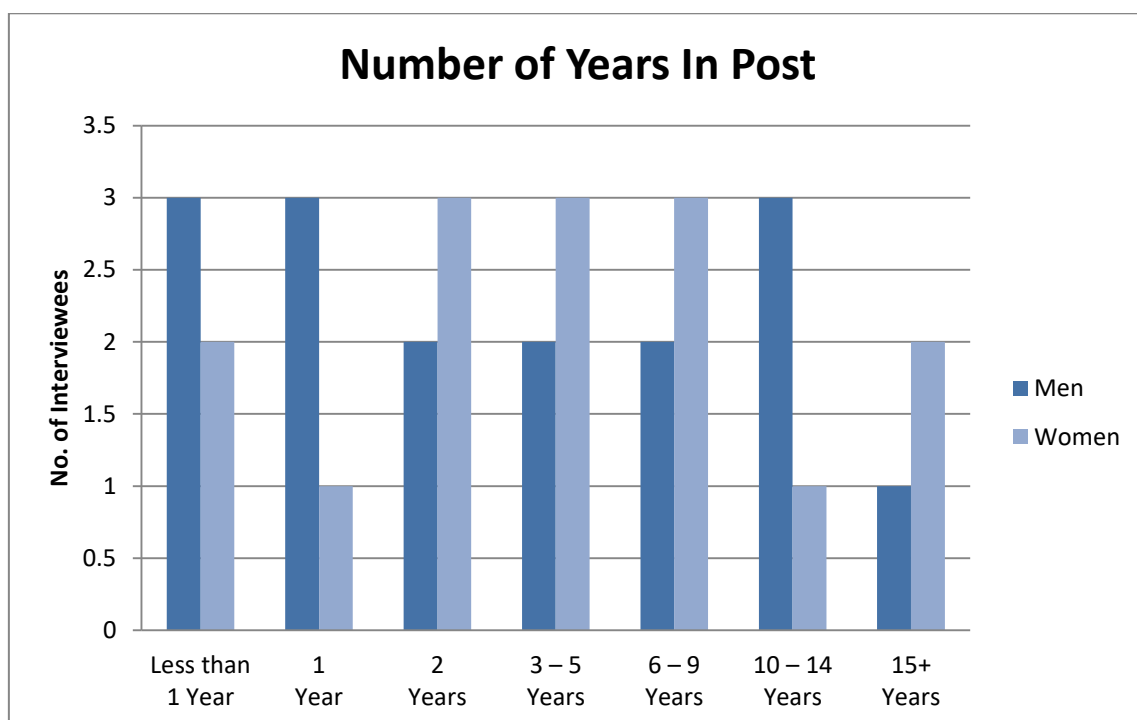
Fig 3.26

Fig 3.26 shows a distinct gender grouping; especially when managers and Chief Constables are excluded (Fig 3.27). Just over half the female interviewees (54%) had been in their current post between four and nine years with the longest having been in post for 14 years. This increase has a corresponding decrease in the male interviewees; with no male interviewees having been in post between three and nine years and with 44% having been in their post for longer than ten years compared to just 9% for female Heads of Department.
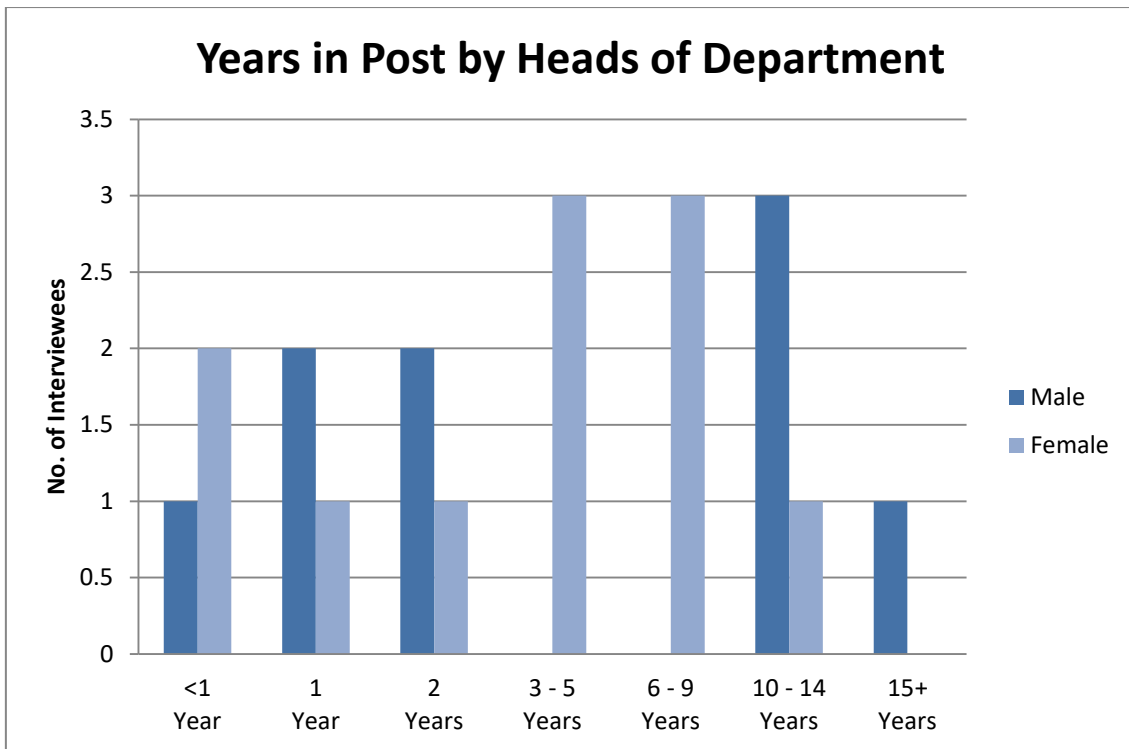
Fig 3.27

Training and Experience

This gender difference also carries over into training and experience. Interviewees were asked to describe their background experience and how they became involved in police communications (Fig 3.28). The most common route into police communications was through experience in the corporate communications industry. 46% said that their background was in corporate communications either in private or public sector companies; this route accounted for 60% of female interviewees compared to 30% of male interviewees.

25% trained as journalists working in police communications. PI.4 described this transition as "The poacher turning gamekeeper". Four interviewees reported that they had no professional qualifications or previous experience in the wider communications industry but had instead worked their way up to their management position in the department; while another four participants had professional qualifications and had joined police communication department as their first job. Both of these latter two routes had a 3:1 ratio when it came to gender. In total, nine interviewees (five male, four female) said that they had either a degree in communications/marketing/public relations or were professionally accredited with an organisation like the CIPR (Chartered Institute of Public Relations).

Training and Experience

Y-axis: No. of Interviewees (0 to 10)

Categories:
- Trained as a journalist / worked for a newspaper: Male 3, Female 4
- Worked in corporate public relations / marketing: Male 4, Female 9
- No formal qualifications or prior experience in communications industry – experience gained by working in police communications.: Male 3, Female 1
- Professional Qualifications and experiences working in police comms: Male 3, Female 1

Legend: Male, Female

Fig 3.28

The majority of interviewees, when asked about the differences in background and experience, thought that the diversity in professional skill sets was an important part of professionalising police communications. Three interviewees (PI.2, PI.11 and PI.13), however, argued that while they agreed with the need for professionalisation they disagreed with what they considered the "practice of employing journalists to run police communications like a newspaper" (PI.13). PI.2 and PI.11 in particular felt that it was very important for the head of police communications to rise through the ranks of the communications department so that they understand both it and policing in general.

> "I think it's great when we do shake up the business by bringing people in from outside. But, I think there's benefit in someone who knows the job of policing… I've also got 12 years of policing experience... I know how things stick together politically, I get the culture of the place, I get what… [the police are] operationally trying to do. So… I have seen… peers come in from outside the industry and find quite a learning curve… I don't think bringing in people with strong journalism background is right for this kind of role. Sometimes people will be brought in because they've got a strong journalistic background, actually they haven't worked in the wider communications and engagement so, that for me is a concern. [it's] Less of a concern if they are people from a different sector moving with comms experience." (PI.11)

3.2.2 Overview of Department

Interviewees were asked a range of questions about the structure of their department, staff, professionalisation and operational position within their force and how they thought these had changed over their tenure. The 28 communications professionals interviewed identified 14 principal changes in their departments ranging from the size of the department, to their budget, to whom the police are now communicating and the channels they are using to achieve this (Fig 3.29)[21]. These changes are dealt with over the course of this chapter while the implications of these developments are discussed in Chapter 4. This section concentrates on the changes to the department itself; staff levels, professionalisation, location of staff and the operational position of the department.

Changes

No. of Interviewees
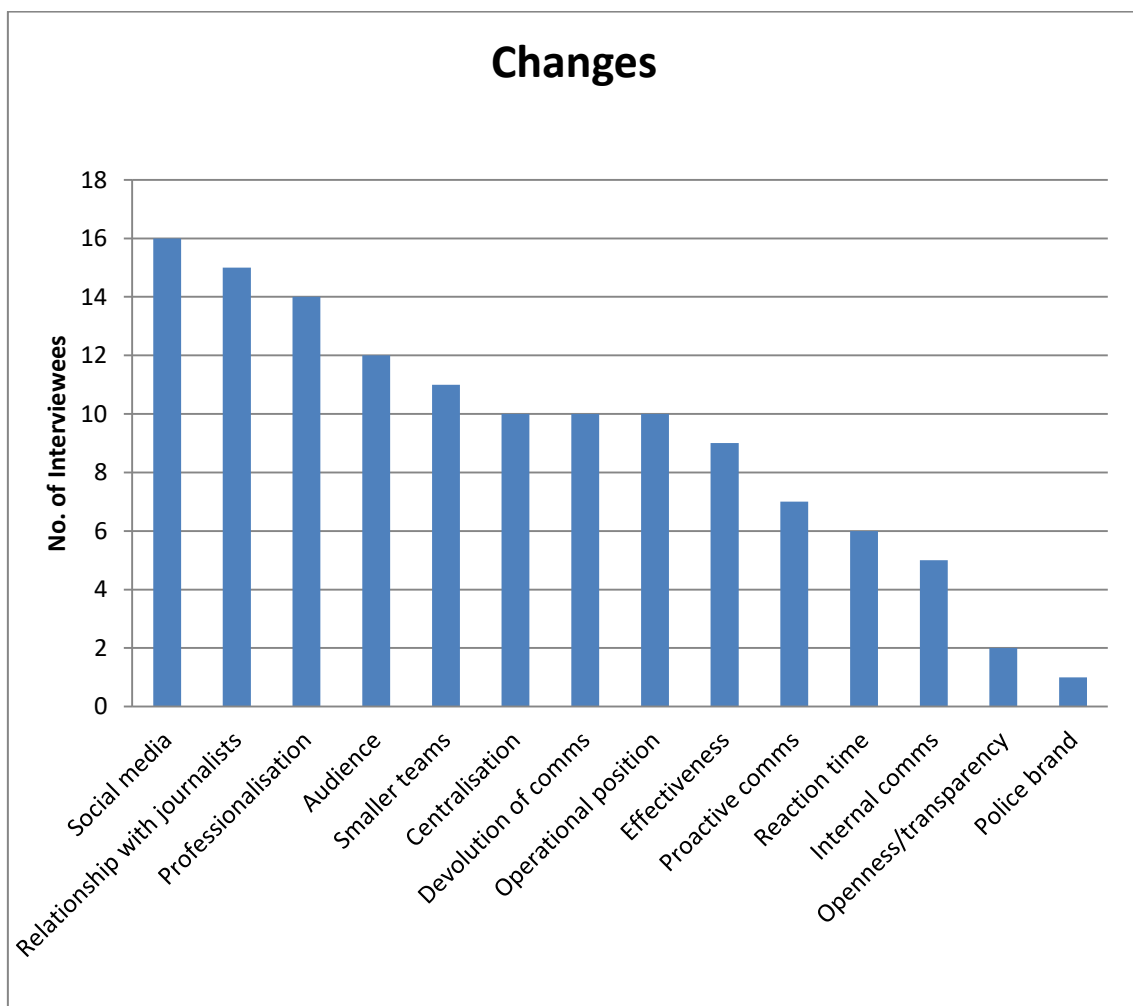
Fig 3.29

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[21] The two Chief Constables and PCC opted not to answer these questions as they felt they were outside of their expertise.

Staff

All but one of the departments interviewed (PI.8) had seen reductions in staff levels. The decrease in staff numbers ranged from 3% in one case (PI.25) to over 50% in another (PI.14) with most departments losing over 30% of their staff (14).

In 80% of the forces interviewed, communications staff had been centralised and were based completely at police headquarters. Only in three forces were communications staff still on placement in divisions (Fig 3.30).

> "we had structures where we had area based communications teams in our five basic command units… So you would have had a comms manager, plus one or two comms officers and we had a central bit here at HQ where the internal comms sat and where this team, the graphic design, etc. sat. So in order to reduce costs and to take that budget hit they centralised the service, so we took all of the area people, brought them in house."(PI.6)
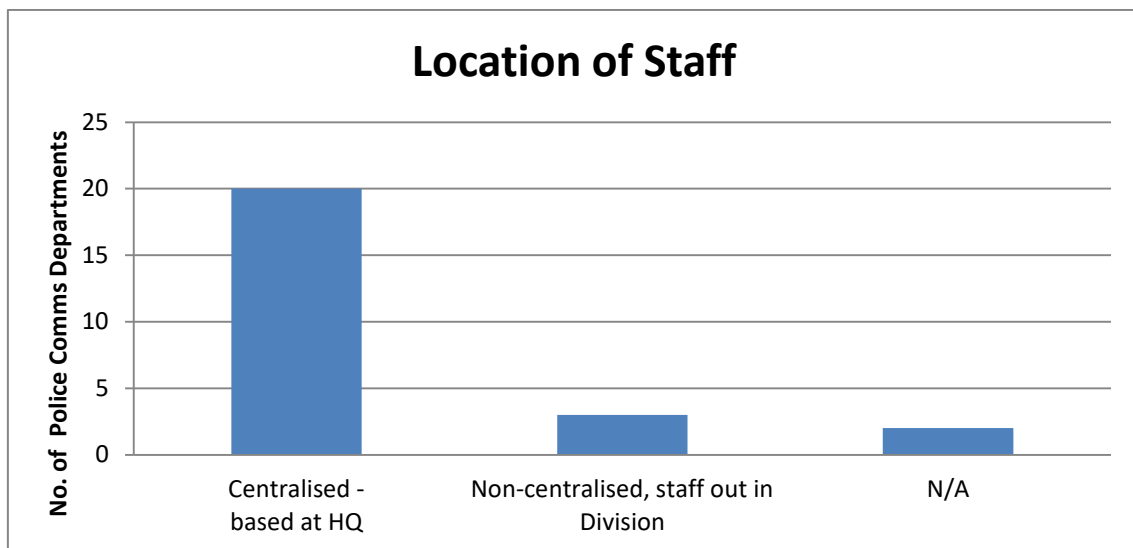
Fig 3.30

With regard to specialism within the department, the majority of departments interviewed (88%) still used dedicated roles within the communications team (e.g. Press Officer, Public Relations Officer – see Appendix 3.2). Three forces had, however, adopted a generic model in which team members rather than having a specific role (e.g. Press Officer) were instead part of a pool of people who could cover all aspects and needs of the team. At the time of the interviews this model was also under consideration by four other forces (Fig 3.31)

"we've got an assistant pool of people, they provide what we call our news hub and they are central, everything coming in… they are split by the organisational operational need as opposed to you're a press officer, you're a web content, you're a marketer." (PI.17)

Department Structure
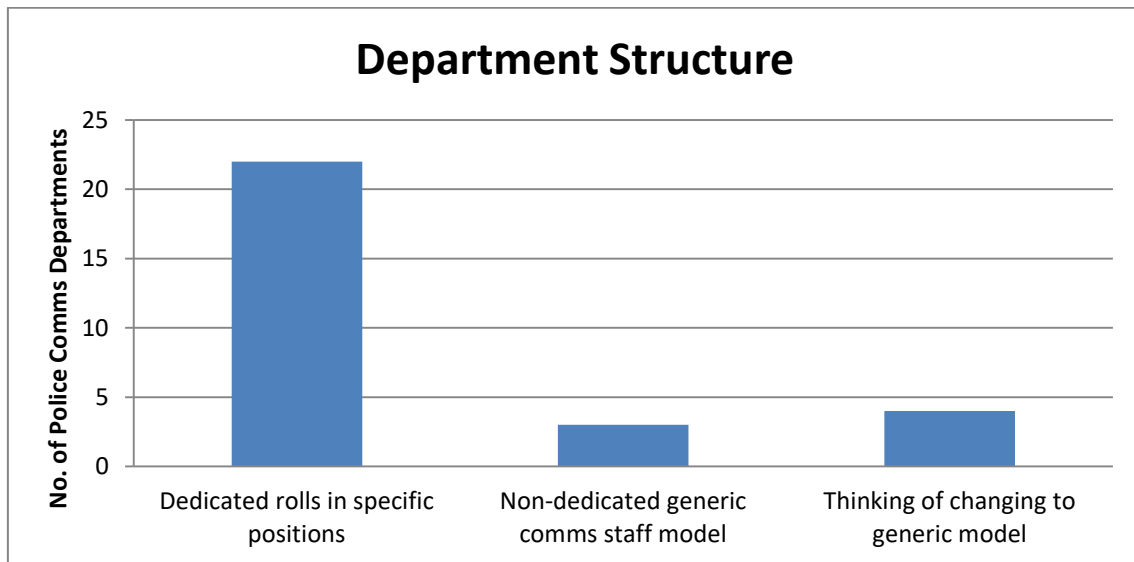
Fig 3.31

Professionalisation

As noted in the previous section, there has been an observable trend over the past decade which has seen police communications increasingly run and managed by civilian professionals rather than warranted police officers (Fig 3.32). The interviewees were asked why they thought this change had occurred. The interviewees unilaterally saw professionalisation as both necessary and beneficial for police communications; even the warranted officers interviewed agreed with this stance. Most interviewees (80%) expressed a belief that police officers were not qualified to either work in or manage police communications.

"I don't know why we have policemen in charge of comms or working in these departments; they are not qualified, they don't know what they are talking about, and that's why it's a mess… we don't have untrained civilians policing the streets, so why should we have untrained police officers running the business side of things?" (PI.5)
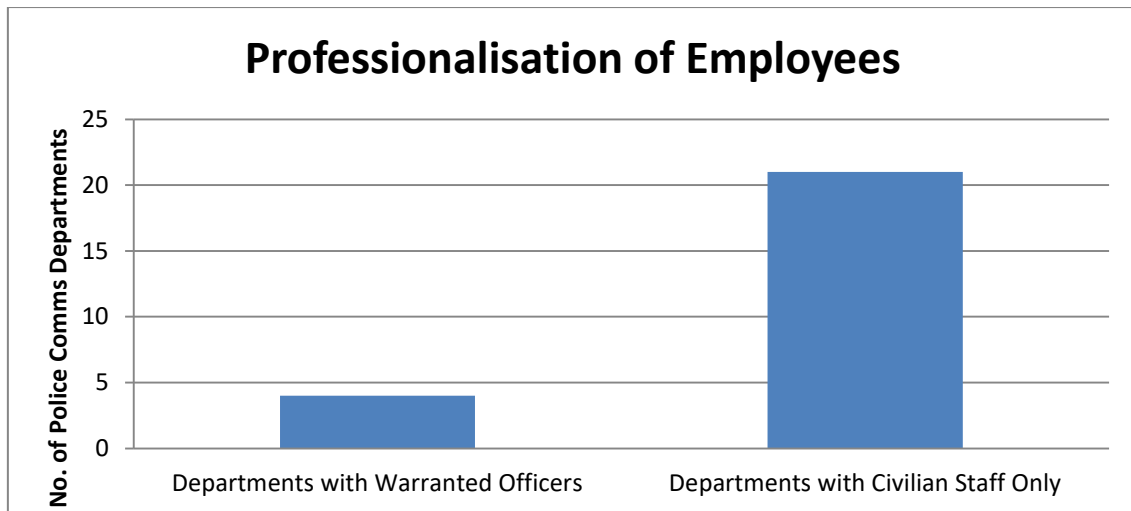
Fig 3.32

For PI.10 and PI.2, the most significant problem with warranted officers being employed as the head of communications was that these officers were often at the end of their careers or using the position as a stepping stone for quick promotion. As such the officers were in the role long enough to start changing things, often according to PI.2 to "make their mark", before moving on without completing the changes. The new head would then start and any sense of continuity would be lost:

> "one of the problems that I see with having police officers in the role is that they tend to come in… change things and move on for promotion. So there is very much a culture that if you want to get promoted you have to have appeared to have changed things, so they would tinker with the way that communications was done, which meant there was no stability, there was no understanding throughout the organisation of the way that communications should be dealt with, so yes, I think there has been a real move towards professionalisation of it." (PI.10)

Although, according to PI.21, employing civilian professionals has not always been an unalloyed success or an improvement on the previous situation - which is why in her force they replaced the professional head of communications with an experienced police officer.

> "you should be really careful about what skills and what type of department you wanted to be. Because… when they first had a professional head of comms seven or eight years ago, the advert created a post where somebody was a bit of a media personality, as opposed to running a professional corporate comms department. So despite them wanting a head of corporate comms to be a professional role, they

didn't get one… it was somebody who was more interested in media spin… So that's how we ended up going back to a police officer running it." (PI.21)

Counter to the assumption underlying the above perspectives that professionalisation was the end goal, PI.4, however, suggested that professionalisation was more of a convenient side effect of police forces' main need to make financial savings than an intended strategy:

"I'm the first professional head as far as we know, in forty years. There was a Chief Inspector or a Superintendent to do this job. And you might think, why would you make a chief inspector head of comms?… Well now all these jobs are covered by staff coz warranted officers are given jobs where you have to be a trained, warranted officer to do it. And you might say well, that sounds pretty obvious doesn't it? But there was never any need for the police to think differently till the money started drying out." (PI.4)

PI.4's opinion was anomalous – one not agreed with by the majority of interviewees who, with the exception of PI.15 and PI.22, all (90%) considered professionalisation to have been a deliberate part of the police communications strategy. In the case of PI.15, while she agreed with PI.4's assessment that professionalisation was more of an accident than a planned for outcome, PI.15 was also quick to clarify that she thought it was it was symptomatic of the evolving nature of public relations and the change in how police forces both understood and utilised this skill set:

"public relations has been a sort of evolving skill hasn't it and as it's evolved it's become more sophisticated and as it's become more sophisticated it's been obvious you need specialised people to do it. Whereas I think when it was in its infancy there was this assumption that anybody could take it on. " (PI.15)

A similar view was expressed by PI.22 who suggested that professionalisation had occurred as a result of police forces recognising that they need to properly invest in communications rather than simply use it as a formality:

"So I think there is a level of recognition around the fact that this is a very specialist service that's being provided and you either invest in it properly or… you don't do it at all… go back to probably 10, 15 years ago… you probably could argue that a comms function within a police force was maybe a bit of a luxury… and I think comms teams

were probably seen as a bit of a delay tactic rather than something of actual use". (PI.22)

Operational Position

A connection frequently raised was the link between the professionalisation of police communications and the change in the operational position of the department. There was a feeling amongst those interviewees who had been with the police for over ten years that there had been a significant culture change in how police communications was viewed internally by police officers.

> "Back in the 90s, the communications office was mostly left out of operational policing. Police officers had preferred journalists and it was very common that the first thing the press office would hear of a situation would be from the newspaper the next day... Some officers still don't like the communications department, but they know they have to talk to us now". (PI.26)

The interviewees were asked to describe how they understood the operational position of their department within their police force and which term they thought best captured this position: 'Optional', 'Complementary' or 'Embedded' (2.8.5).

The majority of interviewees (58%) felt that their departments were 'Embedded' (Fig 3.33). Only two reported that their department was still considered 'Optional' and six said that their departments were 'Complementary'. Four participants suggested that the operational position of their departments was currently in the process of changing. In all of these cases, the departments had been 'Optional' but were now moving towards 'Complementary' or in one case 'Embedded' (PI.22). A common theme was a sense of frustration with police officers who, as PI.7 said "still don't get it", even when the team is considered 'Embedded'. There was also concern raised by PI.10 that budget cuts could lead to communications teams losing their embedded position in police forces:

> "I think [communications] is absolutely seen as part of what we do... because it helps, so they understand you can put out witness appeals and do things like that, so that actually it can help them with solving some issues but also they've seen a lot of cases where it goes wrong and reputation gets, you know, damaged, irreparably... and I think that's, sort of, changed right across the country. Although interestingly, the cuts

have meant in some areas it has gone back to where it was before and I think that they will, quite honestly, live to regret that because I just don't think that it's a sustainable way of dealing with things really". (PI.10)

Operational Position of Department
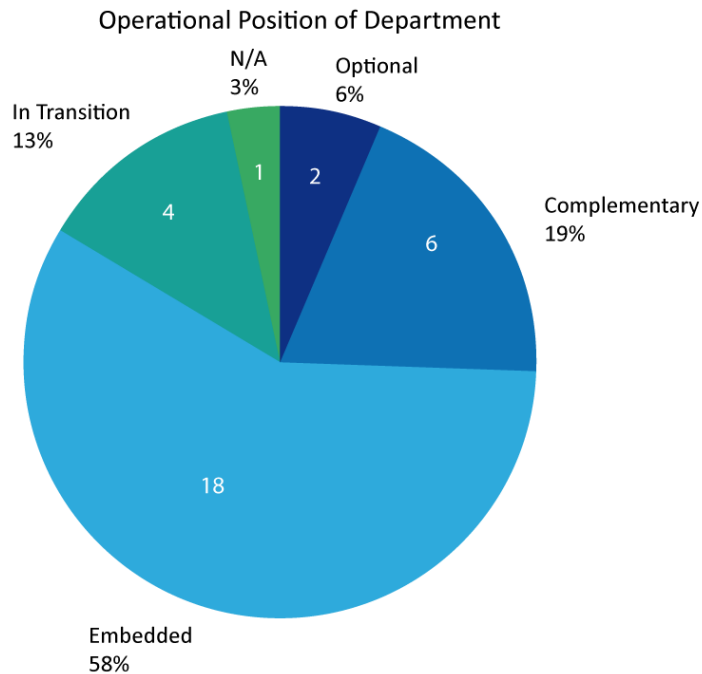
Fig 3.33

There was also frustration over how the communications department is classified. As PI.6 explained, the Home Office classifies police communications as a back office function. This is counter to how many interviewees (75%[22]) perceived their role in the police:

> "We have very strong links into the operational side of the business. We are effectively an operational department. There's quite a rub, I think, between us and the Home Office - around the Home Office including comms in what you would call back office support. Well we're not. We are an operational team, we're deployable. Whenever there's something happening, we're part of that resourcing, we're part of the operation… we are there to support the investigation team, to support front line policing and to help get the intelligence and the witness appeals and information back to help progress investigations". (PI.6)

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[22] This percentage refers to the 28 communication staff interviewed only.

Interviewees who felt that their department was 'Embedded' were less likely to report frustrations around how they thought police officers treated the department and reported a better relationship with their senior management team. PI.12, for example, commented on the close working relationship he had with senior police officers:

> "I see the Chief Constable every Monday morning for half an hour and take all the senior officers through what public relations and comms activity we've got planned for the next eight days every Monday morning." (PI.12)

Similarly, PI.14 emphasised how his department has become interwoven with all aspects of policing:

> "The communications team is involved at all levels of operation, culture change, improvements and changes. We're not just broadcasting message for police officers we're part of crafting them, setting the communications strategy and fully involved in all aspects of policing". (PI.14)

In forces where the communications team was described as 'Complementary' or 'Optional', however, the interviewees often reported frustrations around how the department was "misunderstood" (PI.15), "marginalised" (PI.21) or only brought into something "at the end or if something had gone wrong" (PI.28). As PI.18 explained:

> "I think quite often - I think too often to be honest – it's a bit of an add on. So something that is kind of pulled out of the box when they need it. A lot of activity that goes on in the force we quite often get brought into too late in the day…" (PI.18)

An apparent trend with regard to the operational position of the department was that all five of the departments interviewed who were either currently, or had been, managed by their PCC were considered 'optional'; although three of these departments were thought to be in transition at the time of the interview. The view of the departments controlled by the Chief Constable, on the other hand, all placed themselves as either 'Complementary', 'Embedded', or in transition between the two.

Interviewees were asked who, or what, they thought was responsible for the differences in the operational position of communication departments (Fig 3.34). The responses varied considerably. The majority of interviewees said that the department's acceptance in a police force depended upon the tone set by the senior leadership; with over a third of participants

placing the responsibility on the Chief Constable. As PI.12 explained "you do need the senior officer buy-in and one of the difficulties facing forces and it faces us as well is having enough influence at the top table in terms of comms." A similar remark was made by PI.23 who commented that she was aware of her colleagues in other forces struggling with "a senior command team that think it's just a bit of fluffy PR" and as such tended not to listen to the professionals in the department. It is interesting that even in the forces where the PCC was involved in the department only two (6%) thought that they had an impact on the department's operational position.
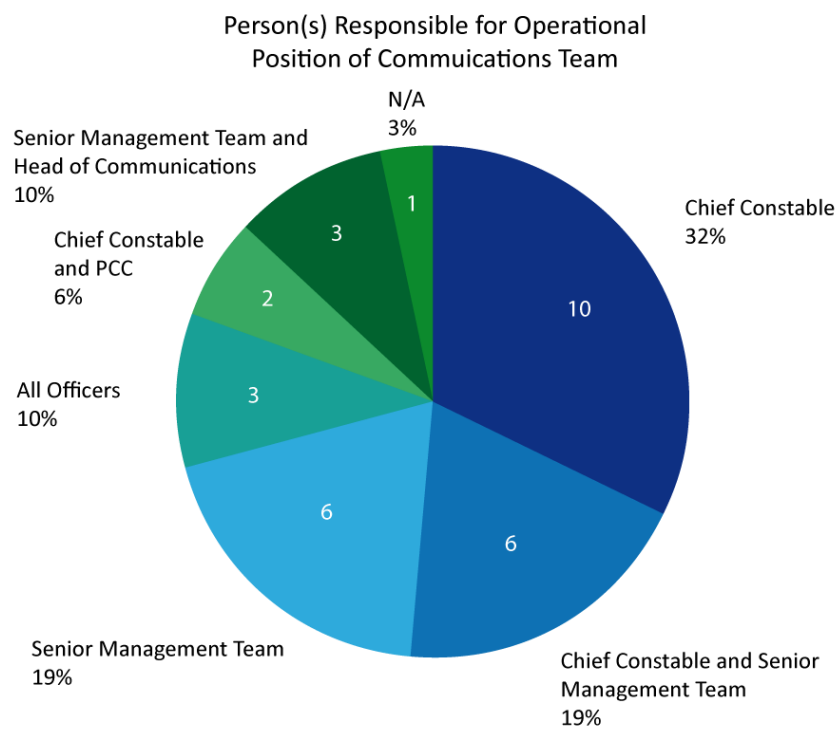
Fig 3.34

3.2.3 Public Relations in the Police

Role and Purpose of Police Communications

Interviewees were asked what they thought the communications department's role or purpose was in their police force. There were two types of answer to this question; some, like PI.2, PI.6 and PI.7, listed what they considered the key responsibilities/activities their department managed while others, like PI.4, PI.9 and PI.12, approached this question from a more ideological perspective[23], or as PI.9 poetically described it "I'd say we're the guardian of the brunt." (Appendix 3.8).

The disparity in the nature of the answers made identifying a list of shared responsibilities, or traits, difficult. However, through analysis of the data and comparison against the responsibilities listed in the APComm survey (APComm, 2014) a set of sixteen core activities was created (Fig 3.35). Due to the aforementioned variation in answers, this should be taken as a rough guide only and not as a complete list of activities.

Some activities like campaigns, public engagement, social media/web and media relations were consistent across all police communications teams interviewed. Others like internal communications and tactical advice/briefings for police officers were common but not included by all interviewees. Seven teams (28%) had responsibility for FOI requests and a further seven had Reprographics as part of their department. Public confidence was considered a key responsibility by just over half of the teams (56%). The operational nature and responsibilities of the department in assisting with the solving of crimes and what was commonly referred to during the interviews as 'managing crisis communications' were stressed by a significant proportion of the interviewees (88%). The operational nature of modern police communications became a strong and consistent theme throughout the interviews.

Reputation management and what the interviewees considered image making tasks were included by 11 (44%) of the participant teams as part of their responsibilities; with some interviewees, like PI.6 drawing a strong distinction between what they considered the operationally essential work of police communications and public relations:

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[23] Three participants opted not to answer this question: PI.1, PI.19b and PI.20b

"I see the purpose of the coms department to work with frontline police officers and investigators to prevent and reduce and solve crime. That's our fundamental as far as I'm concerned… We are not nor should we be a public relations department or a marketing department. We want to promote the successes of the police, absolutely, but our fundamental reason for being is that we're an operational department". (PI.6)

Core Responsibilities / Roles

Categories (top to bottom): Visibility, Reprographics, Freedom of Information requests, Reputation management, Identity / Brand / Image, Intranet, Public confidence, Tactical Advice, Internal Communications, Operational policing, Warn and Inform, Media Relations, Marketing / Campaigns, Crisis management/incident or operations communication, Public engagement, Social media/web

X-axis: No. of Comms Teams

Fig 3.35

Most Important Aspects of Modern Police Communications

The interviewees were asked to identify which of the functions in Fig 3.35 they thought were the most important. Internal communications was the most frequently cited (55%); community based external communications came a distant second (34%) with crime prevention campaigns, marketing and publicity ranking 10th (13%), 11th (10%) and 13th respectively (6%). Managing issues around police brand, identity and reputation were only listed by six (19%) interviewees (Fig 3.36).
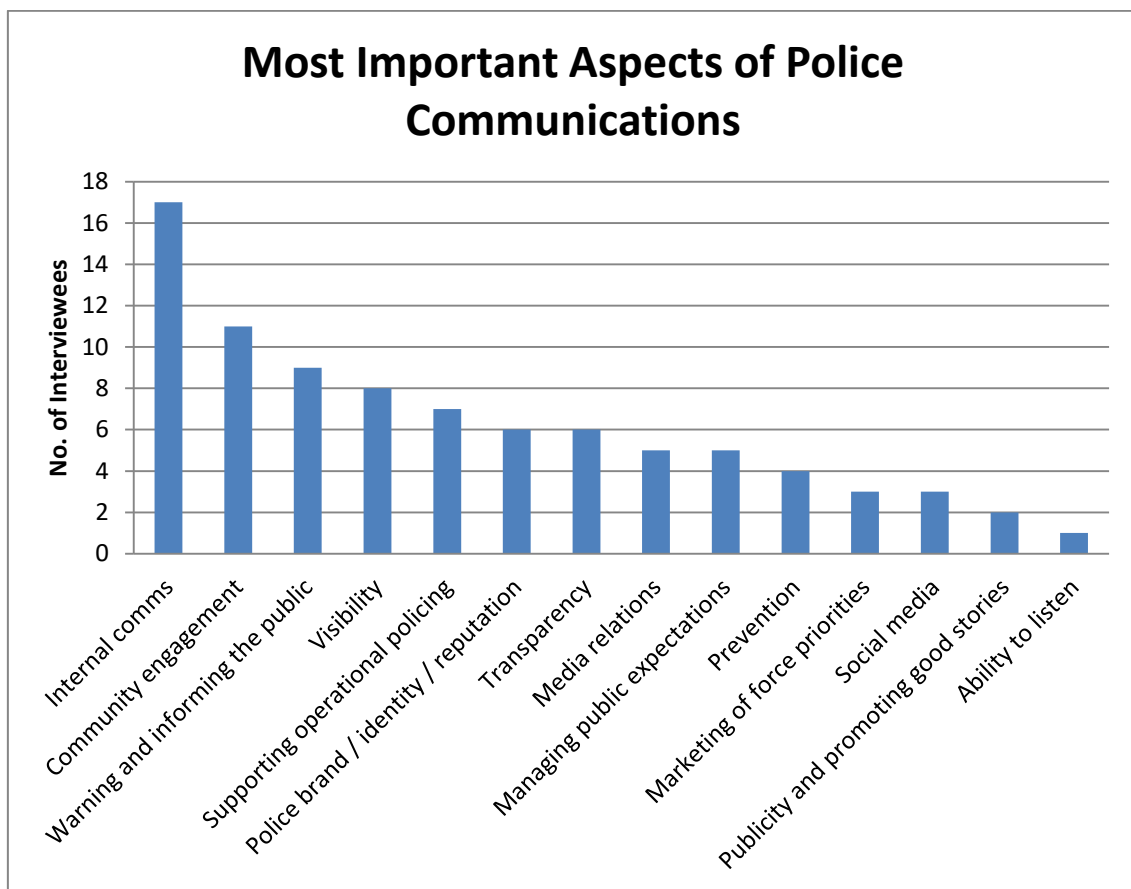
Fig 3.36

Keeping the public informed was considered fairly central by just under a third (29%), although this did not carry over to media relations which was listed as a priority by only five (16%); nearly half the number who included 'warn and inform'. This supports the trend identified in 3.2.4 and 3.2.6 of the change in police force's communication strategy and media relationship (4.2).

As with the previous question there was a strong emphasis on the operational element (23%). PI.6, for example, felt strongly that police communications did not just assist operational policing but was an essential part of it:

"primarily we are there to support the investigation team, to support front line policing and to help get the intelligence and the witness appeals and information back to help progress investigations." (PI.6)

The final point of note is that public relations was not included by any interviewees. Given the level of discomfort displayed by some interviewees with regard to defining the concept and the move away from such terminology, this was not unexpected. Interestingly, over half (52%) later said that public relations was still a relevant and important aspect of their department's work.

Definitions of Public Relations

The interviewees were asked to define public relations. As Fig 3.37 shows, there were a variety of responses and a considerable degree of confusion and disparity in how public relations was understood by communications professionals. This is consistent with the observation made in Chapter 1 that there is in general a high degree of confusion around this term.

Almost half (45%) replied that either it was too difficult a concept to define (29%) or that they did not know how to (16%). PI.5, PI.7 and PI.27 in particular, struggled with defining public relations.

"I don't really know… I suppose It's about managing the public and our relationship with them so that everyone is happy". (PI.7)

"I don't use the phrase to be perfectly honest… I wouldn't really know how to define public relations which doesn't mean that I'm not interested in our relationship with the public, obviously that's what we're all about. It just feels a little bit redundant as a concept." (PI.27)

PI.13 suggested that the reason why public relations is difficult to define, especially in a policing context, is the abstract nature of the concept. Words like marketing or communications provide people with a visceral, instant understanding complete with tangible examples – which is the opposite of public relations.

"You know if you said to people what is public relations well there isn't actually anything they could point at and say that was public relations... It can be what you choose to make it and it's an inexact science isn't it?" (PI.13)

Definitions of Public Relations
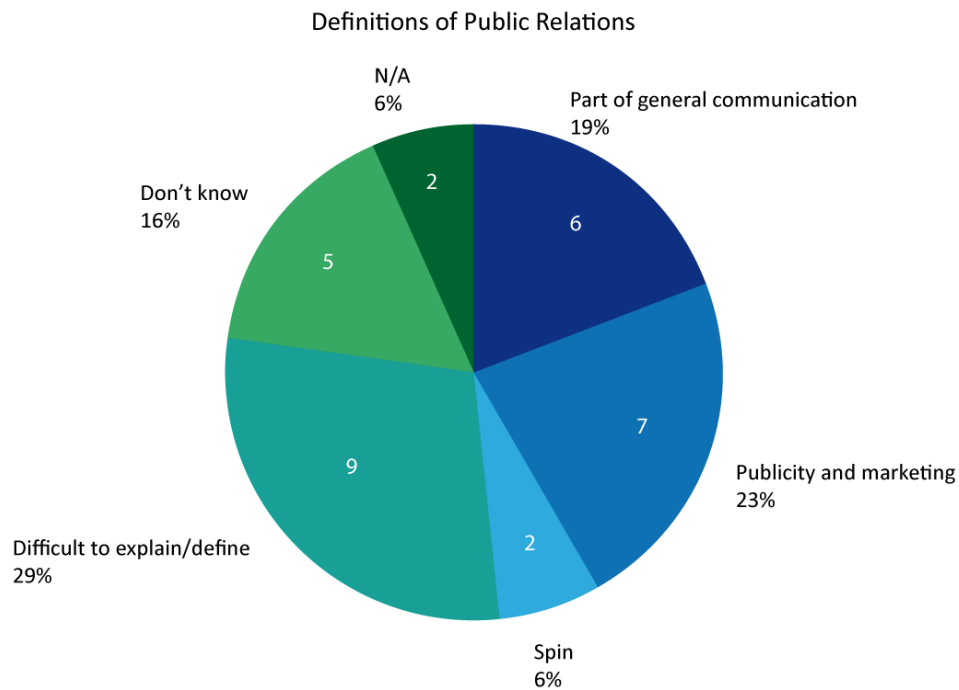
Fig 3.37

Six (19%) interviewees thought that public relations was essentially the same thing as communication. This opinion was most clearly explained by PI.12 who argued forcefully that public relations is fundamentally about engagement and service delivery.

"Public relations, done properly, is about listening and engagement… Well, we're listening and engaging all the time… You're creating a conversation. You're targeting an audience. You're understanding what you're trying to deliver. Have they understood it? have they changed their behaviour? Have they changed their opinion? Those are the things you're doing. That's public relations work, isn't it, at the end of the day". (PI.12)

PI.12 then went on to explain the difference between marketing and public relations.

"Marketing, I think, is more output based… Marketing is a tool within the public relations mix to reach an audience, but we don't like to see marketing purely as the

end result. It's the engagement that marketing can generate that turns it, in my view, into the public relations or engagements and content all engagement is marketing in some ways, isn't it?" (PI.12)

The distinction drawn between marketing and public relations by PI.12 is particularly interesting given the synonymous use of those terms by seven (23%) interviewees. For example, when asked to define public relations PI.6 gave the succinct reply of "publicity and campaigns". One possible reason for this, which is highlighted by PI.12's explanation, is that marketing and publicity are both output orientated examples of public relations activities. As such both provide tangible evidence with which to understand them and as activities used in public relations it is easy to position the activities/products as the whole of public relations.

The confusion around public relations and 'spin' was a central theme within some of the interviews even before this question arose. Only two of the eight interviewees who expressed this concern, however, defined public relations as 'spin'. PI.11, in particular, was quite averse to the idea of police communications being linked to public relations as he saw it as "information provision and reputation management, spin."

PI.22, however, distinguished between his own positive opinion and what he perceived to be the organisational understanding of public relations. It is important to note here that PI.22 replied 'Yes' when asked if public relations was still relevant to police communications.

"I think the public relations element of it can have quite negative connotations to a unit itself if you're deemed to be more interested in making sure we spin the right level of information at the right time or we keep back as much as we can do until we potentially put it out there." (PI.22)

Is PR Still Relevant to Police Communications?

Despite confusion around the definition and the level of discomfort exhibited by some interviewees on this matter, just over half (52%) emphasised the continued importance of public relations in their jobs. Considering the definite undercurrent present during the interviews at times which sought to dismiss and minimise the public relations aspect of police communications this was a surprising, and intriguing, result. Fig 3.38 shows that there were two distinct groups of opinion split between the 16 interviewees (52%), like PI.7, PI.8, PI.9 and

PI.12, who thought that public relations was still important and the 11 (36%), such as PI.6, PI.16 and PI.27, who did not.

"Police communications is still fundamentally public relations - we just don't call it that anymore". (PI.7)

"Definitely comms. Definitely… I've worked in PR so I know. I come from a PR consultancy background, so and that's not what we do." (PI.6)
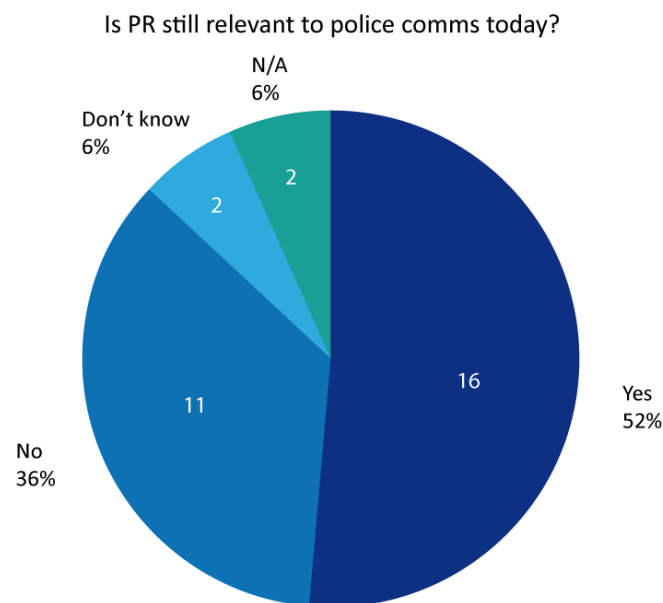
Fig 3.38

Change of Department Name

Following the trend identified in 3.1.2 the interviewees were asked to explain why they thought a significant proportion of police communications departments had changed their name. The answers given were varied and sometimes confused as several interviewees had inherited their current name and were not involved in the decision to change it. Overall, however, from the 27 responses five basic categories emerged (Fig 3.39).

Reason for Change of Department Name

- N/A 13%
- Aspirational 10%
- Not sure 3%
- Better description of department priorities 29%
- Part of professionalisation 16%
- Distancing the department from 'PR' 16%
- Easier to understand 13%
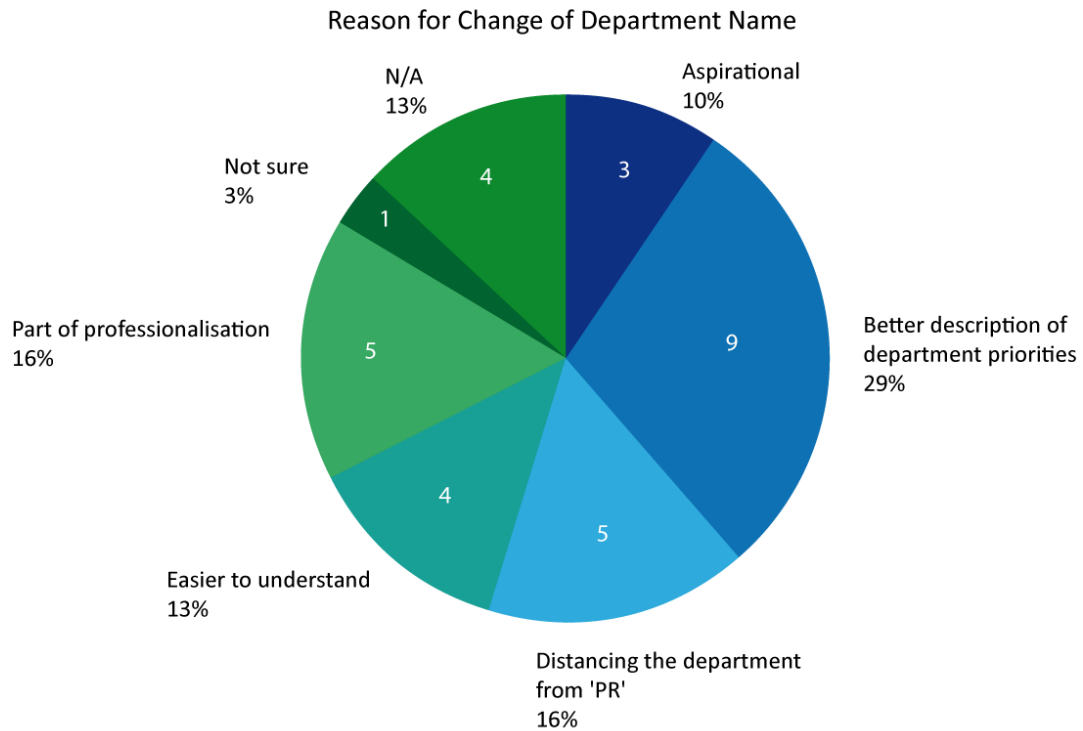
Fig 3.39

Department Priorities

The reason given by the largest proportion of interviewees (29%) was that departments had changed their names in order to more closely align with their priorities. As the communications team moved from being primarily a reactive media service so they changed their name to reflect this. Interviewees in this group[24] were often keen to draw a distinction between what they do now and the 'public relations' activities of the past while simultaneously stating that this move was not to do with a desire to distance the departments from the negative connotations of 'public relations'.

This distinction was particularly important for PI.4 and PI.22 who made a point of emphasising that it was functional rather than ideological.

"I don't think there's any cunning plan behind why it's been changed... who really uses public relations anymore?... it's all a bit misleading. So corporate comms actually does say it's about communications and we're called corporate coz we're a corporate function and not a local function. It actually makes sense". (PI.4)

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[24] 7 of the 9 in this group

"No, I don't think it's a conscious thing, I don't think it's been done deliberately, certainly hasn't from our point of view… now we've gone into corporate communications and that's mainly because we've got that many platforms we're now looking to service… So for us it's about changing into corporate communications". (PI.22)

Distancing from Associations with Public Relations

This theme was of particular interest given the title of this thesis and the general level of discomfort that some interviewees had demonstrated up to this point on the subject. Given that seven (23%) of interviewees dismissed the idea that the name had been changed because of this it was curious that five (16%) interviewees later contradicted this and asserted the opposite.

"I don't like to use the term PR… people rightly or wrongly associate PR with spin and politicians. PR itself is all about open communication but the negative connotations is why we use Communications for a name and not Public Relations". (PI.26)

Part of Professionalisation

A further five (16%) interviewees felt that the change in name was simply another aspect of the professionalisation that police communications had undergone. For PI.15, however, professionalisation was only part of the change in name:

"So I do wonder if the name corporate communications came out to almost subliminal effort to control communications… what actually quite interests me is that… has all the ring of we'll tell you like corporate what the company line is…" (PI.15)

Easier to Understand

Four (13%) suggested that 'Corporate Communications' is an easier concept to explain to police officers and the public than something like 'public relations' or 'marketing'.

"corporate communications is an easier name to explain… public relations gives people ideas that are then hard to sort out." (PI.7)

"There is a misconception even within the force that previously we were part of the press. Still, people would say 'can I tell you that?' 'Yes, you can tell us that'. So it was breaking down the barriers internally, but also recognising that communications is so much broader than just press and public relations now". (PI.17)

Aspirational

The final category was that communications teams had adopted names which better suited their aspirations and how they wished to be seen and understood by the police officers they worked alongside.   This was the least popular explanation given with just three (10%) interviewees suggesting this as the reason for the change in department names. As PI.23 explained corporate communication better reflects what they are trying to do; "we've gone broader so [Press and Public Relations] it didn't reflect a lot of it".

3.2.4 Communications Strategy

Interviewees were asked to choose which term they felt best described their department's current communication strategy; 'Push', 'Pull', 'Networking' or 'Transformative'. The terms themselves were based on the models proposed by Mergel (2012) (2.8.5).

The interviewees identified elements of 'Push' and 'Pull' in their strategies; however, the 'Networking' model was considered separate and often positioned as part of engagement or operational policing. The reason given for this was that it covered appeals for information and maintaining their virtual intelligence network rather than part of their core strategy which was mostly characterised by 'Push' and 'Pull'.
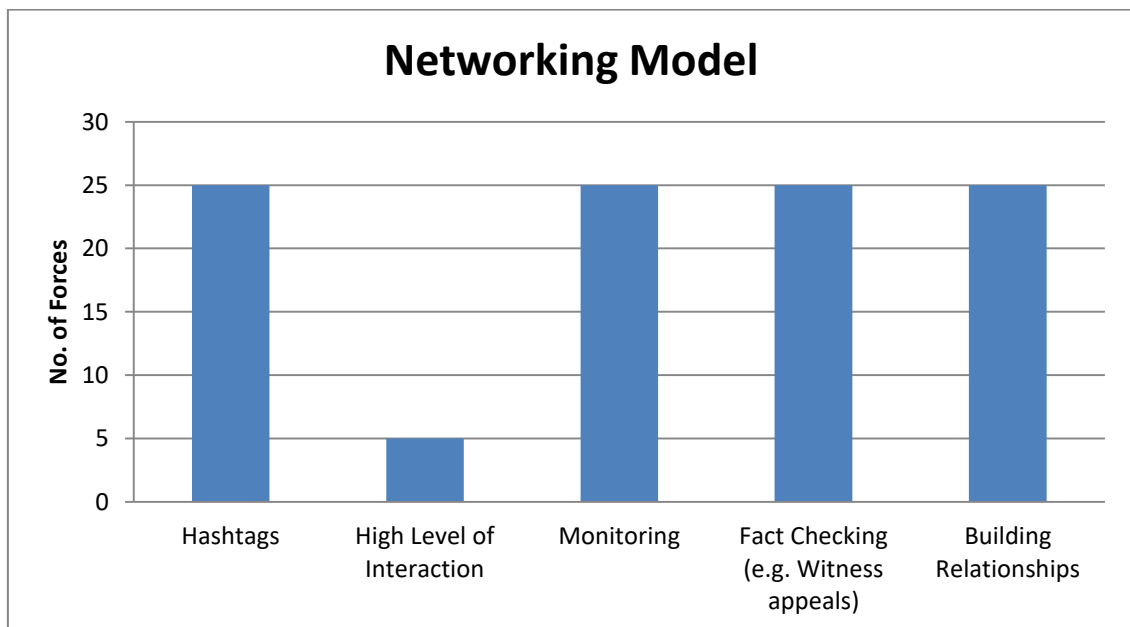
Fig 3.40

All of the 25 teams interviewed reported using hashtags and some level of monitoring when it came to their social media accounts to ensure that there was nothing inflammatory being posted by members of the public (see Fig 3.40); although the degree of monitoring differed considerably between departments. Just over half of the interviewees (55%) felt that their departments were either starting to engage with or had been engaging in conversations with online audiences for some time; however, 12 (39%) stated that they had not yet reached that point or were not yet able to offer that service, often due to capacity and predicted demand.

With regard to current strategy there were a variety of responses from the interviewees; 15 interviews (48%) felt that their departments were only using 'Push', eight (25%) 'Pull', three (10%) felt that their departments used a combination of 'Push' and 'Pull', three (10%) that their departments used a combination of 'Push' and 'Transformative' and only one (3%) described their whole strategy as 'Transformative' (Fig 3.41).

Interviewees were then asked what they thought their communications strategy ought to be and whether they thought they had achieved it (Fig 4.41). With the exception of one interviewee (PI.13), all interviewees who answered the question thought that their communications strategy should move away from simply pushing information out and into either 'Pull' (11), 'Transformative' (10) or 'Pull and Transformative' (3). Four interviewees thought that while some element of 'Push' was inevitable it should be combined with either 'Pull' or 'Transformative' strategies to improve effectiveness. As PI.26 explained, the difficulty when discussing communication strategies is that "there are always going to be elements of 'Push' in how we communicate simply because of the nature of policing".
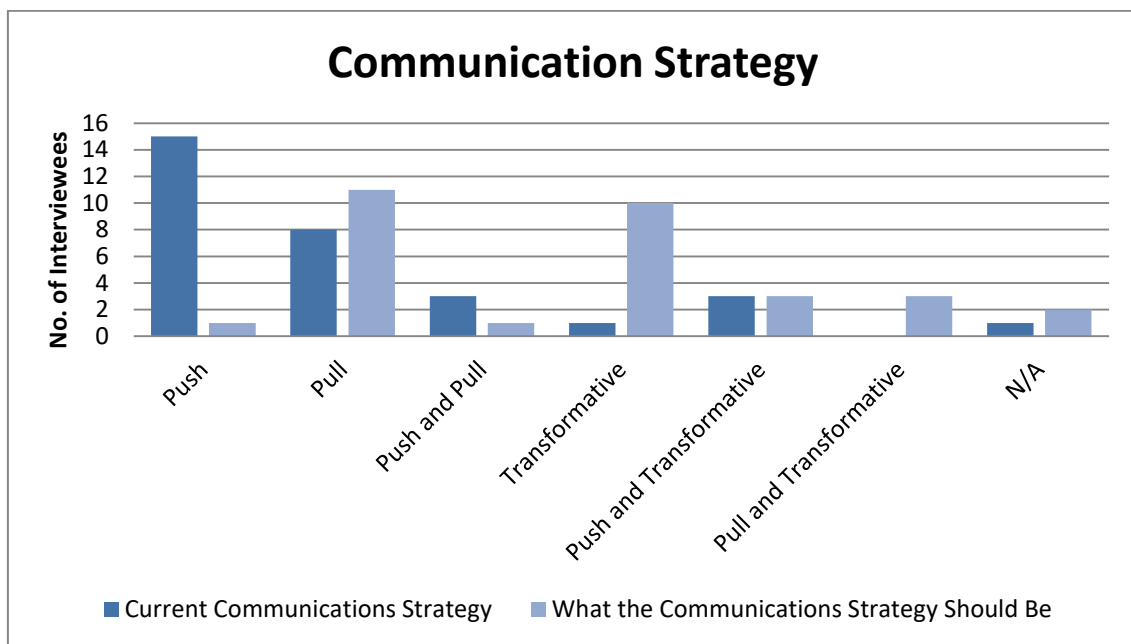
Fig 3.41

PI.26's opinion was anomalous. The majority of interviewees suggested in their answers that 'Push' should be eliminated in favour of a more interactive and symmetrical model of

communications. PI.12, for example, argued that while 'Push' had been the strategy, now it was all about engagement and dialogue.

> "If you go up to the four models of public relations… we were very much press agency. We shout out what we did. That's how police comms was, and particularly when you had police officers running it… now we're not symmetrical, but we're not far off at times. We will respond to demand… If we're picking up rumours of child abductions, we will put posts out there to provide the facts and that people make the decision. We try and be the most credible, trusted voice". (PI.12)

The disparity between communications teams with regard to strategy was considerable; with some interviewees, like PI.2 and PI.15, explaining that in their force "police communications is still basically about broadcasting. "We might talk about increasing engagement but at the moment we just don't have the capacity to actually manage it" (PI.2). While others (for example PI.6, PI.12, PI.23, PI.25), described a much higher level of activity and engagement and a different approach to communications in general. PI.25a, for example, felt very strongly that social media is about talking and forging community networks, particularly for the police.

> "It's about having those conversations. So yes, we push stuff out, but we should also be jumping into conversations that are happening in our local communities. So a big part of the local social media accounts is to keep an eye out about what's your local council saying and what are local people saying. Are they talking about something that actually, we should be talking about too. Is there a way for us to jump into the conversation and be part of that community?... that's what all our social media accounts should be about. It should be about talking." (PI.25a)

When discussing whether they thought they had achieved the ideal communications strategy in their team almost twice the number (19) reported no, this had not been achieved (Fig 3.42). The two most common reasons given for this was firstly, demand and not having the time and resources to facilitate a more interactive communications strategy and secondly, that it was a work in progress as the team was "still coming to grips with social media" (PI.11).

PI.28, however, suggested an alternative explanation which was unusual both in content and how candid the interviewee was about this issue:

> "it's a personal view, but I think we aspire to be pull… but I don't think we're actually very good at it… I think we're very used to telling people, I think it comes from a

command ethos that's in the police, you know, we'll tell you what we're doing, we don't actually engage you in the debate about what we're doing." (PI.28)

A similar reason was given by PI.11 who thought that part of the problem was that a "lot of police officers still see effective comms as delivering that awareness, just the understanding." which was impeding change in communication model.

Interviewees Perception of Whether Their Department Has Achieved This Goal

A bar chart titled "Interviewees Perception of Whether Their Department Has Achieved This Goal." The y-axis is labelled "No. of Interviewees" ranging from 0 to 20. The x-axis categories are "Yes" (10), "No" (19), and "N/A" (2).
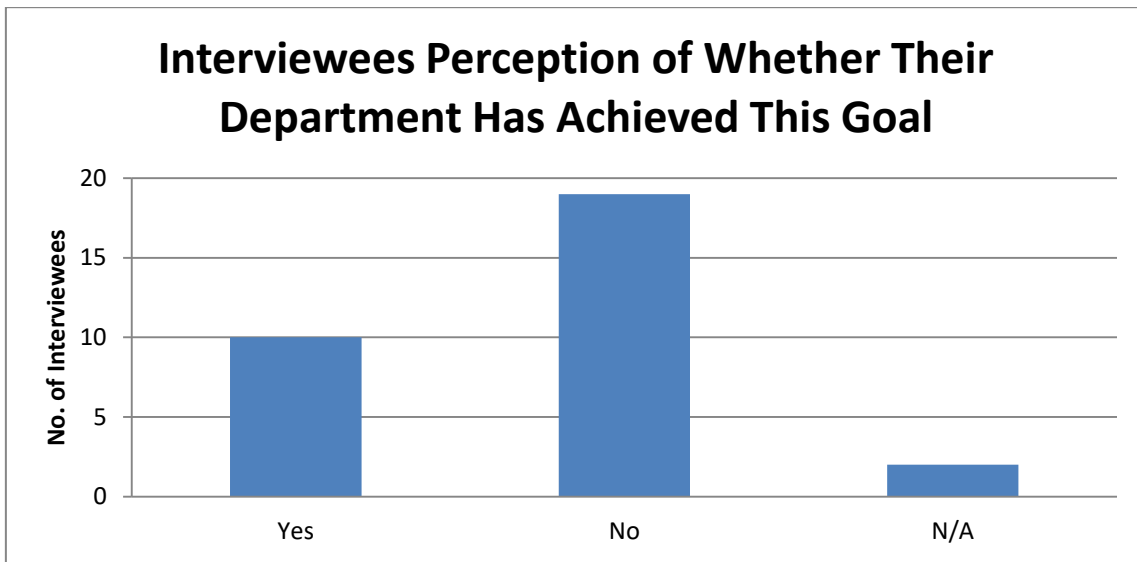
Fig 3.42

4.2.5 Social and Digital Media

The interviewees were asked a series of questions about their online presence covering;

1) Which social media sites they were using,

2) How social media is being utilised as part of their communications strategy,

3) The level of engagement; and

4) Any limitations, or problems, they had experienced with these platforms.

Interviewees Stance on Social Media

The majority of interviewees (75%) were either very positive or generally positive about social media. Six (19%) replied that while they were in favour of social media as a concept, they had reservations about the risks associated with it; only two (6%) were actively against social media but both PI.7 and PI.13 also acknowledged that it was a necessary, and unavoidable, part of modern policing (Fig 3.43).

A tension in 10 of the interviews was the dichotomy between the interviewees' professional opinion regarding the business uses of social media and their personal opinion about using it themselves. This was excellently encapsulated by PI.8 who was very keen on police use of social media:

> "Personally, I'm not on Facebook. I'm not on Twitter. And I have absolutely no idea why anybody would want to be, honestly." (PI.8)

<u>Pro Social Media</u>

For most interviewees the principal benefits offered by social media were improving public engagement (PI.17), expanding the police audience to include traditionally hard to reach groups (PI.26), managing the often conflicting needs of multiple audiences (PI.6), and encouraging transparency (PI.1). PI.6 pithily captured the essence of these points:

> "This is the biggest tool and the biggest opportunity the police have had to directly engage with the public that they serve. It's brilliant. Yes it has risks, but it's actually you know, brilliant and valuable beyond anything else really". (PI.6)

The final benefit of social media was initially raised by PI.4 although it was later reiterated by PI.2, PI.12 PI.20A and PI.21. For PI.4, one of the most important aspects of social media was improving police visibility and providing reassurance in a non-invasive way.

> "There are some areas where they want to follow us on Twitter and follow social media, but they don't want to see a police car… coz it might imply there's a crime in their road… So some areas they want to see police patrolling, coz that's reassuring. In other areas, people are put off… So it's not even as simple as get more cops out, coz in some areas it doesn't work." (PI.4)

This was a very interesting point as the common consensus is often that people feel reassured by the visible presence of the police in their area (see Chapter 1) and yet, according to this group, this does not seem to be the case.

Against

Of the two interviewees who were vocally quite opposed to social media, PI.7 offered the more comprehensive precis. For PI.7 social media is "like a glittery toy… noise the police have to put out to keep the door open to virtual engagement – 99% of it passes people by, but 1% might get noticed and remembered". As PI.7 went on to explain, people, in her experience, tend to skim social media rather than absorb it, this inattention is further compounded by the fact that even the most popular posts only reaches a specific online audience whereas radio and newspapers reach more people and tend to sink in.

> "what I've found over the last few years is that most of the information police put out on social media is just "noise" that doesn't get noticed, or if it does, it gets ignored or forgotten about very quickly… the only things that seem to capture attention and are likely to be retweeted are missing persons campaigns and if there is a murder". (PI.7)

A similar point was made by PI.13 who thought that too much emphasis was being placed on virtual engagement to the detriment of operational requirements.
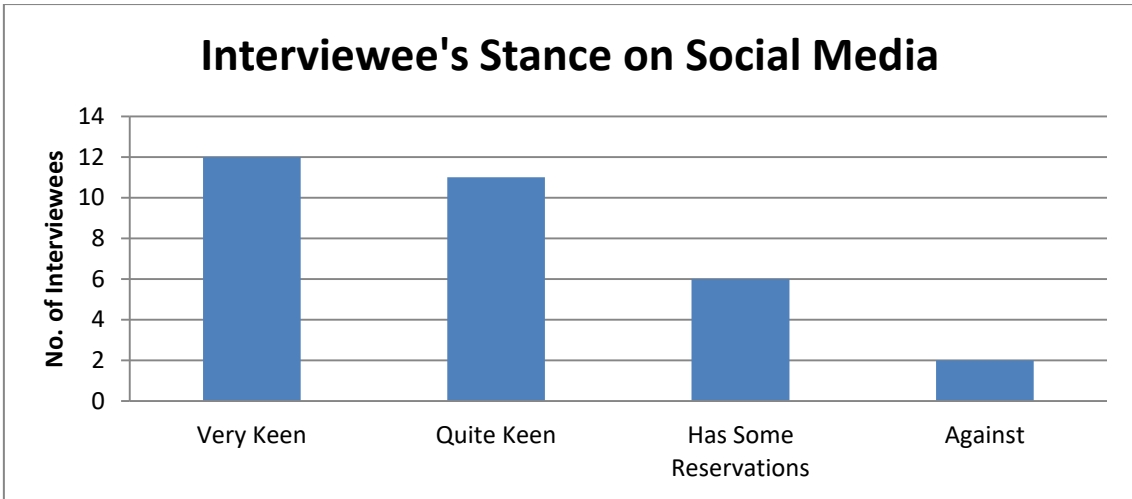
Fig 3.43
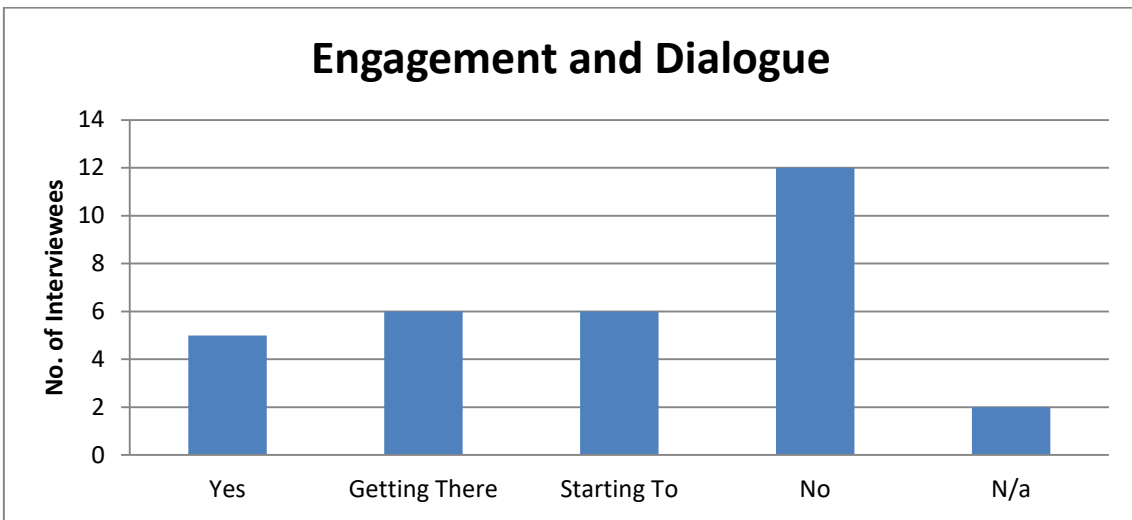
Fig 3.44
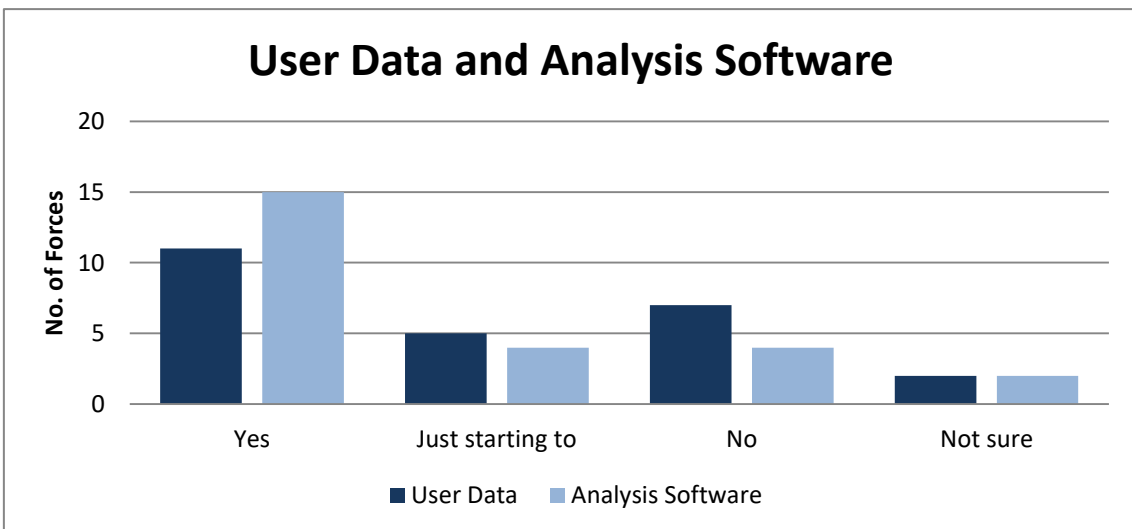
Fig 3.45

Engagement and Dialogue

Interviewees were asked to assess how successful they thought their team was with public engagement. As Fig 3.44 shows, results were mixed with only five interviewees (16%) stating that they thought their teams had achieved the aspiration set out in Engage (NPIA, 2010; see 1.5). 12 (39%) interviewees thought that their teams were "getting there" (6) or were meeting the requirements to "some extent", but an equal number (39%) replied that their teams were a long way off this ideal.

The most commonly given reason for poor levels of engagement (48%) was lack of time and resources to be able to manage the level of demand replying to public interaction on social media sites would create. Another frequently given reason (29%) was inexperience using social media which was hampering active online engagement.

Yes

"We do get a lot of interaction, so obviously what we do is engage with them, and I think with the messages we put out, we do attract certain audiences… we don't just put the stuff out there and think oh it's out there, we try to respond to everything that we get in media or a live call, if there's a question asked we try to have that engagement side of social media rather than just pushing lots of information out". (PI.19A)

Getting There

"It's very hit and miss and… we're still learning what works and what doesn't." (PI.6)

Starting To

"To some extent we do. Mostly social media is still used as a means for getting the police message out." (PI.1)

No

"we've realised we've got to get better at responding on Twitter, so not just putting information out there but actually responding to people who are coming through". (PI.10)

"we don't at the moment have the resources to respond to those tweets." (PI.15)

User Data and Analytics

Interviewees were asked if their team currently collects information about their online audiences (e.g. demographic data, location, click throughs and objects of interest) and which analytical software they use (Fig 3.45). Responses to this question were inconsistent across police forces.

<u>User Data</u>

11 teams (44%) routinely collected user data to map their online audience. PI.12's team had the most comprehensive breakdown of user demographic data to the point where he could target strategies by address within a specific community. In five forces they had only started collecting this data a few months before the interview took place. A common concern raised by all the interviewees in these forces was with regard to how to evaluate the data (3.2.8). Of the remaining nine communications teams, seven (28%) were not yet collecting or looking at user data while the interviewees from the two other teams (8%) were not sure whether this data was collected or not.

<u>Analysis Software</u>

Over half of the teams (60%), used some form of analytical software to track and evaluate their activity on social media. An additional four teams (16%) had just started using such software. A further four teams (16%) had not yet started analysing social media content and interviewees from two teams again were not certain whether their team used analytical software or not. There was a clear connection in the answers between those teams that used analysis software and those who also collected user data; all but one of the teams who had just started to collect user data had also just started to use analysis software, and the two teams who 'did not know' were the same for user data and analysis. The only significant discrepancy arose with those who answered 'no'; seven teams did not collect user data, but only four did not use analysis software – the missing three had been using analysis software for some time. No explanation was given at the time for this discrepancy.

Purpose of Social Media

Interviewees were asked to identify what they thought the primary uses of social media were (Fig 3.46). The most frequently given responses were 'to encourage public engagement' (48%) and, as PI.2 put it, "to warn and inform the public so that they are kept up-to-date on what's going on" (48%). Crisis management was also a popular use with 12 interviewees (39%) including it in their list and was closely followed by community reassurance and campaigns/appeals (32%). Less common uses included a tool for self-promotion/publicity (16%), a means for improving police visibility (16%), crime prevention or behavioural change (13%), a means of networking with key audience groups (10%), driving online users to the force's website (10%), internal comms (7%), and rumour management (3%).
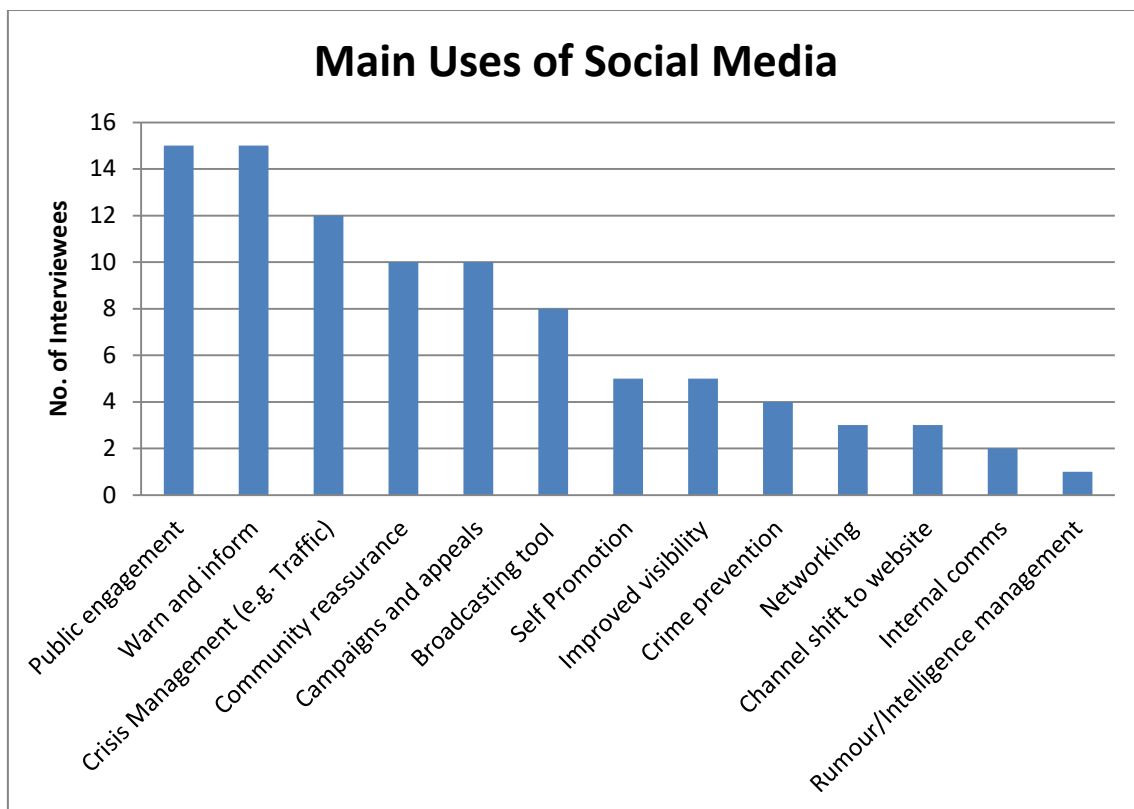
Fig 3.46

Preferred Platform

The interviewees were asked if they, or their team, had a preferred social media site (e.g. Facebook) and if so, why that was. The results were relatively even in their distribution (Fig 3.47). Twitter, Facebook and YouTube were the three most commonly used sites (see 3.1.6);

with 12 (39%) preferring Twitter, nine (29%) Facebook, and eight (26%) stating that they did not prefer one of the other as they used the sites differently.

Twitter

"more people tend to engage on Twitter than on Facebook" (PI.2).

"we've got our biggest following is on Twitter. It's the easiest way to engage, particularly when we talk about doing the multimedia kind of package of the photos, etc. Instant responses from people". (PI.6)

Facebook

"We're finding Facebook's taking off really really well for us." (PI.4)

Is There a Preferred Platform?

N/A
6%

No favourite as each is used for different things
26%

Twitter
39%

Facebook
29%

2

8

12

9
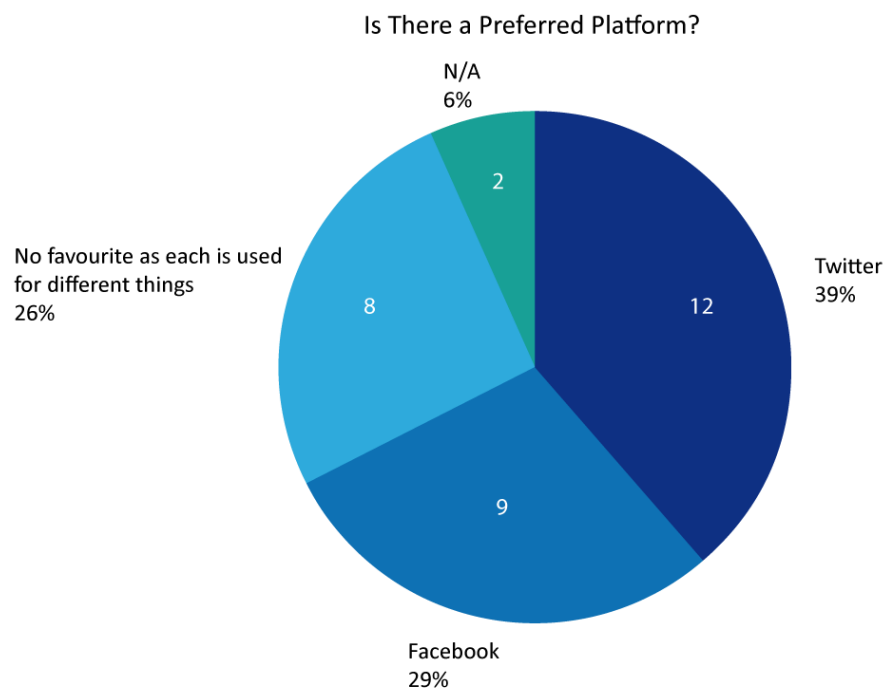
Fig 3.47

Facebook and Twitter

"I think they are both really important but they really differ for what you want to get out of them, so I don't think I would put one above the other, to be honest… both are of equal importance but it depends who you are trying to reach and what your

campaign's about or what your appeal or whatever is about as to which one is the best one." (PI.10)

"the difference between the Facebook and Twitter audience is really clear in one of those papers about only 15% of our Facebook audience use Twitter and similar proportion back. Everybody thinks you just use social media, you use both. They're different audiences… And what we found through trial and error… is that Twitter works better on a geographic approach. Facebook works on a big mass and because the way people live". (PI.12)

Some, like PI.9 and PI.12, thought however that there had been a channel shift as to which platform worked best:

"I think different things for different jobs and I would say historically, it's been Twitter. I personally and from a department perspective, I would say that Facebook has a greater potential… I would say, we get 90% more interaction on Facebook than we do Twitter". (PI.9)

PI.27 suggested that Twitter and Facebook are platforms designed to do fundamentally different things:

"So Martin Sorrell sums it up in a really good way… he said Facebook's for your brand, Twitter's for public relations. I think that's quite a good way to put it". (PI.27)

This was not found in any of the other interviews, however. A pattern that emerged during the interviews is how different social media sites are utilised and the communications strategy adopted by the department. For the most part, those forces which used the 'Push' communications model also preferred Twitter to Facebook. The reverse of that was also true, that those teams that prioritised Facebook did so because of the additional engagement benefits they found with the site. These teams were also more likely to be using 'Pull' and 'Transformative' models (see 3.2.4). With the exception of PI.27, Twitter was viewed as a broadcast channel best used in crisis management situations and for quick news updates. Appeals, recruitment and engagement achieved the best results from Facebook.

"In terms of engagement, Facebook is better. We get more engagement through Facebook than we do through Twitter. I have no idea why that is… Twitter's good for the quick time. Let's just get stuff out, so the road closures. Yeah, from a reactive

point of view, certainly, Twitter is preferred, whereas Facebook is better for giving a bit more information, a bit more detail." (PI.8)

<u>Other platforms</u>

While Twitter, Facebook and YouTube are the three main social media sites used by police forces, some communications teams are using other social media sites (3.1.6). Use of these across the interviewed forces was inconsistent and patchy. 12 forces (48%) had a Flickr account, six (24%) Google+, five (20%) were using Pinterest and one force was using Instagram and SoundCloud (4%).

Some, like PI.4 were keen to experiment with all social media sites to find out what works:

"We're using Instagram, we're using everything we can. We've done Thunderclap, we've done Storify. We're trying lots of different ways of engaging and I think what it means is, you're reaching lots of different groups of people." (PI.4)

Others were far more conservative in their approach.

"I know that I've had a couple of requests of why don't we use Instagram or why don't we get involved with Snapchat, but really for us for Instagram we don't really have a lot of pictures to put on it and I think Instagram for me is a creative, it's I dunno, mass images, I think West Midlands are using it and it's worked well for them, they've got some great pictures and they've got a big team so maybe they've got someone who's just dealing with that". (PI.19A)

Time, difficulties managing the demand, inexperience using social media, and lack of suitable content were the most reasons most often cited for not branching out beyond Twitter and Facebook.

"if we had more resources we'd probably use it [Flickr] more regularly... there's this pressure when a new one comes out that takes off... that oh you have to do that because it's so popular but yeah, when you actually take a back step and go well, is it going to benefit us that much, is there anything we can do on that that we can't do on these?" (PI.19B)

Limitations and Problems with Social Media

Social media is not, however, without its problems and limitations as all but one interviewee (PI.5) were eager to discuss; sometimes in considerable detail (Fig 3.48). The problems identified ranged between difficulties around audiences (13%), engagement (5%) and problems with evaluation (15%), to difficulties with managing demand (8%), changing the sometimes anti-engagement risk averse police culture (5%), and the potential for unintended consequences, such as increasing fear of crime instead of providing reassurance (5%).

The general consensus, however, was that despite the risks and problems associated with social media, these channels had improved police visibility, accountability and relationship with their audiences. Efforts at improving engagement were apparent during the interviews and reinforced by the additional functionality many forces are redesigning their websites to include (see Appendix 3.10).
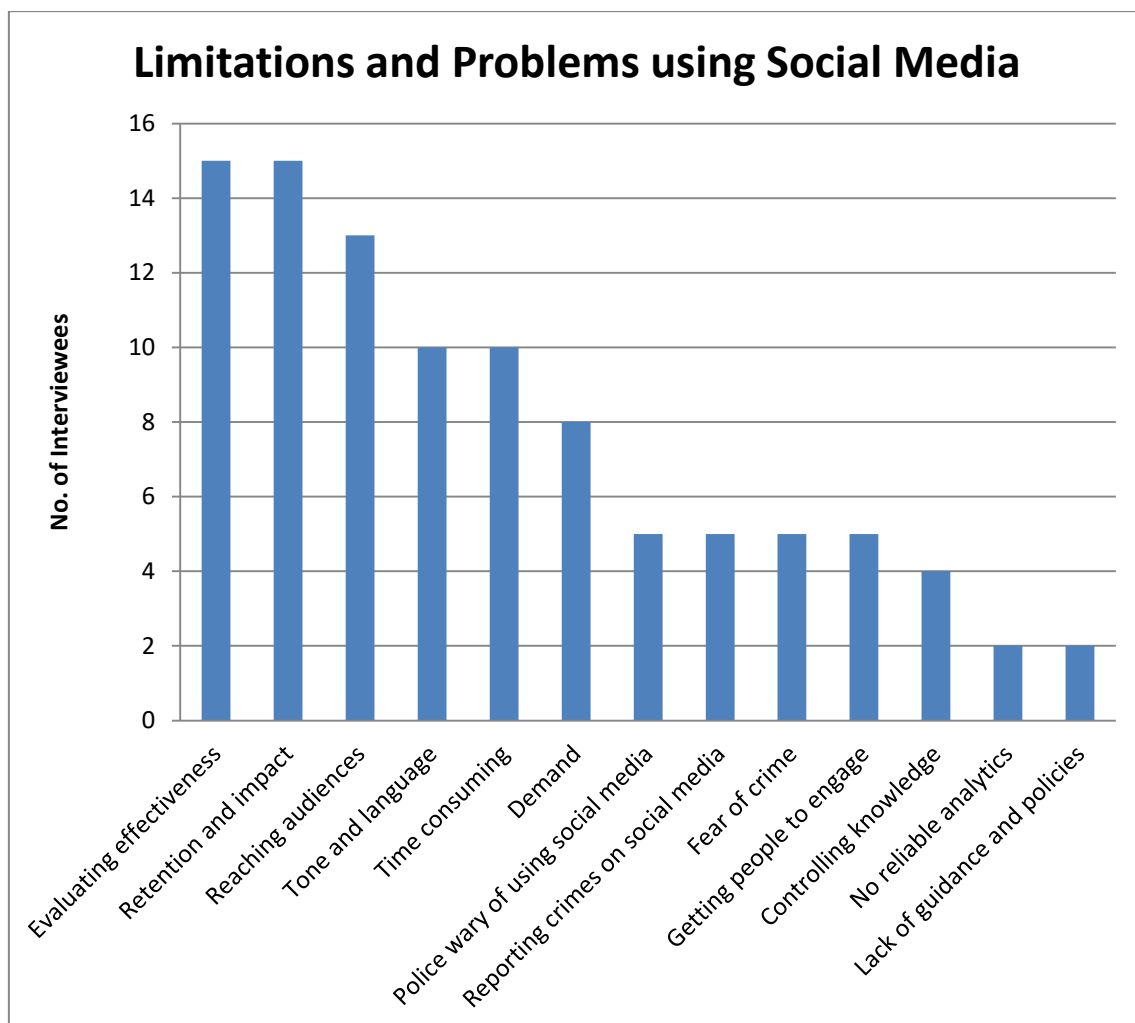
Fig 3.48

4.2.6 Traditional Media

Interviewees were questioned on five aspects relating to the interviewee's experience with journalists and news media.

1) How the interviewee would describe the police-media relationship in their area;

2) How the relationship has changed with the success of social media;

3) Whether there has been a decrease in local journalism;

4) What the interviewee thought of the new 'self-service' model of interacting with the media which has been adopted in some forces; and

5) Whether journalists are still able to provide a watchdog function (see chapter 1) in light of these changes.

The Police-Media Relationship

How interviewees described the police-media relationship varied considerably (Fig 3.49); ranging from 'Very Good' to 'Hostile'. One point that became apparent during the group interviews in particular was the subjective nature of this assessment, as in two of the three group interviews the participants disagreed with the other's description. For example, PI.20A classed the relationship between the local press and her force as "very good" while PI.20B, who was new to the force, said it was "okay, but improving". A similar situation occurred during interview PI.25; where PI.25A thought the relationship could be difficult with the media often being overly critical, while PI.25B replied:

> "I think we're quite highly regarded by media, including nationals, because they know they will get a response from us. We never do a no comment and we're pretty swift."

Just under half of the interviewees classed their force's relationship with the media as being 'Very Good' or 'Good', although some (PI.2, PI.8, PI.9, PI.11, PI.21) made a point of distinguishing between pre and post Leveson inquiry.

> "I think we generally do have quite close relationships with them, but post Leveson it's a lot more cautious". (PI.9)

Other interviewees, like PI.8, drew a distinction between newspapers where there was a certain stability or permanence to the staff and those where there was a high staff turnover:

"Some of the papers we have very good relationships with and, if they're short on the front page or two, they'll come and ask if we've got anything and we're still trying to have that quite open dialogue… There are a couple of papers where the turnaround in staff is so high that you never really get to know [them]. They're just a name and an email address with the odd phone call." (PI.8)

Four interviewees thought that their relationship with journalists was 'okay or improving'. One interviewee, PI.20B, was a former journalist and explained how in his opinion part of the communication difficulty between the press and police was in the police not knowing what the press were looking for and so not providing it. This led to journalists investigating or speculating on their own, which in turn frustrated and aggravated the police and thus soured a relationship which should be positive and mutually beneficial. As PI.2 summarised – "the police are news, but we need to be in the news to do our jobs the problem is managing that relationship so we both get what we want".
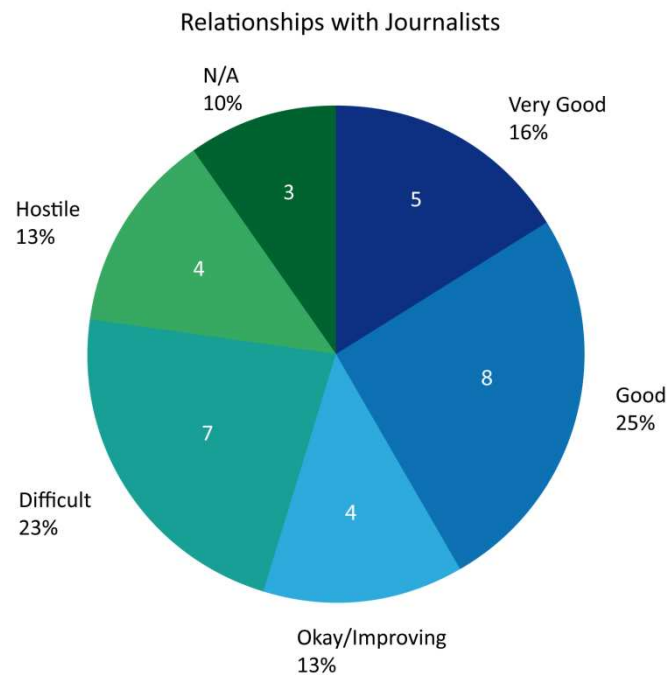
Fig 3.49

11 interviewees, however, described their relationship with the press as either 'difficult' (23%) or what PI.4 termed "critically hostile" (13%). PI.15, for example, felt that the press went out of their way to "put a negative slant on everything", even positive stories. Similar experiences were reported by five other interviewees PI.1, PI.6, PI.13, PI.21 and PI.23. Part of the reason

given for this was again the transient, high turnover nature of modern journalism identified by PI.8 which as PI.7 explained meant that:

> "it's hard to build rapport like we used to when it's a different face every week… We don't know them and they don't know us". (PI.7)

For PI.10 the problem with the press was twofold; on the one hand the constant stream of unknown reporters made it difficult to build rapport and trust but on the other the static journalists often had long entrenched links with various police officers which meant that they often by-passed the communications department to get information.

> "we've got quite a few crime reporters… who have been static, they have been there for 10/15 years… they have really good contacts within the force because they have been here for so long, they met somebody when they were a PC, who is now a Chief Superintendent and… that's quite difficult for us in terms of managing that". (PI.10)

Changes to the Police-Media Relationship

Another point that became apparent was how this relationship had changed; particularly since the Leveson report. There was a relationship between the length of time the interviewee had been in post, or working for the police, and the amount of time they spent dwelling on the changes in the press-police relationship. Some, like PI.6 and PI.12, talked of how social media had created a shift in the power dynamic of this relationship. This shift had changed police communication from being a principally one channel to a multichannel model and thus ended the traditional monopoly of the print press.

> "everything that you did and everything that was around an incident or operation, it was all focussed on media management, press management… But the power balance has shifted dramatically and you see it even with the chief officers now. Once upon a time a negative story in our local newspaper… would send them into disarray. They'd be wanting to know how that happened. But now, it's kind of like, yeah they've written a negative story, they kind of do that, but what we can now do is we can put our side out through our channels or we can put some good news out to counter balance it." (PI.6)

> "I had a meeting with the local paper only a couple of months ago, to discuss how they were feeling left out and it's not that they're less important than they were. It's

that our communities are more important than they were and they've got more, as a sort of press function because we can communicate direct with them." (PI.12)

PI.26 suggested that part of the reason for this change was because of the Leveson Report, which discouraged close relationships between police officers and members of the press, and partly because of the constraints reporters were now feeling with regard to resources and time.

"[the press used to] see us as a block to the police officers who will give them more and better stories… Now we are a necessary evil as local journalists no longer have time to go investigating on their own and post Leveson has placed restrictions of these relationships". (PI.26)

Local journalists

A theme identified in the literature was the general decrease in reporters, particularly dedicated crime reporters, following the widespread success of social media which had encouraged the rise of citizen journalism (1.3). When asked about this, just under half (48%) of the interviewees said that they had seen a decrease in the number of local journalists; a significantly smaller number of interviewees (23%) thought that reporters had stayed roughly the same, while five said that counter to even their expectations newspapers were expanding in their area (Fig 3.50).

It is of note that all five interviewees (PI.10, PI.11, PI.19A, PI.19B, PI.20B) who remarked on this worked for predominantly rural police forces with a small static population and a high number of transient tourists during peak times. It is also interesting that with the exception of PI.20B the other four interviewees felt that traditional media was still a more effective channel for reaching the majority of their audience than social media – which was reflected in the way resources were allocated in their teams.

In the case of PI.20B, the interviewee suggested an alternative interpretation. PI.20B thought that the reason why newspapers in his area were able to expand was because they were moving away from the traditional in-person reporter presence towards an online model. In this new model investigative work and information sourcing was completed through online channels, taking advantage of "so called citizen journalists" to expand and supply their network.

"Our locals [are] still doing really well, they've just changed the model so papers have now gone to a digital-first model, where it's basically everything is online, first and foremost. So the paper's only one edition during the day. It used to be four or five when I was there. But it's gradually deteriorated because the circulation has dropped. But the online has just gone through the roof. So they have now five or six, we call them spikes, through the day where their hits at the morning [go up]… Basically, you hit those spikes with different content. So it's almost like having different editions of a newspaper." (PI.20B)

The opinions expressed by the 'increase group' provided a distinct contrast to the interviewees who had reported a decrease. The apparent decline in journalists was reported across the country irrespective of population type or number. According to PI.4 "it's clear the newspapers are all dying, certainly locally"; PI.4 predicted that within a few years local newspapers would have moved completed online and only the nationals would be producing a daily print version. A similar remark was made by PI.8 who said that one of the reasons why they were looking to increase interest in their social media sites was because there were so few journalists to speak to now that getting the local papers to pick up stories was proving difficult.

"in reality, there's hardly any journalists to speak to… We had probably at least three crime reporters 10 years ago. We've got one and he has to do everything else as well. Yeah, they're just not there". (PI.8)

It is important to note that the difference between the local and national situation was again raised in this topic. As PI.1 explained in his area the number of journalists had remained about the same, where the difference was noticeable was in the style/content of reporting (see following sections) and the numbers of local journalists which meant that stories from "the smaller, less interesting forces" often didn't make it into the news.

"It's about the same really. We have active local journalists and local newspapers round here. National is probably where we've seen the biggest reductions in dedicated crime journalists". (PI.1)

Number of Local Journalists
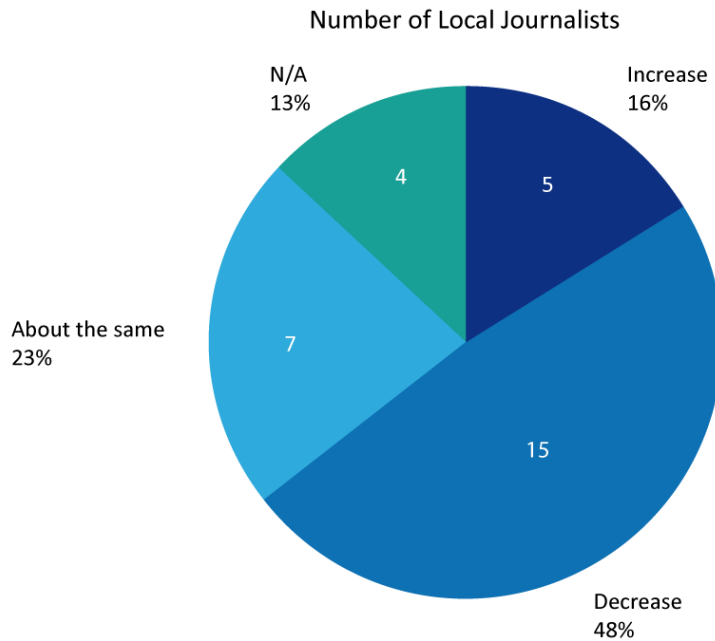
Fig 3.50

Implications of there being Fewer Local Journalists

Opinion was divided among the interviewees as to whether or not the implications of this change would be to the benefit of the police or merely create new problems for them. Six interviewees (19%) thought that the decrease in reporters and their stretched resources had actually made more work for his department, not less, and that it was increasingly difficult to maintain that level of service especially if resources were reduced further.

> "whereas you think newspapers going out of business that's good for us as far as business is concerned it's not. It's arguably even more busy now because they're all wanting to keep their websites up to date. That's why we've moved to this almost self-serve system whereby anything that's vaguely big that we want to give out will be on our news centre… I think we're getting to the stage where we're going to have to tell them to go away because we've not got time to deal with that kind of thing." (PI.13)

> "Local newspapers are closing. There's fewer and fewer reporters so they don't get out. So they expect to be fed". (PI.25B)

It is significant, however, that the majority (68%) agreed with PI.16 and saw the reduction of journalism as a decided benefit:

> "That would be like the best thing actually if we had no newspapers anymore and, you know, I think the more we can get people to receive information directly from the police rather than through the media the better, so for me it'll be like okay if people have to receive their information from us they're hearing it from the horse's mouth, they're not hearing what part of a report the media's chosen to focus on, they're hearing the bit that we want to know this time. So it can't be a negative." (PI.16)

A common theme in this topic was that the greater problem was the poor training and inexperience of the journalists the interviewees were now working with.

> "we've noticed that the kind of quality of the crime reporters in terms of their training has really reduced, you know, we'll have reporters asking us very obvious legal questions that you think well surely you should've learnt that when you trained to be a journalist… So yeah, I think the way that local journalists kind of report has definitely changed." (PI.16)

Self-service model

Early in the fieldwork, PI.9 raised the concept of what she referred to as the 'self-service' model of managing enquiries from the press. This model repositioned police communications teams as the publishers of police news rather than simply being the source, continuing the trend of self-publication through newsletters identified by Mawby (2002) and others (e.g Bradford, 2012).. Under this model, the communications team would publish information and press releases first on their website and social media sites; thereby redirecting the bulk of media enquiries to what would essentially be a "self-service area" where journalists could make use of police information without needing to contact the press office directly.

The interviewees were first asked whether they were aware of this model, what they thought of the idea (Fig 3.51) and whether this was something their team had already adopted or was currently considering (Fig 3.52). All but four interviewees were aware to some extent of the self-service model; the two Chief Constables and the PCC were three of the four who were not aware – the fourth being PI.19A, who admitted she had very few dealings with the media side of her team.

Over two thirds of the communications staff (71%) approved of the concept. The remaining five interviewees (16%) liked the concept but felt it would not work in their teams due to the high level of media activity and demand; it is important to note that all five of these interviewees were working for rural forces where they had seen a growth in their local media.

> "We couldn't move to the time kind of web firsts, breaking news ourselves, it just wouldn't work here." (PI.11)

This is in keeping with the explanation suggested by PI.26 who thought that it was the reduction of local journalists and constraints the remaining ones found on their time that had encouraged and allowed police forces to start providing a less personal and more mechanistic service to the media.

> "Most journalists no longer have time to go out and find stories on their own now, so they basically regurgitate and rewrite press statements". (PI.26)

The final question asked interviewees whether this was a model they had either adopted already or were considering. Eight (32%) teams interviewed had changed to the self-service system. Almost half of the forces were considering it (48%) and of the remaining five who said in their previous answers that it was not yet viable in their areas, four expressed hope that they would be able to change the system in the future. For some, like PI.8 and PI.17, the benefits of this model were clear cut.

> "if you go back five, six years, a lot of police forces would write a press release, they would issue it to an email distribution list of media. We don't issue anything to the media, everything that we put out on the public domain goes on our website… but we're putting out public information now, so we can tell the public what we're saying, as opposed to relying on the media to interpret that. So our website and social media have proved a massive opportunity for us to tell the public things in our voice". (PI.17)

Interviewee's view of the self- service model

N/A
13%

Not an option in their area
16%

4

5

22

A good idea
71%
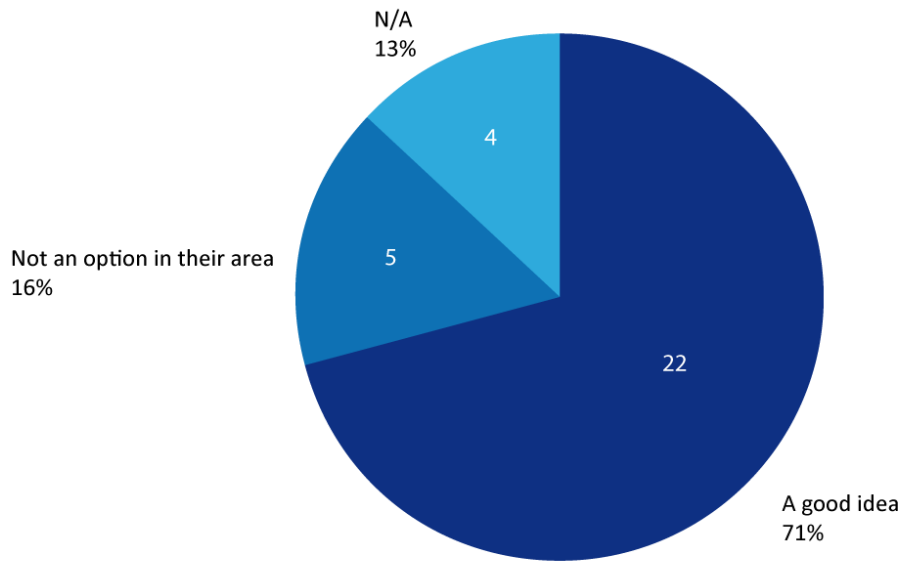
Fig 3.51

Is this a model their force is either considering or already adopted?

Not a model that will work for them
4%

Not yet, but maybe in the future
16%

Adopted already
32%

1

4

8

12

Considering
48%
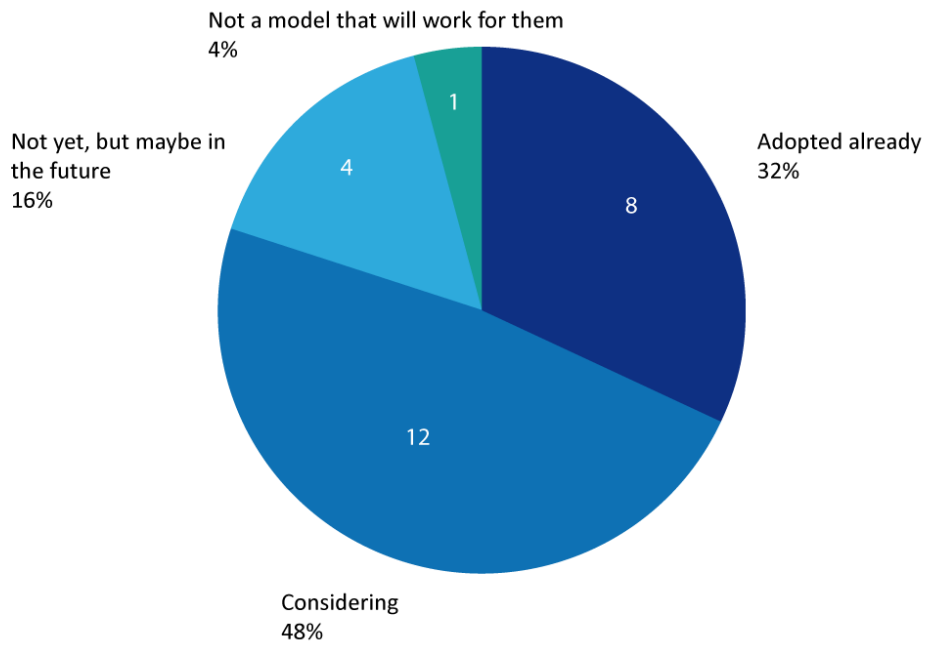
Fig 3.52

A similar reason was given by PI.2, who was trying to steer his department and reluctant senior management team towards this model:

> "We're trying to keep up with the demand, but it's a struggle and likely to be more so if there are further budget cuts. Self-service press releases would save us time and mean that the investigating officer can just add the relevant details to a template which they then put on the website rather than contacting the comms departments and giving us the information which we then have to write up and put in a press release that we've probably already confirmed verbally to five journalists by the time we get round to publishing it." (PI.2)

For PI.4, however, the self-service model also raised a significant concern from a journalistic point of view as it encouraged what PI.4 described as the uncritical, "spoon fed" nature of modern crime journalists.

> "Now, journalistically I would almost question that and say well actually, they shouldn't always take everything we say for granted, because they should question it. I mean I know we do a professional job and I know we do it as well as we possibly can, but is that short changing their public? Their readers? By always accepting what we do?" (PI.4)

Watchdog function

It has long been thought that the news media act as a watchdog for police forces; alerting the public to mistakes, scandals or incidents of 'police spin', such as during the recent Hillsborough Inquiry (Conn, 2016), and thus help hold police forces to account. When asked whether they thought journalists were still able to perform a watchdog function for police forces in light of these changes, nine interviewees (29%) thought 'yes', the news media are still performing this function while an almost equal number (26%) disagreed. Five interviewees (15%) thought that the press were still, to an extent, able to provide a watchdog function while eight (26%) opted not to answer the question and one interviewee (3%) replied that they did not know (Fig 3.53).

Yes

There was a distinct relationship between those interviewees who answered yes to this question and those who said earlier that they thought either the number of journalists had increased or stayed the same. PI.10 is a prime example of this, her force were still prioritising

individual media services, rather than moving towards a more self-service model, as they had seen an increase in the number of local journalists over recent years. For PI.10, social media had allowed local journalists to increase and improve their ability to criticise and hold the police to account.

"very critical… and what's really lovely now is that they are not only critical in the paper they are also critical on social media so… you get a double hit frankly and online because they have all the papers online, so yeah, they definitely still do the watchdog function and, as I say, they are not shy at putting things up on Twitter… if they feel they are not getting a good service as well… and actually that changes the relationship a little bit as well". (PI.10)

Watchdog Function
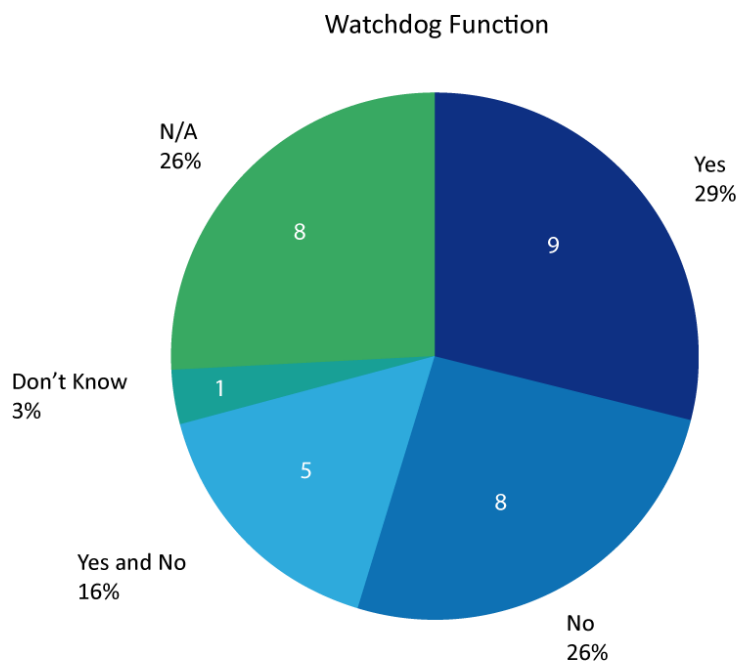
Fig 3.53

It is also of note that over two thirds of the interviewees who thought that local journalism had increased or stayed the same worked in rural forces. Interviewees from metropolitan and urban forces were much more likely to say that they had seen a decrease in local journalism. For example, PI.4 is the head of communications in a large urban based force. One of the topics he continually returned to during the interview was how the police-media relationship had changed over the last decade particularly since 2010 with the rapid decline of daily

newspapers and dedicated crime reporters. Despite this reduction and the move in his force to a self-service model of dealing with the press, PI.4 thought that the media were still able to hold his force to account.

"One of the editors… had a meeting with me and the Chief Constable, just a regular meeting and he said to both of us, I accept our job is never to break the news about police stuff anymore. He said I know you're going to do that… I know our job… is to analyse and question and check the work of the police and I said yeah I think that's right. Because… they're not gonna get scoops about the police. They're not gonna find out first coz we're going to publish it first, but they're right to then say, is this right? To question it, coz we should be questioned, we should be checked." (PI.4)

No

Not all interviewees agreed with the above assessment, however. PI.11, for example, was vociferous in his complaints about the media. His force had, like PI.10's, seen an increase in the number of local journalists. Unlike PI.10, however, PI.11 felt that the media had long ago ceased to be an effective watchdog, which he agreed police forces need, and had instead become lazy "fermenters of problems".

"I think there's bad journalism and I think there's good journalism and there's a lot of lazy journalism these days unfortunately because … resourcing is being reduced so much that good investigative journalism is much thinner on the ground than when I started." (PI.11)

A similar theme was captured by PI.8 and PI.18 who both agreed that the reason why the press had ceased to be a watchdog was because of this move to the self-service model. Like PI.11, PI.8 and PI.18 thought that journalists relying increasingly upon regurgitating police press releases in order to generate news content had led to a lazy brand of journalism where journalists would rarely question or challenge the official police account.

"for the ones we have a relationship with, not so much, but the ones that we don't have a relationship with, then yeah, very often they'll just print what we give. Very rarely do they come back with questions or a challenge. The two main newspapers that we have, they do… And we don't have masses of interactions with nationals anymore. We used to have quite a bit. It's only on the odd story whereas now a lot of it goes through FOI." (PI.8)

"I just remember some people who used to be sort of old school I sort of suppose in the past who would dig up some fairly interesting stories and sometimes not very positive for the force... I don't know if that's because of Leveson or they are just a different breed now but they are very reliant on what comes out of the centre now." (PI.18)

For PI.15, PI.21, PI.23 and PI.27, however, the more important question was not whether newspapers were still able to provide a watchdog function for the police, but whether they had ever provided this service in the first place. PI.23 summarised this perfectly with her point that "criticism isn't necessarily the same thing as being a watchdog". A similar point was made by PI.15 who felt that by calling the press a watchdog there was an assumption that journalists and news reporters were a benevolent force acting for the disinterested good of the public. PI.15's concern, however was that this view overlooks the fact that newspapers and journalists are very often agenda and consumption driven; in which case, should they be viewed as a watchdog.

"I think that certain newspapers have certain agendas... I think the issue probably is that at the end of the day I don't believe that the media necessarily works for the good of the country, it works for the good of its own doesn't it in that they want to be seen to be the first and exclusive or they want to be seen to be being bold and brave in breaking news and I'm not sure that that comes with a lot of sense of responsibility to realise what the impact of that might be." (PI.15)

3.2.7 Audience

The interviewees were asked three questions regarding audience:

1) Who did the interviewee think was their audience?

2) Did their department use targeted communications?

3) How effective or successful did the interviewee think their team is at communicating with these audiences?

Who is the Audience?

Answers to this question again varied considerably (Fig 3.54); with several interviewees expressing confusion over how to talk about the topic and four stating that they did not know:

> "I think the easiest answer is at the moment we don't know enough to stipulate who our audiences are. Broadly speaking, everyone is potentially a stakeholder at some point, you know, while they live within the area". (PI.22)

Just under half (48%) said that their audience was "everyone" (PI.1); some interviewees like PI.24 qualified that statement by saying that they meant "anyone who needed to contact the police for any reason" while others like PI.6 differentiated between audiences and clients:

> "Our audiences? There's a difference between audiences and clients. So I would say our audiences are the public. Just the general public of [our area] and I think we have client relationships with everyone internally and the media… as opposed to an audience. I would say audiences are the public we serve. That's got to be our main audience." (PI.6)

Who Is The Police Audience?

No. of Interviewees

Category	Value
Everyone	15
Public, Press and the Third Way	1
Public and Businesses	2
Public, Press and Officers	3
Depends on the Subject	6
Don't Know	4
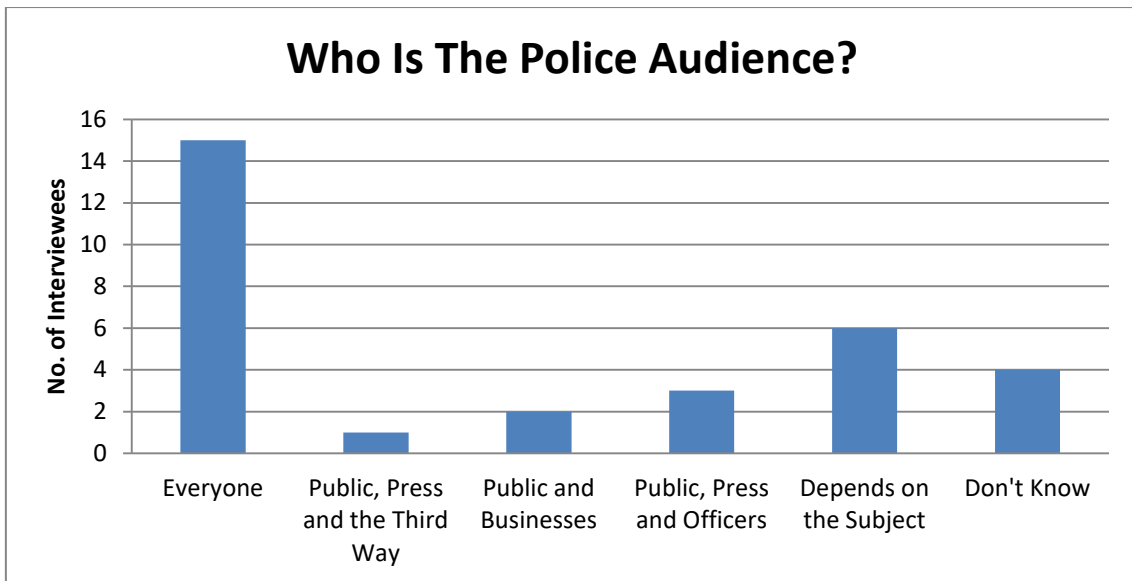
Fig 3.54

Only four interviewees expressly identified the media as one of their principal audiences (PI.3, PI.4, PI.2 and PI.27) and even then most often as secondary to the general public and internal communications. The reason for this was best summarised by PI.3 who explained that his strategy was to "move the direction away from journalists and to citizens, our public".

PI.4 suggested that the press had become only one avenue instead of the only one and so their attention had to be divided now between these different channels and opportunities. According to PI.4 there are three main audiences, the general public, the press and what he referred to as the 'third way'.

> "So firstly we have the general public, then members of the press – those people working in journalism. Then there's the third way [blogs]- which is for people who aren't quite the public and aren't quite qualified journalists, but have massive followings... And of course mostly people are untrained so they're amateurs at it, so they're not as well written. They've certainly not got any journalistic qualifications. They wouldn't know a lie if it came and bit them. But they know if it comes from us, it gives them the literal legal privilege to publish that information, they know they're protected by us." (PI.4)

Other interviewees, however, thought that audience depended very much on the message. For example, PI.25A thought that "it depends completely on what we're talking about". A similar

opinion was expressed by PI.11 who used cybercrime to illustrate his point about the importance of understanding target audiences:

"We have very, very limited defined audiences. So in the case of cybercrime who is your audience? Everyone in county? Well no, it's not. The audience is going to be probably anyone that actually engages online, so if they're not using the internet, they're not going to be at risk of cybercrime. And let's be more specific your risk group is very different for potential online victims of sexual exploitation and that's going to be a very big difference to those at risk of financial exploitation versus those at risk of identity fraud." (PI.11)

The difficulty communicating with audiences who do not wish to engage with the police was a recurrent theme across all the interviews. Opinion was split between PI.20B, who argued for the need to try everything to reach alienated/disinterested audiences through careful targeting, and PI.21's question of whether it was a sensible use of limited resources to try and connect with people who do not wish to talk to the police:

"It's very much people are picky and they decide this is the method of communication I want and that's kind of what they stick with, so we try our best to offer different kinds of communications". (PI.20B)

"The vast majority of time people don't actually want contact from the police. So that's a hard sell from a communication perspective, isn't it, if you're trying to get a message out... No matter how many communication campaigns we do to stop people leaving things in cars, they either don't understand it [or] don't want to read it because it'll never happen to me". (PI.21)

Targeted Communications

Interviewees were asked if their departments differentiate between audiences depending on the message and target them using specific channels (see Fig 3.55). Over half of the interviewees (61%) thought that their departments did use some form of targeting to communicate with specific audiences while seven (19%) said that targeting was not really used (PI.3, PI.7, PI.16), used infrequently (PI.9, PI.21) or used in a haphazard fashion (PI.26). Five interviewees said that their departments did not use targeting at all (PI.2, PI.11, PI.20A, PI.20B,

PI.28) although both PI.11 and PI.20B said that this was something they wished to change in the next year.

Does The Interviewee's Department Use Targeted Communications?
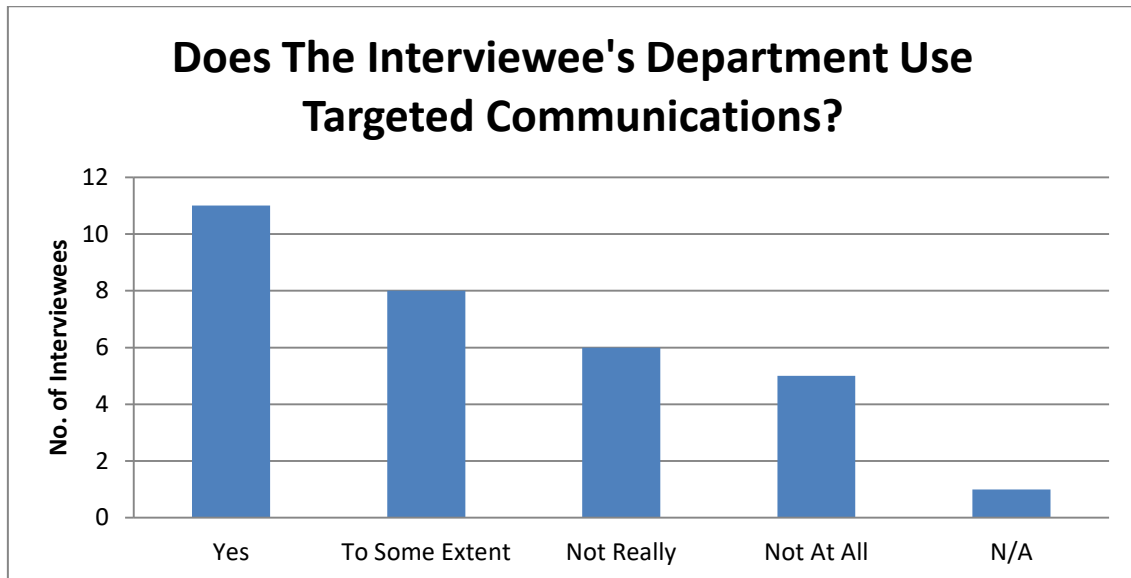
Fig 3.55

There is also variation in how different teams are targeting audiences. Some, like PI.6 and PI.12, target by community, geographic location, age and gender; while other departments, like PI.16 and PI.22, are only using geographic targeting.

> "There'll be certain crimes that affect certain communities and then our comms is targeted. It might be different languages; it might be where we send information, which publications we use, where we might send out officers to deliver leaflets. So we definitely target the different audiences and communities when we need to" (PI.6).

> "In general targeting is only done by geographic location, so targeting a town for a witness appeal where someone was hurt/went missing. But if it's just like a general message each day then we're not thinking right well this message has to be relevant for a specific audience group". (PI.16)

When asked to explain the rationale behind targeting communications to specific audiences, PI.8 explained:

> "why would we blanket everybody about something that actually is only going to hit a small percentage of the city?"

194

This theme was expanded upon by PI.21 who raised the point that audiences want to be communicated with in different ways depending upon the message, the sender and the recipient. PI.21's central concern was that not targeting messages created white noise, or spam effect, which was lessening the impact of the messages.

How Effective is the Team at Reaching These Audiences?

The final question interviewees were asked was to estimate how effective or successful they thought their team was at communicating with their audience (Fig 3.56). Answers ranged from 'Very Good' (19%) to 'Poor' (13%), with two interviewees (6%) replying that they did not know and only one participant refusing to comment. Just under half (42%) thought that their departments were either 'Very Good' or 'Good' at communicating and engaging with their audiences while eleven (35%) classed their efforts as 'Fair' or 'Moderately' successful. The majority of interviewees (71%), however, reported that they thought their departments needed, or had room, to improve when it came to how they communicated with sections of the public; this included several departments like PI.10s who rated their success/effectiveness as 'Good':

> "I don't think we reach everybody as successfully as we should do… and I think we are getting a lot better at targeting them but I still don't think we do everything that perhaps we should do". (PI.10)

For PI.27 one of the central problems facing police forces was in getting the level of targeting right. As PI.27 explained, in his opinion what communications needs is a two pronged approach in order to be more effective in reaching specific audiences; which was something his team were currently exploring, but until they found the right balance effective communication would always be difficult.

> "So you need that sort of double layer of communication strategies. Key one is probably always going to be a geographical one, but you need another layer which is based on ethnicity or different types of community." (PI.27)

Estimated Success at Reaching Audiences

A bar chart titled "Estimated Success at Reaching Audiences" with the y-axis labelled "No. of Interviewees" ranging from 0 to 8. The categories and values are: Very Good = 6, Good = 7, Fair = 4, Moderate = 7, Poor = 4, Not Known = 2, N/A = 1.
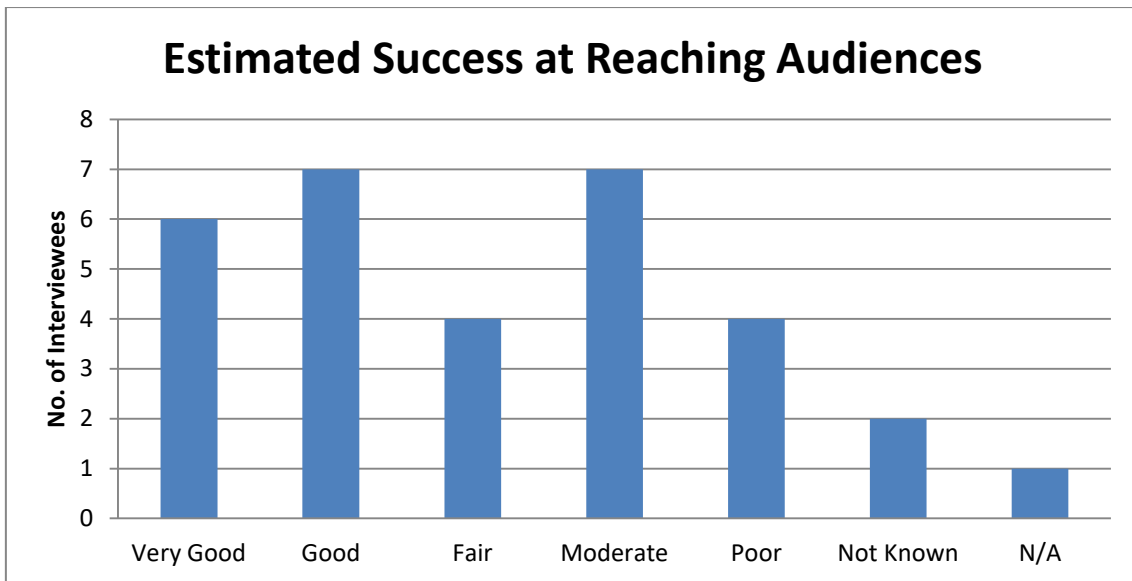
Fig 3.56

PI.28 felt that there was a lot of confusion in her team, and across policing in general, about how to communicate in a reassuring way that reduced fear of crime:

> "I mean we're telling people they should feel reassured, but actually are they reassured by being given information or do they have to be told and the R word used, you can be reassured." (PI.28)

This theme was raised by several of the other interviewees as well (PI.7, PI.10, PI.11, PI.15, PI.17, PI.21, PI.23) who were concerned that campaigns, awareness appeals, and even statements meant to be reassuring could unintentionally increase fear of crime by "making it more visible, more immediate and seem more frequent than they might have been previously aware" (PI.7).

How to engage audiences and create an impact was also a recurrent theme (3.2.8) that many interviewees kept returning to during their interviews. As PI.24 pointed out:

> "So why aren't we chatting? Why aren't we doing more of this? There's always been communities we can't reach. We've always struggled to reach communities; whether they're itinerant and travelling communities, whether they're people that don't want to reach us… So the thing is, there comes a push back, what about the people that don't get it? There will always be people who don't get it." (PI.24)

Similarly, PI.9 commented that:

> "Moderately successful, I would say. I think we do pretty well capturing sort of mid-twenties probably and then older because even the people not captured through digital media are captured in traditional media but I would say it's our younger generation that are the hardest to capture. That's a mixture of them being apathetic-safe or 'Why would I have any interest in the police force?' because they are not home owners, they don't see themselves as having many assets, so there is no risk in it for them. So why would they want or have an interest in the police?" (PI.9)

PI.9's point was reflected in a remark made by PI.2 that one of his greatest challenges was in knowing whether anything they were doing was actually making an impact:

> "We get the message out but whether anyone is a) interested, b) actually paying attention or c) going to do anything with it, we don't know." (PI.2)

PI.21, however, felt that the effectiveness/success at reaching audiences depended entirely on whether or not that audience wished to engage with them rather than how they, the police, were communicating:

> "I think unless that person wants contact with the police, why are we enforcing ourselves on them? So that we can say we've engaged with that hard to reach community, whether they wanted to be engaged with or not. It's like… imagine if the pharmaceutical society said we want to be more inclusive in our communities as a pharmacist. Unless I need a pharmacist, I don't want to go and engage with the pharmacist". (PI.21)

The general trend that emerged from the interviews, however, was that the introduction of social media has had a positive impact upon police force's ability to communicate and engage with different audiences (3.2.5); particularly with 20 – 40 year olds. Although young people, older generations, minority and what PI.22 referred to as "fringe groups" remain a challenge.

3.2.8 Measuring Effectiveness and Success

Interviewees were asked to explain the methods their team employ for measuring the success/effectiveness of their strategies and activities using both news/traditional media and social media channels.

News/Traditional Media

Just over half of those interviewed (52%) had a formal strategy in place to evaluate the success of campaigns/activities that involved the traditional communication channel of the news media. The activities included campaigns, appeals and good news stories. There were two main methods identified by the interviewees for assessing the success of these initiatives; measuring output and assessing outcomes[25]. All of the teams who said that they had a formal strategy had moved away from output to outcome based measures for traditional media. Outcome based measures were again divided into two groups; those which measured an increase/decrease in reporting/information (28%) and those that did an impact assessment comparing the campaign/appeal against the intended outcomes (24%). Of the remaining 12 teams, three opted not to answer the question and nine said that they did not have a formal evaluation strategy at the time of the interview (Fig 3.57).

Traditional Media Evaluation Strategies
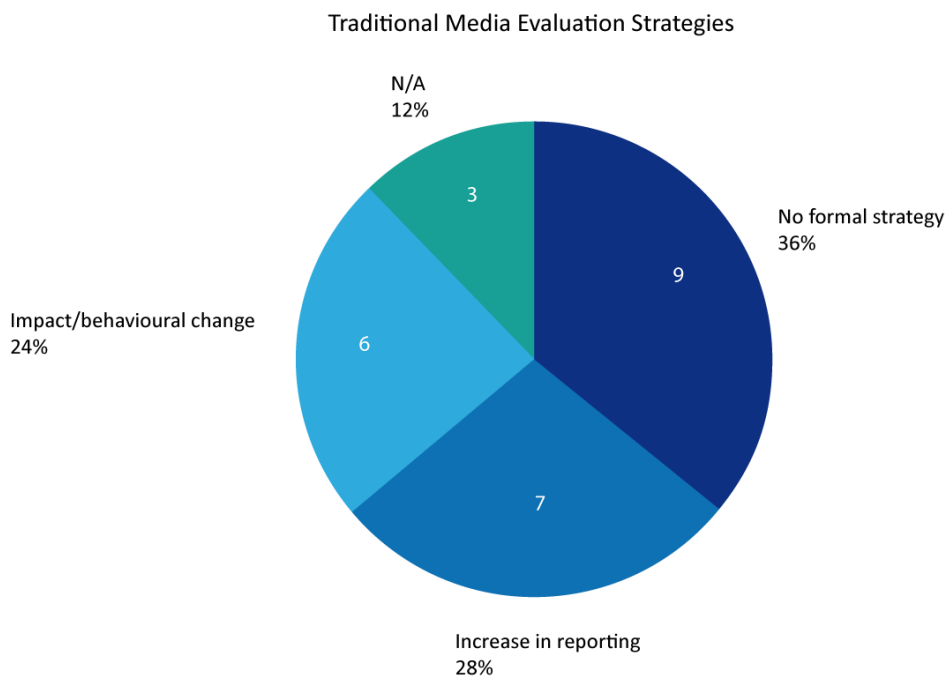
Fig 3.57

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[25] Output focus' on the number of activities whereas outcome is looking at behavioural change

Social Media

With regard to social media there was an increase (76%) in the number of forces who had metrics in place to assess the success of their activities and initiatives (see HMIC, 2014). This increase is most likely due to the widely available, if basic, free online assessment tools that are available through the social media sites themselves. For assessing social media four basic methods were identified during the interviews (Fig 3.58, 3.59).

Fig 3.58 Evaluation Typologies		
Output Based	**Interaction Based**	**Outcome Based**
Reach / Retweets	Interaction / Engagements	Increase in Reporting Impact / Behavioural Change

The most commonly used assessment metric (36%) was based around measuring reach, retweets and reposts. Five forces (20%) did not measure reach but instead assessed the impact of the campaign/appeal in terms of whether there had been a corresponding change in behaviour of the audience it was directed at while three forces (12%) measured interaction/engagement on their sites to determine the reaction of the users to their posts.
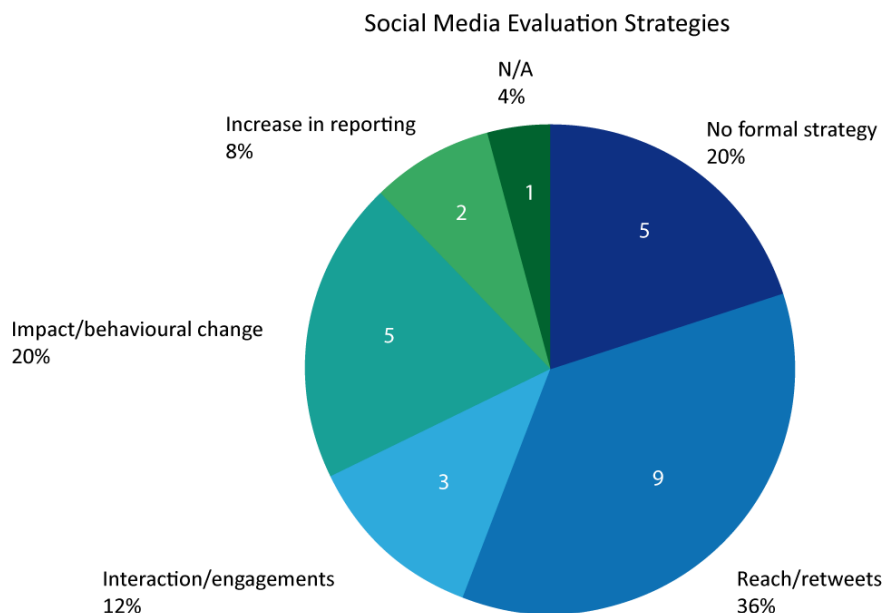
Fig 3.59

Assessing the Effectiveness of the Evaluation Metrics

The interviewees were next asked how effective or useful they thought their assessment measures were (Fig 3.60). Nearly two thirds (61%) replied that in their opinion their current means of evaluating their team's activities were inadequate, principally with regard to social media; while a further three (10%) stated that they thought evaluation strategies "redundant and pointless" (PI.7). In comparison only three (10%) replied that there were satisfied with their assessment methods. With regard to the three interviewees who deemed their methods 'adequate' PI.19A used impact based measurements, PI.9 used output while PI.12 used a combination of all output, interaction and impact.
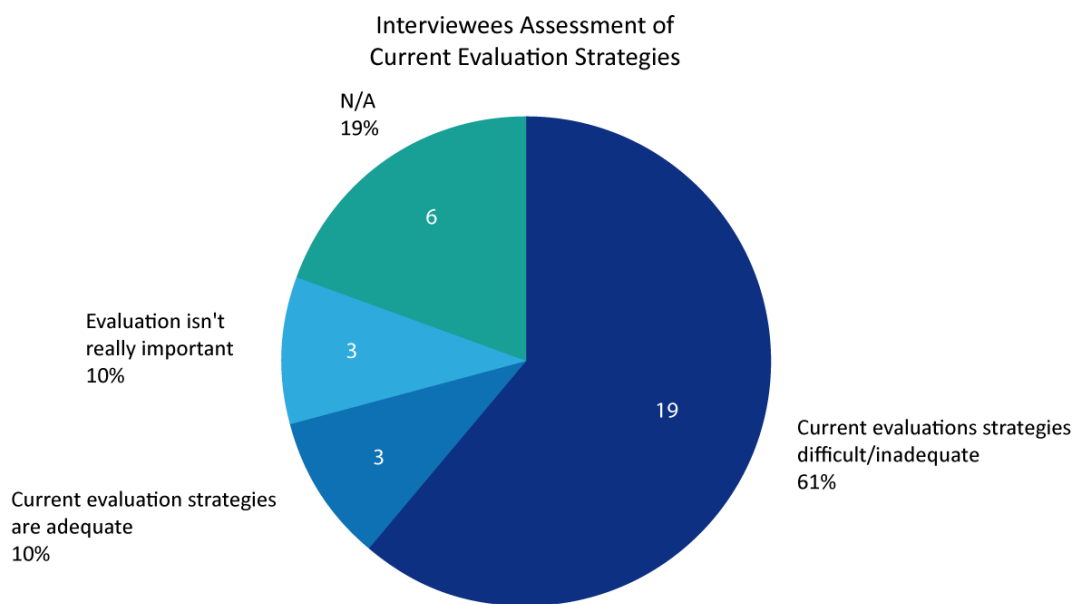
Fig 3.60

Dissatisfaction around measuring effectiveness was a prevalent theme. There was a general feeling across the interviewees that evaluation was a difficulty faced by most police communications teams, and was not something unique or that only a few struggled with.

"The one area that all police forces struggle with is around evaluation and marketing campaigns." (PI.3)

"That's one area where I think we're bad and I think most comms teams are bad." (PI.6)

It is indicative of a wider systemic issues around effectiveness that this view was not just held by the 19 (61%) who classed their strategies as inadequate but across the group as a whole; even by those who thought their strategies were sufficient. For example, PI.12 was concerned by what he saw as the "endemic" difficulty police forces had with designing and implementing suitable assessment measures. There was a clear divide in PI.12's analysis of this situation between how he viewed his team and how he perceived evaluative methods in other forces; particularly with regard to social media, which was his specialty.

> "the whole thing about digital is you can evaluate it too much. The trick is to work out what you want to evaluate when you're starting to plan. What are you trying to generate? Why are you doing it? What's your objective?" (PI.12)

Problems with evaluation can be divided into five broad categories: measurement, analysis, cultural antipathy, time and apathy.

<u>Measurement</u>

Confusion around how or what to measure was one of the two most commonly cited difficulties interviewees were finding with evaluation (35%). According to PI.2 and PI.26 the fundamental question facing communication teams was what does effectiveness look like and once identified, how do you measure it.

> "Part of the problem is that we just don't know what effective looks like in social media. With the press it was easier, but with social media we're trying to do so many different things at the same time…" (PI.2)

> "success is a tricky concept to measure. Is it reach? The number of followers? The Number of retweets/reposts? Likes? Comments? - I don't know! The traditional methods of assessing success aren't yet suitable for using on social media". (PI.26)

How interviewees judged their success appeared to be based upon the metric they used. Output based was generally considered easier to assess, particularly as both Facebook and Twitter provide in-site tools for this sort of analysis. Where problems arose was in determining interaction and outcome based assessments.

"It's really hard, you'll see we put some measures in there. Some areas, the challenge is measuring the outcomes and not the activity and policing is very good at measuring activity and not so good at measuring outcomes." (PI.27)

The interview data shows that there is a division in how assessment strategies were perceived; with those who used interaction or outcome based metrics vocally dismissive of what PI.8 referred to as "vanity stats":

"We've started to move away from what I call the vanity stats. So we're not measuring how many followers we've got. We're measuring the engagement that we're having and actually making what we're doing on those channels more meaningful… Just because something appears in a paper, it doesn't mean you read it. So because something appears in your Facebook feed, it doesn't mean you read it. If you like it, you comment on it. If you put it as a favourite it suggests that you've done some sort of interaction with it and we would class that as an engagement". (PI.8)

This difficulty is further complicated by the problem identified by PI.21 and PI.27 of knowing what it is that you are actually measuring.

"Unless you can prove the thing you're measuring has had an impact, then it doesn't hold any substance. You can't evaluate the benefits of social media unless you create a sterile environment and you can attribute that behaviour to doing that social media, and I don't think we can in most circumstances". (PI.21)

"Trying to separate out the impacts of that from other changes to legislation, alcohol limits and all that is always very very hard". (PI.27)

There is also the further complication, as PI.10 pointed out, that in communications much of their success is in either deterring potential offenders or in preventing an issue from arising; the question then becomes how can you accurately measure or assess an absence?.

"I think it's really hard to say actually because a lot of your bigger successes are things that don't happen…"

Analysis

Seven interviewees (23%) identified analysis as a significant problem. As PI.4 explained – having identified your methods and what you want to assess and having collected the data, how do you make sense of it?

> "I suppose it's the impossible thing, which is the how we evaluate the success of social media in policing. That's my big issue. I can show you the numbers… I can give you examples of success… Now our trouble is, is how do you evaluate? How do you say, we are reaching these people?" (PI.4)

Culture of Antipathy

Several interviewees (20%) expressed frustration at what PI.21 referred to as "the cultural roadblocks" which had led to her communications department traditionally ignoring evaluation. PI.11 reported a similar problem where because of the disinterest shown in communications by the senior management team in his force, communications had suffered both in terms of resourcing and in the cultural attitude towards it which had led to the department being marginalised. PI.11 explained that this culture in the wide force had infected the internal culture of his team and the level of expectation that both his team and officers had with regard to what comms does and can achieve.

> "there's a lot of that in [here] where, even people in my team, they'll be part of a project team and success for them is doing what they're asked, creating a post that they were asked for, writing a leaflet they were asked for, not what are you trying to achieve, how are we going to get there, what do you want to do?" (PI.11)

Time and Resources

One of the essential aspects of evaluation is the time and resources that are necessary in order to do it. For 11 (35%) interviewees this was a significant problem. As PI.6 explained, in order to evaluate how successful/effective their efforts are communications teams require the time, money and manpower to do the evaluation. However, as almost all communications teams have seen significant reductions recently in both their budget and in their staff communications teams rarely have the resources or ability to do a full evaluation.

> "evaluation is something we really need to do that more and I think we're kind of struggling with that at the moment just because of sheer numbers of people that we don't have." (PI.18)

One alternative PI.6 had started exploring was outsourcing the evaluation to a specialist.

> "The last campaign we did... we paid to have a proper evaluation done by an evaluation company. And I think we'll be doing more of that moving forwards with things like that. Because otherwise, it's kind of like, you don't know whether it's done what it needs to do. And generally comms teams don't have the resources or the abilities as such to do much evaluation themselves". (PI.6)

Apathy

Connected to the 'culture of antipathy' described above, three interviewees (10%) said that they thought evaluation was not particularly important for police communications. There difference here was that unlike those in previous group these interviewees agreed with the cultural indifference to evaluation. For PI.26 it was a question of prioritisation and recognising that extensive evaluation would have an impact on the operational capacity of her team. PI.14 and PI.23, however, felt that 'target chasing' in the police distracted attention and resources from the victims and service users who should be their primary concern; particularly as success in communications is very often subjective rather than objective:

> "ultimately in policing it [success] is a very personal, subjective thing, which means we can't properly, and shouldn't, put a measurement on it as this inevitably draws attention away from the victim who should be the first and only concern... The thing is, communications can't be target driven - it ends up destroying, or at least impeding, what you are trying to do". (PI.14)

3.2.9 Areas that need Improvement

The interviewees were asked to identify aspects of their team or strategies which they felt needed improvement. In total 15 interconnected categories were identified (Fig 3.61); ranging from 'social media' as the most commonly cited (45%) area needing improvement, to one interviewee replying "pretty much everything" (PI.11).
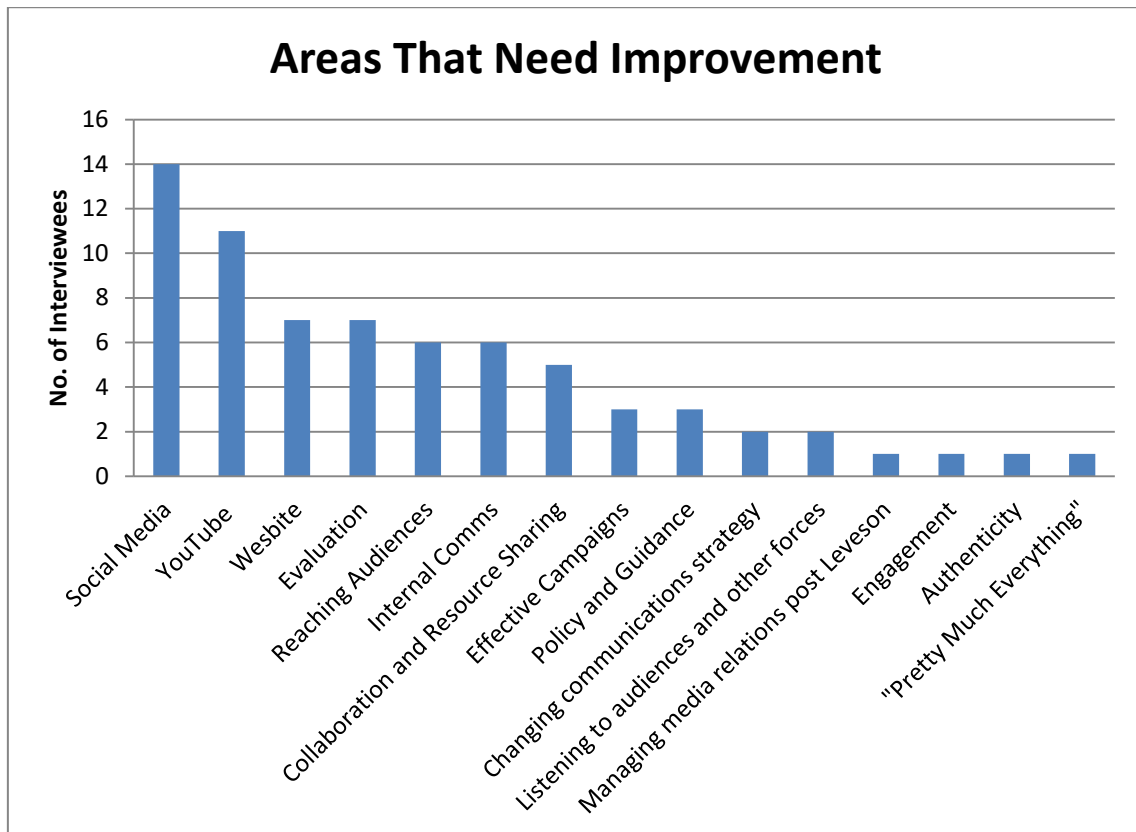
Fig 3.61

The following areas were the top ten areas requiring improvement identified.

Social Media

Nearly half of the interviewees (45%) felt that social media was an area that needed to be improved – particularly with regard to keeping up with changes in the channels and the tone and content of posts.

> "So I think we did very good at the start to get to this stage but when we look at some of the other forces they're really flying with it [social media] and I think we're

maybe a little bit behind now, but that will hopefully change when we get the tools in place." (PI.19A)

YouTube

All but four of the forces interviewed had a YouTube channel. While YouTube, as a social media site, should have been included in the above category in 11 of the interviews a distinction was made by the interviewee between improving their social media presence on Twitter and Facebook and YouTube.

The general consensus regarding YouTube was that it is currently underused and seldom used effectively by most police forces. While there was some evidence of intelligent and integrated use of YouTube as an integral part of the wider communications strategy in four forces (PI.4, PI.6, PI.12, PI.23), for the most part YouTube was considered a "video dumping ground" (PI.26), and frequently an "after thought" when it came to designing and implementing campaigns (PI.7). For PI.17, one of the problems with using YouTube was the change in style it now required which had moved from the "formal, corporate videos and stuff. It's not now, you need to be able to take quick, little, short snap shots".

Websites

Police websites were another area that seven interviewees (22%) were concerned about. In all but one of the teams, the website was considered as the essential "base for everything" (PI.19B), a "central hub of activity and information" that social media should direct people towards (PI.4). 11 teams described their websites as "inadequate to meet current needs" (PI.27); with the seven who identified this problem actually in the process of redesigning the website (See Appendix 3.10). The remaining four teams were dissatisfied but thought that the website was not a significant issue for them at present.

Problems with antiquated technology were again highlighted here by five (16%) interviewees; PI.28 summarised this dilemma - "the website should be a one stop shop but we're working with an antique content management system, I mean it's awful". Money was also an issue cited by some with PI.27 lamenting that:

"I don't think we've got a very good website at the moment. It's poorly designed, doesn't get a massive amount of traffic and certainly since I've been here I've not invested a lot of time in improving it because it's very expensive to do so". (PI.27)

Evaluation

How to evaluate the effectiveness or success of strategies and campaigns is something of an historic issue for police forces (3.2.8). While this was a problem identified by 19 interviewees, only seven included it on their lists of areas needing improvement.

Engagement

See 3.2.7

Effective Campaigns

Three interviewees reported problems with designing effective campaigns. For PI.6 and PI.18 this was due to limited resources.

"we just don't have enough resource at the moment focussing on the creative content side of the business." (PI.6)

PI.16, however, thought the problem around designing campaigns was far more widespread than communications professionals often liked to admit. For PI.16 the central issue was that in her opinion most police forces were confusing crime awareness campaigns with prevention campaigns.

"when lots of communications departments are designing campaigns they are focussing on a mixture of awareness raising and behaviour change and they're not focussing clearly enough on whether they want one or the other… because awareness raising is a completely different type of communication to actually making somebody change the way that they behave and things that'll motivate people to change their behaviour vary depending on what that behaviour is… lots of forces aren't really doing this." (PI.16)

Internal Communications

The absence of effective internal communications was another problem felt strongly by some interviewees (19%). This was particularly interesting as internal communications was identified by 17 (55%) as one of the most important aspects of modern police communications. A common theme was that interviewees felt that the importance of internal communications was dismissed by the senior management as unnecessary (PI.16) or taken away in order to resource something else (PI.3).

> "What is really interesting is that internal communications used to be… almost non-existent… So I produced this review saying they needed that and my line manager at the time, the Deputy Constable… said to me police officers don't need internal communications they do what they're told." (PI.16)

> "We currently have no internal comms function because the view was taken that it made sense to create a big campaigns team… and not have an internal comms function." (PI.3)

Collaboration and Resource Sharing

See 3.2.13.

Policy and Guidance

Three interviewees (10%) felt that there was a lack of coherent guidance available to police forces regarding what was expected of communications and what strategies were working. Guidance around social and digital media was felt to be particularly lacking.

> "there is some guidance on it rather than actual policy but it's so loose really that you can just do whatever you want really. The impact area is if it comes under the area of you could make it fit pretty much anything. I just think that everybody should be working to some fairly fixed rules." (PI.18)

This was particularly frustrating for PI.22 who spent a considerable amount of time talking about the savings, both in terms of time and resources, that communications teams could be making if there were standardised procedures, campaign templates and website templates available from one of the oversight bodies; such as the College of Policing or Home Office.

"This is a conversation that happens a lot at the moment, in an age of massive cuts and austerity… you would think now would be the time to say here's your literature, because burglary's burglary, doesn't matter what force you're in, car crime is car crime, here's your literature, stick your crest on there, go away and use it. Here are your website templates, we need you to tackle these areas, these are the core issues, so simply dropping your priorities and that way we know that everyone's website meets with whatever the Home Office require us to meet... and there are some forces across the country that are spending thousands on various different forms of public engagement and consultancy in order to try and establish what people want from online channels." (PI.22)

Changing the Communications Strategy

See 3.2.4

Listening to Audiences

PI.28 suggested that one of the main reasons why police forces were struggling with changing their communications strategy from 'Push' to more dialogue and interaction based models was because of the historic problems police forces have with listening to their audiences.

"I don't think we're very good at listening sometimes [pause] I think it comes on the back of telling, we're good at telling, we're not so good at listening." (PI.28)

3.2.10 Threats

Interviewees were asked what threats they believed were currently facing their teams. In total fourteen threats were identified (Fig 3.62).
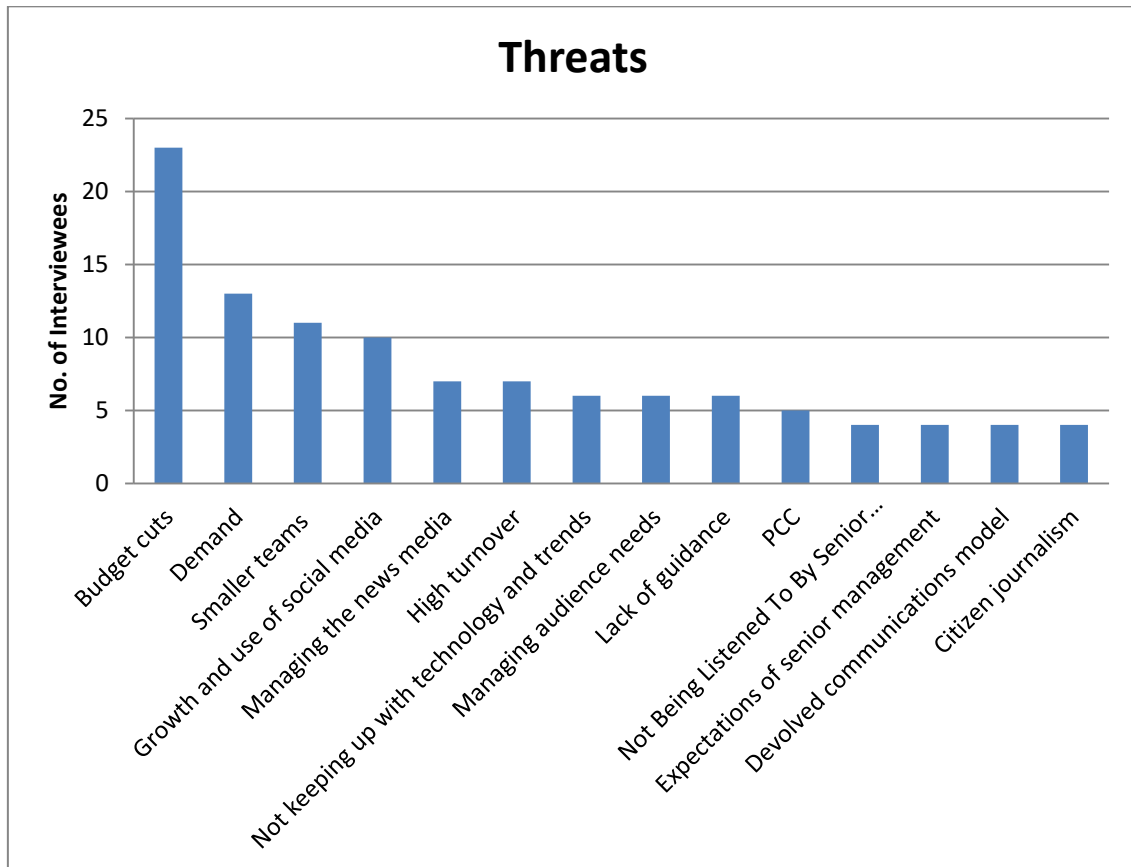
Fig 3.62

The most commonly agreed upon threat was the danger that budget cuts posed to the efficient and effective running of police communications teams (74%). This was a significant concern and was frequently referenced by some interviewees with regard to other questions. As PI.18 explained, inadequate funding is the nexus point from which other threats and problems arise:

> "I think money is the primary threat because money is dwindling and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. So I think that is the one threat and everything else comes after that because from that we could see our team reducing or almost disappearing altogether really." (PI.18)

Demand was another frequently raised threat; with interviewees concerned about how they would manage increased demand with smaller teams. For PI.10, the main threat facing communication teams was the team's inability to meet public demand for services with her current resources:

> "I've had to reduce in other areas and I just don't have the people to be able to provide the service that people want, so I think that is one of the biggest threats". (PI.10)

The pressure identified by PI.10, however, was only part of the problem with demand. As PI.7 explained, budgetary constraints and the growing popularity of social media meant that police officers, and particularly senior officers, were expecting more and more from the communications department in terms of the services they can deliver and the audience they can reach. According to PI.7, such expectations created a high level of pressure and dissatisfaction with the results and outcomes often achieved by these departments. Similar concerns were raised by PI.8, PI.11 and PI.28 who felt that often more was expected of their departments then they were able to realistically deliver.

> "The budget is constantly getting smaller and as people/police officers get more used to new technology they expect more from it for less. Over the last few years, I've noticed that there is a lot more pressure being put on the function of corporate communications in policing – police officers are learning and developing new expectations for what they want out of communications and we're struggling to keep up". (PI.7)

For PI.11, the increasing disparity between available resources and demand for services meant that engagement and confidence levels would sooner or later decrease.

> "we've gone from having had 27 people doing corp comms in 2009 to having 10 now so … yeah I've done the correlations, the drop in confidence levels totally correlates the lack of investment in the gaps in corp comms and engagement activity." (PI.11)

A similar point was raised by PI.12 and PI.14 who both raised concerns over how their teams would cope with increased demand and meeting the changing needs of growing, often diverse, audiences.

> "It's a huge amount of work and this is the challenge now facing policing and certainly a challenge for us, how do we cope with the demand, 24/7. People are beginning to

report incidents and calls for assistance though social media and how does the force respond to that. How can we make sure we pick them up in a timely fashion?" (PI.12)

PI.14, was particularly keen to emphasise what he considered one of the fundamental dilemmas facing police forces; that the more you engage, the more resources you need in order to sustain and respond to it. Police forces looking to optimise communications and engagement through social media are, therefore, taking on a resource intensive channel that is only going to need more investment, not less.

> "the more you engage with people the more they expect and want out of the service
>
> - requiring more resources in order to deal with expectation management. Social media is not 'the easy option' not when it comes to long term management". (PI.14)

PI.14 believed that social media is viewed currently as a "magic bullet solution"; a palliative answer to the need to improve public engagement while simultaneously reducing budgets. The difficulty, as PI.8 explained, is that while there has been a culture shift which has seen social media move from "nice to have" to "an essential"; what has not yet caught up is the organisation's ability to "deliver against that expectation". Social media creates demand for services which with restricted resources are difficult to meet.

For PI.23 and PI.25A, however, increased demand was also a potential threat because of the impact on staff morale and wellbeing:

> "the bottom line is people are over worked, people feel the real pressure". (PI.23)

> "And we're all extremely busy and it's not just the comms that are busy. Every police officer, every staff member have got extra work on. We're all too busy." (PI.25A)

Budget and working environment were also linked by several (7) interviewees to what they described as the high turnover in communications staff.

> "we don't have the money, so people leave when they get a better offer". (PI.28)

This loss of trained police communication professionals was a growing concern with some interviewees. High turnover was blamed for the loss of expert knowledge, increased likelihood of mistakes (PI.23) and contributed to the intra-departmental difficulty with collaboration as the informal sharing network that had previously existed was eroded (PI.2, PI.25A).

"I think a lot of the time they are concerned about loss of skills because of the reduced budgets…" (PI.23)

"but I do find it a lot harder than what it used to be because people don't have the time to share information as much, I used to know all the actual names of the Web Managers in different Forces whereas now I've just lost it." (PI.25A)

Other less commonly mentioned threats included: Lack of appropriate guidance from the College of Policing or Home Office regarding universal aspects like website templates, communication policies and best practice (19%).

"there isn't one website template for the forces, one set of marketing material, but there's also not one set of best practice for social media." (PI.22)

Six interviewees (19%) were concerned about their department's ability to manage the needs of diverse audiences:

"Externally, it's a huge challenge for us to service the different requirements of our demographics". (PI.9)

Four interviewees (13%) thought that one of the threats they faced was not being listened to when it comes to senior management making decisions about the communications department:

"My only worry is we tell them this sort of stuff we told you… and they're like, no we're doing this, shut it down and they end up in a problem because they haven't really listened to the people who are actually doing it." (PI.19B)

19% said that not being able to keep up with the fast moving developments and innovations in technology was a threat to police communications. According to PI.1 "policing cannot afford to be a dinosaur", but that was exactly what they were in danger of becoming with out of date IT systems and a reactive rather than proactive mentality. A further difficulty, PI.9 explained, that her team kept struggling with was how to keep pace with technological and social developments when it comes to social media. PI.9 was concerned that police forces would fail to keep their online audience due to lack of planning and remaining on sites when the audience had moved on to something new.

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"just keeping pace… presents challenges operationally for policing but also for us from a communications perspective actually, which channels we should be investing time and effort in versus those that we don't. Do we keep it simple and develop certain channels massively and not worry about some of the other emerging ones but actually then we could get left behind the curve". (PI.9)

One example PI.9 gave of this dilemma was Facebook. Experts started suggesting in 2013 that Facebook would be a "dead site" within a few years. Instead of this occurring as predicted, Facebook has continued to grow and is now their most promising tool for engagement.

13% of interviewees thought that citizen journalism and "spot light reporters" posed a threat. As PI.7 explained, one of the growing problems was the lack of legal knowledge around what can and cannot be posted regarding people and events.

"Citizen journalism is more an inconvenience than a problem – the usual policy is to ignore it unless we can't. By comparison, however, the new generation of crime journalists are a big problem for [us]. With the death of the dedicated crime reporter we've seen a rise of spotlighting reporters – journalists who do a bit of this, a bit of that and a bit of crime on the side. The problem is with this approach is that these reporters really don't understand the reporting rules in place – especially since Leveson – and so report things wrongly, libellously, slanderously or on occasion illegally". (PI.7)

The above concerns about budget and meeting the increasing demand for services raises the question: is there a 'critical mass' when it comes to department size; and below which a communications department significantly loses effectiveness? Given the current economic situation it also raises the question of whether police communication departments are, as PI.6 and PI.25B believes, nearing the tipping point.

The final threat identified by 16% is Police Crime Commissioners taking control of police communications:

"I guess a couple of threats are obviously, some have got issues with the police and crime commissioners who have stolen some of the corporate communications teams." (PI.6)

Although only 16% of the interviewees classed this as a 'threat', concern about this development was raised later by over half of the interviewees (58%) (see 3.2.10).

3.2.11 Police Crime Commissioners

Following the data collected in 3.1.4 regarding who had operational oversight/control of police communications, interviewees were asked who had oversight in their force (Fig 3.63). Five (20%) of the communications teams were either part of the PCC's portfolio (3) or, in the case of PI.18 and PI.28, had been with the PCC's office but had recently moved back to the Chief Constable. The remaining twenty teams (80%) remained under the control of the Chief Constable.

Operational Control /
Oversight of Police Communications

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)
12%

3

Was PCC But Now Back With Chief Constable
8%

2

20

Chief Constable
80%
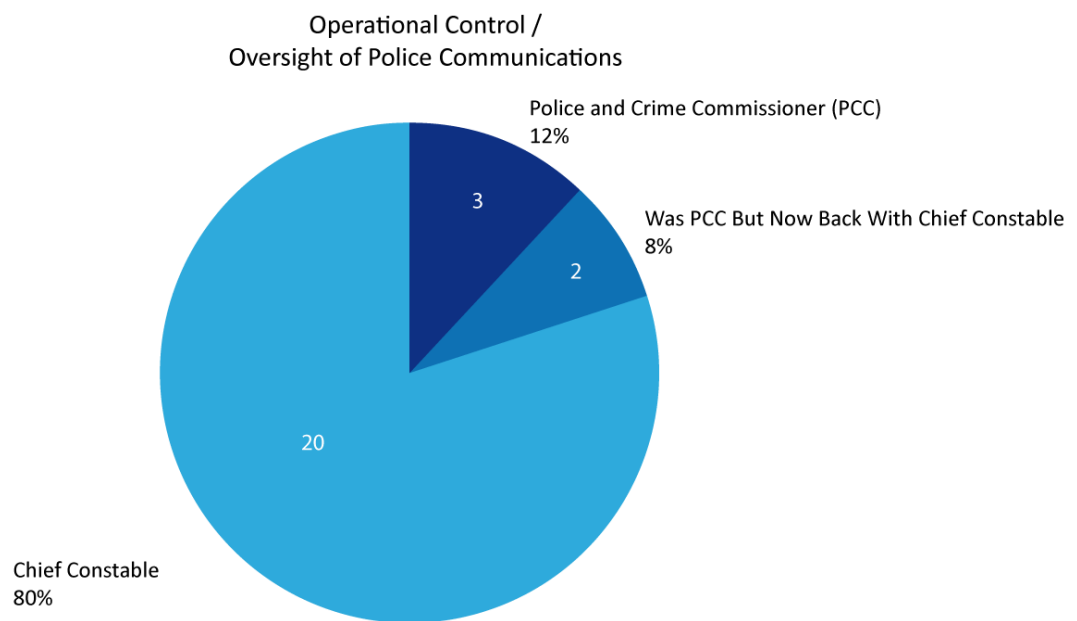
Fig 3.63

Interviewees were then asked what they thought of PCCs taking over control/oversight of police communication teams. As Fig 3.64 shows, reactions were mixed between those who supported the change and those who, to varying degrees, did not.

Interviewee's Opinion On PCC Control of Police Comms

N/A
13%
4

It's a good idea / Situation is working well
13%
4

Neutral
16%
5

Very against
19%
6

Difficult situation to manage
39%
12
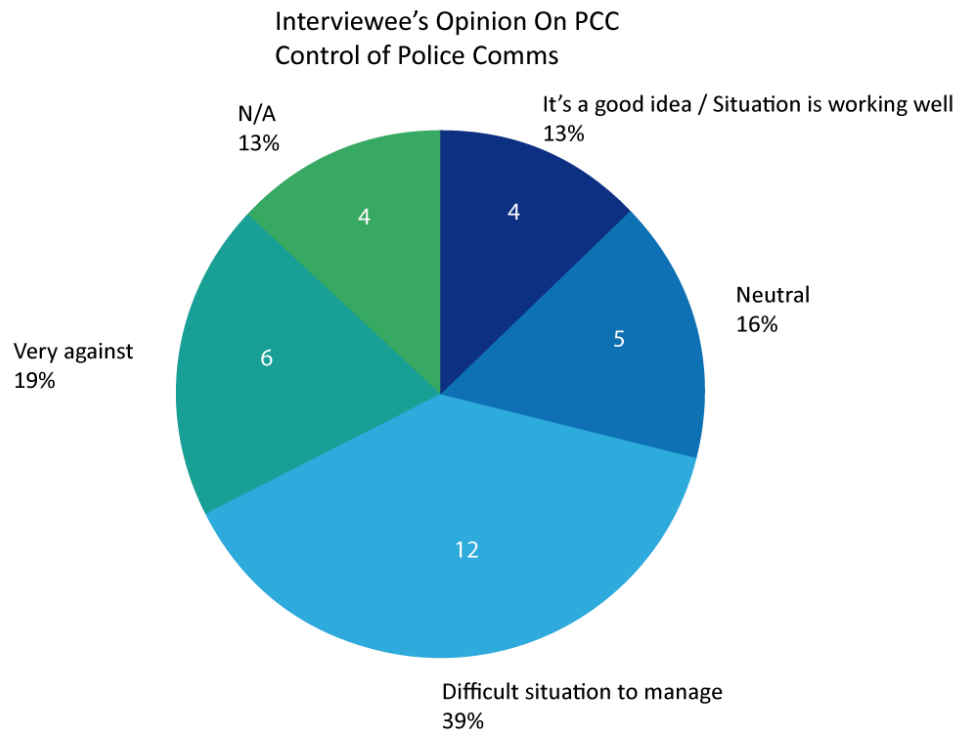
Fig 3.64

For

Four interviewees (13%) thought the situation was working well. It is important to note, however, that three of these four interviewees (PI.13, PI.18 and PI.28) were in the teams controlled by the PCC and the fourth (PI.9) felt that there was a high degree of overlap between police and PCC communication requirements:

> "A lot of our work is structured around – our proactive campaign work is structured around the PCC priorities but if I am honest, I'm quite comfortable with that because there are the things that public have set their priorities what's key to them… So, it makes sense that we adopt them from a campaign perspective." (PI.9)

A slightly different view was expressed by PI.18 who explained that while he had found little difference during his tenure under his PCC, he was concerned about possible problems come election time for the PCCs:

> "[A]s it turned out with the day to day it didn't seem to make a lot of difference at the time because we were still primarily doing things for the force. So I think the focus of all the work we were doing was all around delivery of the police and crime plan. Of

course the PCC's plan is actually the work the force should be doing anyway, so we didn't really get marred in any of the politics of things; that might be different when it comes to the next PCC election because politics will come into play a bit then; but then they have their own comms lead now."

PI.13 was by far the most definite in his support of joint communication teams for PCC and the police. Like others, PI.13 said he had initial concerns about the practicalities, but had found the situation worked in his force as the people involved wanted to make the situation work.

"I was bit wary about it at first as to whether it would work... like I said at the start it's all down to individuals in the end. And if you can get on with the people that you're dealing with then you're fine but if there's any awkwardness or they're doing things off the cuff without consulting you then or telling you what's going on then it could be incredibly awkward. I know that happens in other places but as far as I'm concerned here it's working and working very well..." (PI.13)

PI.28, on the other hand agreed that while the situation worked in her force and could work in others, she believed that this was largely down to their PCC being an Independent rather than affiliated with a specific political party.

"Yeah, it works, I mean, you know, we're professionals, you know, I work for the Commissioner, the Commissioner has an agenda of what she needs to achieve during the year of what her responsibilities are, what she has to deliver on, so I will work to that agenda. But it works because she's an Independent. I'm not sure how it would work if she wasn't." (PI.28)

Neutral

Five interviewees (16%) were neutral when asked for their opinion. In four cases, the interviewee was obviously uncomfortable with the question and refused to be drawn into giving a more in-depth answer. In the final instance (PI.1), he explained that his answer was evasive because he felt that he lacked the knowledge to comment on the situation. It is important to note here that while these answers were all quite non-committal, all interviewees in this group stated their belief that PCC control of police communication would not work in their force.

"It seems to work in some forces. It's unlikely to happen here as [the PCC] is keen to keep his office separate from the police force. I think it needs to stay separate otherwise how can the PCC hold policing to account and ensure transparency?" (PI.2)

While PI.11 initially gave a neutral response he later returned to this topic to explain that he thought that PCC's had taken control of police communications departments because they had misunderstood the role of these departments and saw them as a "political press office"; which also accounts for why several of the PCC's have now returned the department to the Chief Constable's portfolio.

"[the PCC here] presumed that the Chief Constable must have like a private office managing their profile and managing their perception. And when they came into being he said okay, we accept we can't have all corporate communications functions but can we have the part of it that delivers and drives the chief officer's personal profiles, well, we don't have a function that does that." (PI.11)

Against

The majority (58%), however, replied that they were either "very against"[26] (6) or thought the situation was a bad idea as it was untenable in the long run (12). Opposition to PCC control of police communications fell broadly into two distinct groups;

1) Those who felt that police communications was part of operational policing and, therefore, not something the PCC should be involved in (PI.3, PI.4, PI.5, PI. 6, PI.8, PI.19A, PI.19B, PI.24, PI.25A, PI.25B and PI.26).

2) Those who felt it compromised openness, transparency and encouraged politicisation of the police (PI.10, PI.12, PI.14, PI.15, PI.16, PI.17, PI.21, PI.22, PI.23).

Operational Communications

Communications has become an increasingly essential component of modern policing with the communications department now often viewed as part of operational policing (3.2.2). This change in perception has significant implications for PCC control of the department as the PCC is not meant to be involved in the operational aspects of the police force. As PI.26, however, pointed out:

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[26] PI.14

"The PCC should have no control over operational policing but when they take over the comms team it veers dangerously into this territory". (PI.26)

This dilemma over the operational position of the police communications department was a frequently cited concern; particularly with regards to PCC control and whether it would, or could, lead to the politicisation of the police and what it meant in terms of openness and transparency.

Openness, Transparency and Politicisation

The central concern, however, appeared to be around whether communications professionals could be "the servant of two masters" (PI.7) without compromising the image of openness and transparency police forces had been working towards. As PI.12 explained, the PCC was brought in to hold the Chief Constable and police force to account; such a situation requires a level of distance between the two – distance which is eroded when the Chief Constable and PCC have the same voice.

"My view is it needs to [be separate] because the PCCs were always to hold the Chief Constable on the force to account. So at times there may be issues where the PCC needs to be saying something negative about the police. So how can the police comms team be in that position and defend itself, or whatever, and the PCC is about strategic direction of the organisation. We're about the operational delivery." (PI.12)

PI.22 expanded upon the idea of there being a conflict of interest by citing a recent example in Lincolnshire police where the Chief Constable had been fired by the PCC and there was a shared communications department. PI.22 was forceful in expressing his concerns over the ethics of the situation and the return to what he considered 'bad public relations' with PCC's preoccupations with promoting themselves.

"Huge, huge conflict of interest… Communications was a huge bugbear, because it didn't take a genius to figure out that they wanted a certain amount of control of what went out, so they could be seen to be delivering on their manifestos and they could be seen to be meeting the needs of the public. We argued right from the word go that there would be a huge, huge impact on the level of trust between the police and the press, the PCC and the press. There would be this massive conflict of interest, because it wasn't by any means unthinkable to be in a situation where the PCC is calling the Chief to account, but we're doing both sets of comms for it. So

we're defending the Chief, but we're also doing the PCC stuff and as if by magic Lincs Police then went through that process where, you know, the PCC fired the Acting Chief Constable at the time and it just acted as the demonstration that we needed. So how would you deal with that if you were one comms office? Because ethically it's all wrong…" (PI.22)

PI.23 was the most vociferously opposed to the idea of PCC control, stating several times that she had threatened to leave her job if the PCC took her department as she felt it would be impossible to successfully manage the dual nature of the role without compromising the integrity of at least part of the role. PI.23 was also concerned about the problems which would come with the PCC election – a concern that was echoed by both PI.18 and PI.21.

"I said I couldn't do it. If they did that here I wouldn't be here to do that dual role. I know lots of people that do, do a head of comms for both PCC and the force and I have said here quite openly I would not be here to do it, I couldn't do it because for me I always see it as like doing PR for an energy company and for the energy regulator, you can't provide that level of advice to both at the same time so no, people do the job, some do the job pretty well I'm not convinced that when things got hard that they could still do that and I think as we head to the election it's going to get increasingly difficult… it's sad really and doomed for me to collapse at some point because you can't operate like that…" (PI.23)

These concerns came principally from forces where the department had not moved over to the PCC. It is, therefore, interesting that PI.13, whose department was one of those under PCC control, felt that these were ultimately "non-issues" that could be managed:

"Well one thing that Police and Crime Commissioners can't do whatever they take over is deal with operational policing. So generally our news branch for want of a better phrase deals with operational policing so however big and bold they are if the Crime Commissioner come in and said "I don't want you to answer that" I can tell him to push off because it's nothing to do with him." (PI.13)

3.2.12 Public Confidence

One trend that became apparent very quickly during the early interviews was the connection the interviewees believed existed between public confidence and their work as the police voice. Interviewees were asked four questions relating to public confidence:

1) Did the interviewee think that public confidence was still important for the police?
2) Was public confidence still measured by their force?
3) Did the interviewee think there was a 'crisis of confidence' in policing?
4) What did the interviewee think were the causes of this 'crisis'?

The results obtained from the interviewees were mixed and showed surprising disparity across all four questions considering the homogenous view often taken by the media, politicians and academics concerning public confidence (1.3).

Is Confidence Still Important?

Answers ranged from those who felt that public confidence was still very important as it is "one of the fundamental reasons behind our work" (PI.26) to those like PI.22 who said that they thought it was: "Yeah, stupid idea, let's get rid of it".

Just under half (48%) of interviewees felt that confidence in the police was still important while 36% answered that they thought it was either no longer an issue for the police or too difficult and complicated to accurately measure or influence (Fig 3.65). Seven (23%) said that they thought confidence was more a political matter than a policing one. For PI.1, confidence was still important "only because politicians have made it important". This view was reflected in the answers given by PI.13, PI.15, PI.17, PI.21, PI.22 and PI.24.

For PI.23, confidence was a complicated issue, but it remained a central issue because her force had experienced what happened when certain communities were alienated from the police force.

> "I do think it's a massive factor because we've lived it. In areas where we've had problems because people don't feel as though they're going to get listened to nobody tells us anything because they have no confidence that they will be protected, that we will be able to deal with it, that we are taking the issue seriously so you can see how that impacts. There are other factors affecting public confidence, absolutely the

stuff that we're doing here in terms of communication is important but there will be other factors that impact on peoples' confidence."

Is Confidence Still Important?

N/A
16%

5

Yes
48%

15

Not Really – More
a Political Matter
23%

7

4

No
13%
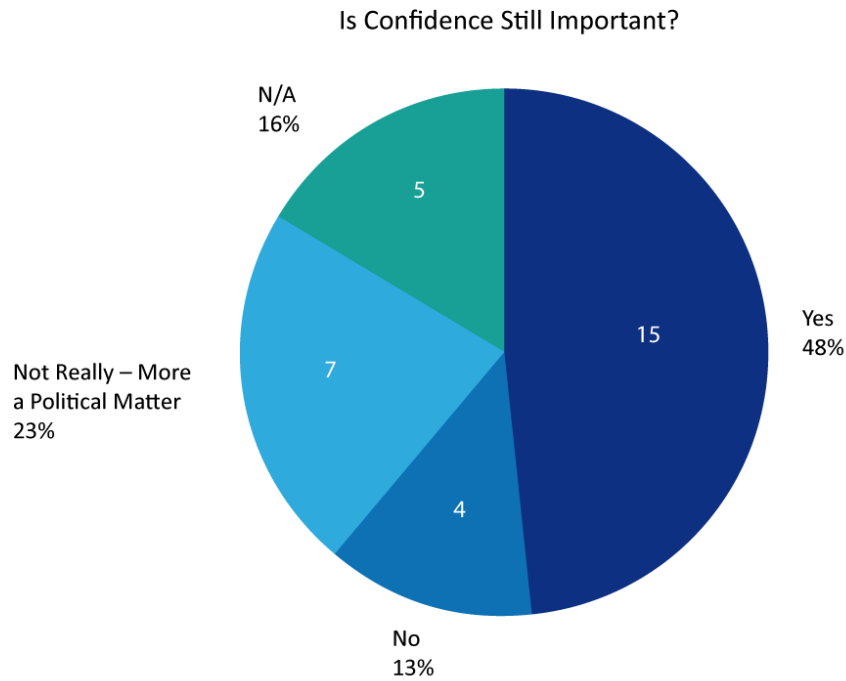
Fig 3.65

Is Confidence Still Measured in the Interviewee's Force?

Answers to this question ranged between 'Yes', with just over half of the interviewees, to four saying they no longer measured it and eight either declining to answer or unsure of whether their force still collected this information or not (Fig 3.66). Several interviewees (PI.4, PI.6, PI.7, PI.8, PI.12, PI.15, PI.21, PI.28) used this question as a gateway in order to discuss the problems they had with measuring confidence, or using it as a target.

**Is Confidence Still Measured
Regularly by Their Force?**

N/A
28%

8

Sometimes
4%

1

15

Yes
54%

No
14%

4
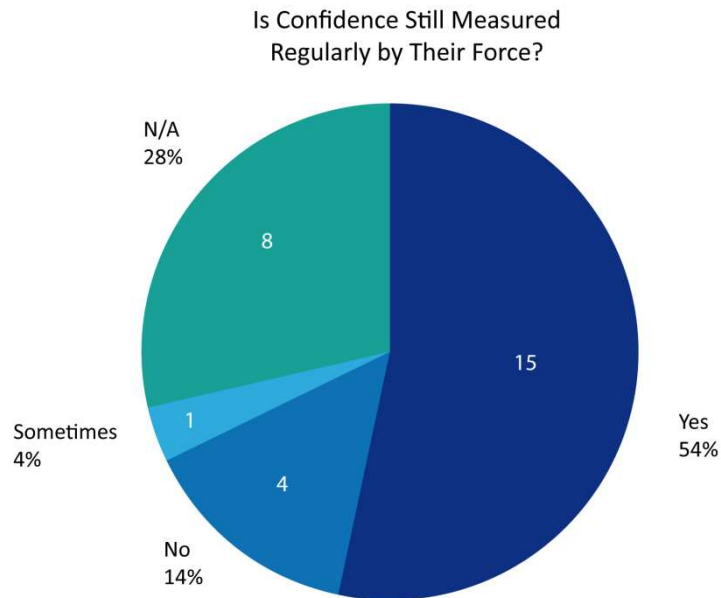
Fig 3.66

Eight interviewees (28%) expressed serious misgivings and concerns over what PI.9 described as "deep rooted methodological problems" with how confidence is measured and understood . As PI.4 explained, one of the significant difficulties facing their current method is firstly, knowing what it is that you are measuring and secondly, understanding what the data means.

> "I think it's really hard because it tells you what it tells you. I know that sounds stupid, but it tells you if this group of people, who you've approached think this. I think we probably need to get a bit more sophisticated in terms of how we do it. But I'm not quite sure what that sophisticated way of doing it is yet." (PI.4)

PI.9 discussed how she had recently changed the way confidence questions were asked and measured in her force as she felt that the old methodology was biasing the results. A similar difficulty was reported by PI.15:

> "That is a difficult one isn't it, because… actually phrasing the question in a way that doesn't prompt people to a positive or negative response is actually a science." (PI.15)

For PI.28, however, problems with measurement had a far deeper root, and centred in understanding how people are defining and understanding confidence.

> "You know, what is confidence? Confidence that an officer's going to turn up? Confidence that when you ring you're going to get your query answered? If we don't know, then what are we measuring?" (PI.28)

PI.8, on the other hand, identified a different problem entirely with the concept of public confidence, that there was a question over whether the underlying assumption driving confidence as an issue was actually correct:

> "We measure it because it's one of the measures that we're measured against by the Home Office…There was a big piece of work done by Cambridge University that was released this month around actually does engagement affect confidence… [and it] contradicts everything that we've put in place... basically, they conclude that there is no correlation between engagement and confidence, which kind of blows our measures of engagement right out the water." (PI.8)

Over half of the interviewees (58%) suggested that engagement and victim satisfaction were more reliable and useful measures for police forces. Some, like PI.7, identified satisfaction as being more directly actionable for police forces:

> "Satisfaction is much easier to measure and of more use in a practical sense - we can do something to improve satisfaction; confidence on the other hand…" (PI.7)

While others, like PI.20A, focused on using satisfaction as a way of improving trust and changing public perception

> "Victim satisfaction is really important - it's at the heart of the circle of trust; if victims have a good experience of the police their friends and families know about it and the circle of trust expands organically." (PI.20A)

Is There a 'Crisis' in Confidence?

Again, answers to this question varied greatly and were at times quite contradictory (Fig 3.67). 80% of interviewees said that they did not agree with the word 'crisis' either because they thought if there was a crisis then it was not affecting their area (39%), that it was manufactured by politicians and the media (13%), or that there was no crisis at all (29%). Only

two thought that there was a 'crisis', PI.5 and PI.20A, but even they later qualified their statements as confidence not being considered a particular problem for their force.

> "there are issues nationally at the moment as we all know, public confidence is not where it should be and where it needs to be, but it is pretty okay here." (PI.5)

Is There A Crisis of Confidence In Policing?
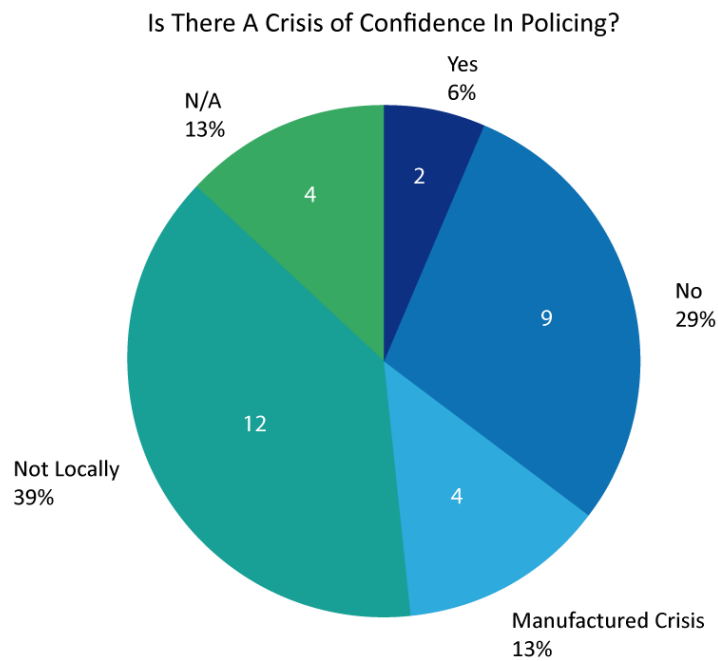
Fig 3.67

With regard to those who did not think there was a crisis, the dominant opinion (39%) was that if there was then it was not affecting them locally.

> "I think confidence is really interesting because I think the, sort of, national stories that we've had running recently so you know, Plebgate and all of the [pause] Hillsborough and all of the integrity issues… there's been a lot of issues recently but if you look at the confidence stats and satisfaction stats, actually people are still pretty happy with their local police force, so I think people don't think that this is their police". (PI.10)

Four interviewees expressed the opinion that the 'crisis in confidence' was more a political invention than a reality:

"Yes and No. Politicians certainly want us to think there is a crisis and maybe there is on a national level - but on a local one, in this county confidence has remained steady". (PI.1)

"No! No, it's not true if you assume that the public attitude survey that we do every quarter, is accurate… One of our [senior officers] last week… made this point that journalese and political circles as well have referred to crisis of confidence in policing, it's not born out by what the public say". (PI.27)

Nine interviewees thought there was no 'crisis'; although as PI.6 pointed out there are aspects which need improvement.

"I think confidence generally in the police is still fairly high. If you look at all the polls, etc. They're still pretty good. I don't think that there's a general sense that their confidence in the police is lacking… there tends not to be a massive correlation between a big national story about how bad the police are, with then how your local people feel about you as a force. I think it's a very localised thing... But I genuinely don't believe there is a massive issue with confidence in the police in this country. I think there are pockets that need improving and we still need to do more work with our BME communities across the board... And I know a lot of forces are doing work on that, but it's difficult." (PI.6)

One of the clearest themes that became apparent, however, was the distinction the interviewees felt existed in the minds of the general public when it came to 'the local police' and policing in general. The essence of this was captured by PI.1 who was the first to propose that such a distinction existed:

"I think that there are two levels of police identity - the local and the national, which is usually confused with the MPS" (PI.1)

This theme was later expounded upon by PI.10 who reported that in her area she had noticed that widespread confusion over how local policing sits within the national context had a significant impact on how people responded to questions around confidence in the police.

"I think it's really interesting because I think people do and don't think of it as a, kind of, homogeneous body, I don't think people understand how policing works… So I think they get a bit confused, I think people think there are their local police… and

then I think, they think, there is some other sort of police that sits above that and I don't think they really understand quite how that works… and that leads to confusion when we ask questions about confidence". (PI.10)

This theme was followed on four occasions by the interviewee reflecting on the futility they felt in trying to alter public confidence, or perception, of the police as "nothing we try here seems to work when you have national things going on in the background " (PI.7).

According to PI.18, part of the problem around police identity is that police forces are trying to create and maintain two very different personas and present them to the same audience; that of reassurance and deterrence. For PI.18 police forces had, under New Labour, fallen into the trap of numbers chasing when it came to confidence levels and it has been a difficult mind set to leave behind; which is why some forces are still concerned about confidence figures. In chasing the elusive concept of improved confidence, PI.18 thought that police forces had forgotten or overlooked the natural dichotomy in their image and roles which meant that 100% popularity and confidence was not only unachievable but also counterproductive.

"We don't want everybody to like us because there are some people that we want to be scared of us really. I think some of that has been lost over the years because everybody knows their rights now don't they… we will never win everyone over these days because not everyone are nice are they - that's the thing." (PI.18)

Similar thoughts were expressed by PI.7, PI.13, PI.14, PI.21, PI.22 and PI.28 who concurred with PI.18's statement. PI.7 and PI.21 proposed that a reasonable level of fear was conducive and even essential for modern policing:

"we need people to be a bit afraid, don't we – that way they'll take the proper precautions, lock their doors and stuff, avoid speeding. So, yeah – a bit of fear is useful thing" (PI.7)

This was not a unanimous view, however; PI.2, PI.11 and PI.20A well all vocal in their agreement that fear of crime was one of the most significant hurdles to improving the police-public relationship.

What also became apparent from the data collected was that there was no clear pattern emerging from the interviews with regard to the two forces who felt there was an issue with public confidence. From the literature research in Chapter 1, it was hypothesised that the

interviewees most likely to report a 'crisis in confidence' were those who had large pockets of BME populations in poor districts. This was not the case. Of the two interviewees who answered 'Yes', both were from rural counties with low BME populations. The two metropolitan forces and three urban forces interviewed all disagreed with the popular assessment that there was a 'crisis of confidence'.

Causes of the 'Crisis in Confidence'

Opinion was again divided when it came to the factors interviewees felt contributed to the perception of there being a 'crisis' in confidence. Only 22 interviewees felt comfortable answering this question, with nine electing not to answer.

Engagement

Of those interviewees who did answer the largest group (7) agreed with PI.11's assessment that lack of adequate police engagement was at the root of problems around confidence.

> "We've moved from being – 2000 to 2010, the second highest confidence levels in the country out of 43 forces that were in that assessment to now 20. All of that, yeah I've done the correlations, the drop in confidence levels totally correlates to the lack of investment in the gaps in corp comms and engagement activity." (PI.11)

This view, however, was challenged by PI.9 and PI.21 who raised the question of whether knowledge increases confidence or fear.

> "there's research that says that people feel more engaged when they have more information but on the other side of it, there's also an awful lot of research which shows that more information people have about something, the less confident they feel. It's almost like are only more confident in ignorance. The 'apathetic safe' we call them." (PI.9)

Public Expectation

Four interviewees thought that unmanageable public expectations were the greatest contributing factor, made worse by the unrealistic portrayals of policing in fiction. As PI.18 succinctly summarised - the police are "victims of our own success"

> "you know you watch the Inspector Morse of this world or whatever the current one is. It is obviously miles away from the reality of everyday policing because you've got

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a copper who spends all of his time leisurely investigating one incident where as in reality they would probably be investigating two dozen incidents at once and going from here to there and doing all sorts of things… I think it's we've not managed expectations that well in the past because everybody knows when they ring the doctors for an appointment they're probably not going to get in that morning are they?... People by and large tend to live with that really but that a police officer won't be there immediately for everything still seems to wind people up a lot really." (PI.18)

<u>Politicians</u>

PI.1 and PI.10 both thought that confidence was an issue created by politicians for their own benefit:

"Politicians like having something they can fight for or against. Confidence is just one of their long standing favourites". (PI.10)

<u>Dual Identity</u>

For PI.18 and PI.12 the fundamental problem confronting the police was that they are trying to wear two irreconcilable hats simultaneously; that of beloved bobby and the law enforcer. As PI.12 explained:

"We are the ones that come running towards you when you need us, but we're also the ones who will come and, if you're breaking the law, deal with you and issue you a fine for speeding. And that's the classic divisive issue; one of the biggest issues of concern in our communities is speeding and parking…. Crime hardly ever appears as being their issues that they want us to address. But nobody wants anybody to speed down their street, but you're happy to speed down somebody else's." (PI.12)

A similar point was mentioned by PI.24 who suggested that policing is something that "everyone likes in principle, so long as it doesn't affect me".

<u>Inherited Opinion</u>

PI.22, on the other hand, suggested that the central problem was inherited views about the police. As PI.22 explained, a lot of the engagement problems his force faced were caused by the inherited subculture of their audiences. These subcultures very often maintain an

antipathetic relationship with the police; which makes engagement and dialogue based communication difficult.

> "a lot of it [when it comes to confidence] is inherited… So you've almost ended up with maybe two or three generations whose whole… perception of policing is this well they're just a government heavy-handed bunch of idiots that'll come in and sweep up afterwards and… it does translate down, it is passed down into this generation. That child then grows up at least with no trust or confidence in the policing, they're certainly not going to want to report anything to us or speak to us about any problems that they might have, because they've been fed this staple diet of if you don't pack it in I'm going to have you arrested by that copper over there…"

3.2.13 Collaboration and Awareness

Collaboration has become an increasingly popular suggestion as a means of improving operational efficiency and reducing costs for police forces   (4.4). Four forces have a shared communications department; West Mercia and Warwickshire, and Suffolk and Norfolk. In order to determine the extent of collaborative efforts, or whether more department mergers are likely in the future interviewees were asked three questions.

1) Whether the interviewee's force was in a formal collaboration agreement with either another force or partner agency regarding communications.
2) What the interviewee's stance was on collaboration for police communications.
3) Any potential problems with collaboration.

Collaboration

Interviewees were asked if their force was in a formal collaboration with another force or partner agency over communications and if they were not, whether this was something that they were considering (Fig 3.68). Nine departments (36%) are currently in a formal collaboration with either another force (28%) or partner agency (8%). Nearly two thirds of departments (64%), however, are not collaborating over communications although four forces (16%) were in discussions about collaboration at the time of the interview; two (8%) looking at collaboration with a neighbouring police force and the other two (8%) exploring the possibility of sharing resources with a partner agency. By far the largest group, at nearly half of the departments covered during the interviews, stated that they were not currently collaborating and did not expect this to change in the foreseeable future.
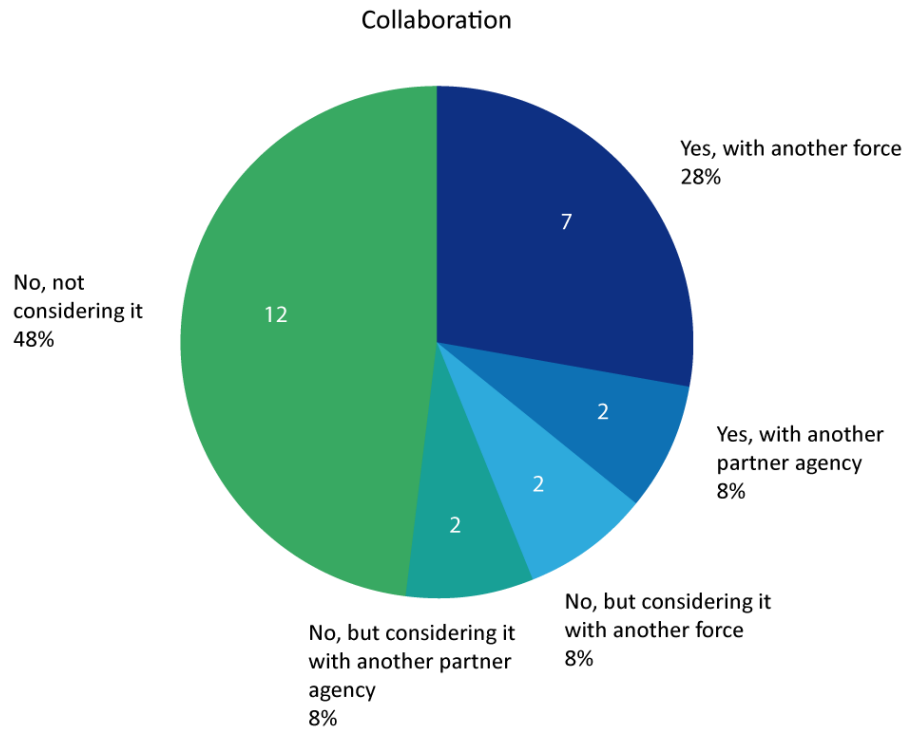
Collaboration

Fig 3.68

Attitude towards Collaboration

Interviewees were then asked how they felt about collaboration and whether they thought it was a practical solution to the problems faced by communications departments. Given the number of interviewees who reported that their force was not considering collaboration it was expected that there would be a corresponding attitude against collaboration in the answers to this question. As Fig 3.69 demonstrates this was clearly not the case. Only a very small minority (6%) said that they were against collaboration. For PI.5 the problem with collaboration was the practicality of managing an equal relationship; PI.5's primary concern was that "you can't be the servant of two masters" so one party in the collaboration would always lose out to the other in some respect. A similar opinion was expressed by PI.20A who thought that while collaboration was a good idea in principle, it needed to be carefully managed to ensure that it is mutually beneficial to the parties involved:

> "So we're not against collaboration by any stretch of the imagination, but it's got to be beneficial for us. We won't do it just because it says collaboration is a good thing to do."

PI.27's dislike of collaboration was more centred on what he considered "brand awareness issues", and the difference between police forces which made collaboration over communication projects impractical. A similar concern was raised by PI.12, who argued that the potential confusion around brand could reduce the effectiveness and impact of the message they were trying to convey. PI.12 explained that this concern was the principle reason why he preferred working with in-county partner agencies rather than other police forces.

> "What can we do better with our county council colleagues in terms of campaigning…
> Because of the geography, it means that we can use similar materials and messaging
> without the audience seeing it being similar because that's important. Otherwise, you
> can have difficulties with a regional campaign that its seen as a, for example, West
> Midlands campaign and not a [your] campaign… if they live [here] and they're seeing
> a West Midlands badge on it, they might not think it's relevant." (PI.12)

The vast majority (90%) of interviewees, however, reported a positive attitude towards collaboration; with some teams, like PI.25A, deeply involved in collaborative projects with multiple forces.

> "There's a regional burglary campaign at the moment that we're collaborating with...
> there's four forces there, so somebody's doing the internal and we're doing the press
> releases and there's the posters and so on, so that we're being efficient, I think."
> (PI.25A)

In contrast to earlier comments, however, collaboration was not viewed, as an unalloyed answer to problems facing police communications (3.2.4). 21 interviewees (68%), while supportive of the concept in theory, also expressed significant reservations and concerns about how to make it work in practice.
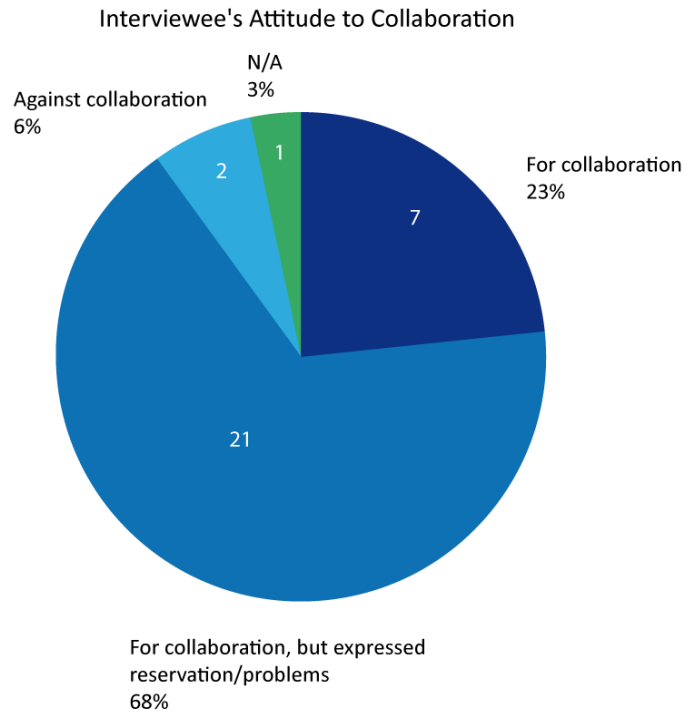
Fig 3.69

Problems with Collaboration

The potential problems with collaboration identified by the interviewees largely fell into eight categories: culture around sharing resources, money, internal politics, perceived differences between departments, perceived differences between jurisdictions, confusion over police brand, poor communication/organisation between teams and lack of time (Fig 3.70).

The most frequently cited problem was lack of time (42%) on the part of staff to arrange collaborative projects. Time constraints were also closely associated with what PI.10 referred to as the "notoriously poor" communication between different communications departments which meant that projects and ideas were often raised too late to actually organise as departments had already arranged something else.

> "but yeah sometimes even more hassle than it's worth… they'll send the design through and we can put [our] badge on it and stuff, but again that stuff all seemed easier in the past as well cos now everyone's so busy it's like we haven't got the time". (PI.19B)

"The Association of Chief Police Officers attempted last year… to do national weeks of action to focus forces' attention on certain subjects all at the same time, it caused a few issues, you know, that it wasn't very well thought out, so a lot of forces opted out after the first few"(PI.22)
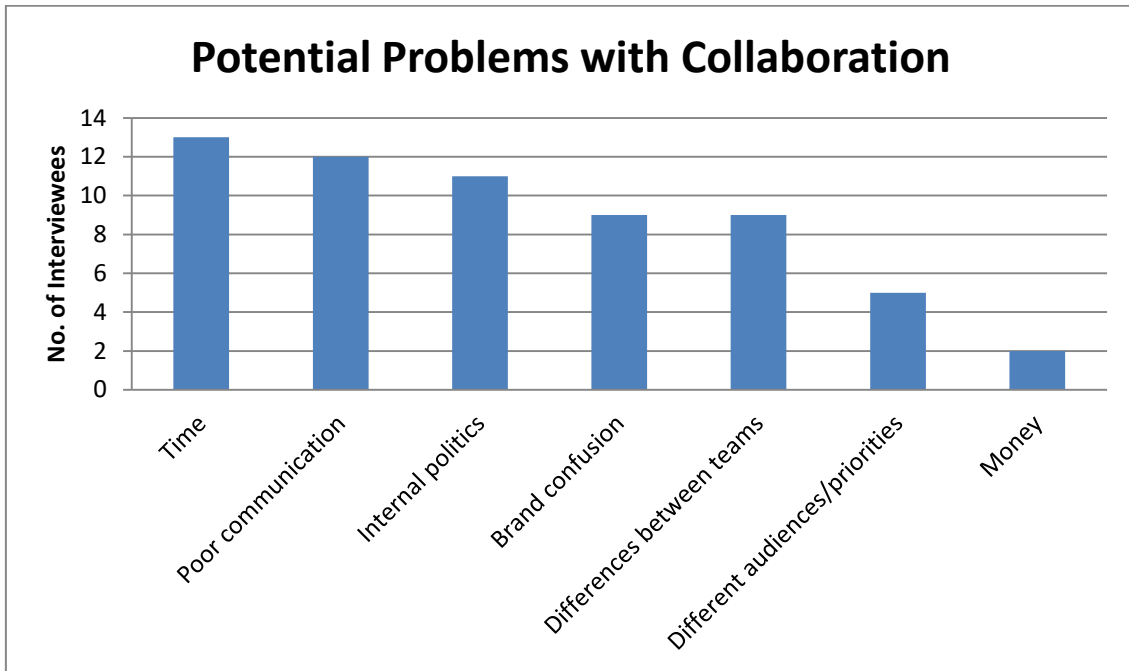
Fig 3.70

Time and poor organisation are often further compounded by a lack of awareness of what their counterparts in other forces are doing. Interviewees were asked how aware they felt they were of the activities, successes and problems faced by other police communication departments (Fig 3.71). Only three interviewees (PI.4, PI.6 and PI.17) said that they would class themselves as "very aware".

Just under half the interviewees (48%) felt that they were either 'quite' or 'moderately' aware; while thirteen (41%) stated that they were either 'not very' or 'not aware at all'. Over half (55%) said that they were mostly aware of their neighbouring forces but once out of the region their knowledge of what other communication departments were doing was "patchy"(PI.25A). Collaborative efforts and sharing of resources (e.g campaign material) was most likely to occur between neighbouring forces or those considered within the same region (PI.10). There was a considerable disconnect found between communications departments from different regions. PI.26 described the fact that most forces only forge ties to their neighbouring forces as

"nonsensical in the digital age". There was a strong feeling with PI.17, PI.21, PI.22, PI.26 and PI.28 that police communications would benefit from forging ties with forces outside of these regional blocks that shared similar characteristics; e.g. demographics, policing priorities, similar audiences, policing environment (urban, rural, metropolitan).
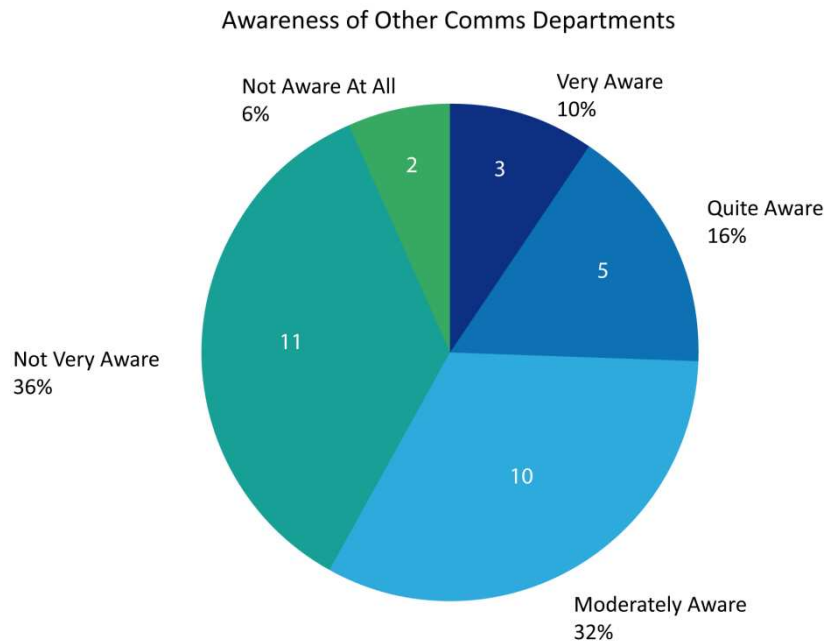
Fig 3.71

Several interviewees (PI.10, PI.11, PI.15 and PI.26) referred to the benefits of networking at APComm conferences but were also keen to stress that the central problem facing any form of collaboration or resource sharing was lack of time. PI.26 in particular felt that she used to be "a lot more aware but I've slipped in the last couple of years - we're all just so busy". A similar difficulty was discussed at length by PI.19A who said that:

> "I find it a lot harder to keep in touch with what everything's going on… I really struggle nowadays to know what're the key messages that we should be doing… I do find it a lot harder than what it used to be because people don't have the time to share information as much, I used to know all the actual names of the Web Managers in different Forces whereas now I've just lost it." (PI.19A).

The question of brand was also raised again here, with seven interviewees expressing concerns over their audiences getting confused over different police brands:

"But the other forces I've spoken to, they were like 'no, we don't touch other people's campaigns, we do them all in-house, because if we had shared across the borders campaigns, people might get confused about the branding'." (PI.17)

This concern, however, was not shared by the majority. Indeed, PI.15 and PI.28 objected to brand being used as a reason against collaborating:

"I personally always wondered why the police service doesn't just doesn't have a central unit doing national campaigns because you'll find domestic abuse is quite high on the police agenda and everyone is doing individual campaigns and replicating it why does everybody not just make a contribution to the central unit which produces a national poster with the messages that the police services want to get out and then you've got consistency haven't you. So you're more likely to get the message across. That has always puzzled me… Some forces are worried about brand because the police service remains quite parochial isn't it, in that in general it has never had a particularly strategic overview it hasn't looked in the whole what messages you need to get out to the public to reduce crime and they tend to be quite insular in saying this is The City of London Police or this is The Metropolitan Police and actually people don't really care do they. They are more interested in the messaging generally... I would be very surprised if people could pick out the individual logos for their county from the 43 wondering around the UK at the moment". (PI.15)

The question of internal politics preventing improved efficiency through collaboration was one which provoked the most heated responses. 11 interviewees expressed significant discontent with the internal politics and insular culture which often frustrated schemes and ideas which they felt could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their teams. As PI.9 explained:

"we went out to the region and said, 'Look, you are probably doing your own thing, this is what we are doing, here's our materials, if you want any of it, you know, grab away. Let us know what you want and we'll send it over.' There was [only one force] who did. So, yeah, I think culturally we have got a way to go". (PI.9)

A similar experience was reported by PI.11, who felt that collaboration was being hampered by teams who were afraid that it would lead to more budget (and staff) reductions in their departments.

"I'll bet there's 43 versions of the same Halloween poster being used across multiple forces, why the heck can't we be doing one version and sharing it? That's not a contentious issue, there's not a localisation issue there… Problem with this was highlighted at a recent meeting between five forces over calendar sharing… Potentially over time it would have led to staff reductions as well as you don't need five people all designing a Halloween poster or five people all doing a slightly different version of a drink-drive campaign. That's is efficient comms for me, cutting those roles which is unpalatable when it's people losing jobs but, we have to be thinking in that way and a lot of forces don't." (PI.11)

For PI.16, difficulties with collaborating, and even sharing information, between police communication departments was a significant and long standing problem.

"I think it would be really amazing if that [collaboration] could happen, but my experience of the police has been that a lot of police forces, particularly comms teams are really, really like insular... when I joined the police I found that there was quite a 'this is mine, we do it this way'; we really want to work with other forces and it's not really helped at a national level either by the things like ACPO or the College of Policing and even like the Home Office for example, so the Home Office have their own kind of policing comms team who will kind of like just put a campaign on you and tell you that this is a campaign that they're doing and they haven't engaged forces across the country in that journey or look to work with you, they just sort of do things to you, so forces have become very like this is mine and this is what I'm going to deliver". (PI.16)

PI.16 later went on to say that because of the insular culture and internal politics her force have looked to partner agencies instead as a means of cost saving through collaboration "because it is just so much easier to work with them than other forces":

"Well the way that we've approached it, because we have at the moment a zero marketing budget, but we ran our recent domestic abuse campaign with [our] County Council… it cost about £27,000 and they paid the money and we put in the… equivalent staff time, so we made the films, we did all the work, did all the graphic work, all the images, all the digital images, all the digital adverts etc etc…". (PI.16)

PI.13 raised a further complication with regard to internal politics – that of the PCC. PI.13 was in favour of merging communication teams to create regional teams, like the one pioneered in West Mercia which covers four counties. When the idea was presented to his PCC, however, PI.13 said it had been dismissed because in his view PCC's "all jealousy guard their bailiwick so to speak - so are they going to give that up? Not without a Fight". This view was supported by PI.23 who said:

> "I think there are things we should absolutely share and you could do it, you absolutely could do it, but you would then have to say that's your template so effectively some PCCs will get hacked off... I think we are further away from there [collaboration] now than we have ever been because I just don't see how you'll get PCCs to agree". (PI.23)

> "It used to be a lot more coordinated. It's a lot more difficult now with PCCs involved because some PCCs wanted to lead on some of the campaign areas." (PI.12)

Differences between department and jurisdiction were also cited as common reasons why collaboration might not work between some communication teams. The central concern expressed by these interviewees was that different areas have different audience requirements and prefer different methods of communication. As such what works in one area might not work in another rendering collaboration pointless. As PI.20A explained:

> "When you're looking at collaboration, you have to collaborate almost from a similar baseline, particularly in policing and, when you look at funding arrangements in policing, the variability is massive... And then it's a case of, okay, so what baseline are you coming from... What's the appetite for collaboration from your PCC? Who do you want to collaborate with? Have you got the same kind of operating standards, policies and procedures because forces work differently?" (PI.20A)

> "The problem is, obviously, you've got different types of burglary [here] to London. You've got different residents, you've got different audiences." (PI.24)

Similarly, PI.19B's principle concern was that having pushed through merging communications departments to save money, police forces would be stuck with a structure that turns out not to work as they thought, at which point things will have returned to how they were in the first place:

"oh this was a bad idea, what were we thinking. Let's go back to how it was, but it's too late because now we're living in Gotham City… At some point the wheels will probably fall off if they keep trying to do this and then someone will decide 'hang on a second this isn't working very well, let's stick bits back on again and it'll go a big full circle." (PI.19B)

The final problem identified was money. This was raised by PI.19A and PI.20A who both felt that while collaboration is often positioned as a good way of saving money it did not always achieve this:

"And then the HMIC and the government are pushing it as a money saving opportunity, but often these things need funding to make them work and then who recognises the savings and who realises them." (PI.20A)

"We've done the odd thing but it hasn't really worked for use, it ends up being more expensive". (PI.19A)

3.3 Part Three: Chapter Summary: Emergent Themes

A number of themes became apparent during the interviews.

1) **Evolution of the communications function**. The function of the communications department is continuing to evolve. These departments have noticeably changed, over the last decade in particular, in form, structure and function. This change is reflected in the name of these departments which has in many cases moved away from 'public relations', 'marketing' and 'media' and instead adopted the more business-like title of 'Corporate Communications'. This transformation has also been connected to the change in operational position and value placed on communications by police officers and the senior management over the last decade in particular.

2) **Change in Staffing**: Communications teams are now significantly smaller in many forces than they were in 2010. These teams are now almost exclusively made up by professional civilian staff who are based at police headquarters rather than out in the divisions. While the majority of departments interviewed still have a delineated structure with specific roles (e.g. Press Officer) there are a growing number of forces who are adopting generic communications roles rather than maintaining the old specialist structure.

3) **Change of primary audience:** A growing number of police communications departments are moving from principally communicating with, or through, the media to communicating directly with the general public using social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook. While this arguably represents a continuation of trends identified over 10 years ago, social media has accelerated these changes and is responsible for the extent of renegotiation described by the interviewees with regard to the power dynamics in the police-media relationship.

4) **Social Media:** while use and reliance upon social media has grown substantially since Crump's (2011) study, it remains inconsistent in terms of the approach, strategy and channels used across different police forces. The principle strategy for police communications remains 'push' or 'broadcasting' (48%) with some forces starting to try dialogue based 'pull' (25%) and some now moving towards 'transformative' based communications (32%).

Twitter remains the preferred social media channel for the time being although there is a growing move towards Facebook as the preferred platform for engagement. This shift is consistent with the increasing emphasis being placed on engagement and the change in communication strategy away from 'push', which the broadcasting tool Twitter excels at, to 'pull' and 'transformative'.

YouTube continues to be underutilised; with 44% of forces interviewed stating that they either rarely used it, needed to improve their video content, or used it in a non-strategic way as "a video content dumping ground" (PI.26).

There was also concern raised at what some interviewees perceived to be a growing over reliance on social media as "a magic cure-all" (PI.14) by police officers; which has, in some instances, already led to some force's reducing, or completely replacing, traditional channels of communication with social media (e.g. PI.12). Social media channels have grown significantly over the last few years, and are still continuing to grow. However, they only account for a small proportion of the population each police force covers. There is a risk here of alienating or ignoring sections of the wider police audience.

5) **Measuring and Assessing Success/Effectiveness:** The majority of interviewees (77%) described historic difficulty with measuring or assessing the impact or effectiveness of their communication attempts. Just over half of the forces (52%) had developed some means by which to measure print campaigns; although assessing the long term impact of those campaigns was often considered too costly to run frequently (PI.27).

A more immediate concern raised by 19 (61%) interviewees was over how to create a suitable framework for evaluating activity on social media as they deemed their current strategies inadequate. Of the 19 forces (76%) who have an evaluation strategy in place for social media, nine (36%) had strategies based on measuring output based metrics, such as reach, while three (12%) used an interaction based metric which measured engagement/interaction (e.g. likes, retweets, comments). These measurement strategies are aided by both Facebook and Twitter releasing free, inbuilt measurement tools for tracking social media activity.

As PI.16, however, pointed out while output and interaction based assessments can tell you how many people have seen the post or liked it, neither of those methods can determine the outcome of those posts (i.e. whether those posts have led to behaviour change, people coming forward with information etc.) – which to PI.16 and several others is the fundamental reason that should be underlying all communications activities. The difficulty around measurement is further compounded by what several interviewees (10%) described as a lack of rigorous national guidance on these issues from senior bodies, such as the College of Policing and APComm.

6) **Collaboration:** Collaboration and resource sharing between departments remains fragmented, patchy and inconsistent with most forces still doing their own campaigns independently. Where collaborative projects had been negotiated they were mostly with one, or a limited number of, neighbouring forces. Relatively few interviewees (26%) professed a good level awareness or understanding of what other communication departments were doing across the country.

Lack of time was the most frequently cited reason as to why collaboration and resource sharing was not more common or widespread. Concern over potential brand confusion was also raised by some as an issue – although it was dismissed by other heads of department as "irrelevant" (PI.28).

7) **Confidence:** Confidence still remains important to police communications, although not to the same extent as it did in 2009. Counter to expectations, only two agreed that there was a 'crisis of confidence' in policing; with the vast majority saying that if there was a problem with confidence in the police then it was not an issue in their area. Seven (23%) interviewees suggested that the perception of crisis had been manufactured by politicians and the media for their own ends and did not reflect how people thought/felt about their local police. Similarly, three interviewees proposed that one reason for the discrepancy was that there is a difference between how people perceive their local police and the idea of policing in general, which is not adequately differentiated in many measurement models. For PI.10 and PI.27, the 'crisis in confidence' was a political-ideological one and not actually related to local police forces. The interview data raises the question of whether there is a public 'crisis of confidence' in policing and suggests the idea that 'moral panic' might be a

more accurate description of the cyclical fears that have plagued police forces in England for much of the last century. This is discussed further in the next chapter.

8) **Threats, Challenges and Problems:** Restricted financial resources and meeting the increasing demand for services that departments are experiencing were identified by the interviewees as the two most significant threats facing communications departments currently, and going forward; especially as all but one of the teams interviewed had already lost a significant proportion of their staff. Concern around resources and meeting the growing demand for police services, raises the question of whether there is a 'critical mass' when it comes to department size, below which a communications department significantly loses effectiveness. Given the current and continuing austerity measures it also raises the question of whether police communication departments are, as PI.25B and PI.6 believe, nearing this tipping point.

A further difficulty identified was with PCCs taking control of police communications. There were significant concerns expressed by the interviewees around the politicisation of the police and transparency. Interviewees appeared particularly concerned over how one team can communicate for two entities that by their nature are unequal in power as one is responsible for holding the other to account.

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1 Answering the Research Questions

All research is driven by questions. This study began with three aims:

1) To provide a picture of the current state of public relations and communication in the English police;

2) To explore how police public relations has and continues to change in the age of social media; and

3) To investigate whether the concept of public relations is still relevant for the police today.

Following an extensive literature review these aims evolved into nine research questions aimed at providing a comprehensive knowledge of modern police communications. To reflect the focus of the study the research questions were divided into two groups, the primary (contextual) questions, which were principally concerned with understanding the 'what' aspects, and the secondary (diagnostic/evaluative) questions which looked at 'how' and 'why' police communications differed across policing environments. When initially crafting the questions the intention had been to create a foundation from which to investigate this area and which would provide a suitable framework to then discuss a complex area in a clear and logical manner. Each primary question would focus on a core aspect of the department in order to lay the groundwork for the secondary questions which would then investigate specific elements and test the questions and assumptions raised in the literature review (1.8).

Primary Questions

1.1   What is the purpose of police communications?

1.2   What are police forces trying to communicate?

1.3   How are police forces communicating?

1.4   With whom are the police trying to communicate?

1.5   What are the threats and challenges currently facing police communications?

Secondary Questions

2.1   Is the concept of public relations still relevant in modern police forces?

2.2   To what extent do public relations strategies differ between policing environments?

2.3   What position does communications hold within the operational side of policing?

2.3   Is it possible to measure what, or whether, police communication strategies are having an impact?

In practice, however, this proved difficult to implement. While the structure of the questions helped significantly with the interviews and maintaining the focus of the project, the delineated structure did not account for, or adapt well to, the intricately interwoven nature of police communications. The results resembled a highly complex web where everything was an interconnected part of the whole and investigating one aspect inevitably led to incorporating other superficially separate elements.

One example of this is the close alignment between determining the purpose of the department and its operational position within the police force. Prior to the interviews it had appeared that the two were separate and not conditional upon the other. What the interview data showed, however, is that how the interviewees described the purpose of their departments was associated with how they, and the wider force, saw communications in terms of backroom function vs frontline policing. Those departments where communications was seen as an essential part of modern police work described their purpose as part of operational policing while interviewees who felt their departments and efforts were marginalised were more likely to talk about their purpose as being supportive, undervalued and side-lined into dealing with the press and public so that "police officers can get on with the real police work" (PI.2). The interplay between these two aspects is discussed in more detail later (4.2), what it demonstrates, however, is the complexity of convergence and divergence when researching multiple forces.

A further challenge then presented itself in the form of managing the vast amount of data collected. When this project began the intention had been to interview three police forces, this was then expanded to include more forces as the methodology changed, and it was estimated that a sample of around 12 forces (30%) was achievable (2.9). What had not been anticipated was the extent of the interest which saw 27 forces (69%) agreeing to interviews – generating

an enormous amount of data and highlighting many exciting areas of interest ranging from police identity, questions around legitimacy and public confidence.

Given these difficulties, the following chapter has been divided into four thematic sections. Each section deals with one or more of the research questions, to make cross referencing easier each section has a reference code for the relevant parts of Chapter 3 and which question(s) are being discussed. Due to the amount of data, however, this chapter has had to prioritise the core aspects relating to the research questions. As such there are themes and ideas present in Chapter 3 which are not discussed.

4.2　　Purpose of Police Communications

Questions:　　1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.3

Results Ref:　　3.1.1 – 3.1.5, 3.2.1 – 3.2.3, 3.2.12

Police communications has changed considerably over the last century. These changes were the strongest and most frequently returned to theme throughout the interviews. While the extent of the changes identified depended partly upon the interviewees length of time in the department, it is significant that all of the interviewees without exception were determined to emphasise that police communications has changed – that "modern comms" is distinct, in form, function, practice and ideology from that which was considered "old comms" (PI.7).

From the 1990s onwards the official rhetoric with regard to police communications was one of apparent openness and transparency. According to Mawby (2002, p.21), under Sir Robert Mark, the MPS moved from "the principle 'tell them only what you must'… to 'withhold only what you must'" (1972 cited in ibid). This trend was cemented by the Wolff Olins report and continued through the 1990s as departments moved from an ad-hoc, reactive media service staffed by police officers "looking for quick career progression" (PI.2) to a professional department run by trained experts (Chapter 1).

This interpretation however was disagreed with by most of the interviewees, particularly those who had worked for the police for more than a decade. The general feeling was that far from adopting the spirit of the official rhetoric, police communications in the 1990s and early 2000s was governed by what PI.2 called a "calculated and controlled openness". According to PI.2 and others (e.g. PI.1, PI.13, PI.15, PI.27), this move was more about transforming the police image and re-legitimising the 'police voice' in an increasingly cynical and suspicious environment than a cultural metamorphosis or substantive change either within the department or the wider police culture. As PI.22 remarked there is a reason why the police public relations department gained the reputation of being the "spin machine".

The interview data suggests that change occurred incrementally over the last 25 years and at different rates across the police forces interviewed. One aspect which was commonly associated with the substantive changes was the gradual professionalisation and civilianisation of these departments over this period (see Chapter 1).

Mawby (2002) noted that in 2007 90% of heads of communications were civilians compared to 64% in 2001 and 52% in 1996/7. In 2014 only two of the communications staff interviewed were serving police officers; by 2015, the FOI data shows that all permanent communications staff across police forces in England were civilians.

Professionalisation and the attendant civilianisation of the communications department was viewed unilaterally by the interviewees as a positive, important and highly necessary change in police communications; one which heralded a move away from the traditional isolationist mentality of policing and into a more connected and networked modern institution. Introducing 'new blood' into police communications was thought to have brought new ideas and new ways of working. Surette (2001, p.108) found that there was "structural division" between civilian and officer run departments. According to Surette (2001) civilian departments were more likely to be proactive and progressive than their officer run counterparts, who were characterised as reactive and slow to change (1.5). Surette (2001) suggested that professionalisation was driven by civilianisation (rather than the other way around) and therefore departments which embraced external experts would be substantively different from, and more evolved than, those departments which remained under the control of police officers.

It had been the intention to test Surette's (2001) hypothesis in this research, however, this proved challenging as only two of the departments in the sample group had police officers as department head which provided insufficient data to assess the theory. What was apparent from the interview data, however, was that the interviewees agreed with Surette's (2001) theory. PI.4, PI.6 and PI.11 were particularly vocal in their arguments for how police communications has been stunted in their forces due to police officers being left in charge of the department. There was also a marked association between those departments which had adopted progressive communication strategies (e.g. 'Pull' or 'Transformative') and those who were still using the traditional communications model ('Push'), this is discussed further in section 4.3.

A common belief espoused by the majority of the interviewees was that the tone of the department is set by the senior management team (e.g. Chief Constable) but also by the head of department who is responsible for driving innovation, development and expansion. The more dynamic and innovative the head the more progressive and open to new ideas the

department was likely to be. What is of interest, however, is whether professionalisation was the goal or merely an unintended outcome.

The long held assumption has been that professionalisation was the result of a deliberate strategy and that civilianisation occurred as an expedient means by which to achieve this (Morgan and Newburn, 1997). For the most part this is corroborated by the interview data, nearly all the interviewees (90%) thought it was a planned outcome in recognition that the previous system was no longer adequate. For three of the interviewees, however, this was not the case. PI.4 thought professionalisation was the result of police forces realising that civilian staff are a less expensive alternative to police officers – and thus professionalisation was the "serendipitous result" of "bean counting" civilianisation. PI.15 and PI.22, on the other hand, thought that professionalisation was a consequence of the growing awareness that communications should be at the heart of policing and not just used as a formality. As technologies and society changed police forces increasingly needed more specific expertise in order to meet new demands – expertise which were only available from outside police forces.

This explanation supports the pattern observed in the FOI data (3.1.2). The FOI data shows a national trend of accelerated growth in department size and spending followed by a steep decline after the Government announced widespread budget cuts in policing. Between 2010 and 2015 61% of police communications departments saw a considerable reduction in their staff levels. Reductions ranged from 3.7% in one force to 54% in another; with 16 forces (66.6%) reporting a decrease of between 20% and 40% (Appendix 3.3). The sudden growth of these traditionally small departments suggests a re-prioritisation in how they were perceived by police forces over the last two decades. It is also interesting to note that despite the austerity cuts, no communications department has returned to pre-2010 staff levels.

One indication of this change can be found in what the interviewees perceived to be the key responsibilities of their department. According to the interviewees the function of their department has changed over the last decade. The primary focus now appears to on supporting frontline policing through a focus on public engagement and promoting virtual visibility. Indeed, it is of note that internal communications was the most frequently cited core function, with external communications being voted a distant second, as this marks a significant departure from previous priorities which in many departments has led to internal communications being "dropped because officers just don't think it matters" (PI.3) (Fig 3.36).

In comparison, traditional department activities like publicity, media relations and reputation were only included by 2 (6%), 5 (16%) and 6 (19%) of interviewees respectively. As Fig 4.1 shows, however, while the functions have condensed over the last decade there is little evidence of a substantive difference between the core activities found by Mawby (2002) compared to those reported in the APCOM survey (2014) and by the interviewees in this study in 2015.

One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that while the core activities have not changed significantly how they are perceived by the interviewees has. A recurrent theme raised during the interviews was the ideological difference between 'new' and 'old' police comms. Such a change is likely to alter how the interviewees interpret and view their roles and their departments. This shift in ideology was clearly reflected in the way the interviewees described both the department's core activities and the function they thought police communications now had. Many of the interviewees were keen to stress the operational importance of communications in modern policing and it was a frequent frustration that the Home Office and HMIC categorised communications as 'business support' rather than a frontline service. Communications was described as essential for preventing, reducing and solving crime. According to PI.1, police communications had "moved on from being a publicity machine, there to promote the good work of the force to distract from the shit", instead good publicity was considered a nice-to-have by-product of their work to educate and inform the public rather than the primary goal and raison d'être of the department.

The shift in ideology is also apparent in 'what' police forces are trying to communicate. 'Public engagement' was a key concept and one often returned to by the interviewees. The importance placed on this aspect is demonstrated by its inclusion as one of only six activities listed by all the interviewed teams as part of their core responsibilities (3.2.3). It is also of note that another activity raised by all interviewees was what PI.2 termed "warn and inform". According to PI.2, this involves not just crisis communication where an issue has arisen and the public must be informed in order to redirect traffic, create awareness or gain essential intelligence, but also more mundane matters such as keeping the general public up to date on what the police are doing, minor issues and forthcoming problems (e.g. football matches which will affect traffic). Such a transition is reminiscent of Lee and McGovern's (2015) suggestion that risk has become one of the underlying influences which governs police communication.

Fig 4.1	Key Departmental Responsibilities / Functions		
2001 (Mawby, 2002 p.95-96)	2006 (Mawby, 2007 p.13)	2014 (APCOMM Survey, 2014)	2015 (see Section 3.2.3)
• "Promoting and protecting the reputation and work of the force by clearly informing the public of its activities". • "Maintaining relationships between the force and the community, through the media where appropriate." • "Maintaining and developing police-media relations." • "Responding to media enquiries." • "Proactively issuing stories and information to the media." • "Coordinating media and public relations activities across the force." • "Providing quality control on internal and external force publications." • "Producing videos and other promotional materials." • "Organising open days." • "Developing and maintaining internal communications." • "Providing support/ consultancy to force personnel on media relations." • "Providing in-force training on media handling."	• "Dealing with media enquiries, reactive and proactive media liaison. • Proactive marketing campaigns. • Promoting public reassurance messages. • Informing the public. • Managing media interesting in incidents. • Protecting and promoting the force's reputation. • Major incident and crisis communication. • Internal communications. • Delivering media training. • Facilitating interviews. • Partnership communications. • Responsibility for corporate communications strategies and media policies. • Public relations. • Marketing. • Corporate identity.	• Advising other officers and staff. • Strategy and planning. • Social media work. • Evaluation and monitoring. • Internal communications. • Incident/operation communication. • Directly briefing senior officers • Crime prevention marketing and communication. • Training of staff. • Developing visual images, photography and videos. • Web and online developments. • Other. • Media/press duties. • Attend/organise meetings. • Communications. • Staff management/training. • Office management/admin. • Freedom of information act releases. • Policy work.	• Visibility. • Reprographics (graphics, printing). • Replying to Freedom of Information Requests. • Identity, brand or image management. • Managing the intranet. • Improving public confidence. • Tactical advice and support on operational matters. • Support for frontline services and solving crimes. • Keeping the public informed about criminal and public order matters (e.g. traffic accidents). • Managing media requests and the police relationship with the media. • Marketing and campaigns. • Crisis management and incident or operations communication. • Public engagement. • Social media.

• "Providing in-force advisory documentation. • Monitoring the media for police-related stories." • "Supporting force initiatives and campaigns." • "Responding to major incidents." • "Arranging and coordinating press conferences." • "Producing the force newspaper." • "Maintaining the force internet website." • "Producing the force annual report." • "The communication of key messages." • "Advising the local police authority on corporate issues (ad-hoc)." • "Providing media and PR support for the local police authority." • "Providing media and PR support for local community safety partnerships." • "Providing external training on media handling." • "Development and maintenance of corporate identity." • "A role in the force sponsorship activities." • "Maintaining the force museum. "	• Merchandising. • Graphic design. • Audio-visual services. • Exhibitions and shows, event management. • Intra and internet development and management, e-communications"		• Managing web content.

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It is beyond the scope of this study to explore the concept of risk and its implications in depth. However, the results do suggest a reorientation in communications away from traditional 'image making' and towards risk, public responsibilisation and public mobilisation in order to tackle crime and disorder. Certainly the work of Lee and McGovern (2015), Connor (2015) and Brainard and Edlins (2015) on how police forces are using Twitter suggests that there is an international trend in police forces to use social media as a means of communicating risk.

When Crump (2011) examined social media use in England, however, he found no evidence of risk as a communicating logic; although there was a strong feeling from the police forces at the time that using social media was seen as a significant risk, which was why so few forces had prior to the August riots attempted to promote these channels. From his research, Crump (2011) suggested three models for how the police are using social media.

1. Broadcasters: publicity and information based. The aim of this model was to 'push' information into the public domain, whether this was regarding traffic accidents, alerts, success stories or appeals for information. This model closely coincides with Grunig's (1989) Press Agency model and Mergel's (2014) 'Push'.

2. Local knowledge gathering: intelligence monitoring and network building. The root of this model is in operational policing and includes covert social media police operations as well as using it to monitor tensions (see Williams et al, 2013; Trotter, 2015), demographic information on audiences and using the police audience as an information network.

3. Community facilitators: this is aimed at encouraging dialogue and community engagement. This is the most inclusive and engagement based model, closely resembling the 'Two-Way Asymmetrical' (Grunig, 1989) and 'Pull' (Mergel, 2014).

The interview data however, suggests a further two possible typologies may now be in evidence – that of risk management and pacification. Interviewees with more active social media networks were keen to discuss what PI.23 referred to as "virtual people management". This, according to PI.23, involved successfully communicating with targeted audiences in order to manage a problem as it is occurring (e.g. traffic accident) or to respond to fears, worries and complaints in order to provide mass scale public reassurance and prevent panic. This strategy was about communicating risk in order to reduce the likelihood of greater risk and bigger problems. 'Pacification', as PI.4, termed his approach had been used to great success by his force during the 2011 London Riots as a means of de-escalating local situations and managing

panicked demands for immediate police action. Since then PI.4 said the model had been regularly used by his team as a method of public engagement and was, he thought, a contributing factor in their high confidence levels. Similar approaches were mentioned by a significant number of the interviewees, although many of those from smaller or less developed teams agreed that in their case pacification was less of a proactive strategy and more reactive. The opposite, however, was found with regard to risk – in all but three teams communicating risk (accidents, alerts and appeals for information) was increasingly described as a proactive strategy.

Further evidence of these 'logics of risk' identified by Lee and McGovern (2015 p.1) included police social media policies. According to Lee and McGovern (2015), police social media strategies were prime examples of how a culture of risk, and communicating risk, had become established and prominent in Australian police forces. In England, however, these policies are often inconsistent in terms of the breadth and depth of the topics covered; with some forces providing policies only a few pages long, with very little guidance and little concern with educating officers about risk (3.1.5). While there are exceptions to this, the variability in standard and level of concern is interesting and suggests that how social media is used and viewed varies considerably across police forces, both in terms of potential and risk (Appendix 3.4).

In general, while there were some references to risk apparent in the data[27], there was less overt evidence of it found than Lee and McGovern's (2015) research suggests is the case in Australia. When this topic was broached around a third of the interviewees (10) declared a lack of interest in risk, preferring their officers to experiment with what works and get things wrong if necessary than to be overly cautious and prescriptive. PI.11 and PI.14 were particularly clear on this point as they felt that encouraging police officers to "really engage" with social media was "far more important in the long run" than "being a corporate net-nanny always telling them what to do" (PI.14). As PI.11 explained:

> "you've got officers out in the street every day of the week, probably tens of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of interactions, you would kill for a complaint ratio of only four or five complaints from all those interactions. You know, you're talking hundreds or thousands of complaints a year. So, what's the big risk.

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[27] Notably around social media use in those forces which were only just starting to use these channels in a more involved and strategic manner.

Just because it's visible and it's on social media, we either trust our people to use their common sense to follow the guidelines, know what the law is or we don't… we don't monitor… every one of their interactions with the public on the streets or at community meetings, so why do we suddenly get nervous on social media?" (PI.11)

Such an approach seems to tie in closely with the apparent devolution of communications away from a central hub (Communications department) to rank and file police officers. This trend was remarked upon by many of the interviewees and is confirmed by the number of local social media accounts run by local police officers (3.1.6). Innes (1999), Boyle (1999), Kingshott (2011) and Ponsford (2014) all comment on the distance police forces tried to establish from the media and public through the employment of communications experts from the late 1980s up until comparatively recently. Devolution then marks a significant reversal in the pattern of increasing centralisation prevalent during the Twentieth Century. What the media have termed 'Bobbies on the Tweet' (Miller, 2013) has not been without scandal or issues over the past few years. From 2012 onwards there has been a proliferation of journalistic attention over possible police misuse, professional misconduct and examples of inappropriate disclosure on social media sites (Laville, 2012a, 2012b; Hamilton and Bonner, 2014; Spillet, 2014). That police forces have persevered with encouraging a devolved model of communications despite these issues is highly suggestive of a wider change in overall communications strategy and how communications is seen, understood and used by police forces. It is also arguably indicative of a shift in how police forces are responding to risk – with police communications becoming less demonstrably risk averse rather than more in some forces; the opposite of Lee and McGovern's (2015) findings.

Perhaps the most outwardly visible indication of this move away from the 'old' model of communications, however, is in the names of these departments. Names are of fundamental importance on a symbolic level (Loader, 1997); particularly for dramaturgical organisations like the police who exist on the well-lit stage of public scrutiny. Names tell us not just what a thing is, or does, but what they strive to be and what they want to be seen as (Loader and Mulcahy, 2001b).

Mawby (2002) observed that through the 1990s and early 2000s, of these departments starting replacing 'Press' and 'Public Relations' in their names and instead restyling themselves 'Corporate Communications'. In 2006 Mawby (2007) recorded that 17 English police forces

were using 'Corporate Communications'. As of May 2015 this had increased to 25; it is interesting that any reference to 'Public Relations' in the department name has now been phased out completely (Fig 3.1).

Mawby (2008, p.14) concluded that "the change in name indicates the aspirations of these departments and the direction in which police communications has been moving over the last decade". When asked to explain the name change, however, the reasons given by the interviewees were considerably more confused. Explanations generally varied between those who thought it was due to:

1) Aspiration (3: 10%);

2) To make the department less esoteric and easier to understand (4: 13%);

3) Another example of corporatisation and professionalisation (5: 16%);

4) Part of a strategy to distance the department from 'PR' (5: 16%); or

5) The new name better describes departmental priorities and function (9: 29%) (Fig 3.39).

There was an interesting divide in the answers between those who thought the change of name was ideological (reasons 1 and 4) and those who thought it was functional (2, 3 and 5) – with the majority of interviewees arguing for the latter rather than the former. Given the high level of discomfort expressed by some interviewees around the term 'public relations' it would not have been surprising if the move had been driven by the change in ideology. What is particularly interesting though is the subsequent swing away from 'corporatisation' observed by some of the interviewees. PI.15 and PI.28, for example, discussed how communication departments were increasingly losing the 'Corporate' part of their title and now instead adopting words like 'Engagement' or simply using 'Communication'. This supports the idea that the name reflects the perceived functions of the department and lends credence to the ideology argument – as the department continues to change and evolve so does its name.

In conjunction with this change in ideology there has been a corresponding shift in the operational position of the department within the wider policing context. Mawby (2002, p.181) proposed three models of public relations activity in police forces: 'Marginal', 'Supportive' and 'Core' (1.6.1). Mawby (2002) concluded that while there were traces of all three models, police public relations was predominantly used in 'Marginal' or 'Supportive'

roles by the police. He hypothesised, however, that given the complex nature of communications and the growing importance of the department it was possible that while the third model was "organisationally unfeasible" in 2002 police public relations could move towards a more integrated and dialogued based approach across police functions instead of remaining an optional "bolt-on" advisory service (*ibid*, p.198).

Following consultation with the pilot force, however, these typologies were adapted to better suit current terminology and understanding, instead becoming[28]:

1) **'Optional'**: police communications is considered non-essential or an optional extra by police officers. This is reflected in lack of inclusion at senior levels and avoidance or a dismissive attitude from investigating officers.

2) **'Complementary**: police communications is considered important and is used/accepted by most police officers although there remains a sense of exclusion and not being a part of operational policing.

3) **'Embedded'**: police communications is considered an essential part of operational policing and is included at all levels of police management (e.g. has a seat on the management board).

In contrast to Mawby's (2002) findings, the majority of police communications departments were categorised by their staff as 'Embedded' (18) with only six departments described as 'Complementary', two as 'Optional' and four in transition (3.2.2). The change in operational position of the department was highlighted as one, if not *the*, greatest change in the department over the last two decades. In 'Embedded' departments, the interviewees were keen to talk about how their department had moved from an "ancillary backroom function affiliated to but not part of real police work" (PI.1) to "operationally essential" (PI.16), supported by the senior management team and accepted by police officers as a necessary part of policing.

Part of the reason for this wider cultural change in perception was attributed by some to the decade of professionalisation which had helped transform the reputation of the department. According to PI.2, the communications department had traditionally been viewed as "where you go for a quick promotion", a department whose primary function was mainly seen as

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[28] See 2.8.5

"spinning things for the press to keep them off your back so police officers could get on with real police work" (PI.1). Civilianisation and the advent of social media, however, has required police forces to adapt quickly to a new communications and virtual social landscape which has redefined the role of communication in the police. Now, instead of a department that is a "bit of an add on" (PI.18), or "luxury" (PI.11), communications departments are increasingly viewed as an expert resource there to "aid in actual police work by networking with the community and assist in achieving police work" (PI.15).

This was not, however, the case with all the forces interviewed and there remained a significant number of departments (42%) which were not considered 'Embedded' – reporting long standing, and often considerable, frustrations with this situation. PI.2, PI.11, PI.15, PI.18 and PI.21 were the most vocal on this matter, and felt strongly that their departments were "misunderstood" (PI.15), "misused" (PI.2), "marginalised" (PI.21),"under resourced" (PI.11) and usually only brought in when "something had gone wrong" (PI.28).

There was a very clear connection between reported satisfaction and operational position in the interview data. Those interviewees who believed that their departments were 'Embedded' and accepted were far more positive about their contribution to policing and were keen to emphasise the importance and operational nature of their work. Those interviewees, however, who described their departments were 'Optional' or 'Complementary' were less enthusiastic about their activities, described their department roles in more traditional terms (e.g. media management) and eager to air their frustrations.

The above discussion shows that how police communications is perceived and used has changed considerably over the last century, and especially over the last decade. When the first official press office was introduced in 1919 the intention had been to create a central function for the MPS that would publicise the information senior officers wanted known, prevent corrupt practices, and standardise and manage press enquiries so that police officers could perform their duties undistracted and unimpeded (Wood, 2013). It was limited function in a small department that was affiliated to but not part of "proper policing" (PI.2). In 2014, over half of the interviewees (58%) described their departments as fully 'Embedded' and thought communications an essential part of operational policing rather than supportive backroom function. While the purpose and operational function of the department varied between the forces interviewed, the interviewees who described their departments as

'optional' or 'complementary' were all optimistic that this situation would change as police officers had to rely more on communications in order to bridge gaps in service delivery caused by the reduction in funding.

Mawby (2002, p7) suggested that at the time of his research there were four periods in police public relations: Informal Image Work, Emergent Public Relations, Embedding Public Relations and The Professionalisation of Police Image Work. The changes and evolution described above, however, suggest that there is now evidence of a new era emerging; one which prioritises direct communication to (and more importantly with) individuals through digital channels (see 4.3).

Engage (NPIA, 2010) set out a vision of an inclusive, personal and direct dialogue based communications model that used social media as a vehicle to create and maintain virtual information and policing networks in local communities. The aim was to improve public confidence, user satisfaction and make use of the immense crime solving and intelligence gathering resource that these sites have the potential to be. As will be discussed further in the next section (4.3) while the interviewees reported limited success with meeting these standards and ideals analysis shows that there is growing evidence of this 'Direct and Digital' approach. Social media has rapidly expanded and embedded itself at the heart of police external communications strategies with some forces looking to use social media sites and websites as the primary means of non-emergency service provision. At the time of interview 23 (74%) of the interviewees were exploring the potential resource and time saving benefits of moving more services online with many developing, or improving, their websites to allow online crime reporting and access to more key services[29].

The fifth era of police communications is characterised by the predominance of social media as *the* preferred channel for communication to the exclusion and diminution of journalists and traditional channels. There is a strong emphasis on public engagement and dialogue orientated police communications that is moving away from traditional communication models and methods that "shout at everyone in the hope of hitting the right group" (PI.1) in order to forge direct and personal relationships with the individual rather than 'target group'.. In parallel to this, increasingly sophisticated tactics for micro targeted communications are developed so that messages and content can be tailored to highly specific audiences and online networks are cultivated to aid operational policing requirements (e.g. appeals).

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[29] Such as gun licencing, crime tracking, media enquiries, FOI requests and social media updates.

Such strategies and tactics in many forces, however, were still in their infancy in 2015 but there are encouraging signs of development and growth in this area. The change in ideology and the increasing adoption of a devolved communications model offers compelling evidence in support of the advent of a new period in police communications. Of those interviewed 5 (16%) thought that their teams had achieved the aspiration set out in Engage (NPIA, 2010) while 12 (39%) thought that their teams were "getting there" or were meeting the requirements to "some extent" – an improvement from the HMIC (2011b, p30) report which concluded that "the police have much to learn about social media" and that "with some notable exceptions, the power of this kind of media… is not well understood and less well managed".

The emergence of a 'Direct and Digital' periodisation, however, does raise the question of whether public relations can still be considered relevant in modern police communications. Certainly this was a concern raised with some frequency during the interviews. Of the 31 people interviewed, 11 (36%) stated that they thought public relations was no longer relevant, either as part of their jobs or within the wider policing context. One interviewee explained that changing the department name to Corporate Communications was a rebranding exercise designed to distance the department from any suggestion of 'spin doctoring' and the connected concern that the department was the police propaganda machine only there to protect their reputation (PI.27); as another interviewee said - their "job is to 'warn and inform', not cover up scandals" (PI.2). Lack of relevance was also cited as one of the reasons why public relations departments had changed their names in order to better reflect their new functions and aspirations (3.2.4).

Wright (2015), and others (see Bolger, 1983; Grunig, 1989; Morris and Goldsworthy, 2012), suggest that there is something of an industry, almost society wide anxiety around the concept of public relations – entangled as it is with notions of control, manipulation and examples of corporate malpractice – that frustrates attempts to define it. Something similar appears to be the case with the police as it was suggested by six of the participants that the title of this thesis should remove the term 'public relations' principally on these grounds (1.4).

Public relations is often seen as existing in order to conceal, cover up, redirect and manipulate public opinion (Cottle, 2003). That it is a "manifestation of power designed to legitimate the

discourses, power and positions of the dominant collation" (Motion, 2005 p.505) - the antithesis of the openness, transparency and accountability agenda currently pursued by many public institutions (Cornelissen, 2011).

This belief was strongly apparent in several of the interviews. PI.6, PI.7 and PI.22, in particular, were vociferously opposed to associating 'public relations' with their departments precisely because of the negative connotations linked with the concept. As PI.6 explained, police communications, in her department, was about meeting the operational requirements of the force; helping to solve crimes and alert the general public to problems or issues that they needed to be aware of.

> "I see the purpose of the coms department to work with frontline police officers and
> investigators to prevent and reduce and solve crime. That's our fundamental purpose
> … We are not nor should we be a public relations department". (PI.6)

Consistent with the interviewees objections, only limited evidence of traditional public relations activities was found in the data collected. It is interesting that of the 25 teams interviewed, under half (44%) included identity, brand and image as part of their responsibilities; while the majority of these interviewees were openly dismissive of the idea of controlling their image with the prevalence of social media. In comparison 22 teams (88%) saw that their core function is to assist operational policing, and all teams said that one of their principle jobs is to 'warn and inform' the public. One fundamental aspect which became apparent from the interview data was the significant shift in the culture and attitude around communications which many of the interviewees had witnessed in the last decade. Several of the interviewees drew a distinction between the ideology which underpinned traditional police communications and that which they thought governed their modern departments – which in turn had led to a change in ideological purpose if not the practical realities of how and what they had to communicate.

The overwhelming emphasis from the interviewees was that police communications is now about engagement, information networking and risk communication rather than direct image management. This change was captured by PI.22 who said that the purpose of police communications is to "provide the public with a window into the world of policing… they need to be able to see what their police forces do, who we are, what we do, what we're doing for them and they need to be able to call us to account if they think that something's wrong."

The interview data reveals a clear underlying anxiety around the term and a desire to distance modern 'Corporate Communications' from what most interviewees considered the 'old model'. When measured against the changes described above, the popular understanding of public relations as 'spin', 'publicity' and 'reputation management' does indeed appear to be a poor and outdated fit as a framework for modern police communications and suggests that public relations may no longer be relevant.

As Broom and Sha (2013) remind us, however, definitions are more than just convenient conversational vehicles for shared communication, they also show how the definer relates to the concept. Change the definition and a very different answer becomes apparent.

Chapter 1 discussed the historic difficulties around defining public relations. Most definitions are either incomplete, too vague, too narrow, tautological or impossible to apply. Indeed Wright (2015) suggested that trying to define public relations was a "never ending question" due to the adaptability of the industry that means it is constantly in a state of transition. Of the 100+ definitions considered for this thesis the only one that worked within the context of policing was one devised by Grunig and Hunt (1984). According to Grunig and Hunt (1984, p.4) public relations is best understood as "the management of communication between an organisation and its publics". For Grunig (1989) public relations is an umbrella function made up of four basic models: Press Agency, Public Information, Two Way Asymmetrical and Two Way Symmetrical.

The basic argument forwarded by those interviewees who said public relations was no longer relevant was that there is an ideological and strategic difference between new (modern) and old (traditional PR) communications. Using Grunig and Hunt's (1984) definition, however, renders this distinction irrelevant. Instead, it suggests that public relations is far from being redundant and has simply transitioned between models; away from the Press Agency model that is primarily concerned with controlling image and 'the story' to a more open one like the Public Information model that emphasises truth and targeted communication.

Seen in this light public relations still plays a fundamental role in police communications. While at the time of the interviews there was limited evidence of Grunig's (1989) third and fourth models, there was a strong indication that police forces were increasingly experimenting with and adopting more dialogue based strategies and that honesty and

credibility are now viewed as more valuable than protecting the reputation of the force at all costs. As the police exist as the legitimate authority and enforcer of laws it is unlikely that police forces will ever be able to wholly achieve the level of openness and engagement that Grunig's (1989) Two Way Symmetrical or Mergel's (2014) Transactional models stipulate, but the initial changes are promising and support the interviewees' assertion that there has been an ideological transformation.

This raises the question of why 11 of the interviewees were so opposed to public relations and thought it irrelevant. The answer the interview data suggests is that there are systemic misconceptions and misunderstandings around the definition of public relations. 15 years ago both the HMIC (2001) and Mawby and Worthington (2002) reported that ironically there was a generally poor understanding of public relations in the police, particularly within the then called 'Public Relations' departments. As a result of this, public relations was frequently conflated with marketing, spin and propaganda (1.3). Understanding of public relations has not improved markedly in the intervening decade. PI.22, for example, said that he avoided using the term not because it was no longer part of his job but because of the reaction it garnered from both his staff and other police officers who "heard PR and thought 'spin'".

The results show that there remains a high level of confusion around the term (3.2.3); with almost half of the interviewees unable to explain what public relations is. This was quite surprising given the number of interviewees who claimed to have a public relations background. PI.27, for example, said that he had over 20 years experience in corporate public relations and yet when asked replied that he "wouldn't really know how to define public relations". Two of the interviewees thought it was synonymous with 'spin' and seven thought it was the same as publicity and marketing.

What was also surprising was that despite the almost endemic confusion and discomfort surrounding public relations, over half (52%) were keen to emphasise that public relations was still a relevant and important part of their function. The results show a strong association between the interviewees who had a more positive definition of public relations and those who thought it was still relevant. The converse was also consistent – with those who either had trouble defining public relations or viewed it negatively were significantly more likely to claim it was now redundant or irrelevant.

Yates (1989) suggested that the reason why public relations has not just survived but thrived despite its "PR problem" (Fisher, 2012) is because of its adaptability to become whatever is needed; as society changes so too does the public relations industry. This is arguably true with public relations in the police. Public relations is arguably a reflection of the organisation using it and as the communications department has evolved to meet the requirements of a new age, so too has public relations practice and ideology. In doing so public relations has cemented its position and relevancy within policing.

4.3　Communication Strategies, Audience and Channels

Questions:　　1.3, 1.4, 2.2

Results Ref:　　3.1.6, 3.2.4 – 3.2.7

Further evidence of this new 'Direct and Digital' period is apparent in how police forces are communicating, the channels now being used and the strategies employed. The results show a clear underlying pattern in how the police are communicating; with police forces increasingly transitioning away from traditional methods of communication to a more direct and inclusive approach. Police communications has moved away from the 'press office', one channel model where their core responsibility was to meet the needs of the media and 'push' (Mergel, 2014) their story out, to a service provider role where the department talks directly to a plurality of different audience groups in the general population - only one of which is the media.

The interview data suggests that there is considerable variation in strategy between communications teams, and across different policing environments in general. Using the categories adapted from Mergel's (2014) typologies, evidence was found of all four communication strategy models ('Push', 'Pull', 'Networking' and 'Transformative') in varying combinations and to differing extents. 'Push' (48%) was the most common strategy identified, followed by 'Pull' (25%) with a few interviewees using a combination of 'Push' and 'Pull' (10%) or 'Push' and 'Transformative' (10%); only one department, however, described their strategy as 'Transformative' (2.8.5).

Given the historic purpose and focus of the communications department the strong emphasis on 'Push' communications is not surprising; especially as social media sites lend themselves to this model. This facet of social media has been utilised to great acclaim during crisis situations in the past (e.g. during the widespread flooding in spring 2014) and is likely to continue as an essential tool for police forces in the future (Connor, 2015). What was more unexpected was the strong reaction from the majority of the interviewees towards eliminating 'Push' in favour of 'Pull' or 'Transformative' strategies.　This was consistent with the growing importance placed on behavioural change as the foundation for crime prevention campaigns that was mentioned by several of the interviewees.

When asked about their current communication strategies, however, nearly two thirds of the interviewees expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the strategies currently in place.

There was considerable sense of frustration discussed with regard to the gap between how they thought their teams were currently communicating and how they ought to be. One of the difficulties which was hampering this was encapsulated by PI.28 who thought that while police forces "aspire to be pull… I don't think we're actually very good at it… I think we're very used to telling people… we don't actually engage [the public] in the debate about what we're doing". PI.28 raised a valid point, engagement in the form that social media encourages is not only new to police forces but also often an anathema to how they have previously interacted with the public. In order to further grow public engagement the wider mentality around communications needs to change and this takes time to evolve.

Such a change, however, would not have been possible before the advent of Web 2.0 and social media sites which allow users to generate content and interact on a virtual platform (Zerfass and Schramm, 2013). The interview and FOI data are consistent with the ACPO (2014) survey results which showed the growing importance and time devoted to social media by police communications teams. The data shows a pattern of accelerated up take in police forces post 2010/11, with forces increasingly using not just Twitter and Facebook but also experimenting with the potential of other sites as well.

As of December 2015, all forces now have at least one Twitter account and Facebook page, with 34 using YouTube and over half maintaining a presence on at least one additional site. Twitter remains the preferred social media channel, for the time being at least, although there was an emerging theme in the interviews which suggested that Facebook might become the prioritised channel as it is considered a better tool for engagement. This is consistent with Connor's (2015) findings which suggested that Canadian forces were moving increasingly towards Facebook as the preferred site for engagement strategies. Given McGrory's (2016) analysis of social media audience trends, which suggests that Twitter usage is decreasing while Facebook is increasing across all age ranges, encouraging a more active police, and targeted, presence on Facebook will likely become more important in the future.

The distinction drawn between these two sites by the interviewees is particularly interesting and suggests a far more sophisticated and targeted grasp of social media technologies than that found by Crump (2011), Proctor et al (2013) or Brainard and Edlins (2015). YouTube, however, continues to be an inconsistently and underused resource by many forces and while there are a growing number of other social media sites used these are often updated

lackadaisically and seldom considered as part of the integrated, official communications strategy.

That police forces are experimenting with new sites, however, is a good indication of how the overall strategy and outlook of the department has changed and suggests that the direct and digital approach is slowly becoming more embedded. When asked about the purpose, or uses for, social media in a police context the interviewees emphasised three main aspects; public engagement, 'warn and inform' and crisis management as the core functions/uses of social media. In stark contrast to this, self-promotion was only included by five of the interviewees and was largely considered irrelevant by the remaining participants. For PI.9 and others, social media was viewed as "the future of police comms" (PI.9), taking centre place in the communications strategy. PI.24, for example, described in detail how he intended to "channel shift" audiences away from traditional means of communicating with the police (e.g. telephone and press) to interacting with them online. According to PI.24, the new website his team launched in 2013 was specifically and carefully designed to guide users into interacting with them online in their virtual call centre chatroom, while their social media sites all funnelled users back to the website. Traditional print campaigns, the local media and daily press releases were considered things of the past.

There was a clear pattern that emerged in the interviews between use of social media and the communications strategy employed. Departments which experimented with new social media channels were generally less concerned with risk, more open to new ideas, interested in promoting public engagement and described their current strategy as 'Pull'. There was also a clear association with the operational position of the department with the interviewees much more likely to describe their departments as 'Embedded'.

In forces like PI.11 and PI.18 however, where communications was seen as optional, social media use was significantly behind other departments with often only a corporate Twitter and Facebook account in use. These departments described a risk averse mentality that made benefiting from the opportunities created by social media difficult for the force. PI.11 described his force as having a "pre-historic understanding" of their communications department. Lack of resourcing and disinterest over consecutive years had resulted in a department that "was not fit for purpose" and which was "stuck" in the "old comms mind-set" which saw communications as something to be done by a central team who "advised the rest

of the force as and when required" and was there to "clean up the mess when the shit hit the fan" (PI.2). It is of note that in 'optional' and 'marginal' departments interviewees rarely talked about the devolved communications model (4.2), instead communications was very often seen in a similar light to PI.11's description with communications viewed as 'not police work'.

In parallel to the explosion of new channels, there has also been a shift in the intended audience. Police forces are now increasingly looking to communicate directly with the general public. As all of the interviewees were keen to point out, social media allows police forces for the first time in their history to not only control the message but to talk directly to, and engage with, individual members of the public on a mass scale.

When asked who these audiences were, however, there was a general sense of confusion with nearly half of the interviewees suggesting their audience was everyone. Only four of the interviewees included the media as one of their principal audiences. Despite this confusion, however, the degree of targeting described by interviewees suggests that, on a situational basis at least, most teams do differentiate between audiences – 'everyone' becomes 'everyone who fits the criteria'. The interviews showed that the level of sophistication with regard to targeting varies considerably between police forces with some forces only targeting by geographic location using a single, blanket channel approach (e.g. PI.14) while others used highly developed and detailed micro strategies for communicating messages to precisely defined audiences through multiple channels (e.g. PI.12).

As use of social media has grown there has been a corresponding impact on police forces relationships with the media. In essence, as PI.24 remarked, social media means that police forces "no longer need the media in the same way, and journalists know it". According to PI.12 and others, social media has "redefined" the police-media relationship leading to a "dramatic shift" in the power balance (PI.6) as police forces have moved from primarily using indirect channels to communicate to the public to a direct multi-channel approach to engagement. The advent and public enthusiasm for connecting with the police directly has not only allowed, but encouraged, police forces to provide more services and opportunities for interaction online. Social media sites enable the cost-effective communication of ideas, advice and direct engagement on a mass-scale impossible to replicate with traditional channels. This has led in several teams to the prioritisation of social media over traditional press-relations roles; particularly for campaigns and information networking. PI.19A, for example, explained that in

her team the vast majority of campaigns and communications activity was now based online and that print and press campaigns were seldom used. Similar situations were also described by PI.9, PI.12, PI.22 and PI.25A.

In some forces this move has led to the adoption of a 'self-service' model of media relations whereby information and resource packs for the media are posted on the force website for journalists to use rather than issuing a press release and answering phone enquiries. The self-service model repositions police forces as the publishers of crime and public order information rather than a source that is then interpreted and published by another organisation (i.e. the media). At the time of the interviews almost a third (32%) of departments had adopted this model, with a further 12 (48%) considering it. It is indicative of the popularity of this model that only one team dismissed the idea outright, and that was on the grounds that journalism was increasing in their area and thus a more distanced relationship would be neither practical nor accepted by the local press.

The vast majority of interviewees, however, spoke of this model as not only a practical means of managing the media in a fair and efficient manner but also as a way of reducing the sensationalism that usually attends press versions of police stories and thus controlling the narrative the public reads. PI.12 and PI.17, for example, no longer issue traditional press statements. Instead both departments place all information on their website for both the public and press to access with no preferential treatment offered to journalists. Both interviewees thought the new system worked well and reduced the level of demand placed on their departments from trying to manage enquires from individual journalists. It is also further evidence of the altering power dynamic between press and police.

The rise of the 'self-service' model, however, poses the question of whether journalists are still able to play their traditional role of police watchdog, investigating and reporting police errors or poor behaviour in order to hold them to account (Ericson, 1991) especially in light of the reported decline of local journalism. It is interesting that opinion was almost equally divided between those who thought that journalists had ceased to provide this function and those who thought they were still a "happy critical frenemy" (PI.13).

The orthodox view is that in the old days the police and media were in a symbiotic, if asymmetric, relationship filled with dynamic tension where police forces needed the media to

talk to the public and the media held police forces to account by their oversight (Schlesinger and Tumber, 1993). The self-service model, however, has knocked this delicate balance and successfully skewed the police-media relationship further in the police favour (White, 2012). The difficulty with this argument is that the police have always been the primary source of crime news for the media and even at the height of journalism in the 1990s there was an observable trend towards journalists regurgitating police press statements almost verbatim (Chermak and Weiss, 2005; Hollins, and Bacon, 2010).

In this respect the situation has now significantly altered with the advent of the 'self-service' model. What has changed, however, is that the police are becoming publishers in their own right, rather than simply the source; effectively removing the need for the middle-man-media in favour of talking directly to their audiences. The interview data shows that a growing number of police forces are trying to establish their own voices, separate from those of the news media. This transition is changing the landscape of the police-media relationship and redefining the traditional roles played by both parties.

The 'self-service' model is unlikely on its own to have a significant impact on the watchdog function if journalists continue to retain their criticality of the police organisation and independent investigations, such as the one by The Times journalist Andrew Norfolk who broke the Rotherham abuse scandal in 2011 (Martinson, 2014). The greater threat to the continuation of this function, however, is whether news outlets will have the staff or resources in the future to maintain it. Nearly half (48%) of those interviewed reported a discernible reduction in the number of local journalists. While larger news outlets like the tabloids and broadsheets continue to be highly critical of police forces the focus of their articles is on the 'big' stories, and usually the bigger, more notorious forces (e.g. South Yorkshire Police and the MPS) as those are where the big headlines and greater public interest will be. Smaller rural forces, in comparison, reported that they had seen a marked decline in interest from national papers over the last seven years and with the reduction of local journalists this was having a knock-on effect on the quality of reporting that departments were seeing.

While the majority (68%) of interviewees thought that it "would be like the best thing actually if we had no newspapers anymore" (PI.16), there was a surprising number of interviewees (19%) who expressed considerable concern over this eventuality. The reasons for this concern were twofold; firstly, that fewer journalists meant that those that remained were increasingly

expecting "to be fed" (PI.25B) by the police - which increased the level of demand and expectation upon the communications team for speedy responses and the amount of information readily available to journalists. As PI.13 explained, at one time his team would issue a couple of press statements a day, more if there was a major incident. Now with the 'self-service' model, journalists were expecting more information to be available quicker. The second reason was the more surprising one, that the loss of an external view on the police could call into question the credibility of the police voice as journalists might come to be viewed as mouthpieces for 'police spin'. This presents the intriguing question of whether in addition to accountability, journalistic critique and apparent hostility acts to help legitimise the police voice by providing a source of independent corroboration or disaffirmation for the police narrative (Côté-Lussier, 2013). Whether police forces require, or should have, this oversight, however, is another question entirely and one that is beyond the remit of this work.

The above discussion shows that there is growing evidence of the 'direct and digital' approach. What is evident from the interviews is that the introduction of social media has had a profound impact upon the way in which police forces not only communicate but also what they are communicating and increasingly their strategic objectives as well. Sites like Facebook and Twitter offer police forces the first time the ability of direct engagement and of forging large scale community links and networks within a virtual environment. However, uptake and competent use varies considerably across different policing environments with some forces embracing the new opportunities now available (PI.12/PI.22) and others only sluggishly attempting to keep pace (P.11/PI.13). Along with the unparalleled opportunities, however, there are an equal number of threats and challenges facing modern communications departments.

4.4   Threats and Challenges

Questions: 1.5

Results Ref: 3.2.9 – 3.2.11, 3.2.13

Interviewees were asked to identify what they considered to be the threats and challenges for modern communications. The literature review had raised several issues as possible threats or difficulties for police communications teams; including the rise of citizen journalism, the news media and the much talked about 'crisis' in public confidence (1.5). It was surprising then that counter to expectation these were not considered threats by the interviewees. Indeed, the data gathered in this research suggests that in conjunction with the move away from the 'old' police public relations philosophy there has been a corresponding change in this area as well.

4.4.1 The Absent Problems

It is interesting to note that of the three core problems highlighted by the literature review only citizen journalism was raised as a possible problem, and then by only four interviewees (13%). The apparent reason for the lack of concern over these traditional issues centres around the change in ideology discussed above. According to one of the interviewees citizen journalism was merely "inconvenient" (PI.7). Of more concern, for "modern police comms" was the lack of legal knowledge frequently demonstrated by new journalists (PI.7).

Perhaps the clearest example of the extent of this change is that the vast majority of interviewees showed limited concern about the way their force might be portrayed in the news media which marks a significant change from previous research (1.5). As PI.6 explained, the advent of social media has given the police a voice of their own which has removed many of the pressures and anxieties around image and public perception that have "historically bothered police officers". According to PI.6 and others (PI.4, PI.12 and PI.22), social media has empowered police forces and this has resulted in police officers demonstrating increasing confidence and a "lack of concern about what journalists might be saying" (PI.3). It is important to note, however, that this view was only consistently found among the more technologically advanced communications teams. In the four forces where social media use was still in its infancy there was a much stronger emphasis placed on traditional anxieties around the media.

What was most interesting, however, was the absence of public confidence. Given the considerable attention this subject has received from politicians, the media and academic research it had been expected that the interviewees would express similar concerns and levels of anxiety. Far from the data supporting this view, however, over three quarters of the interviewees (80%) disagreed with the idea that there was a 'crisis' of confidence in policing; with almost half stating that if there was a crisis then it was not one felt in their county. Part of the reason for this disinterest appears to be due to the difficulty in accurately measuring it. Eight of the respondents (29%) expressed serious concerns over the current methodologies employed to capture confidence, and over half (58%) thought confidence was a poor, inexact measurement that was mostly irrelevant for police work and more of a political issue than a policing one. Far from there being a universal 'crisis' of confidence in modern policing, a strong theme from the interview data was that the apparent 'crisis' was more a reflection of Machiavellian power politics (Ellison, 2000) than the actual state of public opinion. The majority of interviewees who still tracked confidence levels corroborated the YouGov (2013) findings that public confidence has actually remained remarkably steady over the last decade and suggested that dips in some surveys might have been caused by the systemic methodological problems with trying to measure confidence.

That there is a 'crisis' of confidence in policing has long been an established historical 'fact'. Research and news articles over the last century have consistently reported that this is the case (BBC, 2014b; Bradford, 2011 Karstedt, 2009) and it has proved a popular rallying call for politicians like David Davis to justify changes in the wake of 'scandals' and perceived failings (Davis, 2013; O'Neill, 2013a).

While it is not possible in this thesis to discuss the perennial debate of public confidence in depth, the disparity between the social 'fact' that there is a crisis and the interview data does raise a number of difficult questions and potential avenues for future research. Perhaps the most interesting question, however, is whether the apparent 'crisis' might be more the result of a cyclical systemic 'moral panic' over policing and wider social insecurity around change and the future than actual changes in public opinion towards the police (Walklate and Mythen, 2007). Academics and politicians alike have a long tradition of referring back to what many refer to as the 'golden age' of policing (Reiner, 2010). The post war decade is commonly thought of as a halcyon era for police public relations during which the police and public were united and there was mutual respect and affection on both sides. This was gradually eroded in

the face of increased media attention, scandals and the pluralisation of society which placed the police and the policed on opposite sides which resulted in decreased public confidence levels (Clark, 1965; Holh, Stanko and Newburn, 2012).

What is apparent, however, from the literature and news articles is that public confidence in the police has been consistently raised as an issue by politicians and the media since their inception in 1829 (White, 1983; Shpayer-Makov, 2010; Wood, 2011; Loader, 2014). The term 'moral panic' was first popularised by Stanley Cohen during the 1970s, since then it has come to represent an exaggerated, and often disproportionate, social reaction to a perceived issue that has been incited by the activities of a person, group or organisation (Murji, 2003; Marsh and Melville, 2011).

A popular idea among the interviewees was that politicians were using public confidence as a means of gaining more control over police forces. It was suggested by some that in order to justify a solution (e.g. police officers wearing body cameras) that there must first be a problem that this can be the answer to. Into this battle then came the media who reported it as a means of selling newspapers and thus cemented the credibility of the idea at a social level. Whether there is a moral panic around public confidence is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, the idea is a compelling one, especially as PI.9 pointed out "how long can you be in 'crisis' for before it's no longer a crisis?"

4.4.2   Threats, Challenges and Problems

The primary threat identified was that of budget cuts to the communications department. Concern around money was described as the fulcrum from which most of the other threats and problems facing communications departments arise. It was raised by nearly three quarters of the interviewees (74%), often without prompting and was a subject frequently returned to during the course of the interview which is suggestive of the degree of anxiety felt on this issue.

It is interesting to note, however, that the interviewees who did not list this as a problem were either from larger departments or non-communications staff (i.e. Chief Constables/PCC). Only one interviewee (PI.6) from a mid-sized department stated that further budget cuts were not a concern for her and this, she explained, was because her department had decreased so much in the last round that there was "no more fat to trim" without reducing the number of staff.

This, PI.6 thought, was unlikely to happen as it would adversely affect the operational effectiveness of the department which is not something her "comms-aware Chief Constable" would allow.

The threat of further budget cuts was a problem that seemed to be particularly felt in rural forces and in those teams described as 'optional' or 'complimentary'. In both of these scenarios the communications team was usually smaller and in forces that had placed less importance traditionally on communications. Conversely, those departments that described themselves as 'embedded', while still concerned about decreased budgets generally expressed less anxiety about the future and were more positive that having restructured and made efficiency savings that their funding would stabilise. This suggests that to some extent the degree of anxiety expressed around the future of the communications department may have been an extension of an underlying systemic or cultural insecurity in terms of the position of the department within the wider police force and the value accorded to it.

This certainly appears to have been the case with PI.11 and PI.18 who both described the senior officers in their forces as historically apathetic, if not antipathetic towards the function of the communication department. According to PI.11 this had led to a cultural disinterest in the wider force and with consecutive Chief Constables in maintaining the communication department and providing adequate funding to ensure that it was modernising and able to meet modern requirements. A similar situation was referred to by PI.18 who believed that it was the view of communications as an auxiliary backroom function which had made it "an easy target" following the introduction of austerity measures in 2010.

What is of particular interest is that following initial significant reductions to these departments, PI.11 explained that the new Chief Constable, prompted by the PCC, had reinstated much of their budget after confidence levels fell over a three year period from one of the highest in the country to one of the lowest. Historically, PI.11's county is one which has enjoyed high levels of public confidence and satisfaction with their police force. Following PI.11's appointment to the position of 'Head of Communications' he said that he was able to prove to his senior officers that this sudden drop in recorded confidence levels was due directly to the reduction in budget. According to PI.11 this isolated that force from the public by removing the "police voice" and reduced efficiency and effectiveness by placing untrained police staff in the department instead of employing professionals. At the time of interview,

PI.11 had just started what he called the "Herculean task of bringing… comms into the age of social media". More funding to properly train the staff in his department had just been allocated and while he thought it would take considerable time and effort to retrain his staff and reconnect with the public the outlook was positive.

The same could not be said for PI.18, who like PI.21, believed that there was an endemic culture of indifference to communications. Indifference from the senior management team, in particular, meant the situation was unlikely to change, funding would be further reduced as "easy savings" (PI.18) and this would continue to impact on the effectiveness of their communications departments.

While confidence was not included in the list of threats identified by interviewees it was raised by some as a potential consequence of the budget cuts. As PI.23 explained, while she thought that there was no 'crisis' of confidence in policing, in her experience public confidence was likely to start slipping in the absence of a visible and visibly engaged police force – two aspects in which effective communications is essential. PI.23's concern was that in the wake of decreased budgets more forces were relying on social media as a means to increase visibility and the community connection in order to reduce the demand for a physical presence. Social media, although free to use in terms of membership fees, is highly expensive to maintain. The predicament is that social media is a resource that requires constant attention and one where success generates more work and demands more resources rather than less the longer you use it and the more it grows.

How to manage the ever growing demand placed on communications departments was another frequently discussed threat and one which was ultimately the result of six separate but connected problems; budget, smaller teams, social media, high turnover, officer expectations and not being listened too.

Budget and Smaller Teams:

In order to meet the financial saving requirements, most of the departments interviewed had recently been through, or were going through, a restructure. This commonly resulted in a significant decrease in the number of staff, with most departments seeing a reduction in size of between 20 and 30%.

<u>Social Media:</u>

Following the London Riots in 2011 police use and presence on social media has grown considerably. Most police forces now have upwards of 50 social media accounts spread over an ever growing number of platform. The interviewees described a pattern of accelerated growth on social media driven in part by a sudden uptake in public interest and involvement on these channels. As police forces move away from simply broadcasting to a more symmetrical model of communications that actively encourages engagement, more resources are required in order to maintain these sites to meet both the public and operational demands being placed on them. The difficulty, as PI.8 explained, is that the department's ability to "deliver against that expectation" has not yet caught up to the demand placed on it.

<u>Expectations:</u>

Connected to the above, there was a concern that the rapid expansion and success of social media had resulted in police officers, and bodies such as the COP and HMIC, having increasingly unrealistic expectations of what communications can achieve. Engagement is a good example of this. As discussed earlier in 4.2, the majority of police forces (84%) said that they have not yet met the aspirations set out in 'Engage' (NPIA, 2010). The most commonly cited reason for this was lack of time and resources in order to be meet the demand. Yet, despite this, interviewees also reported continued pressure from officers, the COP and HMIC to adopt a more dialogue based model of communications in order to replace some of the engagement activities police officers have traditionally performed in person.

The problems caused by expectation are not only limited to pressure from governing bodies either. The problem of meeting demand is further exacerbated by the fact that increased service provision and engagement needs to be maintained once started. Chapter 1 discussed Chandek and Porter's (1998) 'Disconfirmation theory'. Once audiences have become accustomed to a level of service provision, if these expectations are not met 'disconfirmation' is likely to occur which is likely to not only affect confidence and use of those services in the future but also overall perception of the police organisation and the credibility of the police 'voice'.

<u>Ignored Concerns:</u>

Although this was only raised by four interviewees, there was a general underlying feeling (particularly among 'Optional' and 'Complementary' departments) that there remained

difficulties with senior police officers and managers heeding the advice of communications staff – particularly with regard to limitations or problems with social media. PI.19B was particularly frustrated by the lack of care and attention he felt his senior management team gave to his advice and concerns. PI.19B described several recent examples where the SMT had decided upon a course of action against his advice only to later run into the problems he had cautioned would occur. Similar situations were also mentioned by PI.7, PI.9, PI.15 , PI.18, PI.21, PI.25A and PI.28, particularly with regard to demand and social media.

Staff Turnover:

Another, although less immediately obvious, consequence of the strain felt by communications departments is the impact on staff morale and wellbeing. According to PI.23, over her long tenure as head of communications in her force she had seen a change from slow to high turnover of staff. PI.25A and PI.28 agreed with this assessment and expressed a belief that the pressures of modern communications meant that staff were frequently overworked and felt underpaid and undervalued so left after gaining a few years of experience for more lucrative jobs. Staff retention is not just concerning as a reflection of morale, however, it is also potentially crippling for small departments where the cyclical loss of trained professionals places an additional burden on the remaining staff, both in terms of coping with increased demand, the loss of expertise and also training a new staff member.

The above problems combine to make an unfeasible situation for communications teams who increasingly appear to be victims of their own success as success generates greater demand for more services. It also raises the question of critical mass and whether it is tenable to expect the level of engagement and operational support from communications if the funding and resources are not there to support the needs of the department. Social media appears to have created demand for services which, with the current resources, is difficult to meet. The more communications can do from an operational perspective the more is expected of them. Smaller teams and restricted budgets however mean that there is a limit to what can be achieved and if expectations are not realistic then disappointment is inevitable.

One possible solution to these difficulties is collaboration. This was proposed by several of the interviewees as their ideal answer. HMIC (2012, 2014) suggested that collaboration between police forces and related public sector agencies would be an advisable and desirable means by

which police forces could save money and improve efficiency. HMIC (2014, p6) defined collaboration as:

"an arrangement under which two or more parties work together in the interests of their greater efficiency or effectiveness in order to achieve common or complementary objectives"

Collaboration can involve joint enterprises between police forces or other public organisations (e.g. the County Council) and take the form of shared campaigns, joint research/evaluation or shared services, such as the joint Sussex and Surrey Major Crimes Team or the Suffolk-Norfolk joint Communications department. HMIC (2014, p33), however, concluded that despite their earlier recommendations "collaboration between forces, public and private sector organisations remains patchy, fragmented, overly complex and too slow".

A similar situation was found when this research was conducted. Collaboration remains fragmented and inconsistent across the teams interviewed. While there was a generally positive attitude towards collaboration, with 28 interviewees (91%) seeing it as a viable means of meeting demand and reducing costs, only nine (36%) of those forces interviewed were actively working with other departments in this way. Of those nine, four forces had merged their communications units with another force and reported improved efficiency and consistency in their departments as a result of the merger. The other five forces were mostly collaborating on a case by case basis for specific campaigns.

Lack of time to organise and manage collaborations was the most commonly given reason for communications teams not collaborating. Poor communication and networking was also identified as a significant issue by some of the interviewees who felt that with shrinking budgets and growing demand collaboration provided an opportunity for joined-up, whole sale campaigns across the country; however they lacked the time to build relationships with other departments.

The inefficiency in police communications was a source of considerable frustration for PI.16 and PI.22 who both felt that there were substantial inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the way communications had traditionally been managed as independent and isolated units. Police websites were raised as a good example. Each individual force maintains and funds their own website and across these websites there is considerable variation in terms of design,

functionality and usability (Appendix 3.10. PI.22 observed that if the College of Policing had produced a master template or if forces had collaborated with each other on website design then police forces could have one well designed, affordable template that could be personalised by individual forces instead of 30+ variations of varying use. According to PI.22, even when designed in-house, websites cost thousands of pounds in terms of time and manpower to construct. As increased functionality and usability is of growing importance for police websites, which are no longer "data dumps" (PI.2) but a strategic part of communications activity, collaboration would have been a sensible solution to the difficulty of modernising and keeping police websites up to date. Such an opportunity, however, has not been grasped although several forces have collaborated with another force, or their PCC, in order to create a joint template.

A similar situation seems to exist around campaigns. In 2014, the College of Policing ran an initiative which sought to synchronise the major campaigns run by police forces across the country. The aim was to encourage consistency in campaign message and timing in order to improve the impact of the campaign. While this was lauded as a good idea in principle, many of the interviewees explained that they had later stopped participating in the scheme as it was placing too great a burden on them and did not fit in with their communications strategy.

PI.10 was in favour of this idea, she thought that a better way of achieving the result would be to diary-share the campaigns across police forces so that each communications team led and created a campaign on a specific issue (e.g. burglary). These campaigns would then be disseminated to the other forces and run over an agreed period. Using this strategy, PI.10 thought would reduce demand on communications teams, help improve consistency of message, improve networking between departments and share the financial burden in an easily managed way.

When this was suggested to the other interviewees, however, there were mixed reactions. Some, like PI.22, PI.16 and PI.11 thought this an excellent and practical alternative to formal collaboration. Others, like PI.5, PI.13, PI.20A and PI.24 were very against it. The reasons given by this latter group varied between internal politics getting in the way, to the potential for brand confusion and the difference between teams making it impractical. PI.24, for example, thought that "the problem is, obviously, you've got different types of burglary [here] to London. You've got different residents, you've got different audiences".

This was not agreed with by many of the interviewees who felt that most of the major campaigns were quite similar and did not differ significantly between audiences in one location to another. Similarly, concerns around brand were dismissed. PI.2 was particularly vocal about what he considered the "ridiculously proprietorial rhetoric" around brand. The argument put forwards by interviewees like PI.4 and PI.12 was that by sharing campaigns the general public might become confused about the brand which could affect how much attention they pay to the campaign because they might think it does not apply to them. PI.15, however, was quick to disagree with this notion on the grounds that in her experience an average member of the public is mostly unaware of police branding other than it has come from 'the police':

> "Some forces are worried about brand because the police service remains quite parochial isn't it, in that… it has never had a particularly strategic overview… they tend to be quite insular in saying this is the City of London Police or this is the Metropolitan Police and actually people don't really care do they. They are more interested in the messaging generally" (PI.15)

Moreover, as PI.28 pointed out, when talking about the 'police brand' are we referring to the national or local one? Police identity has a long and confusing history and is the subject of much debate (Manning, 1997). What is increasingly apparent, however, is that there is a difference and frequently a disparity between how people think of the 'the police' as a concept (i.e. national) and how they relate that to their local police. A YouGov poll in 2013 found consistently over a 10 year period that people rated their local police better than senior police officers[30]. This difference was also remarked on by the interviewees with regard to public confidence. PI.10, for example, thought that people differentiate between local police and a national police which sits above them and this effects how they respond to confidence questions. What is clear, however, is that brand is closely linked to identity, at least from the police perspective. Whether it does play an important part in reinforcing the police message, as PI.12 believes, or is completely irrelevant as PI.28 thinks, requires further research.

In summary then, while there is a considerable amount of police communications work which must remain local, aspects where there are strong points of commonality, such as awareness/prevention campaigns if created and run by multiple forces will not only reduce the costs of running individual campaigns but promote a more unified and standardised crime

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[30] YouGov (2013) found that while the public consistently recorded lower levels of confidence in senior police officers, senior officers were still considered more trustworthy than politicians and journalists.

prevention and awareness approach than the patchwork system currently in use. Before this can be achieved, however, departments must first start forming better connections with their counterparts. In an age of instant digital connection and joint partnerships between police forces there is an irony that police communications seems to be content to remain in historic isolationism.

Both the problems around brand and the generalisability of campaigns, however, pale in comparison to the problems caused by internal politics when it comes to collaboration. 11 of the interviewees expressed significant discontent and frustration with the internal politics and what PI.2 referred to as a "historical culture of isolation" which they felt frequently hampered any form of collaboration and resource sharing. PI.16 in particular found this a consistent impediment to working with other departments to such an extent that her team now work with partner agencies rather than fellow police communications teams. Similar experiences were reported by other interviewees and a common theme from these interviews is one of cultural isolation. One reason for this, according to PI.11 is that police communications has evolved independently and differently across police forces and this sense of independence is proving difficult to change in some teams.

An additional complication with internal politics, however, has been the introduction of PCCs. PI.13, PI.17, PI.22 and PI.23 were all very in favour of the idea of merging communications teams to form larger regional teams that cover multiple forces[31]. Sir Hugh Orde, a former president of ACPO, has noted that since the introduction of the PCC's that there has been a significant slowing in the number of collaborations between police forces (cited in Gilmore, 2013). Orde's (*ibid*) observation is consistent with the reports by the interviewees that proposals to merge or collaborate with other forces in more meaningful ways have been consistently dismissed by PCCs. In PI.13's opinion, further collaboration is unlikely as PCCs "jealously guard their bailiwick".

It is interesting to note that PCCs were identified in conjunction with another threat. The second problem mentioned was far more divisive with regard to opinion, with some in favour and some fiercely against PCCs taking operational control of the communications department.

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[31] Such as in the case of West Mercia communications department which covers four counties.

Wood (2016) argues that the introduction of the first Police and Crime Commissioners in 2012 was positioned as the most radical change in policing since 1829. The decision to introduce PCCs allegedly on the grounds of democratising policing and improving public accountability was controversial from the start and saw a "staggering low electoral turnout" (Lister and Rowe, 2015, p.373; Lister, 2013) with a worryingly high level of public ignorance as to the function of this new post (Gilmore, 2012).

In 2013 the Times reported that in three forces the PCC had taken control of the communications department and that this was now being considered in other forces as well (O'Neill, 2013c); although by 2015 this had increased to eight (3.1.4). The concern raised in the article and reiterated by over half of the interviewees (58%) was the fear that this could endanger the police independence and lead to "politicisation by the backdoor" (PI.21).

Baldi and Lefrance (2012) argue PCCs represent a move from professional to political accountability. The general feeling expressed by the interviewees, however, was that PCC oversight of communications would lead to politicisation and political control rather than improved accountability. Underlying this fear seems to be the concern that the presence of a fundamentally political post would return communications departments to the past and lead to a resurgence of 'spin', 'cover-ups' and 'political manoeuvrings', particularly during re-election campaigns (PI.5). The hypothesis put forward by some of the interviewees was that this would lead to the 'police voice' losing credibility and allow PCCs a loop hole through which to start effecting operational policing.

Lister and Rowe (2015) note that over two thirds of PCCs in the 2012 election were elected from political parties (Conservative, 39% and Labour, 32%), in contrast only 12 (29%) posts were filled by Independent candidates. How PCC control of these departments will affect their perceived credibility following the second election in 2016 is something only time, hindsight and research will show. What is interesting, however, is the divide between the interviewees who were in favour of or against PCC oversight. While the majority of the interviewees were against PCC oversight, all of the interviewees who were against this change were still managed by the Chief Constable and had no direct experience of the situation. Of the four (13%) who were in favour of it, three of them were working in departments managed by the PCC. Whether or not the fears around PCC control are founded, it is evidently a topic of considerable concern and one that needs further investigation.

The final significant problem mentioned by the interviewees was that of measuring what or whether their strategies were working. This is discussed in the next section.

4.5   Effectiveness

Questions: 2.4

Results Ref: 3.2.8, 3.2.9

It has long been thought that there is a connection between 'effective' policing and communication. Allen (1947, p438), writing over sixty years ago about the English police, remarked that police effectiveness and efficiency "depends at the bottom on the maintenance of happy relations between police and public". This has continued to be a prevalent theme over the intervening decades and remains a dominant presence in official documents and policies today (see HMIC, 2001; ACPO, 2012; HMIC, 2014).

Research into police effectiveness and how to improve it, however, only began in the 1970s (Hough and Clarke, 1980). Since then this topic has become a fiercely politicised issue and one which has been frequently cited by both politicians and the press in recent years (Elder et al, 2004). Consecutive governments have become increasingly preoccupied with demonstrating continued improvements and justifying the police budget to a progressively more aware and vociferously demanding general public. In reflection of this there has been a proliferation of studies and academic interest into the nebulous concept of police effectiveness (Bottomley and Coleman, 1980). It was this political and social anxiety over demonstrating effectiveness which arguably led to the target driven culture that became prevalent during the 1980s; looking to improve all areas of policing from response times to detection rates (Reiner, 2010) and more recently public confidence levels (Resig and Corneia, 1997; Stoutland, 2001; Fleming and McLaughlin, 2012).

So far, however, there has been little research into how to improve the effectiveness of the communications department (1.5). What studies there have been have principally concentrated on evaluating the short term impact of specific activities using the traditional channels, such as newsletters (Wunsch and Holh, 2009). An interesting change remarked on by the interviewees is the recent demand from senior officers (and often the PCC) to provide evaluation data on how well their departments are currently performing.

According to five of the interviewees this marked a considerable departure from the culture of the 1990s and early 2000s where they were "given a brief and expected to get on with it" (PI.2)

but otherwise left alone. One interviewee (PI.19A) explained how she currently creates a monthly presentation for senior officers with graphs, charts and predictions around their social media sites to show who had been accessing these sites, levels of engagement and what the reaction of their campaigns had been like. PI.19A laughed as she added that five years ago her report would have been half a page of A4 about interest from their local journalists and circulation figures.   Several of the interviewees attributed this change to the growing need to justify expenditure and the ubiquity of analytics programmes for evaluating social media cheaply. The advent of these programmes meant that for the first time communications departments could be asked to account for the success of their activities in a cost effective way and without outsourcing for an independent evaluation which is what often happened with traditional media campaigns.

The interviewees were asked whether they had an evaluation framework in place for traditional and social media activities and how effective they thought their current system was. The results from the first question were surprising. Given the level of interest in intelligence led policing, the concern shown by many of the interviewees towards reaching their audiences and the general transition away from broadcasting to behavioural change communications activities, it had been hypothesised that the majority, if not all, police forces would have some sort of framework in place. This was not the case. A significant number (33%) did not have a formal strategy at the time of their interview for traditional media campaigns and one fifth of the forces did not have one in place for social media. Furthermore, when asked, nearly two thirds (61%) rated their current strategies as inadequate. This raises the valid question of whether evaluating effectiveness is important for police communications, and if so what does 'effectiveness' look like.

When asked whether evaluation was important the responses were again mixed and fell into four broad categories.

1) 'Effectiveness' is important and the interviewee was happy with their current strategy.
2) 'Effectiveness is important but the current system is inadequate.
3) 'Effectiveness' is important but department lacked resources to measure it.
4) 'Effectiveness' not important but part of bureaucratic tick box culture required by the senior management team.

The central issue, as Shaw and White (2004) point out, is that public relations is predicated on the assumption that communication leads to favourable behaviour or a desired outcome. This is the fundamental assumption which drives all communication; whether it is internal, external, campaign or a call for information. If no one is listening or something has no impact then what is the value in devoting limited resources to that activity? Given the growing reliance on virtual communications to bridge gaps left by a reduced and less visible police force in the physical world (Salmi et al, 2000; Sindall and Sturgis, 2013) understanding what is working and why is of the upmost importance to police and politicians.

While there was generally a positive attitude towards the need for evaluation, lack of time and resources was commonly cited as the reason why teams were either not measuring effectiveness or still using inadequate systems. This was often linked to what PI.21 referred to as "the cultural roadblocks" encouraged by disinterest from senior officers which meant that her department rarely had the budget or the drive to think about areas for improvement. Issues around resources were further compounded by the endemic confusion over describing what 'effective' communications would look like or how to actually measure it. This was a particular problem for social media and web-based activities as the newness of these technologies and the wealth of data now available through them meant that communications staff were often "learning on the job" (PI.7) and "fumbling our way to find out what works with not a lot of guidance" (PI.2). By the time of the interviews most of the teams had prioritised social media over traditional campaigns with some like PI.19 no longer using traditional campaigns at all.

In 2014 there were three main types of measurement used by communications teams; 'Output', 'Interaction' and 'Outcome' (Fig 4.2). It is interesting to note that for those teams still evaluating traditional campaigns all teams had stopped looking at 'Output' in favour of 'Outcome'. For social media, however, 'Output' was the favourite means of assessing effectiveness, although there was a trend towards adopting 'Outcome' based metrics.

Fig 4.2	Evaluation Models	
Model	**Number of Departments**	**Measures Used**
Output	9	Reach/retweets/Followers
Interaction	3	Likes/reposts/comments
Outcome	5	Increase in reporting Information about crimes/response from public Specific behaviour (e.g. knifes turned in)

Slatter (2009, p.7) pointed out that "when considering effectiveness… it is reasonable to ask 'effective against what'". This is a perennial difficulty for organisations, like the police, where the answer may not be either immediately apparent or easily definable. According to Engstad and Evans (1980) the first step is to establish what it is you are attempting to measure. The challenge with this is that such an assessment requires a unitary system of measurement which is not necessarily reflective, or capable of reflecting, inherently nebulous concepts like the effectiveness of communication where the results are often intangible and take time to become apparent (Skogan and Mears, 2004).

In order to determine the effectiveness of a strategy or activity communications teams first need to be clear about what it is they want to measure before a suitable methodology can be implemented for capturing it. According to the interviewees, however, there is a historic, almost systemic, difficulty around evaluating communications in the police which has resulted in considerable confusion as to what to measure, how to capture the data and understanding what it then means.

With the vast amounts of data readily available on social media it is all too easy to get lost under what PI.4 called the "data deluge". Arguably the problem confronting police forces now is the opposite to the one that has traditionally faced them. Instead of too little data there is now far too much and this can lead to 'paralysis by analysis' (Kolakowski, 2015), a situation where as PI.12 warned "you can evaluate too much". For PI.12, the trick was to "work out what you want to evaluate…what are you trying to generate? Why are you doing it? What's your objective?"

The three strategies currently used offer different insights into different areas of communication but all are also inherently limited. 'Output', or what PI.8 referred to as "vanity stats" are the easiest capture but also the most superficial. This data set may show how many retweets a post has had or what the reach has been but it cannot show whether the desired outcome has been achieved or whether, as PI.7 believes often happens, the post is merely contributing to the "white noise effect" that provides a momentary distraction but nothing more. As PI.10 pointed out, what is the point of 50,000 people reading an appeal for information about a crime if there is no response?

The same is true of 'Interaction' based measurements. There is a growing body of research which suggests that online behaviour does not necessarily correspond to how people behave offline (Jones, 2016). 'Liking' or commenting on a post (two of the common measures for interaction) is not necessarily a reliable indicator of whether something has had an impact. A high proportion of people who will have read a post are silent observers on social media sites (Brainard and Edlins, 2015). For every person who 'engages' with that post there will be a 'dark figure' of those who have chosen not to engage. This lack of engagement should not be taken to mean, however, that the post has not achieved the desired result. HMIC (2014) found that it is only a very small minority of the public who feel comfortable or wish to engage with the police directly on social media and with appeals for information the audience might prefer a traditional means of communicating with the police either in person or by telephone.

'Interaction' based measures were of concern to PI.21 in particular as she feared that by measuring interaction there would be an implicit pressure on teams to try to increase levels of interaction. This, according to PI.21, could not only prove to be a waste of resources as in her experience you can only engage with those that want to be engaged with, but could actually be counterproductive for public reassurance and encouraging a more symmetrical communication model. Similar concerns were raised by PI.4, PI.13 and PI.14 who all echoed these sentiments.

The final measurement, 'Outcome' based, is the most comprehensive of the three but also the most expensive in terms of time and resources and the most difficult to accurately measure. This model measures impact by analysing whether a specific behaviour has changed. The example used by PI.9 to explain this was of a recent domestic abuse campaign her team had run. This had involved comparing the reporting levels for this crime category during and after

the campaign against the same time period for the previous three years to see if the campaign had had a noticeable impact on encouraging victims to come forward. There are three main difficulties with this metric. Firstly, it requires a relative level of stability in the recorded statistics in order to determine if there has been a variation. Bratton (2005) points out that there is a general tendency to assume that the police are responsible for crime rate fluctuations when there is growing evidence to suggest that this is not the case. Behaviour can change for a number of reasons and these campaigns are seldom run in an isolated environment without wider social influences but instead in a hectic social space. As such, simply comparing statistics may not reveal much insight into how effective a campaign was as there will be multiple unknown variables also at work. As PI.21 pointed out:

"You can't evaluate the benefits of social media unless you create a sterile environment and you can attribute that behaviour to doing that social media, and I don't think we can in most circumstances" (PI.21)

Secondly, what constitutes behavioural change? A common problem with campaigns, according to PI.22, is that while they encourage victims to initially make contact with the police or to change their behaviour (e.g. locking doors) this seldom ends in a conviction as the victim later retracts their statements or returns to the previous behavioural pattern. Similar findings were reported in a BBC (2016) documentary on domestic abuse and has been found in other campaigns as well (Elder et al, 2004). Finally, and linked to the above, some behaviour changes in increments and it is only months or years later that the cultural and systemic changes can be clearly seen. The evaluation methods currently used for campaigns only capture the initial change, or absence, they cannot show how long the behavioural change continues for or patterns of change.

As can be seen from the above, no single method offers an integrated means of assessing effectiveness. At best 'Output', 'Interaction' and 'Outcome' offer a partial picture of the situation and thus make judging whether a strategy is actually effective difficult. PI.12 suggested that the most reliable and comprehensive system for measuring effectiveness is to use a combination of all three models, which is the approach his team have adopted. While time consuming and resource intensive, PI.12 felt that as a result of using this strategy he had a thorough understanding of what works in his county and how to apply this in order to have very effective micro targeting when it came to tailoring messages for specific audiences. Such an approach, however, requires commitment from both the communications team and senior

management in order to be practical – two factors which varied considerably between police forces.

Part of the problem with effectiveness, as PI.10 emphasised however, is that much of communications work is based on preventing victimisation or criminal behaviour and there is no reliable way of measuring that which did not happen.

For PI.14 and PI.26, however, the greater concern was that the quest for demonstrating effectiveness could easily degenerate into target chasing. This was a particular concern for PI.14 who felt strongly that "communications can't be target driven – it ends up destroying, or at least impeding, what you are trying to do". Given this, pursuing the eternally elusive ideal of 'effectiveness' through complicated strategies may be, as PI.26 concluded, a "red herring" that encourages target chasing rather than actual improvement.

The research question asked whether it is possible to measure what, or whether, police communication strategies are having an impact. With regard to communications the data collected in this project suggests that the answer is 'possibly' depending upon the definition used. At its heart this question is about how police forces understand and measure effectiveness. What is apparent is that the current strategies are used inconsistently across policing environments and are considered by the majority to be inadequate for the level of analysis thought to be necessary.

Ultimately, what the data suggests is that the difference between the three interviewees who were satisfied with their evaluation methods and the 61% who were not is not down to the method used as PI.9, PI.12 and PI.19A all used different models. The key difference is that these interviewees had a clear rationale for what they wanted the data for and how they would use it. In contrast, the overriding theme from the other 19 interviewees was one of confusion and general bewilderment around what they wanted to achieve. For PI.9 reach was sufficient for her to assess how information was being shared across social media. PI.19A used statistics to track how campaigns were affecting reporting rates and PI.12 monitored everything in order to enhance the success of targeted messages.

This conclusion is consistent with PI.16's observation that in her experience the fundamental problem many forces had was the absence of a clear strategy as to the purpose behind the

campaigns. In PI.16's opinion, there was a common confusion around the difference between awareness and prevention campaigns which often resulted in communications staff and police officers thinking they were synonymous. This in turn led to confusion over what the desired outcomes of the project were and thus made selecting the appropriate measurement strategy difficult. As Hodges (1987, p.190), however, points out "diagnosing the malady is a lot easier than finding the remedy".

Demonstrating effectiveness, and perhaps more importantly cost effectiveness, is a central concern for police forces at the moment and one that is of growing importance for communications as well. The austerity measures imposed in 2010 have resulted in a lot of unpopular public sector cuts and criticism levied towards police forces for continuing to finance what to some might mistakenly appear to be a non-essential function (Davies, 2015). The dilemma is that to assess effectiveness properly requires time, resources and significant budget – the very things the interviewees identified as the greatest threats facing police communications. Until the endemic confusion around 'what effectiveness looks like' is resolved, however, and departments have the resources to devote to evaluation it is probable that 'effectiveness' will remain elusive.

4.6   Chapter Summary

According to Clarke (1965, p.307) "Policing in most societies exists in a state of 'dynamic tension' between forces that tend to isolate it and those that tend to integrate its functions with other social structures". The police are at once a part of and excluded from society. The communications department provides an essential bridge between the police and the policed which enables a "shared universe of discourse" (Nir, 2011, p.505). The purpose of this chapter has been to address the research questions that formed foundation and direction of this thesis. When this project began it appeared to be a relatively straightforward area to investigate. What this and the preceding chapters have sought to show, however, is that it is anything but.

Police Public Relations is a highly complex and convoluted area mired in confusion and misunderstanding. When one considers that this is arguably the most outward facing and public department in the police there is surprisingly little known about it, how it works, what it does or the ideology governing it. There has been a long standing belief in the press that this department exists to 'spin' bad news, conceal wrong doings and publicise 'good stories' in order to distract from the first two functions (Davis, 2015).

What is apparent from this research is that police communications is in a state of transition. It is a department that has changed significantly since the 1990s as police forces have been required to adapt to a constantly changing communication and social landscape that is significantly different from that which characterised the majority of the 20th Century and their formative development. What is also apparent from the data, however, is that in 2014 some police forces have adapted to these new requirements and challenges better than others and that for while some things have changed others have not.

The advent of social media has radically redefined not only the communications landscape but also organisational and personal identity. Corporations and institutions are now expected to have and maintain a virtual identity and presence online (Zerfass and Schramm, 2013). Such a requirement presents a multitude of concerns and difficulties for public institutions like the police who as public bodies are held to higher standards of accountability, openness and transparency than their private sector counter parts and who must walk a fine line between in order to avoid allegations of spin and corruption (Motion, 2005).

Crump (2011) concluded from his research that police activity on social media varied considerably between police forces, both in terms of the degree of activity and what they were using these sites for. According to Crump (2011) prior to August 2011 most forces were using social media as an occasional channel for broadcasting news but that there was limited evidence of engagement, dialogue or of a consistent strategy. The London Riots in 2011 were a watershed moment in police communications, following which there has been a clear pattern of accelerated growth as police forces have adopted these new channels as a means of mass communication.

While the data from this research shows a similar pattern of inconsistency between police forces with regard to social media there have been clear improvements in the majority of the forces interviewed and there is compelling evidence of a new periodisation emerging in police public relations – that of 'direct and digital'. One of the most significant changes identified was the channel shift many forces are currently exploring which is prioritising social media channels over the traditional (press) channels. This proposed channel shift represents a significant departure from traditional reactive police communications which was the source, but not the publisher, of crime information. Modern communications is increasingly proactive and in some forces has repositioned the police to become publishers in their own right; challenging the historical monopoly of the print press to break news to the public. What is needed is more research in the future to see how these changes are developing. The principles established in Engage (NPIA, 2011) and which are apparent in the burgeoning 'Direct and Digital' approach have set out a vision of a personal police service that engages directly with the individual and works in partnership with a virtual network to solve crimes; such aspirations, however, are not necessarily attainable, particularly given the constraints on resources and the growing demand many departments are facing.

In conjunction with the growth of social media it is perhaps not surprising that a significant number of the interviewees reported a corresponding change in the police – media relationship. With the rise of first citizen journalism (Goldsmith, 2010) and now the 'self-service' model of police communications, which removes the need for the media to play the part of intermediary between police and public, the boundaries and power dynamic has shifted irrevocably. Increasingly it appears that local journalists are acting merely as mouthpieces for the police press office, regurgitating (sometimes verbatim) the police story.

This change from critical watch dog function to extension of the police voice has been documented in other countries as well (Lee and McGovern, 2014). While this is by no means the situation in all areas it is indicative of possible changes police communications may experience in the future.

How communications departments are going to continue changing going forwards was a recurrent concern through the interviews. The interviewees were apprehensive over how the continuing budget cuts would affect their departments going forwards. Almost all interviewees reported a reduction in their budgets which they said had had a detrimental effect on the campaigns and activities they could engage in and many felt that further reductions could only be achieved by reducing the number of staff. Smaller teams, smaller budgets and greater demand were among the most frequently cited worries and problems facing police communications in 2014.

Given the current financial restrictions on police forces and the likelihood of these continuing for the foreseeable future it is more important than ever for the police to be able to justify their expenditure, strategies and activities. With news articles such as those by Lane (2015), Davis (2015) and Whitehead (2011) aimed at stirring public anger at an "army of propagandists" (Davis, 2015) there to "cover up… [police] incompetence" (Lane, 2015) to the loss of frontline policing and services it is essential that police communications is not seen as a luxury, inefficient extra.

Collaboration presents one possible avenue for police forces to explore. There was a strong sense of frustration at times during the interviews over what one interviewee called the "needless waste and replication" (PI.16) that is a recurrent issue. PI.22 identified three areas where communications teams could collaborate to save time, money and resources; campaigns, websites and evaluations. Such an approach however would necessitate these departments learning to share information, improve intra-departmental communication and let go of the isolationist tendencies which have historically defined police communications (PI.16).

Time and the resources to establish these joint endeavours remain the two greatest challenges for police forces to overcome. However, there is compelling evidence that this might yet happen in the future. At the time of the interviews four forces had merged communications

teams and a further five of the 27 forces interviewed were involved with joint communications projects.

A recurrent theme in the interviews was how much police communications had changed over the last 20 years. With the work of APCOM and social media communications is now more open than it has been in the past. Police forces as a whole are moving away from working in isolation and towards forming close working partnerships with their neighbours. With the success of joint teams such as the Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridge Major Crimes Unit or the West Mercia and Warwickshire joint communication team, collaboration is looking increasingly to be a feasible answer to budgetary problems.

As police forces have changed to meet the requirements and needs of society so too have the communications department. The interviewees all emphasised the difference between what they considered 'old comms' and their work now. The change in department name was cited as indicative of the change in ideology and culture governing these departments. Police communications now appears to be less about publicity and proactive reputation management and instead increasingly about supporting the operational needs of their police forces through public engagement.

This distinction has led to the question of whether public relations is still relevant in modern communications. The interview data clearly shows that public relations remains a misunderstood term, with almost half of the interviewees struggling to explain or define the concept and nearly a quarter conflating it with publicity and marketing. Despite this confusion, however, over half of the interviewees agreed that public relations remains a relevant and important part of modern policing. The difference is that public relations is now about supporting the operational function of the police within society rather than acting as a barrier between them.

The next step is for police forces to continue improving their communications activities to capitalise on the new social intelligence networks now available to them. A key part of this will require departments to have in place a robust system for assessing what is working and why to improve targeting and the impact of their messages. Effectiveness remains a perennial problem for a number of police forces. Part of the reason for this is the newness of social media and the mercurial nature of the present communication industry which is constantly

changing and evolving, often too quickly for fundamentally reactive organisations like the police to keep pace. These issues are further compounded by the prevalent confusion of many interviewees around which measurement system is best, what the data they collect means or how this can be applied to their activities and strategies. What is apparent, is that until this confusion is resolved and departments have a clear idea of both what they want to measure and why, effectiveness will remain mired in its current difficulties.

Chapter 5:   Conclusion

Weber argues that it is of upmost importance to "ask questions about those things which convention makes self-evident" (1949 cited in Turner, 2013 p.161) and perhaps nowhere is this more necessary than with the police, an institution mired in "non-knowledge" (McGoey, 2007 p.229), confusion, myth and misunderstanding (Reiner, 2010). Much has been written, said and thought about the British police. It has proved to be one of the most enduring and popular symbols, a subject on which everyone in Britain seems to have a ready opinion and a topic of perpetual intrinsic interest. The police are not only the law enforcers, the thin blue line, and the gate keepers to the criminal justice system; they are also the interpretive lens through which people understand crime and society (Box 2004) and society tells stories about itself (Loader, 1997). Such a status, however, presents a multitude of challenges in modern society when it comes to communication, reputation management and managing public opinion (Lovell, 2002; Zavattro and Sementelli, 2014).

Using Weber's (ibid) approach as a starting point, the aim of this study was to ask questions and learn about a department that is at once one of the most public facing departments of the police and yet in many ways the most invisible and the least understood. It is a function often mired in allegations of 'spin' and of being little more than a propaganda machine whose primary function is to manage 'truth' and public perception in order to protect police forces from scandals such as Hillsborough (Geddes, 2016).

This research set out to discover what public relations looks like in the modern police force; how it has changed with the advent of social media and whether the concept of public relations is still relevant in policing today. Following an extensive review of the literature, eighteen months of confusion and multiple discarded methodologies, three aims evolved into nine questions and this thesis was born.

One of the early difficulties encountered while researching this area was the lack of recent, comprehensive research. Most studies are several years old (Mawby 2002, 2007), based in a foreign country (Surette, 2001; Lee and McGovern, 2014, 2015); or focus on only one aspect such as FOIs (Cooke and Sturgis, 2012), social media (Brainard and Edlins, 2015, Connor, 20115; Crump, 2011) or evaluating a specific initiative (Bradford, Stanko and Jackson, 2009; Myhill and Bradford, 2012), rather than looking at the department in an integrated way. Such

an approach, however, has led to a fragmented and out dated understanding of police communications.

The chosen methodology sought to address some of the gaps identified during the literature review. In investigating this area, representatives from more than two thirds (69%) of English police forces were interviewed in depth, covering a range of issues from the place of public relations in the police to their communication strategies and how these departments had changed over the last decade (3.2). Now at the end of the 'research story' it is not the purpose of this final chapter to rehash the discussion in Chapter 4, but instead to summarise the key themes and core arguments of the thesis.

5.1   Key Themes and Findings

The central theme that emerged during this project was one of change and continuity. This thesis argues that while police public relations has changed considerably in form, structure and operational position over the last 20 years there are also strong elements of continuity - particularly with regard to the core functions, communication strategies used and the problems faced. This study found that these departments appear to be continually in a state of transition and tension as forces attempt to adapt to a rapidly evolving social landscape far removed from that of the twentieth century. Social media and the internet has radically redefined the what, where, when and how of communication, the traditional communication channels and the relationship between individuals and public institutions. In such an environment, effective communication has ceased to be a 'nice-to-have optional extra' and instead become a fundamental requirement for the success of modern policing. Yet for all these apparent changes, there is much about these departments that has remained relatively unchanged from the situation described by Mawby (2002; 2007).

1) A Modern Communications Department

Prior to the 1990s, the majority of these departments were run by police officers, in small non-centralised teams spread out across the police force as a background support function designed to deal with the press and adverse publicity. Following the Wolf-Olins report, however, police forces started modernising and professionalising their public relations departments (Mawby, 2002). In 2014, communications had changed significantly.

The interview data tells a story of how police communications departments have evolved over the last decade, with most moving from the position of an auxiliary backroom function not considered part of 'real police work' to an operationally essential part of modern policing. Over half (58%) of the interviewees considered their departments as fully embedded within their force with the remaining interviewees mostly positive in their assessments of how the perception and place of their departments is gradually changing. The increasing cultural inclusion and acceptance that has resulted from this change is indicative of the significant shift in culture both internally and externally towards communications.

Part of the change in perception was attributed to the decade of professionalisation. Replacing warranted officers with civilian experts had, according to some interviewees, transformed the reputation of the public relations department from a route for quick promotion, that kept the press at arm's length, to a professional department of recognised experts there to aid front line policing.

Communications departments are now wholly staffed by civilian communications professionals in streamlined, centralised teams embedded at the heart of the police force. While these teams are mostly smaller than they were following the peak of expansion in 2010 it is indicative of their perceived value that they are still, on average, larger than recorded by Mawby (2007) in 2006/7; especially when size is compared to the interviewee's perceptions of their operational position. Although the delineated department structure model was still in use by many of the teams interviewed, some forces have adopted (or were evaluating the merits of) a more generic, 'jack of all trades', approach – such as the one utilised by PI.17's team where staff were trained to be all round communications officers capable of performing all aspects of communications activity, rather than specialists in one area (e.g. Press Officer).

2) Budget, Structure and Managing Demand

The approach adopted in PI.17's team potentially offers a practical solution to a great number of issues including greater flexibility for resource allocation. In theory this model could significantly improve a department's adaptability to meet demand on a day to day basis. Whether this new structure is adopted by more forces and lives up to expectations remains to be seen. However, it does provide an innovative possible solution for protecting the future viability of communications teams especially given the economic situation which, according to the interviewees, is placing considerable and increasing strain on the functionality of these

departments. It is indicative of the level of concern that police staff feel over this issue that the subject of budget cuts was brought up by 74% of those interviewed, often without prompting and frequently returned to during the interviews. It was also often cited as the root cause of other problems, such as managing the growing demand for services, smaller teams, poor staff retention and the sometimes sluggish adoption of new technology and channels which was thought to be hampering effective public engagement.

The anxiety expressed around resources, staffing and the departments' future ability to meet the growing demand for police services presents a serious concern, particularly as further budget restrictions are likely. Although police concerns around budgets and resourcing are not new, what the interview data does highlight is the troubling question of whether there is a 'critical mass' with regard to department size and expertise - below which capacity, capability and effectiveness is detrimentally affected. More troubling, however, is whether this point has already been reached in some forces as several of the interviewees feared.

3) Collaboration and Information Sharing

Collaboration over campaigns and projects is one possible way for communications teams to manage growing financial constraints and improve the quality, coverage and unity of message (HMIC, 2014). However, at present this remains fragmented, inconsistent and involving only small groups of forces; with only nine of the departments interviewed (36%) currently collaborating either with each other or with outside partner agencies. While the vast majority of interviewees expressed a generally positive attitude towards collaboration as a solution nearly half (48%) dismissed the possibility and showed distrust of the concept. Commonly cited reasons were that it was either impractical, difficult to arrange, an incompatibility of approaches/audience or that it would be too difficult to balance the needs of multiple forces in a mutually beneficial relationship.

These problems were further compounded by a general sense of isolation which meant that communications teams seldom reported a good understanding of what other teams outside of their immediate neighbours were doing. This was a change remarked on by a significant number of the interviewees who remembered a time when there was closer working between departments and greater knowledge sharing. Pressures on time and lack of money to finance closer working relationships were universally cited as the core reasons for this change. While some interviewees felt that there was little to be gained in closer collaboration with other

police forces there was a high level of frustration reported by a significant number at this lack of awareness as it often meant that informal resource sharing such as campaigns or information was rebuffed by other teams and that there was considerable variability in the standard and quality of work across different forces.

The lack of collaboration and resource sharing means that there is a high level of duplication and reinvention across different police environments[32]. Given that many campaigns are not geographically specific and are on topics that all forces' produce campaigns for this is an area which could do with improvement and further investigation. Joint campaigns between multiple forces have the potential to yield reduced costs for the forces involved and an improved standard and consistency within the campaigns – two aspects which can only benefit police forces in the future. Consistency between policing environments is of growing importance going forward as easy travel further blurs traditional borders and areas of jurisdiction yet in 2014 there was little evidence of an integrated approach between communications teams.

4) Audience and Channels: The Emergence of 'Direct and Digital'

Perhaps the most outwardly visible change however, has been in the way police forces are now communicating, often circumventing the traditional channels (e.g. the media) in order to talk to and engage with the general public directly. This change, according to the interviewees, is challenging and renegotiating the dynamics of the relationship between the media and police forces, especially in those forces which have adopted the 'self-service' model. This approach effectively seems to side-line the news industry by making the police themselves the publisher and primary source of information; the 'credible, trusted voice in anything crime related' (PI.4), and in a growing number of forces the "unquestioned provider" of information which is then disseminated verbatim by over stretched local journalists. Such a change would not have been possible, however, without the advent of social media.

HMIC (2011b, p.30) concluded in their report that "the police have much to learn about social media" and that "with some notable exceptions, the power of this kind of media (both sending out and receiving information) is not well understood and less well managed". Similar findings have been reported consistently both with UK forces and the police in other countries (Proctor et al, 2013; Connor, 2015). Research over the last five years has shown a general pattern of

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[32] An example of this is the number of police forces who have designed their own websites which has resulted in considerable duplication and reinvention (see 3.2.13).

disorganisation, sporadic uptake and inconsistent use when it comes to the police on social media (HMIC, 2014). The data from this study suggests that after the London Riots in August 2011 there was a period of rapid expansion when it came to police presence on these channels. While many police forces had a Facebook page and/or Twitter account prior to the 2011 activity was irregular, disinterested and strategically vague in what they were trying to achieve. One interviewee described that August as "a bloody rude wake-up call. Comms had moved on, but we hadn't moved with it, we had to play catch-up and fast" (PI.2).

In his research, Mawby (2002; P.7) suggested that there were four distinct periods in the evolution of police public relations: Informal Image Work, Emergent Public Relations, Embedding Public Relations and The Professionalisation of Police Image Work. With the rapid growth and reliance upon social media across police forces since 2011 there is growing evidence of a fifth periodisation: that of Direct and Digital. This phase can be understood as the predominance of social media as *the* primary channel for communication and principal means of non-emergency service provision through a devolved communications model that encourages the deliberate development of online networks using a more dialogical approach to engage with members of the public and customers directly.

In 2015, every police force in Britain had *at least* one Twitter account and Facebook page. 30 Forces had a registered YouTube account and many were starting to experiment with other social media sites, like Instagram, Pinterest and Google+. At the time of the interviews Twitter was the preferred social media channel which was consistent with the findings of Crump (2011) and Brainard and Edlins (2015). However, there was also a significant number of the interviewees who preferred Facebook and said that they prioritised it over Twitter in their strategies as they considered it a more versatile tool and was more likely to encourage engagement from the public than Twitter which they saw as a limited broadcasting, crisis management channel.

How and what police forces are using social media for has changed significantly since 2011. Police forces have increasingly come to rely upon these channels as a vital support for operational policing and as a means of maintaining community contact in a time of less visible policing. What the data also shows, however, is that there remains an inconsistency across those interviewed in terms of approach, use, strategy and perceived effectiveness. There is an apparent association between the preferred social media channel and communications

strategy in use; those forces where Twitter was the main channel all stated that their communications strategy was 'push' or 'broadcasting' (the traditional police communications model). In contrast, those forces which prioritised Facebook, were keen to emphasise the importance of engagement and were looking to encourage a dialogue or 'pull' based strategy. These were also generally the interviewees who were most in favour of the devolved communications model, promoting a more local and less centralised corporate way of communicating with the public.

While there is evidence of a transition in communications strategy it should be noted that at the time of interview nearly half of those interviewed were still primarily using 'push' as the dominant corporate communications strategy and there was a strong feeling reported almost unanimously that 'push' was an essential component of their work. Despite the laudable intentions set out in Engage (NPIA, 2011), however, this is not surprising and nor is it likely to change in the near future. As PI.28 explained a lot of the core police communication requirements are centred on the need to get information out quickly – particularly during emergency situations. Online dialogue and community engagement are likely to be increasingly important going forwards for creating and maintaining long lasting police-public partnerships and solving crime, it is but one though, and at present the least vital part of corporate police communications for many forces.

Direct and Digital is still in its infancy in many forces but it is growing and embedding – as can be seen in the devolved communications model that is now prevalent across England. Individual police officers and a growing number of Corporate Communications teams are increasingly communicating directly *with* rather than simply *to* members of their local public and more social media sites, from Instagram to Snapchat, are being adopted as vehicles for this move.

There is a concern, however, that this increased reliance upon social media as a cheap alternative to other forms of communication could have adverse consequences in the future. A common refrain from the interviews was the sense of frustration in still not being listened to by over eager senior officers who, as PI.7 so adroitly put it "have found social media and think it will solve everything when actually it makes a lot of work for us". Social media sites may be free to use in terms of membership and reach a wide, diverse audience, but they are not free in terms of upkeep and maintenance and can place an immense demand on the staff and time

resources of the department – particularly once forces start pursuing a dialogue or engagement based strategy with the public. The interviewees were particularly keen to labour the point that once their teams started replying to messages it was a slippery slope as it was no longer a question of simply broadcasting but meeting the demands and expectations of a public who are now actively seeking and expecting answers. While engagement in this way is thought to improve public confidence and satisfaction levels, it is also a considerable strain on communications teams and there is a concern as to whether dialogical engagement will continue to be viable if demand increased or teams are further reduced; particularly as social media when misused or used badly can create confusion and have lasting consequences for the team and the wider police force.

Focusing on social media sites also runs the risk of alienating wide sections of the general public who either do not use their sites, or who chose not to engage with the police this way. Several of the interviewees reported a reduction of budget in physical marketing campaigns or for dealing with the media as the expectation was that social media could fill the gap far more cheaply and effectively. While this new allocation of resources seemed to suit some areas where local journalism was considered to be declining it was not the situation in all forces. Where local journalism was seen to be thriving social media was considered of secondary importance to the traditional channels. In such cases prioritising social media could have adverse consequences.

5) Effectiveness

Concern over 'what works', why it works and how to measure it was a prevalent theme from the interviewees and one which has far reaching implications for the future of police communications. While over half of the forces interviewed had a strategy for evaluating the impact of print and social media campaigns the majority of interviewees (77%) described an historic difficulty with measuring effectiveness; a situation at odds with the target driven nature of modern policing.

Evaluating the effectiveness of social media activity was a particularly common concern. This was often exacerbated by the limited guidance and assistance interviewees reported was available for helping police communications teams to improve and adapt to the new demands being placed on them. There was also considerable confusion expressed over which metric was best and what could be done with the data collected. Until communications teams feel

confident in what information they need to capture and how to then use it, this confusion and concerns around how to demonstrate effectiveness is likely to persist.

6) Change in Ideology: A New Public Relations?

In conjunction with these more tangible changes, however, there also appears to have been a shift in the underlying ideology governing public relations in the police. Crump (2011) suggested that there were three typologies of social media activity that police forces routinely engage in: 'broadcasters', 'local news gatherers' and community facilitators'. The data from the interviews however, suggests a possible further two typologies may now be in evidence – that of risk management and pacification. Both risk and pacification are strongly indicative of an adjustment to the underlying ideology as they are embedded in dialogue based discourses around public engagement and behavioural change. As discussed above, communications is now not only about broadcasting the police story but about engagement and influencing the behaviours of the audience the message is intended for. Over a third of those interviewed stated that their departments were now actively trying to alter the behaviour of their intended audiences. This is a notable and important change from simply "shouting stuff at anyone who would listen" which was how one interviewee (PI.7) described the police forces' traditional strategy for communicating.

A recurrent theme expressed by the interviewees was around the distinction drawn between what was sometimes referred to as 'traditional public relations', or 'old comms', and modern communication departments. There was a strong feeling expressed by some interviewees that public relations was synonymous with 'spin', image management and cover-ups – which, it was emphasised, is not the purpose of modern communications. Mawby and Worthington (2002) found in their study that public relations was not well understood as a concept within the communications departments. More than a decade later this has not changed significantly. Almost half of those interviewed (45%) said that they either found the concept too difficult to define or that they did not know how to and 19% thought it was synonymous with marketing.

One of the most frequent reasons cited as to the above misunderstanding was that it is no longer a relevant part of police communications. It is interesting that while maintaining or promoting a positive public image was described as important by some it was not considered to be one of the core functions by the majority (80.6%). Instead, internal communications,

community engagement, crisis communications, reassurance and supporting operational policing were all considered more important (Fig. 3.35).

Modern police communications, then, seems to emphasise an open agenda; one that is more outward and public facing than in the past and one that is looking to engage and build communication networks with their local communities. Communications now appears to prioritise risk, awareness and prevention rather than with maintaining a certain image and perpetuating cover ups. Such a change in ideology, however, is not incompatible with the precepts of public relations. In the confusion over how to define public relations arguably lies the root of the faulty dichotomy drawn by some of the interviewees between the old public relations departments of the past which prioritised image and reputation and the modern agenda for transparency and openness.

What the interview data suggests, however, is that public relations remains a commonly misunderstood term in police forces and particularly among communications professionals some of whom either could not define public relations or conflated it with 'spin'. Communications departments may have moved away from public relations terminology but the core principles and practices remain. Like the communications department itself, public relations has evolved to meet the needs of society. Grunig and Hunt (1984, p.4) defined public relations as "the management of communication between an organisation and its publics" – using this definition public relations appears to be more relevant than ever for police forces. Modern communications is all about managing communication activities effectively so that messages are received and then acted upon and this is wholly consistent with the observed change in ideology of which many of the interviewees are rightfully proud.

5.2   Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

No research project is infallible, however, or free from methodological issues and limitations. While these issues were addressed in Chapter 2 there are four main limitations to this study which need to be acknowledged here: namely scope, credibility, applicability and generalisability.

Scope

One of the key problems with our understanding of police public relations has been the fragmented research that has often been limited in scope. There are many reasons for previous research to have focused in this way, not least because of the time, money and the practicalities involved in large scale research projects. There is also a lingering concern that research that tries to be the 'jack of all trades', is 'master of none'. By focusing on the macro, the micro is hidden within the bigger picture, and in focussing on the micro one can lose perspective and understanding of how the individual components fit together. In an ideal world, managing both macro and micro elements in one research project would be achievable as well as desirable – but this is not that world. All research is conducted through what Hughes (2000, p241) calls "research bargains"; the compromise between what is necessary, achievable and ideal. With an institution like the police, where access has to be carefully negotiated, this often means limiting the focus so that the end result is something practical and of value to the organisation.

In the early stages of this project I was faced with a similar choice; I could either elect to focus on evaluating one aspect (such as output or confidence) or concentrate on investigating what Ritchie and Spencer (1994, p.182) describe as 'the contextual' – i.e. establishing the "form and nature of what exists". Given my research interests and how much these departments appeared to have changed from Mawby's (2002) research I opted for the latter.

In choosing this approach, however, it was by necessity self-limiting in terms of scope and the immediate practical value that evaluative studies can offer. While a number of themes have suggested themselves, the data and conclusions have been left as interpretive in recognition of these limitations.

Credibility

There is a perennial difficulty with asking for people's subjective assessment of contentious issues. The extent to which the interviewees were correct in their assessments and professed opinions is an important question to ask and a very difficult one to answer. The interviewees were asked questions designed to explore the inner workings of their departments. While 'communications' might seem like a relatively uncomplicated and uncontroversial subject area (and therefore one on which people would speak freely) it was evident from the interviews that many of the participants felt it to be an ideological, political and practical minefield; particularly when topics around effectiveness, operational position and 'public relations' were introduced.

There were occasions when over the course of the interviews participants changed their answers. Whether this was because their opinion changed, the question was asked in a slightly different way or they wished to give a different answer for their own reasons, it is impossible to determine. What this does call into question, however, is the credibility of the responses.

Wolcott (1995) argues that qualitative interviews are better understood as interpretative or surreal performances during which the interview subject and interviewer are constantly negotiating the communicative space (2.4). There is a double misfortune here in that rightly or wrongly, professionals involved in this area have a reputation for 'managing' these performances to give the results they desire. That is not to say that this is what occurred during the interviews, only that it is a possibility which must be kept in mind particularly given the limitations associated with the sampling method used.

It was evident early on that voluntary sampling would be the only avenue possible with the proposed sample group. This does mean, however, that there are questions around the impact of participant self-selection on the interview data as the participants all had to 'opt in', and therefore must have had a reason for doing so. In some cases this agenda was made explicitly clear by the participants, but this was by no means universal (2.4). Reasons given ranged between curiosity (1), a professed desire to assist with academic research (3), a means of encouraging change with the Senior Management Team (3), best practice (5) and interest in the results (15).

Mergel (2014) suggests that one way of ascertaining the credibility of the interview data is to compare organisational activity and stated intent against actual output and officially recorded intent (e.g. policies). The original plan had been to investigate this area in an integrated way using a triangulated approach (Fig 5) comparing the ideology/stated aims of the communications department (interviews) against police communications activities (content analysis of online output) and effect/impact (public opinion surveys)[33]. In doing this the intention had been to cover the 'life cycle' of police communications in order to fill one of the more significant gaps in current literature where research often concentrates on one, possibly two, of those three areas but rarely covers all three.
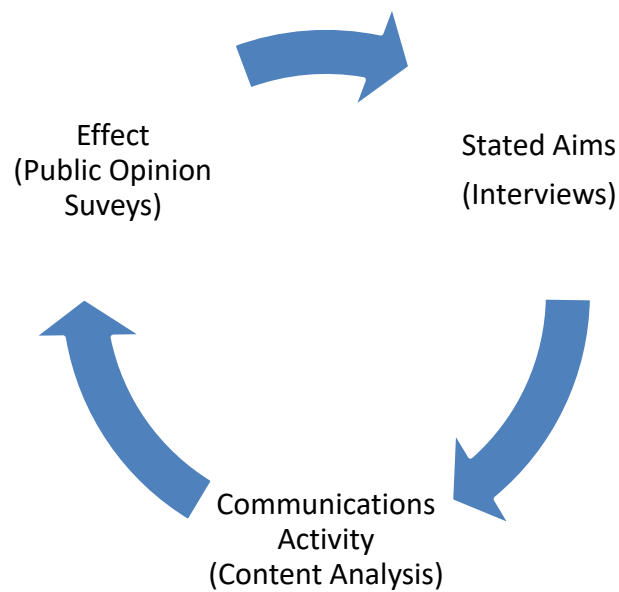
Communications Life Cycle

Fig 5

For a number of reasons this plan was not feasible, and so the content analysis and public opinion surveys were dropped in favour of concentrating on the interviews (2.9). This lack of comparison though means that it is very difficult to determine how accurate a portrayal the interview data is of the actual situation and therefore raises valid questions about the credibility.

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[33] see Appendix 2.2

Applicability

The interview data shows how rapidly police communications is changing. The speed and depth of these changes varied considerably across participating forces but all those interviewed described their departments as in a state of continual transition. The third limitation with this research is one suffered by most studies in that interview data provides a picture of a moment in time. In such a fast paced industry as this there is always the issue of the data being out of date almost as soon as it has been collected (Lee and McLaughlin, 2014).

This was a concern raised by six interviewees who felt that by the time this research was available to them their department would have moved on to pastures new. There is little that can mitigate this limitation in the forces where this has occurred. What was the case in 2014 when the interviews were conducted may no longer be the situation in 2016.

Generalisability

The final significant limitation with this project is generalisability. While the sample achieved in this study was far more successful than initially hoped for at nearly 70% of the target forces, there remains the question of the stone left unturned. In an ideal world of unlimited time, resources and open access it would have been preferable to interview a more representative sample from all 39 police forces in England; including the head, managers and non-management staff. It would also have been useful to interview a sample of those police officers who are now managing their own police social media accounts to see how the devolved communications model has been accepted and used by those who are now key players in its continued and future success. For a number of reasons this was not possible to implement in this study.

This raises the valid question of to what extent and how the findings from this study might be applied to other police forces. What is needed now is research that examines the whole life cycle of police communications activity in order to determine what action has been taken, why, and the outcome/effect it has had on its intended audience (Fig 5). In doing so assumptions can be tested and the question of how to use communications effectively in a police context may be properly addressed.

An example of one such assumption is one that much of current police work is premised upon; that police visibility, whether virtual or physical, provides a level of reassurance to the public

and strengthens their relationship with those same people (Salmi et al, 2000, 2005). An argument which was put forwards on multiple occasions during the interviews was that this might not be the case and in attempting to force contact and engagement police forces could actually be alienating sections of the populous and achieving the reverse of what they are attempting to do by encouraging fear and anxiety. Understanding the impact of communication activities is of upmost importance - especially given the increasing reliance upon communication as a means of maintaining and managing the police-public relationship, the drive to continue growing online audiences and the mounting pressure to demonstrate engagement.

Another potential avenue for future research would be to investigate further how the trend towards devolved, decentralised communications is progressing within police forces. Previous studies examining social media have focused on the 'corporate' accounts managed by the communications team, they have also only looked at online activity from an output perspective. Research is needed to examine how local accounts differ from the main corporate accounts across different policing environments. This research concluded that there had been an ideological shift in these departments away from overt image management and towards a more risk-based information network. Whether this change holds true with the local accounts was beyond the scope of this study, but it does suggest an intriguing area for future exploration, especially given the continued trend towards devolution, the growing reliance on social media and the startling degree of variation between police forces' activities and strategies.

Further research is also needed into understanding the operational position of communications within the police, particularly with regard to those forces where the PCC has assumed oversight or control of the communications department. This research found a trend suggesting that the communications department in those forces where the PCC had control were more often considered 'optional' or 'complementary' and less likely to be properly embedded within the wider force.

In May 2016 the second generation of PCCs was elected (or re-elected) and with this possible change in regime there are a number of concerns raised by some of the interviewees which would benefit from further evaluation. Two of the more significant concerns expressed were over politicisation of police communications through the election process and the possible

ramifications of PCC oversight on police transparency and communications effectiveness. Given the above, it is increasingly important to understand the impact the PCC has had on communications and to test the hypotheses that their involvement will a) politicise (or be seen to politicise) the police, and b) affect the transparency and effectiveness of the department.

A final area for future investigation is the impact of social media on traditional media relationships from the journalistic perspective. A recurrent theme that emerged from the data was how social media, and the emergence of a more dialogical communications strategy, had significantly changed the police – media relationship. The majority considered that this was a positive change as social media allowed police forces to communicate in more ways, to put 'their story' out in their own words and to reduce the power of the press monopoly on public engagement – which had been a historic problem for many forces. Such a view, however, is of necessity rather biased and one sided. Chibnall (1977) described the police-press relationship as asymmetrical in the police favour as they were the ones who 'controlled' the access to crime related news. This study found, as others have before it (1.3), that this is not a view shared by many of the interviewees who, counter to Chibnall (1981), felt that police forces have been 'victims' of this relationship for many years. A useful, and arguably essential, companion piece to this research would be to discover how journalists (both national and local) perceive this relationship in the age of Direct and Digital police communications and how that compares to the police view.

5.3   Final Thoughts

One of the primary influences that has driven this research has been the desire to understand the function and activity of public relations in modern policing. What is evident from the data is that the more things change, the more they stay the same. While there has been a considerable cultural change within these departments, and within police forces in general towards communication, the core strategies and functions have remained relatively unchanged since Mawby's (2002; 2007) research.

The social sphere is now a fiercely competitive environment where the police are but one of many voices and with the unprecedented opportunities created by social media there are an equal number of unprecedented threats and problems. Alongside these practical changes however, is an arguably greater ideological change which has seen police communications in a growing number of forces moving away from reactive, defensive communication to a proactive, inclusive model which actively seeks to build networks and relationships with outside communities.

Sites like Facebook and Twitter have forced the police into an omnipresent spotlight on a national, and sometimes international, stage in which there is little chance for control, evasion or avoiding difficult issues and the constant calls for accountability. Police forces now have to have a voice in the public sphere, one that is not just broadcasting information but engaging with the ever growing public networks forming online. In such an environment transparency, openness and dialogue have become essential tools for the continued success of policing. As the data demonstrates, however, the type, extent and effectiveness of communication activities differs significantly between different policing environments . Just over half of the forces interviewed had a measurement system in place to assess the impact and effectiveness of print campaigns and 76% had an evaluation strategy for social media. Of significant concern however, is the effectiveness of these strategies as 61% of the interviewees expressed considerable dissatisfaction over their current methods; with many feeling confused and lost as to what data they should be collecting, what the data showed or how they could action it to improve their activities.

In the current economic climate now more than ever it is important for police forces to understand what works and why when it comes to something as vital for their continued

success as communication. To understand effectiveness properly requires understanding the life cycle of the communications project – a task that is often difficult for police forces to accomplish. If this is not understood then how can police forces be confident that their activities and strategies are having a positive, or indeed any, impact on their intended audiences? The age of Direct and Digital communications may have arrived but adoption and competency varies considerably between police forces. What is required now is more research, more discussion and greater collaboration between police forces and other agencies in order to help police forces capitalise on the unprecedented opportunities for information networks and partnerships within their communities and to avoid unnecessary reinvention.

Police forces have made considerable improvements with regard to how they are using social media since the reports produced by Crump (2011) and the HMIC (2011a). Communications does appear on the whole to be less defensive and more inclusive, to be more about talking and engagement than about protective silence and information management. All bar one interviewee reported an improvement in the perceived approachability, transparency and openness of their force and the level of public engagement since 2011. In the era of social media, by releasing information, even if the majority ignore it, the police appear to be presenting a more open and approachable image; arguably pacifying an increasingly disillusioned public and creating the potential for a more integrated police force within the wider community.

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Appendix

APPENDIX 1.1   Definitions

Table 1: Outcome Based Definitions		
1	Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR, 2015)	*"the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics".*
2	Collins Online Dictionary (2015)	*"the practice of creating, promoting, or maintaining goodwill and a favourable image among the public towards an institution, public body"*
3	Entrepreneur (2015): a popular business magazine	*"Using the news or business press to carry positive stories about your company or your products; cultivating a good relationship with local press representatives".*
4	First World Assembly of Public Relations Associations (1978 cited in Morris and Goldsworthy, 2012 p4)	*"Public relations is the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisation leaders and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both organisation's and public interest".*
5	Oxford Online Dictionary (2014)	*"the professional maintenance of a favourable public image by a company or other organisation or a famous person."*
6	PRCA (2015): One of the largest Public Relations association in Europe	*Public relations is "all about reputation. It's the result of what you do, what you say, and what others say about you. It is used to gain trust and understanding between an organisation and its various publics – whether that's employees, customers, investors, the local community – or all those groups".*

Table 2: Ideology Based Definitions		
1	Bolger, J. (1983, p36)	*"The purpose of public relations is to influence the public's respect, confidence, and approval for the agency's actions and efforts"*
2	Cutlip (1994, p761)	*Public relations is there to "monitor the public opinion environment so that institutions can steer a safe and steady course through the wings and storms of the public climate".*
3	Cutlip, Center and Broom (2000, cited in Broom and Sha, 2013, 4p29).	*"The management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the publics on whom its success or failure depends."*
4	Morris and Goldsworthy (2012, p6)	*"Public relations is the planned persuasion of people to behave in ways which further its sponsor's objectives. It works primarily through the use of media relations and other forms of third-party endorsement".*
5	Motion (2000, p1)	*Public relations is the advisory role of "communication counselling and relationship building".*
6	Public Relations Society of America (PRSA, 2012)	*"Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics".*
7	The Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS, 2008)	*"Public relations is the strategic management of relationships between an organisation and its diverse publics, through the use of communication, to achieve mutual understanding, realize organizational goals and serve the public interest."*

Table 3: Combination Definitions		
1	Harlow (1976, p36)	*"Public relations is the distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communications, understanding, acceptance and co-operation between an organisation and its publics; involves the management of problems and issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication as its principle tools."*
2	Grunig and Hunt (1984, p4)	*Public relations "is the management of communication between an organisation and its publics".*

APPENDIX 1.2   Peel's Nine Principles

1) The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder.

2) The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions.

3) Police must secure the willing cooperation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public.

4) The degree of cooperation of the public that can be secured diminishes proportionately to the necessity of the use of physical force.

5) Police seek and preserve public favour not by catering to public opinion but by constantly demonstrating absolute impartial service to the law.

6) Police use of physical force should only be to the extent necessary to secure or maintain order and only of persuasion advice and warnings have failed.

7) Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being the only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.

8) Police should always direct their action strictly towards their functions and never appear to usurp the powers of the judiciary.

9) The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action dealing with it.

Available at:
Reith, C. (1948) A Short History of the British Police, London: Oxford University Press.
http://www.crimefree.org.za/Role-players/Government/Police/peels.htm

APPENDIX 2.1:   Letter to Chief Constables

Ms Victoria McIntee

14 January 2014

Dear…

I am a PhD student at Canterbury Christ Church University studying Criminology; I am writing to enquire into the possibility of talking to your Head of Communications as part of this research.

My thesis topic is 'Police Public Relations and Public Confidence in the Age of Social Media'. The aim of my research is to:

1)   Explore both the official and unofficial roles and use of the public relations department within the constabulary;

2)   To understand how public relations is being used by police forces – particularly within the context of increasing and managing public confidence and satisfaction;

3)   To investigate how the police evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives and schemes;

4)   To understand the use and impact of social media on police communication and interaction with their public;

5)   To explore whether public relations strategies, particularly those involving social media have had a discernible impact upon public confidence and satisfaction with the police in that area.

6)   Has PR only become an issue during late modernity?

Superintendent Alexander Murray from the West Midlands police service commented in the British Journal of Sociology that collaborative work between academics and police forces in this area could potentially be very useful, especially in the current climate.

I am currently working with twenty police forces across the UK including GMP, West Midlands, and Avon and Somerset: however I would ideally like to talk to as many police forces as possible as I understand that corporate communications departments differ considerably around the country. I hope that by comparing the methods, successes and problems faced by different police forces that a composite picture can be formed of how public relations and communication could proceed more efficiently and effectively for policing in the future

particularly in relation to the growing importance of procedural justice theory in policing and the increasing reliance upon social media as a vehicle for public dialogue.

I hope that the topic of my PhD is interesting and that it will bring useful information and insight to the police constabularies in general and those I work with in particular. An anonymised copy of my research findings and conclusions will be available for any participating police force.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me or my academic supervisors whose contact details I have included below.

Best Wishes,

Victoria McIntee

PHD Researcher
Department of Law and Criminal Justice Studies
Canterbury Christ Church University
BA/BCS (Hons), MA (Hons)
v.e.mcintee98@canterbury.ac.uk

Academic Supervisors

Dr Tom Cockcroft, B.Sc. (Hons), M.Sc. (Econ.), FHEA
Senior Lecturer
Department of Law and Criminal Justice Studies,
Canterbury Christ Church University

Email: tom.cockcroft@canterbury.ac.uk
Tel. (01227) 782171

Professor Robin Bryant
Director of Criminal Justice Practice
Department of Law and Criminal Justice Studies,
Canterbury Christ Church University

Email: robin.bryant@canterbury.ac.uk
Tel: 01227 782316

APPENDIX 2.2:   University Ethics Compliance

Canterbury Christ Church University

17 February 2014   Ref: 14/SAS/164C

Ms Victoria McIntee
81 Cobbold Road
Felixstowe
Suffolk IP11 7QS

Dear Victoria

Confirmation of ethics compliance for your study *"Police public relations and public confidence in the age of social media."*

I have received an Ethics Review Checklist and appropriate supporting documentation for proportionate review of the above project. Because you have answered "No" to all of the questions in Section B, no further ethical review will be required under the terms of this University's Research Ethics and Governance Procedures.

In confirming compliance for your study, I must remind you that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the *Research Governance Handbook* (http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/Research/GovernanceandEthics/GovernanceAndEthics.aspx) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines. This includes providing, if appropriate, information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data. Any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course should be notified to the **Research Office**, and may require a new application for ethics approval. You are also required to inform me once your research has been completed.

Wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Roger Bone
Research Governance Manager
Tel: +44 (0)1227 782940 ext 3272 (enter at prompt)
Email: roger.bone@canterbury.ac.uk

cc: Dr Tom Cockcroft

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APPENDIX 2.3: Consent Form

Canterbury
Christ Church
University

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Police Public Relations in the Age of Social Media

Name of Researcher: Victoria McIntee

Contact details:

Address:	████████
Tel:	████████
Email:	v.e.mcintee98@canterbury.ac.uk

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

3. I understand and consent to this interview being recorded.

4. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

5. I agree to take part in the above study.

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Researcher   Date   Signature

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APPENDIX 2.4A: Original Interviewee Information Sheet

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Victoria McIntee.

Background

The police have become increasingly image conscious in recent years allocating a substantial amount of resources to PR campaigns and image management through both their use of the media and their operational strategies. This raises the question of how effective such strategies are in a society which, academics claim, is beset by fear and anxiety. There is very little research, however, into police public relations and whether it a) has an effect on public opinion; b) whether it can be considered an effective strategy for intended police outcomes; and c) what these intended outcomes actually are.

This study is part of my PhD research into 'Police Public Relations and Public Confidence in the Age of Social Media'.

The aims of my research are the following:

1) To explore both the official and unofficial roles and use of the public relations/ communications department within the constabulary;

2) To understand how public relations is being used by police forces across different policing environments;

3) To investigate how, or whether, the effectiveness of police communication can be measured or assessed;

4) To understand the use and impact of social media on police communication and interaction with their public;

5) To examine whether police public relations has only become an issue during late modernity.

What will you be required to do?

Participants in this study will be required to take part in a recorded interview and complete and questionnaire about their experience and knowledge of public relations in their police force.

Procedures

You will be asked to participate in an interview and to complete a questionnaire.

Feedback

An anonymised copy of the findings from this study will be available to all police forces who take part upon request.

Confidentiality

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by the primary researcher, Victoria McIntee. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

Any questions?

Please contact me by email: v.e.mcintee98@canterbury.ac.uk
or by post: Victoria McIntee, Department of Law and Criminal Justice Studies, Priory Cottages, University of Canterbury Christ Church, CT1 1QU.

APPENDIX 2.4B: Revised Interviewee Information

Canterbury
Christb Church
University

PhD Research into

'Police Public Relations and Public Confidence in the Age of Social Media'.

INTERVIEW INFORMATION SHEET

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Victoria McIntee.

Background

The last few years have seen a number of immense and profound changes in how we as a society, and as individuals, communicate. We live in a hyper-mediated world where communication is not only virtually free but also instantaneous and further reaching than has ever been possible before. The London riots in August 2011 demonstrated the power and social importance of the aptly named social media; particularly the influence and significance of Twitter and Facebook. The riots also highlighted the need for understanding and adapting to this new technology and its social implications.

Since 2009 Britain's police forces have become increasingly active on these sites; at present every force in the UK have at least one Twitter and Facebook account with many forces maintaining and operating dozens of local-based accounts as well. There is very little research, however, into how and why social media is being used by the police; how it fits into the broader communication strategies; and how this is changing the long held foundations of public relations.

This study is part of my PhD research into 'Police Public Relations and Public Confidence in the Age of Social Media'.

The aims of my research are the following:

1)   To explore both the official and unofficial roles and use of the public relations/ communications department within the constabulary;

2)   To understand how public relations is being used by police forces across different policing environments;

3) To investigate how, or whether, the effectiveness of police communication can be measured or assessed;

4) To understand the use and impact of social media on police communication and interaction with their public;

5) To examine whether police public relations has only become an issue during late modernity.

What will you be required to do?

Participants in this study will be required to take part in a recorded interview about their experience and knowledge of public relations in their police force.

Feedback

An anonymised copy of the findings from this study will be available to all police forces who take part upon request.

Confidentiality

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by the primary researcher, Victoria McIntee. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

Any questions?

Please contact me by email: v.e.mcintee98@canterbury.ac.uk
or by Telephone:

APPENDIX 2.5a: Interview Questions/Prompt List

Questions have been grouped thematically as the order in which they were asked varied depending upon the interview.

1) What is the interviewee's background in communications?

2) Overview of Department:-
    a. Size and structure of department
    b. Operational position within police force:
        i. Embedded,
        ii. Complementary, or
        iii. Optional
    c. How has the communications department changed during your tenure?
    d. Serving policing officers in comms and professionalization.

3) Public Relations:
    a. Role and purpose of the department
    b. Most important aspect of modern communications
    c. Definition of PR
    d. Is PR still relevant to modern police comms teams?
    e. Many police forces have renamed their communications department "Corporate Communications", or some variant thereof, dropping the "Public Relations" element from their department name. Why do you think this is?

4) What does the interviewee consider their biggest successes regarding police public relations/communications to date?

5) What threats does the interviewee think are facing police communications at present, and which ones are the most concerning? (e.g. social media, citizen journalism, media, public confidence etc.)

6) Successful campaigns:
    a. Which campaigns does the communications department routinely run?
    b. Most successful campaigns?
    c. Some police forces have started doing special campaigns around Christmas. Is this the case in the interviewee's force?
    d. If so:
        i. Whose idea was it?
        ii. What was the purpose/objective behind the idea?
        iii. Was it successful?
        iv. Would they do it again?

7) How does the interviewee measure or assess the success/effectiveness of:
   a. Campaigns
   b. Other communications activity (e.g. media, social media)

8) How aware is the interviewee of what the other police communications departments are doing?

9) APCOMM:
   a. Is the interviewee a member?
   b. Do they consider their membership useful?
   c. Do they attend the annual conference?

10) Communications Strategy:
   a. Openness and transparency agenda. Public Relations is usually seen as spin. How does the interviewee deal with this balance?
   b. What does the interview consider the aim of police communications: push, pull or transformative?
   c. What should the communications strategy be?
   d. Is there a different strategy for traditional media and social/digital media?

11) Social Media:
   a. Place in strategy?
   b. How has the introduction of digital media changed things?
   c. What are the main uses/purpose of social/digital media?
   d. Is there a preferred platform? If so, why?
   e. How is the effectiveness measured?
   f. Does the interviewee collect/analyse demographic usage?
   g. What are people using social/digital media for?
   h. College of Policing's Engage document states that Twitter and Facebook should be used by the police to engage in dialogue with their publics. Does the interviewee think they have achieved a dialogue on these mediums?
   i. Where does the interview think social media use will go in the future in terms of police communications?
   j. What analytical software do they use?

12) Website:
   a. What is the police website used for?
   b. Traffic?
   c. What are people looking at?

13) Journalists and Traditional Media:
   a. How has the relationship with journalists and traditional media changed with the evolution of social media and citizen journalists?

b. How would the interviewee characterise their department's relationship with their local journalists?

c. Does the interviewee feel that local journalism is still providing an independent watchdog function?

d. Some police forces are moving towards a "self-service" model of dealing with journalists and news outlets. Does the interviewee think this is:
   i. A viable option?
   ii. Something they are either already doing or considering adopting?
   iii. How this will affect the impartiality of the news?

e. Audience:
   i. Who does the interviewee consider their audience?
   ii. Does this change depending on the type of message? (e.g. targeted communications)
   iii. Does the department use targeted communications?
   iv. How successful does the interviewee think their department is at communicating with their audiences?

14) Public Confidence: Under New Labour, confidence became the single national target for police forces. There has been a great deal of research dedicated to evaluating the success of specific schemes in trying to improve public confidence in the police. This target was later scrapped by Theresa May in 2010.

   a. Does the interviewee think that confidence is still important?
   b. Does the interviewee's force still measure public confidence?
   c. Does the interviewee think that there is a crisis of confidence?
   d. What alternatives are there instead of confidence as a measure of public opinion?

15) PCC and Police Communications. At least five PCC's have taken over control of the police communications department from the chief constable since their election in 2012.

   a. Is this the case in this police force?
   b. If not, is the PCC likely to take over the communications team?
   c. What is the interviewee's opinion of this situation?
   d. How does the interviewee see this sort of situation working? (e.g. tensions between PCC as the official police watchdog but also in control of the image/relationship management department).

16) Where does the interviewee think police communications is likely to go in the future? (e.g. mergers, collaborative communications)

17) What research does the interviewee think needs to be done / would be helpful to the police in terms of police communications?

APPENDIX 2.5b: Interview Transcript Data

This appendix contains excerpts from several of the interviews conducted. Some sections of these excerpts have been redacted as they contain information which could be used to identify the interviewees or their employers. Where this has occurred a substitution in [] has been added where appropriate to aid clarity. For example, interviewees frequently referred to forces or councils they were in partnership with by name. As this can be used to identify which force the interviewee is working for the names have been redacted and if necessary substituted with a generalisation – e.g. [the county council] or [our partner force].

The six excerpts included in this appendix were chosen as examples of the five different interview conditions discussed in Chapter 2 ; Conversational, Direct Questions and Participant Directed, one three way interview and one of the telephone interview transcripts have also been included as the structure and means of recording information were quite different. Two examples have been included of Participant Directed transcripts as there was a difference between those where the interviewee's enthusiasm dominated the direction the interview took (PI.14 and PI.22) and those where the interviewee deliberately tried to direct and control the interview (PI.13, PI.20, PI.25 and PI.27)

For the quotes used in the results chapter … is used to show where a section has been removed. This occurred numerous times for different reasons. Most frequently it was either because the interviewee got distracted by a tangent and spent time talking about a side issue or there was an interjection either from the interviewer or another interviewee. In order to keep continuity in the quotes and make them as easily intelligible as possible these sections/interruptions were removed.

Interview Ref Code	Gender	Type of Interview	Structure of Interview
PI.6	Female	In Person	Direct Questions Very good interview. Good level of rapport and willingness to talk on the part of PI.6. Good level of engagement through the interview and PI.6 was candid about the problems her team were facing.

			Interview started off quite stilted as PI.6 seemed to be waiting for me to ask specific questions. The more direct and specific the question the more information PI.6 gave in her answers.
PI.8	Female	In Person	Conversational. Very good interview. Excellent level of rapport, follow up offered by PI.8. Good level of engagement and candour when answering questions.
PI.22	Male	In Person	Participant Directed. Good interview and one of the longest at over two hours. PI.22 very keen to talk but it was difficult at times to direct the interview as PI.22 once started on a topic would talk for quite some time. Unlike PI.13 and PI.27 this interview was interviewee directed more because of the overriding enthusiasm shown by the interviewee than because he was overtly trying to manage the direction of the questions.
PI.25	Female and Male	In Person	Three Way Interview: PI.25A Participant Directed, PI.25B Conversational. PI.25A sought to direct the interview, he was often the first to speak and while he would accept PI.25Bs corrections he was the dominant speaker. PI.25B responded better to conversation based style. After PI.25A left part through the interview, PI.25B became more comfortable speaking and answering questions fully rather than just offering the odd sentence.
PI.26	Female	Phone	Direct Questions. Difficult interview as rapport was noticeably lacking. Interviewee often evasive in answering conversational prompts and required direct questions. Question prefaced with "would you agree with?" type remarks gained the clearest answers as PI.26 liked to disagree with such statements.

PI.27	Male	In Person	Participant Directed.
			Difficult interview – right from the start PI.27 decided how the interview was going to be structured and where it was going to go. Made asking the questions I had difficult unless they happened to coincide with the aspects PI.27 wished to discuss.

PI.06	Page 1 – 6 of 23
Interviewer:	So are you ready to start? Excellent. I'll start with an easy one then. Size of department.
Interviewee:	Okay, so we've got a current establishment of thirty two, I believe, FTE's now and that is a mixture of so, a press bureau, which looks after all of our reactive media calls. Four local communication officers that support the local police areas, but are still essential resource… At the moment we've got one digital communications officer, although we're looking to strengthen that in that area in the next couple of months, potentially with another two by sort of reusing different roles within this department and then we've got a central team which looks after all of our internal and change coms and PR campaigns if you like. And also aligned to us is the, a graphic designer, a photographer, two web developers. We have two corporate events managers, officers in our team that look after all the kind of commendation ceremonies and the success stories if you like. And then we have at the moment four communication assistants which are kind of a cross between, kind of an admin/coms support as opposed to a pure coms PR person if you like. They haven't got background or qualification in coms as such, but again we're currently undergoing potentially a mini restructure within the department, but we're waiting for that to be signed off so I can't go into details of that at the moment. It's really about moving forwards, focussing on exactly, the digital and producing more digital content. Because we've got the channels now, all we need now is the actual content to fill those channels.

Interviewer:	So are you, is your department primarily staffed with civilian staff then? Or do you have serving officers?
Interviewee:	We have no serving officers in our department at all.
Interviewer:	Is that by choice or…
Interviewee:	Well we're a coms department and so therefore I would not expect necessarily to have people in my department that aren't coms. ▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ [My force] haven't been one for that, which I know some of the forces do use police officers. We have very strong links into the operational side of the business. We are effectively an operational department. There's quite a rub, I think, between us and the home office. Around home office calling, including coms, in what you would call back office support. Well we're not. We are an operational team, we're deployable. Whenever there's something happening, we're part of that resourcing; we're part of the operation. So there are bits of it that aren't operational, but primarily we are there to support the investigation team, to support front line policing and to help get the intelligence and the witness appeals and information back to help progress investigations.
Interviewer:	That's very interesting because West Midlands has removed all police staff from its corporate coms unit, whereas several other police forces again, like Suffolk and Norfolk and North Yorkshire still have serving police officers in those departments. So it's interesting looking at the change in ideas.
Interviewee:	Yeah, well I've been with ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ [this force] since 2008. Not in this role, but in a role out on area. In all that time we've never had police officers working within corporate communications. I think it might have been in the past that there were but again, that was when we were out on areas, not in my memory have we had that.
Interviewer:	That's very interesting. So what about budget and the change in budget? I know that there's been a huge shrinking of budgets all over the place. I was

wondering how it affected the corporate communications department here?

Interviewee: We had a quite significant restructure along with the force as a whole in 2011 and we took a thirty percent cut off our budget. Bearing in mind our budget is largely salary anyway. It's never been big, it's a bit smaller than it was, but it's never had a big PR marketing project if you like. Police forces tended not to have massive budgets in area, it was mainly head camp. So that was when we had structures where we had area based communications teams in our five basic command units as they were called. So you would have had a coms manager, plus one or two coms officers and we had a central bit here at HQ where the internal coms sat and where this team, the graphic design, etc. sat. So in order to reduce costs and to take that budget hit they centralised the service, so we took all of the area people, brought them in house. Got rid of that whole middle level of managers, if you like, the middle layers of managers. Put a couple more seniors in and then kind of levelled everyone out. We lost, trying to think how many head count we lost in the end, it was kind of being done to me at the time if that makes sense. So we lost I think five, full time equivalents of. Most were redeployed so redundancies were kept to a minimum, but it's just that the actual salary level dropped because we were no longer paying so many [unclear: 0:07:20] if you like, they were all people, those that weren't successful in the senior management post were then effectively I suppose, demoted back to a coms officer or a press officer level.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. So what, this one's always a tricky one to ask, but what do you think the purpose of the coms department is? And how do you think it's changed?

Interviewee: I see the purpose of the coms department to work with frontline police officers and investigators to prevent and reduce and solve crime. That's our fundamental as far as I'm concerned. That is our fundamental purpose here. As part of that though there'll be things like reputation managements, crisis management, etc. But that all kind of forms part of that. The actual key thing is around working with officers and… public confidence in the police. It's

about engaging with the public, getting them to want to work with the police, so that when something happens, they feel that will be able to come to the police with information and get involved in help solving things. We are not nor should we be a public relations department or a marketing department. We want to promote the successes of the police, absolutely, but our fundamental reason for being is that we're an operational department putting operational police officers on the ground and on the frontline.

Interviewer: And do you think this is changed? Or has that core fundamental remained the same?

Interviewee: I think it's always, since I've been in and again I go back, I've only been in since 2008. That was always our fundamental purpose. Probably even more so when you were out on area because you were really, you kind of really had a kind of territorial thing going on with the area you looked after and you really were embedded within kind of the CID world and working with the officers. You knew all the officers, they were popping in all the time to tell you things. So even more so then, you were probably front line focussed. Potentially you've lost a bit of that centralising because a lot of people in here have never worked on an area, so they don't have that same understanding of the frontline officers. So we try really hard to get our guys to go out on patrol, get them to go out with rota policing, get them to go and spend some time in the control room, so they can actually remember why we're here. And we're here to serve the public and to help our officers. As part of that we have to serve the press, but that shouldn't be our sole focus. Our reason for doing it is that we're there to support policing purpose.

Interviewer: Do you think then, would you say that your audience has changed? Your primary audience? Because ten years ago, before social media and the internet really took off, I imagine the journalists were your primary way of getting information out to the public. So there was a certain amount of enlightened self-interest in having very good press relations. But I imagine

now with social media, the power balance might have shifted slightly.

Interviewee: Power balance has shifted dramatically I would say. Even from when I started in the policing, it was everything that you did and everything that was around an incident or operation, it was all focussed on media management., press management. So how are we gonna give them the information? And you completely almost lost sight of the fact that actually even though it was still press, the idea was still because you needed to get messages out to the public, but the shift with the digital channels now, the kind of levels of audience that we've got who are actively wanting to engage with us and they've chosen to sign up and to follow us on twitter. They choose to be Facebook friends or likes of ours. They choose to sign up to our community messaging. They're an active audience that has said we want to engage with you. That is far more powerful, potentially, than what we do necessarily through the newspapers and the more traditional press. Obviously we still work with them and clearly they're important. Particularly when you've got big things going on where you need to get messages out to a wide audience quickly, missing people, etc. But the power balance has shifted dramatically and you see it even with the chief officers now. Once upon a time a negative story in our local newspaper… would send them into disarray. They'd be wanting to know how that happened. But now, it's kind of like, yeah they've written a negative story, they kind of do that, but what we can now do is we can put our side out through our channels or we can put some good news out to counter balance it. So there's a real shift there. They're still really important and they're not gonna go away and we still have to service that part of it, but they are just another channel in order for us to engage and inform the public.

Interviewer: That's very interesting because one of the comments that another interviewee made to me when I talked to him about this, was that he thought that the day of the journalist was over. This is why he shifted out of journalism into police communications and he spent a long time telling me about why newspapers are a dying breed, so it's very interesting from my perspective looking at how powerful the media have always been

considered and then you're saying they're one channel, but they're still very important. So do you think they're going to continue being very important or…

Interviewee: I can't see it going away. I' be surprised. They're less important than they were, but they still have a role to play. I mean you see it now with the kind of big stories around some of the nastier side of policing, the Plebgate and that kind of thing. They still have a big role to play. That's [unclear: 0:12:51] you see it everywhere, so you know, to say probably newspapers more so, dying breed. Local newspapers. So we've only got one daily now, which is the Oxford Mail in the whole of the Thames Valley patch. That's our only daily newspaper.

Interviewer: That's an astonishing reduction.

Interviewee: And they're kind of you know, you're constantly hearing rumours about the fact that they're on the brink of like not potentially being daily anymore, going to online or a few days a week. So there's a real, that's significant for us and they are a hugely demanding newspaper. There's no way they're quiet. I mean up to fifty percent of our time is probably spent servicing that daily. So their kind of appetite is still there, the bit where we now get the rub is, because out appetite isn't necessarily there to keep service on everything that they want on little stories that don't have any policing purpose or add value to confidence. Why are we going to waste our time and resources doing that? That doesn't support our officers telling someone that a blue car hit a red car and there were no injuries. And that's the kind of thing that is causing, I guess, a few issues with some of the locals, because they can't get used to that and they struggle to understand that we don't need to do that anymore to keep them happy, to keep that relationship happy. Even though of course we want to work with them. But the broadcast side of business, you can't discount people like Sky and the BBC and their twenty-four hour demand. You know, when we have a significant incident running, they are all over it and we absolutely can't ignore them because we absolutely have to try and manage them otherwise they

become a real problem and can cause real issues in your investigation.

Interviewer: Could you explain a bit about how they cause these problems? Because I can imagine that they get in the way and they go and interview people on their own, but are there any other problems that they can cause?

Interviewee: It can be things, well funnily enough we were talking, I was at a conference this morning and they were talking about the April Jones investigation and they were talking around the searching and the fact that the media really ramped up asking people to come in and help search and we were hearing from the key guy who was the search lead and he was saying the amount of issues and difficulties, it actually hampered them being able to do proper searching because they had to focus on dealing with the two thousand people that had turned up because the media had said come down and search. So it had a massive impact on how the investigation worked. It can have an impact on things like, obviously scene management can be difficult sometimes if you've got the media crawling all over it. And kind of it's changed the way senior investigating officers work as well, because they can no longer just go, kind of shut it down and say well we don't want to give them any of this. They now understand that they need to work with us as the coms attack advisor if you like, to try and give some access to the media for things like photos and scene images etc. So that we can keep a handle on that, so that we can preserve the crime scene and make their job easier. So actually the more you can work with them and the more you can give them as we did on the Jayden Parkinson murder in Oxford. We made sure that we facilitated things like access to them, interviews regularly to the senior officers. Because if you do that, it actually makes it easier for you to get on with the investigation and they're less likely to start trying to climb over the back gardens of the neighbours and then trampling all over your crime scene and so you know, it pays to help them get some access.

And now because of our digital content as well and our digital channels, we can give them packages which is more the way we're working now, is that we go and we take a photo and we'll film the senior officer, if he hasn't got

time to access the media at that point. We can do all of that for them and then give them the package until we can get them access, so it's about doing some of that job for them as well. And particularly the local papers, they've got such limited staff now. They literally are crying out for anything that you can give them to help.

Interviewer: What would you consider the biggest threats to corporate communications at the moment? Smooth running of it?

Interviewee: I don't think there are, I think in the policing world because of the, I think most of the corporate coms teams have been cut back quite significantly in the… in the last round of cuts so I don't think there's a massive issue with cutting. I guess a couple of threats are obviously, some have got issues with the police and crime commissioners who have stolen some of the corporate communications teams.

Interviewer: I'm not sure how that works.

Interviewee: Well it doesn't and that's the problem. I don't know if you've spoken to them, but if you of and speak to Northampton…

Interviewer: mmmmmm

Interviewee: If you actually speak to the officers, they are just completely at a loss, because all of corporate coms now sits under the PCC. They've lost the operational support. They have nothing and so they are sat there going, how do I get a witness appeal? Because it's all over here and they can't direct operational because they're PCC's, so it just doesn't work. So that's a big threat. Fortunately here it's not a threat because we've all gone back over to the chief constable, but that's definitely an issue. Obviously collaboration, not necessarily a threat but it's an opportunity as well. So you probably might see more forces moving forwards, not so much I don't think, collaborating a full coms team. But there will be bits of collaboration that take place. And we already do some of that with some of our South East

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partners. You know working together.

Facilitator:	All right, are you ready to get started?
Interviewee:	Yeah.
Facilitator:	I suppose, the first thing is how did you get involved in corporate communications with the police because it's something that's an unusual job, isn't it, I'd have thought.
Interviewee:	Yeah. I started out as a journalist, trained as a journalist and went for my first job as a journalist and discovered how well they paid you. And at the time, I was leaving university and needed a job and ended up working in PR, worked for a PR agency for a while, moved on, worked in the private sector and then got a job as a press officer here back in 2003.
	I spent four years as a press officer, loved it, absolutely loved it, but knew I needed to keep moving on. So I did just under four years here the first time around, ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ went off, worked in private industry, worked for charity, worked for public sector organisations, came back, but worked for ACPO nationally on domestic extremism and which is of the UK side of counterterrorism, did two years down in London, working for them.
	The job was moving, ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬, and, at the time, I was doing part time down there and part time up here. So it was quite a nice change. I didn't want to go down to London and commute fulltime again, because I'd done it once and it was horrible. And ended up coming back here, initially as marketing manager and then got head of department about this time last year. I've been in post here a year.
Facilitator:	Congratulations. How have you found it, your first year?

Interviewee: Interesting. We've had a massive restructure. We've cut by a third.

Facilitator: The problem all over, isn't it.

Interviewee: But, yeah, it's been good because I've had a lot of ideas and there was a lot of things as marketing manager, I wanted to influence that I didn't have the influence over, which I've been able to do and we continue to just develop and change. April 1st was our sort of goal for the new structure and we're just finding our feet a little bit now. And it feels like it's settled down a little bit.

Facilitator: Well, that's really, really good. So are you finding that the new structure's working for you?

Interviewee: It seems to be. We were previously split marketing, internal comms and press office, and we're now flat structure. So it's comms officer, who do a little bit of everything, but we're still split proactive and reactive. So we have the long-term planned campaigns, which are managed by three of the team and the reactive firefighting, whatever comes in today, we'll deal with...

Facilitator: Crisis communication.

Interviewee: ...is dealt with by the reactive team.

Facilitator: So that's really interesting. You've got a background in marketing. So I was going to ask how marketing actually really fits in with police corporate communications because it's not something that you see as a natural bedfellow for the police and yet, of course, they've got to sell their image in today's world.

Interviewee: Yeah. For me, the brand is probably the most important thing and whether that's what our external communication looks like in terms of print format or whether that's what people look like when they're out on the street

talking to people, it's all about the brand. And I think that's one of the things we lacked. We lacked that consistency. We lacked that co-operation, almost.

And there was a bigger restructure around the organisation, which sort of split out the areas. And it was all around the same time, so it gave us an opportunity to say well, actually, we're going to implement this brand. We have our own theme. We have what I like to think as our Tesco brand, so we don't deviate from that. We've got quite strict brand guidelines, which has taken people a long time to get used to. But it means that there's a consistency in all of our communications, whether that's online, offline, things that we don't use, photographs.

The budget restraints have helped or hindered, depending on your viewpoint, but we don't use photographs because we found that we were having to replace them constantly. They were dated quite quickly. People left, people died, people were sacked. So it was a constant battle to keep on top, so we said, you know, scrap it. We don't need photographs now. We just use word cloud imagery, which saves us a fortune in time and effort.

Facilitator: How did you go about constructing a brand image because the police are so iconic anyway and people see them as quite a homogenous entity, I think? So it must be quite a challenge to create a regional identity when you've got competition with the national one I'd have thought or possibly not.

Interviewee: No, it's local, so it's not regional. It's just purely ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ [this county]. And the brand was built around a crime prevention campaign. So we took all of our analysis, all of our strategic assessment, identified what the force's priorities were and used that information to say, well, if this is what the force's priorities are, then that's what our proactive priorities should be and built a campaign around that.

And previously, we'd have gone to several designers and we'd have gone to different people. So all of our imagery would have looked different, all of

our crime prevention materials would have looked different. We just needed to bring it all in line so that people know that, if they see something that looks like that, they know it's come from the police, rather than it being a, oh, is that from council, is that from fire service, is that from...

So we developed these brand guidelines to give us that it didn't matter where you saw it, you knew if it looked like that, in the same you know if you see something that's from Tesco's or from Boots, you know it's a Boots product, you know it's a Tesco product, that it was a police message and that people should pay attention to it. It was the theory behind it and we've been rolling out the brand for nearly three years now. In fact, it will be three years where everything we do is on brand.

Facilitator: Do you find that it's having much of an impact from a reputational point of view? People are saying, we're clearly recognising the police now. When communication's from them, we recognise the logo.

Interviewee: A lot of that analysis hasn't been as in depth as I would have liked it to have been, but we know that, in terms of identifying what is a police message or what is a council message, has become stronger. But what we've also found is councils, other partners, fire services, have wanted to use our brand as well to get their messages across. And it was designed with that ability, so it was flexible enough.

I think part of the theory, in terms of implementation, was around we knew we were cutting. We knew that our visibility was going to shrink. So it was about making us visible. If it's not a police officer on the street, we still need to make our presence visible. And we brought on a whole range of tactics. We had a couple of marked-up cars and trailers and things that were, if we couldn't be there, we would put something out there in an area where we had a hotspot.

For example, we had a vehicle crime hotspot in a car park in ████████ and we did it through patrols and it reduced, but it moved to somewhere

else in the city. So what we did was the officers put the car in one car park and patrolled the other and just kept swapping them around. So they did the patrols in one and the car crime went down. And they think it's because people thought there were cameras in the vehicle we were putting...

Facilitator: It's the speed camera principle on the road, isn't it. You never know whether it's going to have film in, so you slow down.

Interviewee: And a lot of it was to save the policemen. It's something that's there. When we can't be there, it's something that's there to deter and, as a crime prevention tool, it certainly seemed to work.

Facilitator: And probably reassure as well, if people are recognising it as an official police presence and they'll have quite a reassurance aspect. I imagine social media's been quite important with the visible reduction because it's an easy and very far-reaching way of getting to a lot of people.

Interviewee: Yeah, massively, massively. We started off in 2010 with our social media. And that was predominantly around an ▮▮▮▮▮▮ and we learned a lot of lessons from that account we set up. It was the first Twitter account and it was initially set up in an individual's name. And, after six months, he then moved on to another job, which is what happens. A lot of people move around quite a bit.

So we discovered at that point that actually it wasn't a good idea to have an individual name on an account because the people who were following him were people from ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. He then moved to ▮▮▮▮▮▮ and people in ▮▮▮▮▮▮ didn't care what was happening in [long pause].

So we said, right, we don't do that. We have a corporate account. So we now have a formal corporate account, which we own. And then we have localised accounts, which are run by the local teams, reactive teams, who work updating.
We don't use Facebook and Twitter at the moment, but we're just about to

launch an Instagram account. We have a YouTube account. We've started to move away from what I call the vanity stats. So we're not measuring how many followers we've got. We're measuring the engagement that we're having and actually making what we're doing on those channels more meaningful than what we necessarily previously were.

Facilitator: How would you measure the engagement, if you're not basing it on the number of followers?

Interviewee: Just because something appears in a paper, it doesn't mean you read it. So because something appears in your Facebook feed, it doesn't mean you read it. If you like it, you comment on it. If you put it as a favourite...

Facilitator: So it's proactive, yeah.

Interviewee: ...it suggests that you've done some sort of interaction with it and we would class that as an engagement. We're also doing a lot through Google Analytics and measuring and campaign tracking things that we're putting out, so we can measure, okay, we're putting an appeal out and we're directing people back to our website. We can measure how many people come in from those channels. So if they'd read it and engaged with it, they'll click the link and that's an engagement.

Facilitator: Yes, and they'll go look at the big story.

Interviewee: Yeah, and that's an engagement stat for us. And we're looking at developing our website, so we'll have the opportunity to be able to report online do various things and book appointments, that kind of thing, online. And once that's on, we can actually say, if we're doing a witness appeal, we put it on Facebook. They came from Facebook to our website. We asked them to give us information. They clicked on the box to submit some information. We can tell they've submitted the form and we know it's gone off to our intelligence guys. So we should be able to eventually...

Facilitator: Joined up.

Interviewee:	...track the entire process from what we've done to what's actually come in because, at the moment, put out witness appeals daily and I would argue, probably 90% don't get anything back. And as a reduced team, what's the point? What are we gaining from doing that or what's the organisation gaining from doing that? So part of the review is about being a bit smarter around how we do it and what we do and making sure we're targeting people as opposed to just blanketing everybody.

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Interviewee:	If you just had one [unclear 00:51:34] yeah and, you know, we are to a certain degree, we're looking at this in collaboration with other police forces. We collaborate with ▉▉▉▉▉▉, so we share IT and we share HR and, you know, as a result we're working quite closely, so if we're looking at a solution we look at it together, we may still rule it out because it's not fit for purpose for them but it is for us, but on the whole we're getting a lot smarter at looking at where we can pool the different types of technology we use in the future, examples being the mobile data rollout, which has given officers across ▉▉▉▉▉▉ and ▉▉▉▉▉▉ tablets rather than them having to completely drop everything they're doing to come back to a station to upload all the information about crime, they can do it on the move now, so they can update their Twitter feed or their Facebook feed or they can access crime systems, they can do crime reports, they can do checks on people while they're out and about on the move using this technology, you know, it's a big leap forward for us, but if you look in the grand scheme of themes cops in America have had that for 20 or 30 years built into their police cars. So, you know, everything comes in big circles, we're finally getting on board with this, because we've realised that, you know, there are better ways of doing things and the government's innovation funding massively helps that process, because we were able to secure a big deal of funding for the first two phases of that. We used to be in a position where the Home Office had a lot of crime prevention material, but as money started getting tighter and tighter, you know, the Home Office couldn't afford to keep providing that type of material, literally you rang up

and said can I have ten boxes of this and they sent you it for free, so obviously that bubble was going to burst at some stage, so yeah, you know, we do now find ourselves in a position where lots of forces are trying to be that first force, that secured support from others to create everything and for us all to pay them to supply us with it. How long that's going to take to do, how far spread will it ultimately be, will the College of Policing or ACPO or anyone ultimately come out and say no this is what a force website needs to look like in the future, genuinely don't know. All I do know is that compared to some forces, yeah you mentioned one force earlier looking at a new website and you're talking £100k plus, well ours is literally going to come in at a quarter of that, which is still more than we'd want to send, but we're trying to engineer in the most simplistic of things so that we can then maintain it in-house so we don't have to keep going back to suppliers to get them to make fundamental changes to templates or upload things, so we can cater for a lot more in-house as we move forward.

Facilitator: Because there's quite a lot of talk around collaboration at the moment isn't there with the HMIC saying you need to collaborate more and one area which, you know, struck me a while ago as being sort of a, obvious on the face of it, collaboration is with the campaigns, because as you said basically you've got certain campaigns [unclear 00:54:44] rolled out across the country.

Interviewee: Yes, it's not rocket science stuff is it? Yeah.

Facilitator: So I do find a little perplexing when I go and talk to police forces and they might say well yeah we talk to our neighbours, but we don't know that ▇▇▇▇ ▇▇▇▇▇▇ just did a really fantastic campaign about domestic violence.

Interviewee: No.

Facilitator: You know, round the football World Cup and I do find that really quite odd.

Interviewee: Yeah, you would think I mean and, you know, there are many ways that you could potentially capture all of this ranging from as a police force we're happy for people to borrow whatever they want to borrow, we're all in the same business, so could it all be uploaded into one repository of information and people just pick out what they need safe in the knowledge that if it's

been uploaded there in the first place the force who has designed it are happy for you to use it, so, you know, there's that as one approach, there's an interim approach I suppose, the other side of it is yeah could we be in a position within a year or two's time to just have this force approved list of stuff that you can draw down as and when you need it. The Association of Chief Police Officers attempted last year into this year to do national weeks of action to focus forces' attention on certain subjects all at the same time, it caused a few issues, you know, that it wasn't very well thought out, so a lot of forces opted out after the first few, but it shows that, you know, policing in general is trying to get its act together for want of even worse way of phrasing it, but it's a way off. The good news is because we are all in the same boat you'd pick up the phone to any head of comms or any, you know, section manager within a corporate comms team and gone are the days where certainly in terms of anyone I've spoken to recently where they say yeah, but there'll be a cost attached to it and that, you know, up to a couple of years ago that was the case if you wanted to use someone else's artwork, because they'd invested so much time and effort and in some senses it was maybe an agency created piece of work yeah, but it'll cost you.

Facilitator: That's really interesting, because I know well two forces are currently looking at diary sharing with their campaigns, so they've got the list of, you know, the campaigns they need to do and they've split them up, so that they can switch between the two of them.

Interviewee: Right, it's interesting, so sharing the workload between between'em.

Facilitator: And also the funding, so they're only paying for half the campaigns each and struck me when I was talking to them as being really, you know, potentially a very good way of doing it.

Interviewee: Yeah, now that's a really good idea. I mean we're not quite to that extent, but we're early stages of that type of conversation with ████████. We're opening our list of stuff, they're opening up theirs so we've got this bigger pool of information that we can ultimately get out of people. The next logical step is alright well what can we do in conjunction in some senses, because you're also talking about the cross border element of our burglars go there and vice versa, rural crime exactly the same thing. So that, you

know, certainly the ███████████████████████████████ [neighbouring forces] are all in one big collaborative pot, we don't work together for everything, but if you look at areas of policing at the minute like underwater search, our underwater search team is the Yorkshire and Humber underwater search team, air operations, if our helicopter's offline or any of the others are we collaborate with other forces and they give us a certain amount of air coverage off the back of it all. Comms is another area, you know, there have been moves in the past for I think it was ██████████ were looking at being the provider of literature, provider of campaign material to the other ████████ forces, but it just wasn't quite the right time for us to look at it for various different reasons, so that, you know, there are moves afoot to try and do that, I think certainly within the next 6 to 12 months will be like that with █████████ team and we will be sharing a hell of a lot more, we will be meeting a lot more regularly and hopefully forward planning.

Facilitator: Do you think that we're going to see more mergers coming out in the future, because West Mercia's a bit of a success story at the moment aren't they with how they've incorporated is it Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and one other county that I always forget?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Facilitator: But they've done a really good job. When I talked to ███████████████, she was suggesting that she actually thinks that it's going to happen regionally round the country and we're going to start seeing forces moving away from collaboration and into mergers.

Interviewee: Yeah, well look at Police Force Scotland, you know, ultimately as an example it's just one giant police force now isn't it and, you know, everyone looked at that with a hell of a lot of cynicism and trepidation when it all came together, how well's that actually going to work? The reality of it is we all work to one set of laws, we all work to one set of practice directions for obvious reasons. Yeah, we're going to have to come to a point if something doesn't give financially where the next stage is looking at all right so what can was just do together, now where can we either merge police forces, become one big giant police force, provide one set of governance or one set

of material that'll be used, you know, you can guarantee not only the marketing material or probably even down to the stock check forms or the penalty notices or the speeding fine tickets, you know, all of these sorts of things probably look different force to force, but the information on them will have to be exactly the same. So, you know, it probably isn't too far away at all if things stay the way that they are and forces are still having to make some drastic cuts.

Facilitator: Because there's quite a fierce resentment towards the idea of mergers aren't there among the public?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Facilitator: I know in Suffolk and Norfolk they're collaborating on a lot of things now, but there was a huge outpouring of resentment when there were discussions this year about them moving the control room from Suffolk to Norfolk and logistically it made perfect sense, but opinion wise people, you know, they're not having it. So I imagine it could actually cause quite a branding reputation problem to merge.

Interviewee: Yeah, we've got it to a certain extent now with the model, our current police force model sees us having three policing divisions, policing four local authority areas. The new force model will see us have one giant division, but obviously still policing for local authority areas. So you'll still have community policing within those four local authority areas, but the rest of the specialist teams, the response teams, those types of facilities will all be on a demand basis. So we'll have the ability to be able to plot where we need officers based on what's going on in that location at any given time, if that problem then desists and we have it somewhere else clearly you just move your resources to where you need them, that's not to say that some areas won't get any coverage, but, you know, your analogy about living in an area where it's really low crime so you don't see officers very often, well clearly that's right, you know, if we've got a finite number of resources we need to make the most of them where they're needed at that point in time and have the flexibility of putting them where they need to be and that includes the station we're in now, ███ has got the northern command centre, which is one giant telephone exchange and then we've got the

southern command centre in ████, which is the other part of the jigsaw. The reality of it is if you ring 101 or 999 either site could answer, regardless of whether you're in ██████████████████ somewhere in ██████ ██████ either site could answer, it just trips through to the next available caller, but the suggestion at the moment of closing down the southern command centre and centralising everything here, because our processes will be more efficient has caused one of the national policing ministers' team members to come up and question our senior management teams around why we're doing it on the grounds of well that will have a negative impact on resourcing to a crime. Well why will it? It's suggesting that it'll take longer for a phone call to go from ██████ to, you know, is it as simple as that? I think what it has shown, I think all of this change stuff has shown that the public just don't understand how we actually police. If I stuck a traffic copper in front of you with a response bobby next to him, a firearms officer, a dog officer, there's going to be some fairly obvious differences when you look at a guy with a gun, a guy with a dog, take all that away from them, just leave them there in uniform, they're all exactly the same and I think, you know, people just don't realise how we police and now that we're talking about taking things away or doing things differently there's this fear of god that crime's going to go mad and it won't, because actually we're just getting smarter at delivering these services, best example being we don't have a system at the moment that shows you the nearest resource to a particular incidence, we will have in the very, very near future, it's being worked on now, it's an off the shelf product, it works in conjunction with your radio, it's GPS based, so we get a call in about a major collision right on the border between what would be at the moment ██████████ and ███, at the moment it would be the resource that's nearest from their division that will go and deal with it. So you could end up with this ludicrous situation where you've got a traffic copper from ███ two minutes from the job, but it's not his area, you've got a traffic copper from ████████ 25 minutes away having to do this mad across the city dash to try and get there, all of that goes when we get rid of divisions, all of that goes when you get this new software and it means that science will tell us, history will tell us where we need to put our resources and then the nearest resource will

attempt the same thing. We've already got blurring of boundaries between our neighbouring forces where particularly with traffic, you know, if there's an incident on the border with ████████ and it's just into their patch and we're closer [unclear 01:05:34] and they can get there when they get there, so, you know, that sort of thing's already happening. We do a lot of cross border operations nowadays which is absolutely brilliant in terms of tackling people that just go wherever, criminals don't give a shit do they, they'll go wherever they want to. So we need to be the same and that sort of stuff's happening now, it's just that, you know, the reality of it is a lot of people think they know more than they actually know, so when you start talking about doing things massively different and having to get rid of all of these staff you can understand why there's a real level of fear around having to do it.

Facilitator: Oh yes, but how would you deal with the rebranding issue, because I imagine selling it's going to be part of the comms responsibilities for [unclear 01:06:21].

Interviewee: Yeah, the first part of it's the simple ego thing and you know full well that you're in a position whereby, you know, if you're maintaining your ████████ [XX] Police and ████████ [YY] Police mantras and they're going into this one big pot, is it the ████████ [YY] and ██████ [XX] Police Force or is it the ██████ [XX] and ████████ [YY] Police Force? So you've got all of that to get around in the first place, it'd be easy if we went in as one big ██████ [regional] force, because you'd be ██████ ████████ Police Force.

Facilitator: Yeah, ██████.

Interviewee: That'll be fine. So you've got that to get over in the first place and believe me it would happen, because we had it with the shared services we've got now, well we'd like to be the ████████ [YY] and ████████ [XX] shared services - no, so, you know, you've got that to get over, but I think the reality of it is it's about opening ourselves right up as forces and selling all of the things that are going to benefit people, why are we doing it, you know, helping them through this change process, so we're saying this is ultimately what we're going to do, this is why we're going to do it and this is

what the net result is going to be, so some real tangible as it stands if we had an incident here that force would have to come and deal with it, but under the new model we know where all of our resources are across the two border areas and we send the nearest resource to the job, so attending incidents becomes so much quicker it's unbelievable, highlighting certainly in areas like public protection, protecting vulnerable people, CSE, those sorts of things you'd probably double the size of the unit that would be able to work on it across both areas and it wouldn't necessarily need to be area specific, you could make sure the right people were dealing with the right job, so that, you know, there would be a lot of areas that you could clearly demonstrate some [pause] some real advantages, but the key would be are we open enough to do that in the first place?

Facilitator: That's interesting, I mean…

Interviewee: People, you know, they're not stupid, they need to know why, they need to know what the benefits are and they need to know they're not being diddled out of money that they're paying through their council tax, you know, there are clear benefits to ultimately going down that route.

Facilitator: And I think that's a really interesting word you used there open, because traditionally it's quite difficult for the police to be open and this whole idea about transparency's quite a scary concept to an institution that's, you know, premised on security and information management.

Interviewee: Yeah. No, I agree. We're the police, yeah.

Facilitator: Which normally meant information retention and not giving it out.

Interviewee: Yeah, we'll tell you what you need to know when you need to know it.

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Facilitator: You have quite a high population in ▮▮▮▮, haven't you, because if you think of it, traditionally, as being quite a rural county and yet, it's also got quite a strong metropolitan transient population now, going into London, I would have thought.

Interviewee 2: Well, we've got this collaboration with ▮▮▮▮ [a neighbouring force] as well

	and their comms department is where we're working together, efficiently, etc. But they're half the size we are and I think… Are they about the same size?
Interviewee:	Their comms department is about the same size as ours, but they're half the size of the population.
Interviewee 2:	So we've got ███████, which is…
Interviewee:	And ██████.
Interviewee 2:	And we've got ███████ as well, which is in the [unclear 00:06:36] really keep us busy.
Interviewee:	And something I forgot to mention is that in each district for the neighbourhood policing team, you have a public engagement officer and their job is kind of like my job at a much lower level. They deal with ensuring that the neighbourhood policing teams are engaging with the public and making the best use out of not just social media, but making the best use of any other communications that we can gather in terms of leaflets if they need something. They'll look at, do we need that for a campaign.
	They'll come to me, ask me for it. I will brief it into the production team and they'll deliver it, if I think that they need it as well. And they're quite good at getting the local comms right and they're involved a lot in the social media stuff, but they're also often all other forms of communication. So that's our link. Although they're not our department, it's maybe the policing department, they're our link as opposed to local teams.
Interviewee 2:	So they'll link in with accounts as well as media relations [crosstalk 00:07:44 interviewee 2 interrupted by interviewee 1] just constant flow of information.
Facilitator:	What would you say the role and purpose is of corporate communications in the police?
Interviewee:	It's a difficult one. Well, to support operational policing and to increase public confidence in policing. That's the big role, I think.
Interviewee 2:	I think certainly media relations is support operational policing and it's reassurance, advice and it's a general communications. I mean, I was just

doing the HMIC report about crime, integrity. It's a whole range of things that we try to communicate internally, externally and with our partners as well. So it's really working all together to help [pause] cut crime.

Interviewee: It's to protect vulnerable…

Interviewee 2: Protect vulnerable people and it's about professionalism as well.

Interviewee: And catching the criminals.

Interviewee 2: Yeah, and professionalizing the service. And then, of course, we've got the cuts as well. So it's working differently and trying to get those messages out and understood and people work with us. So it's bringing everyone on board.

Facilitator: Professionalization of the police is an interesting one, isn't it, because the last time research was done in this area, it was about 1998, from an academic point of view. And Rob Mawby, the guy who did it, he found that most comms teams were staffed by police officers. And when I came to study them in 2009, there was a fair whack of police officers still in post. And now having come back to it in 2012, it's like they've all gone. It's a huge culture shift away from having police officers doing the comms job to having professionals, which I think is very interesting.

Interviewee: I think we need a good knowledge of policing, or most of us have got quite a good knowledge of policing because we've been in for a while and we've worked within operational teams or we've worked with operational teams for a long time. But I think there was a time when it was police officers who perhaps didn't know comms and didn't think about channels and didn't think about who their audience were really.

Interviewee 2: The training and the knowledge and so on and the way it's changed over the years. I mean, I know there are some forces who have still police officers, but certainly now, people in their department have the PR skills, the journalism and so on to basically draw out the best messages, etc. and channels.

Interviewee: A big part of having us have portfolios in our divisions is that I work directly with the East Sussex command team and I'm based with them in Eastbourne. I'm here a lot of the time. I'm all over in ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮, but a big

part of me working with the command team and working with public engagement officers is that I understand policing as well.

A big part of internal comms is ensuring that we know who the audience are and that we know how to talk to them basically and how to get the message across and the public engagement officers and the local team know how to get the message across to their local people that are part of their community. So I think that really works well, having us based with that command team to have that knowledge for us. But at the time, we've got professional knowledge that they can use too.

Interviewee 2: They have confidence in us as well. We do surveys and I think there's one recently about our own department and how we were perceived and so on. The feedback generally, was that it's a professional service. I can feel confident that they know what they're doing. And we have a good reputation I think, in the divisions and departments, but also I think externally as well with partners and with media as well. And in the HMIC report being publicised today, it's about partnership that [unclear 00:12:12] confident and constructive relationships with partners.

Facilitator: So HMIC is putting out lots of reports at the moment. There's a value for your money that I slogged through during the summer and I thought that was fascinating, looking at the comparisons they were doing between the different police forces, particularly the collaboration aspects. I understand that you're collaborating very closely with ███████ these days.

When I talked to ████, she was kind enough to explain how that works across boarders because I know some forces with comms, they're finding it a real struggle to actually manage the cross-boarder aspect. So Suffolk and Norfolk, for example, there's quite a lot of local resentment that we're sharing a comms team now in the public. And I think part of that is because they're struggling to put the messages out in Suffolk in a way that doesn't feel like it's benefiting Norfolk because they're based in Norfolk.

Interviewee 2: Right. So local people want local news, yeah.

Facilitator: But where do you see the collaboration going with ████? Do you think it's likely to have a similar situation with Suffolk and Norfolk where they

	combined their comms teams?
Interviewee 2:	It's a possibility that we will merge. They're saying they'll know in the next… There's a model being created at the moment. We'll know in January, February time, but in the meantime, we're collaborating on certain campaigns, drink drive, domestic abuse, [crosstalk 00:13:40 interviewee 2 interrupted by interviewee 1].
Interviewee:	There's a regional burglary campaign at the moment that we're collaborating with ███████████████ [crosstalk 00:13:46 interviewee 1 interrupted by interviewee 2].
Interviewee 2:	████████ there's four forces there, so somebody's doing the internal and we're doing the press releases and there's the posters and so on, so that we're being efficient, I think.
Interviewee:	Yeah. And I think we all kind of work well together. There are differences in every comms team, which there would be, but we work quite well together.
Interviewee 2:	We're certainly feeding things to ████ and they're supporting us as well, but in the long term, I think we can imagine a smaller comms department, a joined up one probably. And I think that's happened elsewhere, hasn't it?
Facilitator:	Yeah, West Mercia, they've merged with Warwick. They've got a joint comms team now, the same as Suffolk and Norfolk, but it seems to be working a lot better there. But I do find this concept of collaboration fascinating because when I was talking to the northern police forces, they're quite keen to have almost like a regional command centre up in the north, so that they all collaborate very closely. But they're finding it difficult to actually enter into negotiations, even though they're all willing.
	So finding out that other police forces are managing to collaborate effectively, it's good signposting for them saying, look, you can do it this way and this is how this is working in other places.
Interviewee 2:	And we're going to learn from each other, aren't we. But I think we've already had some changes where we looked at collaborating some specialist roles and then decided, no, we won't. So it's all being picked through at the moment for the model.

Facilitator:	So it's a watch this space and see what happens as of next year and it's only a couple of months away now, isn't it? Scary thought. With collaboration, do you think the… Obviously, we're going to see more of it in the future, but particularly, in terms of regional communications collaboration. So ▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮ and ▮▮▮ were talking about diary sharing through the year, so they didn't replicate campaigns because that seems to be one of the big things where each of the forces does its own campaign, or used to, and you'd have 43 replicated campaigns across the country, each a bit different.
Interviewee 2:	Well, that's what we're doing with ▮▮▮ [another force] at the moment. We're picking the main ones that we could work on and they aren't the most substantial ones. So say, for example, in ▮▮▮ [this county] for drink drive, we don't name and shame, but we name those that have been charged and that will go out publicly and so on. And now ▮▮▮ [the other force] is looking at doing that and that's starting next week, I think.
Interviewee:	Yeah, but actually, I've had another force get hold of me and ask me if they can do it as well. So other forces are starting to look at what other forces are doing and trying to replicate it. But I know the College of Policing and ACPO send out campaigns that they're doing and something I suppose they need to do at a national level, is work out which campaigns can we help on. Which ones can we tell forces here's your package. Here's the campaign materials. Here's what you've got to do.

The problem there is probably funding in that they might not have enough to create a campaign for the whole country. But if there were something where the forces all threw in some money for specific campaigns and we looked at a national theme, then that might work.

The problem is, obviously, you've got different types of burglary in ▮▮▮ [here] to London. You've got different residents, you've got different audiences. And so our regional burglary campaign was fairly simple to look at, but still our messaging is slightly different in ▮▮▮ [this county] and ▮▮▮ [our partner force] than it might be in Kent because they'll have a different type of offence happening there. Or it will be happening maybe at a slightly different time of the year. So it's difficult to collaborate on things like that. |

Interviewee 2: We have a domestic abuse one coming up that's focused on youngsters and Surrey is taking that on. So we meet with them regularly. Sarah does a particular [unclear 00:18:10] we all do [crosstalk 00:18:12 interviewee 2 interrupted by interviewee 1].

Interviewee: Well, with the domestic one, we've got our ████████████████ campaign and ████ are taking that on. But some of the messaging again, they've changed slightly, I'm guessing to fit their audience or perhaps it's because they don't particularly like our messaging. I don't know. I'm not really involved in it.

But that's where you find the problem, is that yes, we can create materials and we can create something around a campaign and we'll have all this insight and research, but if it gets too generic, then it's worthless and it's not going to work. So that's where each force does need to think about who they're targeting and who their main victims are.

Facilitator: The question of audience is another very interesting point, isn't it, because some police forces I've talked to have said that their audience is everyone and they don't target and they're not strategic in how they communicate because they consider everybody to be their audience. They want to get everybody.

Then others say, no, we're very targeted, so we'll do certain things for youth. We'll do certain things for people who are older. We'll look at Mosaic data, we'll look at survey data and really target down to individual street level to work out where we need to and how we need to communicate with that audience, should we need to. So it's quite interesting looking at how different forces think about audiences.

Interviewee: Yeah, there are different campaigns where we will be quite generic because we don't need… I mean, the drink drive campaign is very generic. We're not specifically targeting anyone with that. We're targeting everyone and telling everyone don't drink and drink or drive.

Interviewee 2: But we use Mosaic, don't we.

Interviewee: But we do use Mosaic if we're looking to get a little bit deeper. So again, say a burglary at a local level, the engagement officers will look at Mosaic after

burglaries in a certain road, they'll look at Mosaic. They'll find out what type of people are being targeted, how those people prefer to be communicated with and they work on how they're going to communicate to them from that. So it's a balance of both really.

But I think probably forces that say, we're just targeting everyone, we don't target specific groups, probably don't have a very good knowledge of marketing and don't perhaps don't understand how important it is to get the message right for those audiences, whereas I think we tend to get it right most of the time.

Facilitator: And marketing is not something that you traditionally associate with a police force, would you, and yet, it's a really essential function.

Interviewee: Yeah, perhaps it's the wrong word, because we're not marketing a product. We're marketing a service and we're marketing crime prevention.

Interviewee 2: But aren't the account managers doing marketing training?

Interviewee: Yes, a couple of us are doing a professional diploma in marketing through the Institute of Marketing. And we went with marketing instead of the CIPR because marketing I think it probably made a little bit more sense. PR is public relations, but marketing will help us, I suppose, target again a little bit more focus.

Facilitator: Well, public relations is quite diffuse, isn't it, because it still doesn't really have a set definition. I know the CIPR has come up with a definition, but for every definition you find, there's another 10 that will contradict it and will be slightly different.

Interviewee: Actually, it's similar to marketing as well, yeah. They all have different definitions.

Facilitator: How would you define them though, because you said they're similar, but they obviously have differences? What do you think those differences are?

Interviewee: For me, marketing is about that targeted marketing into segments of your level of communities. And I think PR has become a little bit of a dirty word really, hasn't it? It feels like it's erm [pause] spin and if you say public relations, people *think* 'spin'.

Interviewee 2: But I think they use of it of everything [crosstalk 00:22:38 interviewee 2 interrupted by interviewee 1].

Interviewee: I think they use a bit of everything. But I suppose there's not too much of a difference, but…

Interviewee 2: But certainly, the department has changed to be more focused communication and for a particular campaign to work.

Interviewee: And there's more focus on the victim. We're thinking about victims much more than we ever have, which is a brilliant thing, which is definitely what we need to be doing. I think the marketing side of things helps that. And the media relations side of it is perhaps maybe more generic than…

Interviewee 2: Yes. It is very much.

Interviewee: But it links in extremely well with our campaigns and we get the message [unclear 00:23:20] hopefully we'll be seeing the results.

Facilitator: That's interesting what you were saying about PR being something of a dirty word now because, when I started in 2009, there were quite a few departments, which were communications and public relations or media and public relations and then they've all had a name change. And I think there's only two or three now that I found who have kept the PR element or the media element. And the rest of them have gone for things like communications department or corporate communications.

Interviewee: I think corporate communications can be a problem for some [pause] for some frontline officers as well because they will say, oh, I'm being corporate. And it's not in a positive way a lot of the time. It's in quite a negative way quite a lot of the time. I'm just being corporate, and I think that can be a problem sometimes. If somebody doesn't really get what corporate communications does, which there are plenty of people out there that probably don't. And they just see posters and think, why are we spending money on posters and that stuff.

Interviewee 2: But mostly, they're really supportive [laughs].

Interviewee: Yes, they are.

Interviewee 2: Posters and campaigns, that's all it was. So it has developed massively and

	we're developing it further. For example, I think ███ [our partner force] is ahead of us in social media. We're trying to develop that collaboration.
Interviewee:	Yeah, and I think we used to be ahead of ███ really, when we had somebody at the helm of just looking at digital communications, which is why we're introducing that again.

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Question	**Answer**
What format would the interviewee like the results in? Full PhD or results section only?	• PI.26 would like a copy of the full PhD.
What is the interviewee's background in police communications?	• PI.26 has an extensive background in communications. Her previous jobs include: Communications various positions in public and private sector corporate communications specialising in media relations. • She has been in post as the head of ███████ ███████████████ since 2007.

Overview of that police force's communications department.
 1) Size and structure
 2) Role and purpose
 3) Operational position
	1) Size and structure:
	   o The department has changed names several times. The current name is ███████ ████████.
	
	   o 24 full time staff.
	
	   o The department serves both PCC and CC.
	
	   o The department comprises of a traditional press office, E-comms team, Marketing team and the Campaign team.

| | o The press office team manage the more traditional functions associated with police communications. They handle media enquiries, monitoring the media and liaising with journalists. The service is provided seven days a week: 7am – 6pm Monday to Friday and only during the mornings of Saturday and Sunday. There is always someone on call in case of emergencies.

o The E-Comms team handles the web content, social media and the intranet.

o The Marketing team deals with campaigns and events

o The Campaign team is in control of creating audio and visual content.

o The comms team used to also include a Public Insight function between 2006 and 2013. This was for surveying the public for their opinions.
   ❖ This has now been moved to ▮▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ as it is more of a performance issue than communications.
   ❖ ▮▮▮▮▮▮ was the only force who had their Public Insight sitting in corporate communications in 2007.
   ❖ There is quite a lot of "synergy and joined up working" between comms and corporate development.

o No warranted officer working in the department. Department a little unusual as it has always been run by civilians as far as PI.26 is aware.

o PI.26 aware that "civilian control of comms has |

led to police officers in the past refusing to cooperate or talk to us as we aren't 'proper police'".

2) Role and Purpose:

- o The purpose of communications at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ police is to "support the prevention and detection of crime and raise confidence".

- o PI.26 said the department was "clearly aligned to operational policing, not there to spin".

- o PI.26 was very concerned that her department should not be seen/understood in terms of spinning or trying to cover things up.

- o One of the main responsibilities of the department is reputation management. The department is there to be the outward facing interface to facilitate communication within the police force and between police and public.

- o PI.26 told me that the so called professionalization of police comms has led to business terms creeping into common usage which can sometimes do more harm than good. "Reputation management", "brand image" and "marketing" are prime examples of this. These terms came from people with marketing and PR backgrounds and makes it sound like the department is there to obfuscate and lie to protect the police force.

- o Really, marketing is about telling people what the police force is doing. The police are not a private

	company who have the ability to say "no comment". Modern police forces have to be open and accountable and part of this is talking to the public and explaining what they are doing.
	
	o The confusion caused by these terms is why PI.26 does not like terming what they do as PR in conjunction with the police. People rightly or wrongly associate PR with spin and politicians. PR itself is all about open communication but the negative connotations are why ███████ has gone for Communications as the department name and not Public Relations.
	
	3) PI.26 thinks that Communications is operationally embedded.
	  o This was not always the case – a lot depends on the tone set by the Chief Constable.
	
	  o Back in the 90s PI.26 was a press officer at ███████ police. "Back in the 90s, the communications office was mostly left out of operational policing. Police officers had preferred journalists and it was very common that the first thing the press office would hear of a situation would be from the newspaper the next day."
	
	  o This was not a workable situation. Communications needs to know what is going on in order to properly manage situations and keep informed the people who need to know.
	    ▪ Modern communications requires joined up thinking.
	    ▪ Internal communications is as important, if not more, than keeping the public

	informed. For a police force to be effective all officers must be on message and singing from the same hymn sheet. In a large organisation internal communications is the only way to manage this.
	o The old school view held by most police officers was that the comms department was to be avoided as it was manned by police staff. They would only talk to / trust other police officers.
	o Some officers still don't like / are not keen on the communications departments.
	o ▇▇▇▇▇ police comms function has always been run by civilian staff. They might have the occasional police officer on secondment to the department but that is all.
	o The new chief constable is very keen on communications and so the department is fully included in all planning meetings, Gold command and the daily briefings.
How has police communications changed?	• Police communications has changed a lot over the years that PI.26 has been working at ▇▇▇▇▇ police.
	1. Information / communications is now all about two way dialogue. Before it was about broadcasting and push comms. Now it is about the conversation and getting people involved in it.
	2. 24/7 media has meant that the old style of deadlines are a thing of the past. Everything is in

	real time so comms "no longer have time to craft answers". Communications used to be a craft, now it is a catch-up race.
	3. Social media: the advent of SM means that everything happens much, much faster and to a much bigger audience. The flow of misinformation and information is now much greater and harder to control. Police forces need to start thinking about how to manage the flow of information.
	4. With social media and 24/7 media coverage there is nowhere to hide if mistakes are made. Openness and accountability are key to surviving in a mediated virtual democracy.
	5. There has been a comms function at ████████ police for over 25 years. In the 90s it was a Press Office dealing with press related matters and had a staff of 4 people. The head of department would have weekly meetings with the CC or DCC. Now the department has control/responsibility over a wide range of activities from the press to campaigns, to web presence and are embedded at all levels of policing. The department now has 24 full time staff and PI.26 meets with the CC every morning.
What does the interviewee think are the biggest successes of the department?	• The biggest achievement in PI.26's view is level of joined up work she and her team do with operational policing. Through her oversight communications has become fully integrated at Northumbria police and PI.26 is incredibly proud of this achievement. According to PI.26 "everything

	this department does is linked to operational policing objectives, if it isn't, then we don't do it".
What does the interviewee think are the biggest threats/problems facing their department?	1) Funding: funding is probably the biggest threat facing ███████ police comms at the moment. They have already seen significant cuts and there are likely to be more to come. The problem is that further cuts will probably come from reducing the number of staff on her team. PI.26 is worried that "people often think comms is a non-essential service until the shit hits the fan and then it is a critical function". The difficulty is that if the cuts are made and the team reduced when the shit does hit the fan the team will not be able to "deal with it effectively". PI.26 thinks that comms at the moment is in danger of being reduced to "just firefighting" but as everyone know, prevention is much more important/useful in the long run than just relying on the bucket brigade. The current Chief Constable is very pro communications and so the team and level of resources are relatively safe but if he retires or moves on and they get a new Chief Constable all bets are off and they could see significant reductions in the future. 2) Police Culture: the culture towards communications from senior staff makes a huge difference. PI.26 has worked under seven different Chief Constables and has found through experience that the tone set by the senior management team is vital to comms being accepted, integrated and used properly by the rest of the force. The current chief has placed comms at the centre of all discussions and planning sessions, but PI.26 is concerned that this will change if/when there is a change of management. 3) PCCs: the political aspect of the PCC is a serious concern

	and potential threat for police forces at the moment. The biggest danger comes from being caught in the middle if there is a problem between the PCC and CC and in the political aspirations / election side of the PCC role. They might have been intended to be apolitical but most of them are openly political in the sense that they were elected as conservation, liberal or labour candidate. PI.26 isn't sure what value the PCC has brought to policing other than being another aspect of modern policing that the common public just do not understand.

Christmas campaigns	• No Christmas campaign as such although they do ramp up certain campaigns around this time of year.
	
	    ○ Domestic abuse, drink driving and night time economy for example.
	
	    ○ But these campaigns run all year round.
	
	    ○ Tactic used is intelligence led campaigns; so working out where the peaks are for certain crimes and launching campaigns to coincide. E.g. around the world cup domestic abuse increases so most forces based a DA campaign around this.
	
	    ○ Saturation is an important thing to consider – too many simultaneous campaigns and people stop paying attention.

How does the interviewee measure/assess success?	• Success is a tricky concept to measure. Is it reach? Number of followers? Number of retweets/reposts? Likes? Comments? Conversations? PI.26 isn't sure. Traditional methods of assessing success aren't yet suitable for using on social media. • PI.26 uses street surveys to assess the impact of

	traditional campaigns. These surveys use police officers stopping people randomly on the street and asking whether they have seen something and what they understand by it.
	• Social media shouldn't be about numbers of followers. Reach and interaction are sort of measured but again means little. What matters is how many people have understood the message and how many have then acted on it. Traditional crime prevention / awareness campaigns are easier to assess in terms of how successful they are. You can look at whether reported crimes of that type go up during a campaign.
	• Behavioural change is key.
	• Social media campaigns / appeals are not yet formerly assessed. So far they are just repeating what seems to work. E.g. witness appeals gain a lot of interest on Facebook and seem to gather a lot of intelligence.
How aware is the interviewee of what other communications departments are doing?	• PI.26 feels they are pretty aware of what other police forces are doing.
	• PI.26 said that they used to be a lot more aware of what other forces were doing – she's slipped in the last few years as the departments have become increasingly busy and there is little time for extra non-essential research projects. PI.26 used to be "a lot more aware but I've slipped in the last couple of years - we're all just so busy".
	• PI.26 thinks comms departments are probably most aware of those forces they share a boarder with as these will be the ones they have the closest operational ties with.

	• PI.26 thinks that police forces are usually quite good "at blowing their own trumpets when they have a success" and that is how she keeps aware of what other police forces are doing well. o Problem with this is that it depends upon police forces self-publicising. • PI.26 is quite happy to with letting other forces borrow her campaign material for a small fee. She thinks the level of duplication currently being done is "nonsensical".
How would the interviewee describe their communications strategy? Push, pull or transformative?	• Their current strategy is aimed at dialogue – but PI.26 admits that there are always going to be strong elements of 'push' in how they communicate simply because of their communication needs. • ▇▇▇▇▇▇ currently respond to most tweets and Facebook posts unless they are extreme in which case they are blocked. • PI.26 thinks that behavioural change is increasingly important and where they want to be. Communication isn't just about 'pushing' the important information at people but about showing them why they need to take note and then convincing them to change their behaviour. In changing their behaviour they can reduce the opportunity for crime, protect themselves etc. and thus help the police do their jobs. • "Policing is not done in isolation – it needs all of the public because it is part of the public". Social media helps with this as it increased the public participating in a police/public partnership and opens up a new audience who don't look at the news (e.g. young people).

What is police Public Relations?	• PR is just one small part of modern police communications and not particularly well understood. In principle it is there "to facilitate cooperation between the public and the police and within the police force itself; but people tend to get it confused with 'spin'." • Lots of negative connotations about spin and lying. • "I don't like to use the term PR… people rightly or wrongly associate PR with spin and politicians. PR itself is all about open communication but the negative connotations is why we use Communications for a name and not Public Relations".
Are there any serving police officers in the department at the moment?	• No and there have never been as far as PI.26 is aware although they sometimes have police officers seconded to their department.
What is the most important aspect of communication in a modern police force?	• "Open and transparent and keep it simple" • Internal comms - Internal communications is just, if not more important, than keeping the public informed. For "a police force to be effective all officers must be on message and singing from the same hymn sheet." In a large organisation, internal communications is the only way to manage this.
Where do you think police communications will go in the future?	• Police communications is "under attack from budget restrictions". It is probable that teams will get smaller and smaller and cease to be as effective. • Social media is likely to become more important to the detriment of traditional methods due to these budgetary restrictions. • This is probably not going to be a good thing as social

	media should not be allowed to dominate as not everyone uses it.

Police website:
 1) Traffic
 2) What are people looking at
 3) Uses
 4) Demographics
	1) Traffic
	   o They have no idea. Demographic data collection and analysis is still in an embryonic state.
	
	 2) What are people looking at
	   o Crime prevention
	   o Operational incidences / crime
	   o Recruitment
	   o Police animals
	
	 3) Uses
	   o ▉▉▉▉▉ police website is the "essential hub, or library for virtual information interaction"
	   o Social media is meant to drive people to the website for more information and services
	   o They are currently designing a website app and a crime prevention app
	
	 4) Demographics
	   o Not sure as they have not yet started to collect this data.
	
	 Website is here to stay! Although it may need a redesign to keep up with changing needs and requirements.

Journalists 1) How has the relationship changed? 2) Are they moving towards self-service?	1) How has the relationship changed? o Traditionally journalists hate press officers "as they see us as a block to the police officers who will give them more and better stories… Now we are a necessary evil as local journalists no longer have time to go investigating on their own and post Leveson has placed restrictions of these relationships".

3) Local journalism?	2) Are they moving towards self-service? o Just starting to move a little towards self-service model but they are not there yet. Journalists still want to do most things are their own (e.g. audio/visual coverage of events, interviews etc.) o "Most journalists no longer have time to go out and find stories on their own now, so they basically regurgitate and rewrite press statements" 3) Local journalism? o There are fewer journalists and daily papers. o Fewer reporters who ring up and ask now and far fewer exclusives. With social media it is highly likely that stories will be broadcast online by civilian journalists long before reporters and police know about the issue.
Audience: 1) Who are their audiences? 2) How are they reaching them? 3) How successful are they in reaching them?	1) Who are their audiences? o Strictly speaking everyone but really it depends on the campaign or crime they need information on. 2) How are they reaching them? o PI.26 is still working out how to target specific audiences. They are currently using the same approach for social media as they use for traditional campaigns – they post things on sites/place most likely to be used by the target demographic. Facebook targeting is something they are only just starting to explore. 3) How successful are they in reaching them? o PI.26 is not sure as analysis and evaluation is still something they are considering and trying to work out how to do. The method they usually use is

	street surveys. These surveys stop people on the street and ask them if they have seen something (e.g. a campaign, witness appeal etc.) and what they understand by it. o Social media is not assessed at all at the moment. PI.26 wants to develop a way of analysing this.
Social media: 1) Place in strategy 2) Use/purpose 3) Effectiveness 4) Demographics 5) What are people using it for? 6) Dialogue or push 7) Where will it go in the future? 8) Preferred channel?	1) Social media is only one of several strategies PI.26 employs to talk to the public. It is an important element but not THE most important. The local media, website and traditional campaigns are all equally important for getting different messages out to different people at different times. The medium used for a specific message depends on who they are trying to contact and what format the message needs to take. Some campaigns won't reach the right people on some mediums; e.g. little point in putting advice for ethnic minorities on sites geared towards the white majority. 2) Publicity, communicating with the public, keeping internal and external audiences informed of developments and things they need to know. Social media is a force connecting everyone – "it allows truly democratic conversation at all levels and the police need to be a part of these conversations. They can't just 'push' what information they want to give out to the public, they need to go find out where people want to communicate, where they are having conversations and then jump in". 3) Very difficult to discern whether social media is effective or not; PI.26 does not have the analytical infrastructure in place in order to determine this with any accuracy. Reach is measured as are the number of followers but PI.26 doesn't think these are accurate estimates of impact or

effectiveness. This is an area she thinks would benefit from more research but the police do not have time to do it. "success is a tricky concept to measure. Is it reach? The number of followers? The Number of retweets/reposts? Likes? Comments? - I don't know! The traditional methods of assessing success aren't yet suitable for using on social media".

Reach, tweets and engagement considered but ultimately deemed a "time consuming red herring". Behaviour change is what matters - but as yet there is no reliable way of assessing this.

4) No demographic data collected at the moment. Is the next phase for this force as they need to know who is using what channels, what is reaching them and what impact it is having. They are currently developing analytical software for this but it will not be ready for a while yet and in the meantime they are operating on public survey data and guess work. PI.26 is quite frustrated by the lack of knowledge around this but the big constraint is time – the team is at stretching point already which makes introducing a research element into it very difficult.

5) People are mostly looking at recruitment, police puppies and firearms licences.

6) The traditional strategy for police comms was pushing information out to the public. PI.26 is very proud that under her direction the comms department has moved away from this and into using dialogue. They now try to answer all questions posted on their social media sites in order to encourage discussion and conversation. They are also starting to join other discussions on these sites

	where questions have not been asked in order to have a voice in these conversations.
	7) Social media is growing all the time. Like Pandora 's Box, or a genie, now it has arrived there is no going back. PI.26 thinks that it is going to continue to grow and become more important as it becomes more normalised in all age demographics. We are likely to see new channels appearing, some old ones disappearing as people move on to the "next best thing"; the trick will be predicting which ones are going to last. "Like the genie, social media is out of the bottle and now that is has arrived there is no going back". Likely to dominate traditional forms of communications to the detriment of non-online audiences
	8) Twitter is the preferred channel. Pinterest, Fickr and Instagram have only seen a little bit of take up from the public. Instagram and Flickr are only useful for photos. Facebook is useful but Northumbria are still coming to grips with how to use it.
	9) "Policing is not done in isolation - it needs all of the public because it is part of the public. Social media helps with this as it encourages public participation and opens up a new audience who don't look at the news - young people".

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INTERVIEWEE: This is quite a useful aid memoir to go through all the things that we currently do, I'll expand on it a little bit. So this is a strategy document for this year. The

objectives at the top are ██████ corporate vision ████████████████████████ ████████████████████████████████████ And broadly speaking my team is split into four chunks at the moment. Media, Internal coms, marketing and external relations; which is stake holder relations, public affairs, you'd call it in some other organisations. So not dealing with the media, but dealing with stake holders. Those are the sort of four chunks and the objectives we've set out here broadly correspond to those four areas.

So managing risk, building reputation and cutting crime are really the ways in which we focus our news activity or our media activity. Managing risk is about trying to manage investigations and the risk around those investigations. It might be a risk to reputation; it might be a risk to the investigation itself. For example, yesterday we did a big briefing about the ██, we let all the news outlets know, we put an appeal out for information, obviously that is helping to detect crime, but we also had a word with the journalist in the nicest possible way about trying to make sure their activity doesn't cut across or jeopardize the investigation. It's a very unusual situation where so much of the material is in the public domain, which isn't usually the case with police investigations. The risk there is that journalists start to interview people themselves and can if they're not careful **[long pause]** corrupt the investigation itself. Corrupts the wrong word **[pause]** they can compromise would be a better word. So that's about managing the risk to the investigation, as well as managing reputational risk as well. It's perfectly possible that we get absolutely nowhere with that whatsoever. And people then say either, you're useless detectives or you were never serious, you're part of the cover up, and then your reputation takes a hit. So, I'll just go through the strategies column if you like, the activities say what we do to support that strategy, the measures, how do we know we've done it and done it well? So this approach, objectives, strategies, activities and measures, is quite a well-known approach. I think it's actually Proctor and Gamble or somebody who devised this four column approach if you like. So you can say, what are your goals or objectives? What are your strategies for achieving those? What do you do underneath that strategy and how do you know when you've done it?

FACILITATOR: Yes, my dad uses something similar in his business mentoring.

INTERVIEWEE: Ok, so there you go. So very, very simple and it's just as applicable to coms as

it is to any other activity. So strategies, high quality, twenty four seven content. It's fairly obvious, but ██████████ [our] messaging framework, we have our own set of corporate messages, I'll make a list because that'll be useful for you as well. We have our own set of sort of corporate messages which we update every quarter and we distribute to leaders for use in all their sort of public engagements if they wish and that's effectively at any one point, what are the key messages as an organisation we're trying to put out there. Again, businesses would do that and political parties would do that as well. So it's really saying, we need to be twenty four seven **[pause]** we need to constantly try to make sure our messages reflect the story that we're trying to tell to the world. High quality service to journalists, responsive, accurate, transparent, supported by a stronger digital production capability. You know, journalists are our customers. Ummmm…We want them to believe we give them a good service because we think that will increase their respect for the organisation. The reference to digital production capability recognizes that there are increasing audiences for digital content on the web and that we have had a largely analogue print media focused operation, used to dealing with tabloid and broad sheet journalists, not an operation geared towards producing content for websites, be it our website or a newspaper website. So, we're in the process of transitioning to get, create more video, more stills, more information graphics. Not just classic press releases. Stop me at any point that you want to.

FACILITATOR: How do you feel that your relationship with journalists has changed recently? There's been a, there must have been a big shift, over the last couple of decades from the way that is normally thought of police sitting in pubs with their journalist friends to much more professionalized relationship and of course with Leveson and then social media...

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, it's changed dramatically and really since probably 2011-12. So Elizabeth Fillkin did her report into how the MET communicated with journalists in 2012, have you read that?

FACILITATOR: No, I haven't.

INTERVIEWEE: It's worth digging out. So she was an independent QC, who was commissioned by the previous commissioner after all the phone hacking stuff had broken, he said, they knew they had a problem, come and pick apart this problem. We wouldn't and

even I wouldn't necessarily agree with all of her conclusions, I think she **[pause]** but, she was right to identify the relationship as too cosy and too cosy with particular tabloid newspapers. She was the one that made references to, who really pushed on the don't drink alcohol with journalists, because they flirt with you. That was the most memorable line, is that journalists flirting with police and officers. May well have had a point but I think she kind of blew it completely out of all proportion [laughs]. But since then ▮▮▮▮ [police forces] have got a much more open, transparent relationship. We do little or no off the record back ground briefing. We try and do, pretty much everything on the record. Like the sort of whole of yesterday's briefing was all on the record. In the past the organisation would probably have done a back ground briefing and dribbled out a few tit bits, but now it's all on the record. Ummm **[pause]** For the most part anyway. There are occasions where we need to do background briefing. Journalists don't particularly like that, they like to be fed little tit bits just to them, but again the other aspect of this is on the record and everybody gets the same. You know, we don't say, journalist x tell you what, we'll give them that story, etc. It doesn't work like that. So it has changed an awful lot and journalists don't particularly like that.

FACILITATOR: Have you seen reduction in the number of local journalists?

INTERVIEWEE: I'd like to yes. Well not I'd like to say yes, I believe the answer is probably yes**, [long pause**] but we still have a massive number of customers and since we have started aggregating all the demand we get from journalists, because there was a time when every borough in London had his own police press officer, so it was impossible to tell how much demand you were getting, now they all work for this team, so we can see what we're getting. Not seeing any drop off. So fewer journalists doesn't necessarily mean less demand. Actually it can mean more demand because they want you to do more of the work for them. You know, so they don't send photographers along to events because they don't employ photographers anymore, therefore they're expecting you to take photographs for them and provide more of the content because they're not there. So...

FACILITATOR: So moving almost to a self-service sort of idea?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, there's a bit more of that now, particularly at a local level.

FACILITATOR: Because that's where, some of the other police forces I've talked to, they're trying to position themselves now, so it's very much...

INTERVIEWEE: Yes absolutely. And I know they're trying to do it deliberately in some, aren't they? So you know, ███████████████. I don't know how many local newspapers there are in total, but we have our team that are based here that deals with all the national and international stuff and is staffed twenty four seven. We have four other teams across London serving news media in the different bits of London and we've got about four people in each of those teams. They would generally get sixty to seventy calls or emails every day from local journalists, bloggers, websites, etc. So there may be fewer traditional journalists, but also there's now citizen journalists or bloggers or community activists who've sprung up. The barrier between what's a journalist and what's somebody who's just interested in what you're up to is very grey. We've got former ███████████, she writes a blog now. She comes in and expects a service that a traditional journalist would get and it's quite hard to say we're not gonna answer your questions, but we will answer somebody from the ████ ████, doesn't really make a great lot of sense.

FACILITATOR: Everything's in transition at the moment isn't it. We're redefining all the traditional boundaries that have been in place since print press came in in the sixteenth century.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes absolutely and it leads on to the next bit actually. You say we talk about building leadership, external leadership communications capability. That's about media training and getting our leaders to be more effective at communicating with their newspapers or broadcasters. In part recognising that we've got fewer people than we have even, having a smaller team in the future and so we need senior leaders and coppers at all levels to be able to have confidence in speaking to the media. So we're doing a lot of training to support that at the moment... [hums] Develop key external messaging channels, that's about developing social media primarily, but not just social media.

FACILITATOR: Do you ever prefer platform to social media?

INTERVIEWEE: Well there... **[long pause]** have you heard of Martin Sorrell?

FACILITATOR: Yes.

INTERVIEWEE: So Martin Sorrell sums it up in a really good way, albeit a couple of years ago, so it's a bit, little bit out of date. But he said Facebook's for your brand, Twitter's for public relations. I think that's quite a good way to put it. So we use, we have forty odd thousand followers on Facebook. We tend to do kind of brand based stories, we got a really, really successful story today with an officer who was called to a house where a four pound weight baby had just gone into unconsciousness, so, ran with the baby to the nearest hospital, he didn't wanna wait for an ambulance. Baby was resuscitated, baby now fine. Fantastic picture, that's reached, well it had fifteen thousand five hundred likes by lunchtime. That gives you a reach, we reckon, probably, well that'll be over a million people that will have reached by now. And yes, of course it's news and information, but that's more about kind of brand and reputation. Twitter is much better for kind of, hyperlocal **[hmmm]** niche news and information. Partly for journalists but also other people are generally interested. So we have more than two hundred twitter accounts now across [the force] ▮▮▮▮▮▮ We've encouraged our neighbour teams who might be covering one ward or a cluster of wards to develop them and only talk about the news in their little bit ▮▮▮▮▮ and engage with people around that. You know, we had a couple of burglaries last night in such and such street, you might want to take care and make sure your house is locked tonight kind of stuff. Not encouraged to talk about the policing settlement from the home office or should we or should we not have water cannon or whatever, it's supposed to be about what's happening in your area. And Twitter's brilliant for that and Twitter's also good, it's a bit grey, of course you can do brand building stuff on Twitter as well, but it is a very good service for niche news and information. So that's how we sort of see those two at the moment. We do use YouTube a bit as well, but as a video distribution channel, probably not something where at the moment we would say there's particular audience in its own right. And probably those are the top three channels that we're using at the moment.

FACILITATOR: Do you find there are any stories that get particular attention? Some other police forces have found that if they stick anything to do with animals up, police animals...

INTERVIEWEE: Facebook yeah, well children, animals, pictures, yeah will do very well. But not necessarily with traditional media. Journalists might not find that quite so interesting.

FACILITATOR: It's an interesting idea though, using it to drive people to the website. Because it seems to be something which grabs some people. But then you've got to wonder if it's sending out the right message, because you might then have more people going onto these sites, but are they actually taking anything away from it other than, oh look there's a lovely litter of puppies.

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, so animal stories, a bit so-what. Stories about police officers behaving in a courageous or compassionate fashion and demonstrating our values, yeah that does have real importance to us.

FACILITATOR: A lot of clouds. And do you find that, because lots of police forces are now moving in to using social media for witness appeals aren't they and appealing for information. That seems to get a lot of, an increasing number of people getting very involved in it.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes and for us, I think the biggest area where that's relevant is missing persons appeals. We get phenomenal number of missing persons in London. I think we did ████████████████ investigations into missing persons last year. Which is a staggering number. Now we don't put out an appeal for all of them and I haven't counted how many appeals we've done, but generally I'd say across ██████ **[short pause]** we're probably doing at least one a day, probably ten a week or something like that. The more important ones will go out on our main ████ twitter account which has got ████████████████████ followers. Other ones we may just decide to publicize at a Borough level, from a Borough account. But it's a remarkably powerful tool for helping spread the word about missing persons. Not to say we don't use it for other appeals as well, but it is particularly good at that because, you will tend to find a network of friends who will then circulate the image if they haven't started already and it has that viral impact and obviously you've got images as well there and images do better on twitter in particular and also Facebook as well so it gathers momentum.

APPENDIX 2.6: Methodology Comparison Table

Version No. and Date	Research Questions	Methodology
Version 1: PhD Proposal May 2012	1) Do the British Police have a media/public relations strategy? If so, to what extent do PR strategies differ between policing environments? 2) Are these strategies effective and, if so, how is effectiveness measured/assessed? 3) Has PR only become an issue during late modernity? 4) Does police PR have a discernible impact upon public opinion of crime and the police?	• Triangulated methodology using a combination of a comprehensive literature review, three case studies and quantitative analysis of officially recorded statistics from police recorded public opinion polls and confidence surveys. • Case studies to be undertaken in three police forces (one rural, one urban and one metropolitan). The case studies would use ethnographic observation of these forces' PR departments and a series of qualitative semi-structured interviews with several PR department staff. The case studies were aimed at answering questions 1, 2 and 3. • The quantitative analysis of officially recorded statistics would have examined data from local public opinion polls and surveys of public trust in the police and fear of crime levels. This data would then have been used to determine trends and patterns through regression analysis using media reporting over this period as a control in order to answer question 4.

| Version 2: November 2012 | 1) Who are the police trying to communicate with, or to?

a) Who are the audience(s)?

b) Does their audience change depending on geographical location/social strata?

c) Is there a preferred/targeted audience? (E.g. white middle class, old ladies, young ethnic minorities).

d) Are there elements/groups in society with whom local police PR is not attempting to communicate with/to?

2) How are different police forces communicating with 'the public'?

a) What media are the police using to communicate?

b) Do these methods/strategies differ between police forces and environments? | • Triangulated methodology using a combination of literature review, interview based case studies with up to nine police forces and an online public opinion survey.

• The case studies in up to nine police forces: three rural, three urban and three metropolitan. They would have involved ethnographic observation of these forces PR departments and a series of qualitative semi-structured interviews with several PR department staff.

• The online survey would be run through the Facebook and Twitter pages of participating police forces, if the police agreed, and if not then through an online survey tool such as *Survey Monkey* or *Bristol Online Survey*. |

	c) Do methods and strategies differ between audiences?	
	d) Are different methods/strategies chosen to target specific audiences?	
	e) Are people aware of police public relations strategies?	
	3) Do the British Police have an official media/public relations strategy or outcomes?	
	a) If so, to what extent do PR strategies differ between policing environments and why?	
	4) To what extent do PR and communication strategies affect perceptions and assessments of effectiveness/satisfaction/confidence in the police?	
	5) Are these strategies considered effective and, if so, how is effectiveness measured/assessed?	
	6) Has PR only become an issue during late	

	modernity?	
	7) How does PR relate to police self-identity?	
	a) Does how the police portray themselves to the public play an important part in informing/maintaining their own self-images?	
	b) If so, how does this circular image construction fit in with some of the more neo-liberal interpretations of police communications and image work?	
Version 3: January 2013 *Version submitted for First Review after contact with Pilot Constabulary*	1) How are 'the police' communicating with 'the public' and does this differ between police jurisdiction, geographical area and demographic group/audience? 2) Why is communication between 'the police' and 'the public' important? 3) What are 'the police' trying to achieve and how do they measure/assess the success or failure of	• Multi-strategy approach using a combination of case studies and three surveys. • Case studies in up to nine constabularies involving three separate elements: semi-structured interviews with members of the constabularies' public relations department, senior police officers and a selection of serving police officers who do not work in the public relations department; observation of the constabularies' public relations department by shadowing members of the PR department for a

these attempts?

4) What do people expect from their police? And how does this impact on their relationship/interaction with police officers?

5) What influences how people think/feel about 'the police'? In particular, what factors/influences make a person feel confident in the police?

negotiated period of time; and an analysis of official documents, posters and magazines produced by the police for both their internal and external audiences.

- Survey 1: survey of police public relations departments sent to every police force in England. The survey would have looked at the number of staff, staff training, name of the department and place within the organisational hierarchy, current strategies, strategic aims, roles and responsibilities, and about budget cuts and how this had affected them in terms of resource allocation and distribution.

- Survey 2: survey of householders. The survey would have been posted to a randomly selected sample of houses from each ward within the jurisdiction of the police forces involved in the case studies. The recipients would have been randomly selected from the electoral register. The sample size would have depended in part on how many wards there were in total in each jurisdiction and how many police forces agreed to the case study. The aim of the questionnaire was to explore 'public' opinion about the police, what people expected from their police service, their awareness of various police activities and public relations and to ask people what they think would help improve public confidence

		and satisfaction levels with the police.
		• Survey 3: web survey of businesses and other online internet groups such as the police website, Twitter and Facebook pages using 'Smart Survey'. It would also have been sent to businesses through FSB and Chamber of Commerce publicity channels. It was intended that the survey would have run for six months with interim analyses at two and four months; this should have improved the probability of a decent response rate while remaining within manageable parameters.

• The questions and format of the householder survey and the online survey would have been identical and would have provided a longitudinal comparison and contrast to the cross sectional house holder survey. The difference between the householder survey and the online survey was the target group and method of delivery. The householder survey would have collected data from a random sample of the population who may have been a) unaware of the police web presence, b) unable to access these resources or c) uninterested in these resources, whereas the online survey would have been deliberately canvassing the opinions of people who had demonstrated an interest in the police public relations. |

| **Version 4**: May 2013

Post First Review – Version Sent to and rejected by Pilot Constabulary July 2013 | 1) What methods and strategies are the police using to communicate to, or interact with, 'the public' and does this differ between police jurisdictions, geographical areas and demographic groups?

2) What are the police trying to achieve with these methods and strategies? How is the success or failure of these schemes measured?

3) Why do the police think that communication between the police and the public is important, and has public relations only become an issue for the police during late modernity?

4) What influence/role has the question of public confidence played in the development of police-public communications?

5) How has the increasing use of social media in police forces affected the way that the police and public interact? | • Multi-strategy approach using a combination of case studies and two surveys.

• Case studies conducted in three or more constabularies and would have involved three separate elements: semi-structured interviews; observation of the constabularies' public relations department; and an analysis of official documents, social media sites, posters and magazines produced by the police for both their internal and external audiences.

• The semi-structured interviews using a purposive sample would have involved interviewing members of the constabularies' public relations departments, senior police officers and a selection of serving police officers who do not work in the public relations departments. The observation element would have involved shadowing members of the public relations departments over a specified time which would have been negotiated with each Constabulary. The documentary analysis would have involved an examination of the material produced by the public relations departments of themes, trends and content in order to compare the intended content, received content and internal meanings against the 'official' strategies and intentions of the public relations departments. It would also have involved an analysis of how the police |

		were using social and electronic media to communicate with the public and whether this had affected interaction between police and public.
		• Survey 1: survey of police public relations departments; looking at number of staff, staff training, name of the department and place within the organisational hierarchy, current strategies, strategic aims, roles and responsibilities, and about budget cuts and how this had affected them in terms of resource allocation and distribution.
		• Survey 2: web survey of police website, Twitter and Facebook pages. The second survey would have been an online questionnaire. It would have been advertised on the websites, Facebook and Twitter pages of each police force participating in the case studies using 'Smart Survey'. The aim of the questionnaire was to explore 'public' opinion about the police, how often they used police run social media resources, why they used them, what services people expected from their police, and their awareness of various police activities and public relations initiatives.
Version 5: September 2013 *Post Pilot*	1) To explore the official and unofficial use of the public relations department within the Constabulary.	• Multi-strategy approach using a combination of case studies and survey analysis in nine police forces.

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Constabulary Consultation	2) To understand how public relations is being used by the police force – particularly within the context of increasing, and managing, public confidence and satisfaction. 3) To investigate how the police evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives and schemes. 4) To determine how integrated the public relations department is and how important their work is considered by different people within the police organisation. 5) To understand the use and impact of social media on police communication and interaction with their publics.	• The case studies involved semi-structured interviews with the heads of police communication departments and the Chief Constables of participating forces. An analysis of official documents, social media sites, posters and magazines produced by the police for both their internal and external audiences would then have been compared against officially recorded levels of public confidence and satisfaction with the police. The documentary analysis would have involved an examination of the material produced by the public relations departments of themes, trends and content in order to compare the intended content, received content and internal meanings against the 'official' strategies and intentions of the public relations departments. It would also have involved an analysis of how the police were using social and electronic media to communicate with the public and whether this had affected interaction between police and public. • The survey would have explored the number of staff, staff training, name of the department and place within the organisational hierarchy, current strategies, strategic aims, roles and responsibilities, and about budget cuts and how this had affected them in terms of resource allocation and distribution.

Version 6: November 2013	1) To explore the official and unofficial use of the public relations department within the Constabulary. 2) To understand how public relations is being used by different police forces – particularly within the context of increasing, and managing, public confidence and satisfaction. 3) To investigate how the police evaluate the effectiveness of public relations strategies. 4) To understand the use and impact of social media on police communication and interaction with their publics. 5) To investigate the extent to which the introduction of social media has changed 'traditional' police PR work.	• Triangulated methodology using a combination of case studies, a survey of police PR departments and an analysis of online activity (e.g. use of social media). • The case studies would have involved in-depth 60 minute interviews with as many of the heads of Corporate Communications Departments who agreed to take part in the study and follow up in-depth qualitative based questionnaires or email interviews with both the heads of department and several members of staff working in the departments. The number of staff and identity and position of the email recipients will be negotiated with the heads of department but will have been be between 2 and 6 depending on the size of department. • Survey of all non-participating police forces to ascertain number of staff, staff training levels, rank of staff members, budgets etc.
Version 7: July 2014	**Primary Questions** 1) What is the purpose of police communication? 2) What are police forces trying to communicate? 3) How are the police communicating?	• Combination of case studies and Freedom of Information requests (FOI) • The case studies would involve in-depth interviews with all the heads of Corporate Communications Departments (or their nominated representative) who agree to participate and gathering data about the

	4) With whom are the police trying to communicate?	online presence and behaviour, socio-historic and demographic information about their jurisdiction, department size, budget, staff training and any relevant policies and procedures.
	5) What are the threats and challenges facing police communications?	
		• Information about the department and policies/procedures would be gathered through FOI requests.
	Secondary Questions	
	1) Is the concept of public relations still relevant in the modern police force?	
	2) To what extent do public relations strategies differ between policing environments?	
	3) What position does communications hold within the operational side of policing?	
	4) Is it possible to measure what, or whether, police communication strategies are having an impact?	

APPENDIX 3.1:   FOI Reference Tables

All FOIs submitted and answers given are available in the disclosure logs on the individual police forces websites under the reference numbers given in the tables below.

FOI Request 1   (Submitted February 2015)

<u>**Questions:**</u>

1)   How many people are there currently employed in the department which handles communications/media relations?

2)   What are their posts/job titles and pay grade.

3)   How many people were employed in this department in 2010?

4)   Is this number expected to increase or decrease over the next three years?

5)   Are there any warranted police officers currently working in the communications/media relations department?

      a.   If yes, how many and what are their job titles

      b.   If not, when was the last time a warranted officer was employed/worked in communications/media relations.

6)   Has the position of head of the communications/media relations department ever been held by a warranted police officer? If so, when was this?

7)   What is the budget for the communications/media relations department for 2013/2014 and 2015/2016?

8)   Is the budget expected to increase or decrease over the next three years?

Police Force	Response Received	FOI Reference	Date Received
Avon and Somerset Police	YES	487-15	On-time March 2015
Bedfordshire Police	YES	2015-00519	On-time March 2015
Cambridge Police	YES	0197/2015	On-time March 2015
Cheshire Police	YES	6292	On-time March 2015
City of London Police	YES	COL/15/193	On-time March 2015
Cleveland Police	YES	2015/6263	On-time March 2015
Cumbria Police	YES	187/15	On-time March 2015
Derbyshire Police	YES	FOI/603.15	On-time March 2015
Devon and Cornwall Police	YES	1187/15	On-time March 2015
Dorset Police	NO REPLY	follow up email and no response	
Durham Police	YES	SS/DC/FOI/171/15	On-time March 2015
Essex Police	YES	7093	On-time March 2015
Gloucestershire Police	NO REPLY	follow up email and no response	
Greater Manchester Police	YES	GSA598	On-time March 2015
Hampshire Police	YES	HC/00547/15	On-time March 2015
Hertfordshire Police	YES	FOI183/15	On-time March 2015
Humberside Police	YES	2015-264	On-time March 2015

Kent Police	YES	15/02/239	On-time March 2015
Lancashire Police	NO REPLY	follow up email and no response	
Leicestershire Police	YES	1296-15	On-time March 2015
Lincolnshire Police	YES	000823/15	On-time March 2015
Merseyside Police	YES	SM67/15	Late reply – received April 2015
Metropolitan Police Service	YES	2015020002057	On-time March 2015
Norfolk Police	YES	2015-00643	On-time March 2015
North Yorkshire Police	YES	987.2014-15	Late reply – received April 2015
Northamptonshire Police	YES	000867/15	On-time March 2015
Northumbria Police	YES	215/15	On-time March 2015
Nottinghamshire Police	YES	001350/15	On-time March 2015
South Yorkshire Police	YES	20150052	On-time March 2015
Staffordshire Police	YES	5645	Late reply – received May 2015
Suffolk Police	YES	FOI 865/14/15	On-time March 2015
Surrey Police	YES	165-15-205	On-time March 2015
Sussex Police	YES	FOI 186 /15	On-time March 2015
Thames Valley Police	YES	HQ/PA/000555/15	On-time March 2015
Warwickshire Police	YES	2015-00155	On-time March 2015

West Midlands Police	YES	RFI 6066/15	Late reply – received April 2015
West Mercia Police	YES	000662/15	On-time March 2015
West Yorkshire Police	YES	000173/15	On-time March 2015
Wiltshire Police	YES	2015/159	On-time March 2015

FOI Request 2   (Submitted March 2015)

Questions:

1)   What is the name of the department which deals with communication/media in your police force? Has it had any previous names? If so, when was the name changed?

2)   How much did your force spend on external communications in 2009, 2010,2011,2012,2013 and 2014?

   a.   A break down by type e.g. marketing, advertising, campaigns, witness appeals and social media would be helpful.

   b.   What percentage of the communications department budget it this?

3)   How much did your force spend on internal communications in 2009,2010,2011, 2012,2013 and 2014?

4)   How much did your force spend on staff for the communications/media department in 2009,2010,2011,2012,2013 and 2014?
   a.   What percentage of the overall budget for the communications/media department was this?

5)   When was your current website designed/launched

6)   How much did it cost to develop this website?

7)   Was the website designed in collaboration with any other police forces?

8)   Does your force have a social media policy? If so, could you please attach a copy.

9)   Does your force have a media policy? If so, could you please attach a copy.

Police Force	Response Received	FOI Reference	Date Received
Avon and Somerset Police	NO REPLY – Information available from alternative source	469/14	
Bedfordshire Police	YES	F-2015-00790	On-time April 2015
Cambridge Police	NO REPLY – Information available from alternative source	0354/2014	
Cheshire Police	NO REPLY – Information available from alternative source	5460	
City of London Police	NO REPLY – Information available from alternative source	COL/14/363	
Cleveland Police	NO REPLY – Information available from alternative source	2014/5535	
Cumbria Police	YES	289/15	Late reply May 2015
Derbyshire Police	YES	000923/15	On-time April 2015
Devon and Cornwall Police	NO REPLY – Information available from alternative source	2652/14	
Dorset Police	NO REPLY – Information available from alternative source	2014-351	
Durham Police	YES	263/15	On-time April 2015
Essex Police	YES	7214	On-time April 2015
Gloucestershire Police	YES	2015.267 2014.5441	On-time April 2015
Greater Manchester Police	NO REPLY – Information available from alternative source	1282/14	

Hampshire Police	YES	HC/000835/15	On-time April 2015
Hertfordshire Police	YES	FOI/313/15	On-time April 2015
Humberside Police	NO REPLY	Follow up email	
Kent Police	YES	15/03/362	On-time April 2015
Lancashire Police	YES	6604/15	Late reply June 2015
Leicestershire Police	YES	002034/15	Late reply May 2015
Lincolnshire Police	YES	33/14	On-time April 2015
Merseyside Police	NO REPLY – Information available from alternative source	DJ 129/14	
Metropolitan Police Service	YES	2015040000124	On-time April 2015
Norfolk Police	YES	FOI 958/14/15	On-time March 2015
North Yorkshire Police	YES	1094.2014-15	Late reply August 2015
Northamptonshire Police	YES	001308/15	On-time April 2015
Northumbria Police	YES	334/15	On-time April 2015
Nottinghamshire Police	YES	002243/15	Late reply June 2015
South Yorkshire Police	YES	20150320	On-time April 2015
Staffordshire Police	YES	5759	On-time April 2015
Suffolk Police	YES	F-2015-01013	On-time March 2015
Surrey Police	YES	165-15-317	Late reply May 2015
Sussex Police	YES	313/15	On-time April 2015
Thames Valley Police	YES	HQ/PA/000872/15	On-time April 2015
Warwickshire Police	NO REPLY – Information	RFI 5233	

	available from alternative source			
West Midlands Police	YES	RFI 6165	On-time April 2015
West Mercia Police	YES	001026/15	On-time April 2015
West Yorkshire Police	NO REPLY – Information available from alternative source	2014-303	
Wiltshire Police	NO REPLY		

FOI Request 3 (Submitted July 2015)

Questions:

1) Does your force have a written document that sets out long term objectives for communication, media and public relations activity? (e.g. a communications strategy)
    a. If yes, since when?
    b. Please attach a copy of the most recent version.

2) Do you have:
    a. a force structure chart showing where the communications department sites within the organisation?
    b. A department structure chart?

3) In which year was the communications department first established?

4) In which year was the communications department established in its current restructure?

5) Who does the head of the communications department report to? (e.g. Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, Superintendent).

6) Does the head of the communications department sit on the force executive/command team?
    a. If yes, is this as a voting member or in an advisory capacity?

7) How long has the current head of communications held their position as head of department?

Police Force	Response Received	FOI Reference	Date Received
Avon and Somerset Police	YES	1046/15	On-time July 2015
Bedfordshire Police	YES	F-2015-01436	On-time July 2015
Cambridge Police	YES	0570/15	On-time July 2015
Cheshire Police	YES	6663	Late reply November 2015
City of London Police	Refused under Section 14 (2)	Similar requests	
Cleveland Police	YES	2015/6574	On-time August 2015
Cumbria Police	YES	FOI 529/15	On-time August 2015
Derbyshire Police	YES	001789/15	On-time July 2015
Devon and Cornwall Police	YES	3594/15	On-time July 2015
Dorset Police	YES	2015-557	On-time August 2015
Durham Police	YES	493/15	On-time July 2015
Essex Police	NO REPLY	Request not answered	
Gloucestershire Police	YES	2015.501	On-time August 2015
Greater Manchester Police	YES	001710/15	On-time July 2015
Hampshire Police	YES	HC/001627/15	On-time July 2015
Hertfordshire Police	YES	FOI/616/15	On-time July 2015
Humberside Police	YES	F-2015-00811	On-time August 2015
Kent Police	YES	15/07/672	On-time July 2015

Lancashire Police	YES	6881/15	Late reply November 2015
Leicestershire Police	YES	003971/15	On-time July 2015
Lincolnshire Police	YES	11/15	On-time July 2015
Merseyside Police	YES	SM191/15	Late reply November 2015
Metropolitan Police Service	Yes	FOI 2015070000415	On-time July 2015
Norfolk Police	YES	F-2015-01883	On-time July 2015
North Yorkshire Police	NO REPLY	**Request not answered**	
Northamptonshire Police	YES	002512/15	On-time July 2015
Northumbria Police	YES	639/15	On-time July 2015
Nottinghamshire Police	YES	004505/15	On-time July 2015
South Yorkshire Police	YES	20150673	On-time August 2015
Staffordshire Police	YES	6005	Late reply End August 2015
Suffolk Police	YES	F-2015-01883	On-time July 2015
Surrey Police	YES	165-15-587	On-time August 2015
Sussex Police	YES	FOI 589/15	On-time August 2015
Thames Valley Police	YES	HQ/PA/001830/15	On-time July 2015
Warwickshire Police	NO REPLY	**Request not answered**	
West Midlands Police	NO REPLY	**Request not answered**	
West Mercia Police	YES	002513/15	On-time July 2015
West Yorkshire Police	YES	00728/15	On-time August 2015
Wiltshire Police	YES	FOI 2015-459	On-time August 2015

APPENDIX 3.2: FOI Data

FOI Quick Reference Colour Key			
FOI request not answered but alternative FOI data found	FOI Request Not Answered	Information Not Known, Not Given or Not Applicable	Question Answer

FOI 1: February 2015 (Part 1)					
	FOI Reference	How many people are employed in the public relations department	Job titles and Pay Grade	How many people were employed in the communications department in 2010?	Is this number expected to increase/ decrease over the next three years?
Avon and Somerset Police	**487-15**	20 full time posts including two job share posts and one part time post	1 x Head of Corporate Communications 1 x Office Manager/PA to Head of Comms 1 x Internal Communications Officer 15 x Communications Officers (this includes the press team (4 members), geographically located communications officers who work locally to support neighbourhood and community policing (3 full time + 1 part time and 1 job share) and the campaign and marketing team (2 posts; one on external campaigns and the other (job share) supports significant change programmes and projects). 1 x Communications Business Manager 1 x Deputy Head of Corporate Communications 2 x Marketing and Campaigns Officer 1 x Digital Communications Officer	32	Not Known

Bedfordshire Police	**2015-00519**	15 full time posts but only 9.5 posts are currently filled	1 x Head of Communications 1 x Channels and Content Manager 4 x Channels and Content Officer 1 x Strategic Communications Manager 1 x Media and Communications Manager 3 x Media and Communications Officers 1 x Insight and Evaluation Officer	18	Increase to fill vacant posts but not to increase overall size of department.
Cambridgeshire Police	**0197/2015**	8 full time posts		8	Not Known
Cheshire Police	**6292**	13	1 x Communications Manager 2 x Communications Manager 1 x Graphic designer 2 x Media Officer 5 x Media Officer 1 x Communications Analyst 1 x Temporary Digital Media Co-ordinator (Sergeant)	14	Not Known
City of London Police	**COL/15/193**	12	1 x Communications Director 1 x Head of Media 1 x Digital and Social Media Manager 1 x Internal Communications Manager 1 x Communications and Digital Manager 1 x Senior Communications Officer 1 x PR Manager 1 x Digital and Social Media Officer 4 x Media and Comms Officers	Not Known	Increase
Cleveland Police	**2015/6263**	8, with 1 vacancy	2 x Corporate Communications Manager (full time) 2 x Corporate Communications Manager (part time) 1 x Assistant Corporate Communications Manager (part time) 1 x Assistant Corporate Communications Manager (currently vacant) 1 x Digital	7, five full time and 2 job share plus 2 temporary staff on fixed term	Not Known

			Communications Manager (full time) 2 x Freedom of Information Officers - scale 6 –SOI	contract.	
Cumbria Police	**187/15**	6	Marketing and Communications Manager 1 x E-Communications Manager 3 x Communications Officers 1 x E-Communications Officer	9	No plans to change
Derbyshire Police	**FOI/603.15**	7.8 full time positions	1 x Head of Corporate Communications 1 x Web Manager 1 x Web Administrator 1 x Media and PR Manager 1 x Media and PR Officer 1 x Neighbourhood and Communications Officer 1 x Partnership Communications Manager ? X Community Messaging Officers 1 x Engagement Officer 1 x Awards and events Coordinator 1 x Print Manager ? x Graphic Designers 1 x Facilities Officer	17	Decrease
Devon and Cornwall Police	**1187/15**	31.29 full time positions	Communications Officer Community Messaging Officer Copy Bureau Operator/Receptionist External Communications Manager External Communications Support Officer Force Media Manager Forms Design and Publication Officer Graphic Assistant Head of Corporate Communications Internal Communications Manager Internal Communications Support Officer	53	Not Known

			Mapping/Geographic Information Systems and Digitisation Administrator Media Services Officer Museum Curator PR and Campaigns Officer Scanning Op/Bureau Supervisor Senior Scanning/Mapping Assistant Technical Web Developer Web Design and Digital Media Officer Web Designer		
Dorset Police	**2014-351**	11			Expected to stay the same
Durham Police	**SS/DC/FOI /171/15**	7 people in 5.6 full time posts	1 x Media and Communications Manager 6 x Media and Marketing Officers	6 people in 5 full time roles 1 x Manager 1 x Corporate Communications Officer 0.5 x Press and PR Office Assistant 05. Press and Public Relations Manager 2 x Press and Public Relations Officer	No, it is expected to stay the same
Essex Police	**7093**	17.5 full time posts	Head of Media Internet Manager	29.5 full time posts	Not Known

			Intranet Assistant Intranet Manager Marketing and PR Officer Museum Curator New Media Manager Press and PR Officer Senior Graphic Designer Social and Digital Engagement Officer Press Officer Manager		
Gloucestershir e Police	**2014.5441**	12 for Chief Constable and 1 for PCC			
Greater Manchester Police	GSA598	35	Senior Manager, Senior PR Officer, Senior Internal Comms Officer Press Officer PR Officer Internal Comms Officer, Web Officer, Web Editor, Web Developer, Admin Coordinator, Awards Coordinator Admin Assistant Admin Assistant	51	Not Known
Hampshire Police	HC/00547 /15	26 (head count)	Media Relations Manager Northern Area Communications Officer Western Area Communications Officer Western Area Communications Manager Media Prod Technical Supervisor		Not Known

			Northern Area Communications Manager Brand and Publications Manager Eastern Area Communications Officer graphic Designer Media Relations Officer Media Production Technician Communications Officer E-Business Officer Force Photographer Director of Communications E-business Manager Force Policy and Procedure Manager		
Hertfordshire Police	**FOI183/15**	16	1 x Head of Department 1 x Media and Communications Manager 1 x PR Manager 1 x Business Support Administrator 1 x Media Desk Leader 6 x Senior Press and PR Officers 2 x Press and PR Officers 1 x Digital Communications Officer 1 x Analyst for Web Services 1 x Media Relations Apprentice	22	Not Known
Humberside Police	**2015-264**	8	1 x Head of Corporate Communications 1 x External Comms Manager (covers engagement, marketing and media relations) 1 x Internal Comms, Digital and Graphic Design Manager (responsible for managing the external graphic design content) 4 x Media Officers 1 x Internal Marketing Officers 1 x E-Comms Officer	12	Not Known

Kent Police	15/02/239	29 full time posts, 1 casual member of staff and 1 volunteer	1 x Head of Communications and Community Engagement 1 x Deputy Head of Corporate Communications 1 x PCC Communications Manager 1 x Head of Press Office 2 x Press Officer 2 x Internal Communications Officer 2 x Marketing Officer 1 x Press Officer 12 x press Officer 2 x Web Editor 1 x Digital Communications Officer 1 x Graphic Designer 1 x Press Officer 1 x Social Media and Communications Assistant 1 x Video Programme Manager 1 x Museum Curator 1 x PCC Communications Assistant 1 x Press Officer 1 x Volunteer	10 x police staff in Marketing and Internal Communications; 25 x police staff employees in Media Services 1 x casual member of staff in Media Service Total = 36	Not Known
Lancashire Police	5672/14	14			probably decrease
Leicestershire Police	1296-15	On the 9th of February a new Corporate Communications department was formed. There are 18 FTEs	1 x Director of Strategic Communications and Engagement 4 x Communications and Campaigns Officers 3 x Community Engagement Officer 2 x Digital Media Officers 1 x Head of Digital Media Services 3 x Media Relations Officers 2 x Press Officers 1 x Stakeholder Engagement Officer	New Department so refused an answer	Not Known

Lincolnshire Police	000823/15	11 Full time posts	1 x Corporate Communications Manager 1 x Design and Publications Officer 1 x HQ Press Office Operations Officer 1 x Web/Intranet and social media Operations Officer 1 x Corporate Communications Officer 1 x Design and Publications Operator 1 x Web and Digital Communications 1 x Area Operations Communications Officer 1 x TV and Events Production Officer 1 x TV AV Operations Officer 1 x Engagement and Campaigns Officer	8	Not Known
Merseyside Police	SM67/15	12 Full time posts 6 in corporate communications 6 in media office	1 x Corporate Communications Manager 3 x Digital Media Officers 2 x Corporate Communications Officers 1 x Media Manager 5 x Media Officers	16	May decrease following further budget cuts but won't increase
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	2015020002057	98 full time posts	30 x press officer ? x social media ? X internal communications ? X stakeholder communications ? X publicity and marketing 20 x borough communications based locally whose role includes work with local media as well as internal, community and stakeholder communication on a local level	145	Not Known
Norfolk Police (joint with Suffolk)	2015-00643	Total in Joint department - 26.8 Suffolk - 14.4	1 x Joint Head of Corporate Communications (until 23/05/2015) 1 x Corporate Communications Manager 1 x Senior News Officer 1.4 x Corporate News Officer	Suffolk - 19 posts Norfolk - 22 posts	Not Known

		Norfolk - 12.4	1 x Temporary Corporate News Officer (internal) 2 x Local News Officers 1 x Corporate Communications Co-ordinator 1 x Secretary 1 x Digital Media Lead 2 x Digital Media Officer		
North Yorkshire Police	987.2014-15	9	1 x Head of Communications 6 x Corporate Communications Manager 1 x Communications Delivery officer 1 x Project and Delivery Officer	13	Not Known
Northamptons hire Police	000867/15	17	Head of News and Communication, 6 x News Producer Digital media Producer News Coordinator Web developer Intranet Developer	20.8 full time posts	Not Known
Northumbria Police	215/15	24	1 x Director of Strategic Corporate Communications 1 x Head of Strategic Communications 1 x Graphic Designer 1 x Audio Visual Designer 1 x E-comms (student placement) 1 x Media and Communications Manager 1 x Marketing and Events Lead Practitioner 1 x Creative Services Lead Practitioner 1 x E-Comms lead Practitioner 1 x E-comms assistant 1 x Marketing and Events (student placement) 1 x senior graphic designer 1 x E-comms assistant 1 x corporate communications assistant 9 x Corporate communications advisors	46	No plans to change this number

			1 x Senior Printer		
Nottinghamshire Police	001350/15	14	Temporary Head of Corporate Communications Media Services Manager Public Engagement Manager Media Relations Officer Social and Digital Engagement Officer Public Engagement Officer Events Coordinator Online Content Coordinator	19	Currently in consultation but likely to decrease
South Yorkshire Police	20150052	16 people for 14 full time posts	1 x Head of Corporate Communications 1 x Engagement Manager 1 x Senior Internal Engagement Officer 1 x Online Content Coordinator 1 x Senior Public Engagement Officer 1.8 x Social and Digital Content Officers 1 x Digital and Campaigns Officer .8 x Media Service Manager 1 x Senior Media Relations Officer 3.5 x Media Relations Officers	Not Known	Not Known
Staffordshire Police	5645	13.1 full time equivalent	Head of Corporate Communications - Grade J - vacant Media Relations Manager - Grade H - 1 Corporate Comms Manager - Grade H - 0.9 Campaigns Officer - Grade F - 2.6 Campaigns Assistant - Grade E - 1.6 Media Relations Officer - Grade F - 2.6 Media Relations Assistant - Grade E - 1.0 Web Development Officer - Grade F - 1.0 Web Admin Assistant - Grade D - 0.6 Freedom of Information Officers - Grade E - 1.8	Not Known	No plans at this stage to increase or decrease
Suffolk Police (Joint with	FOI 865/14/15	Total in Joint department - 26.8	**Suffolk** **1 x** Corporate Communications Manager	Suffolk - 19 posts	Not Known

Norfolk)		Suffolk - 14.4 Norfolk - 12.4	1 x Senior News Officer 1.6 x Corporate news Officers 1 x Temporary Corporate News Officer Internal (until 30/06/15) 3 x Local News Officer 1 x Digital Developer 1 x Digital Designer 2.81 x Police Connect Operator 1 x Printer (print services and staff are being moved from Comms to Procurement department this 2015/16) 1 x Print Room Assistant	Norfolk - 22 posts	
Surrey Police	165-15-205	28 full time posts	**Corporate Communication Team:** 1 x Head of Department 1x Office Manager **Media Relations Team:** 1 x Manager 2 x Lead Media Relations Officers 6 x Media Relations Officers **Projects and Campaigns:** 2 x Lead Account Managers 6 x Account Managers **Online and Productions:** 1 x Manager 1 x Project Support Officer 3 x Channel Developers 3 x Communications Assistants	35	No Current Plans to change the number
Sussex Police	FOI 186 /15	26	Media Relations Assistant Customer Service Coordinator Multimedia Producer	27	Decrease

			Change Communications Project Manager Department Communication Manager Divisional Communication Manager Media Relations Officer Senior Creative Designer Senior Communications Manager Senior Media Relations Officer Communications Team Manager Media Team Manager		
Thames Valley Police	HQ/PA/000555/15	21	1 x Apprentice Comms Support 1 x Museum Curator 1 x Communications Support Assistant 7 x Communications Officer 7 x Media Officer 2 x Photographer 3 x Digital Communications Officer 1 x Corporate Events Officer 2 x Web Developer 1 x Graphic Designer 1 x Digital Engagement Manager 1 x Communication Support Services 1 x Media Manager 2 x Communications Manager 1 x Head of Corporate Communications	8	Not Known
Warwickshire Police (joint with West Mercia)	2015-00155	24	1 x Head of Corporate Communications 3 x Managers 4 x Operational Communications Officers 1 x Communications Officer Specials 1 x Communications Officer StraDA 4 x Organisational Communications Officer 1 x Graphic Designer	Not Known	Not Known

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			1 x Reprographics Officer 4 x Operational Communications Assistant 3 x Organisational Communications Assistant 1 x Reprographics Assistant		
West Mercia Police (joint with Warwickshire)	RFI 6066/15	21	1 - head of comms 3 - Managers 12 - officers 8 - Assistants	Not Known	Not Known
West Midlands Police	000662/15	36.65 full time equivalent	1.0 x Head of Corporate Comms 0.90 x Head of PR 1.0 x Head of News 1.0 x Website Programmer 1.0 x Assistant Website Designer 1.0 x Photographer 1.0 x Business Support Manager 4.56 x Disclosure Officer 3.46 x Operational Comms Manager 4.88 x Organisational Territorial Comms Manager 1.0 x Senior Website Designer 1.0 x Organisational Comms Officer 9.03 x Comms Officer 4.0 x Operational Comms Officer 1.0 x Awards & Secretarial Coordinator 0.82 x Business Support Assistant	42	Not Known
West Yorkshire Police	000173/15	20 full time posts	Not Known	30 between Jan -Aug 29 from Sep - Dec	Not Known
Wiltshire Police	2015/159	19 full time posts	9 x Communications Officers 1 x Media Officer 1 x Strategic Support	15	Intention is to retain the same

| | | | 1 x Head of Communications
1 x Visual Communications Officer
1 x E Comms Developer Officer
1 x Head of Media Service
4 x Media Officers | | number of staff |

	FOI Reference	Are there any warranted police officers currently working in the communications relations department?	If yes, how many and what are their job titles	If not, when was the last time a warranted officer was employed in the communications department	Has the position of head of the communications department ever been held by a warranted police officer? If so, when was this?	What is the budget for the communications department for 2013/2014 and 2015/2016?	Is the budget expected to increase or decrease over the next three years?
Avon and Somerset Police	**487-15**	No	N/A	There was temporary cover from a warranted officer from March to November 2012. This was to support the Head of Communications whilst a team restructure took place.	No	2013/14 - £701,6000 2015/16 - £763,000	There are currently no planned changes to the budget beyond inflation. However future budget cuts may mean that the budget for communications may be decreased.
Bedfordshire Police	**2015-00519**	No	N/A	No warranted officers have worked in comms as far as their records show	No	2013/14 - £459,600 2014/15 - £491,800	Not yet set
Cambridgeshire Police	**0197/2015**	No	N/A	No warranted officers have worked in comms as far as their records show	No	2013/14 - £500,000	Not Known as controlled by PCC but will probably decrease

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Cheshire Police	**6292**	Yes	Sergeant working as a Temporary Digital Media Co-ordinator	N/A	1996	2013/14 - pay = £569,149 2013/14 - non pay = £204,499 2015/16 - pay = 647,932 2015/16 - non pay = £157,051	Not Known
City of London Police	**COL/15/193**	Yes	1 - Special Constable	Not known	Yes - Special Constable in 2013/14	Not known	Budget is expected to remain the same
Cleveland Police	**2015/6263**	No	N/A	From November 2012 – May 2013, a Police Officer was temporarily seconded to Media	The last Police Officer to hold position of head of the communications/ media relations department was a Police Inspector and he left the post in approximately 1985.	2013/14 £11,965.00 2014/15 Part of overall Tasking Coordination and Planning budget, no specific budget for Corporate Comms.	Not known
Cumbria Police	**187/15**	No	N/A	To cover maternity leave September 2011 - Jan 2012	Not Answered	2013/14 - £78,492 2014/15 - £75,148 2015/16 - not yet confirmed	Not expected to increase

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Derbyshire Police	FOI/603.15	No	N/A	2003	No	2013/14 - £570,000 2014/15 - not known	Decrease
Devon and Cornwall Police	1187/15	No	N/A	2008	Not according to their records; however, their records only go back to 2005	2013/14 - £241,000 2014/15 - £261,000 2015/16 - £233,000	Broadly the same.
Dorset Police	Request not answered						
Durham Police	SS/DC/FOI /171/15	No	N/A	N/A	No this post has never been held by a police officer	2013/14 - £236,735 2015/16 - £219,713	The budget is not expected to increase over the next three years except to take into account pay rise.
Essex Police	7093	No	N/A	Not Known	Not that they are aware of and certainly not for the last 10 years	2013/14 - £64,041 (not including staff costs)	Not known but will probably decrease
Gloucestershire Police	Request not answered						
Greater Manchester Police	GSA598	No	N/A	N/A	No	2013/14 - £1,312,653 2015/16 -	The budget is expected to decrease over the next 12

						£1,308,623	months. Beyond that there is no information at this stage.
Hampshire Police	HC/00547 /15	No	N/A	2012	Yes, in 2012	2013/14 - £1,029,800 2014/15 - £979,300 2015/16 - £1,204,300	Not yet known
Hertfordshire Police	FOI183/15	No	N/A	Not Known	No	2013/14 - £751,544 2014/15 - £814,271 (projected outcome budget is £740,355)	Projected budget for 2015/16 - £731,827 (decrease)
Humberside Police	2015-264	No	N/A	2007/2008 and Inspector was working in the department	In 2005 an inspector was the head of the Press Office function (press office predated Corporate Communications function)	2011/12 - £304,590 2012/13 - £314,120 2013/14 - £331,050 2014/15 - £372,540	Not Known
Kent Police	15/02/239	No	N/A	Not within the last 15	Not within the last	2013/14 -	Likely to decrease

				years	15 years	£1,115,700 2015/16 - £1,160,600	
Lancashire Police	**Request not answered**						
Leicestershire Police	1296-15	No	N/A	an Inspector was available as a liaison point of contact for the department but they carried out other duties than a media related role	No	Not yet finalised	Not Known
Lincolnshire Police	000823/15	No	N/A	2005	No	2013/14 - £488,000 2014/15 - £549,000 2015/16 - £500,000 (provisional allocation)	Budget is expected to increase over the next two years.
Merseyside Police	SM67/15	No	N/A	2004	Not since 2000	Corporate Communications 2015/16 £302,342 Marketing	Likely to decrease

						2015/16 £385,894	
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	20150200002057	No	N/A	Chief Superintendent who was Assistant Director of Internal Communications until 2006/07	No	2013/14 - £9,600,000 2014/15 - £9,320,000	Most likely decrease
Norfolk Police	2015-00643	No	N/A	2014 (left October 2014)	Was held by a warranted officer up until 31 October 2014	2013/14 - Joint Budget - £996,220 - Norfolk - £1,801 2015/16 - Joint Budget - £1,069,242 - Norfolk -£1,801	Not known
North Yorkshire Police	987.2014-15	No	N/A	2014	2014	2015/16 - £63,950	Decrease
Northamptonshire Police	000867/15	No	N/A	Warranted officers have worked in Corporate Communications as part of their development but there are no records of their postings	Yes	2013/14 - £685,000	Not yet set
Northumbria Police	215/15	No	N/A	No warranted officer has worked in	No warranted officer has held	2011/12 - £1,229,349	Not known

				communications	the position of head of strategic Corporate Communications	2012/13 - £1,200,408 2013/14 0 £1,173,754 2014/15 - £1,054,628	
Nottinghamshire Police	001350/15	No	N/A	2009/2010 Superintendent was head of Comms	Yes	9/10 126,005 2010/11 42,295 2011/12 12,306 2012/13 42,827 2013/14 44,366 2014/15 32,300*	Budget for 2015/16 has not yet been set but is likely to be lower
South Yorkshire Police	20150052	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2013/14 - £686,012 2014/15 - £700,861	Not Answered
Staffordshire Police	5645	No	N/A	Not given	Prior to 2006	2013/14 £739,449.00 2015/16 £526,470.00	No plans at this stage to increase or decrease
Suffolk Police	FOI 865/14/15	No	N/A	2014 (left October 2014)	Was held by a warranted officer up until 31 October 2014	2013/14 - Joint Budget - £996,22 2015/16 - Joint Budget - £1,069,242	Not known

Surrey Police	165-15-205	No	N/A	2013	Warranted officer as Temporary head between October 2012 and April 2013	2013/14 - £1,519,000 2015/16 - not yet finalised	No current plans
Sussex Police	FOI 186 /15	No	N/A	Never had a warranted officer working in Comms	No	2013/2014 budget £1,160,308, 2015/20016 budget £1,148,521	Decrease
Thames Valley Police	HQ/PA/00 0555/15	No	N/A	Not Known	No	2013/14 – £1,169,199 2015/16 - £1,144,000	Not Known
Warwickshire Police	2015-00155	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2013/14 – £275,795 2014/15 – £341,139 2015/16 – £227,197	Not Known
West Mercia Police	RFI 6066/15	No	N/A	Not Known	No	2013/14 - 613,866 2014/15 - 759,309 2015/16 - 505,697	Not Known
West Midlands Police	000662/1 5	No	N/A	July 2012	Various Police officers have held the position of head of Press and Public Relations	2013/14 £100,800.00 2014/15 £101,200.00 2015/16	Spend across the force is currently under review.

					until July 2012 when the post was civilianised.	£160,500.00	
West Yorkshire Police	000173/15	No	N/A	Not Known	Not known	The Communications/ media relations department forms part of the Force Performance Improvement Unit and has no budget of its own.	Not Known
Wiltshire Police	2015/159	No	N/A	Not Known	Last time held by a warranted officer in 2003	2013/14 - £609,403 2015/16 - £600,000	Remain the same

FOI 2: March 2015 (Part 1)

	FOI Reference	What is the name of the department that deals with the media, communications and public relations?	Are there any previous names for this department?	When was the current website launched?	How much did the website cost?	Was the website designed in collaboration with any other police forces?	Does your force have a social media policy?	Does your force have a media policy?
Avon and Somerset Police	**469/14**	Corporate Communications	Not Known				Yes	No – CAG guidelines only
Bedfordshire Police	**F-2015-00790**	Communications and Engagement	Media Office; Media & Ecomms; Internal Comms	Oct-09	Not Answered	Yes, Hertfordshire Constabulary	Yes	Yes
Cambridgeshire Police	**0354/2014**	Corporate Communications	Not Known				No	No – ACPO guidelines only
Cheshire Police	**5460**	Corporate Communications Department (last changed over 10 years ago)	Press Office	May-10	Information available from web link: https://www.blpd.gov.uk/foi/foi.aspx Estimated £68,980 including set up cost and three years support	No	Yes	Yes

					+ maintenance.			
City of London Police	**Request not answered**	*interview data name of department is Corporate Communications						
Cleveland Police	**2014/5535**	Corporate Communications					Yes	Yes
Cumbria Police	**289/15**	Marketing and Communications (since 2007)	Not given	Sep-09	£24,380	No	Not given	Not given
Derbyshire Police	**000923/15**	Corporate Communications (since 2002)	Not given	Feb-11	£53,825.00	No	Yes	Yes
Devon and Cornwall Police	**2652/14**	Corporate Communications					Yes	Yes
Dorset Police	**2014-351**	Media and Corporate Communications	Press and Media Department				No official policy	Yes
Durham Police	**263/15**	Media and Marketing (since 2010)	Press and Public relations; Corporate Communications	2013	£55,000	No	Yes	Yes
Essex Police	**7214**	Media Department	Not Known	Jan-10	£80,000	No	Not a policy as such, only a	Yes

							procedure relating to private use of Social Media Websites	
Gloucestershire Police	**2015.267 2014.5441**	Communications and Engagement (since Apr 2014)	Corporate Communications	15th April 2015	No information held - project not yet complete.	No, designed in-house.	Yes	Yes
Greater Manchester Police	**1282/14**	Corporate Communications (name changed in 2003)	Press and Public Relations Branch	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Yes	Yes
Hampshire Police	**HC/00083 5/15**	Corporate Communications	Not Known	2012	£327,134 (excluding Vat) (need to ask who the contractors were or if it was done in house?)	No	Yes	Yes
Hertfordshire Police	**FOI/313/1 5**	Corporate Communication (for over 15 years)	Not Known	2011	Not Answered	Yes, Bedfordshir e Police	No	No
Humberside Police	**Request not answered**	*interview data – name of department Corporate Communications						

Kent Police	15/03/362	Corporate Communications (name changed in 2012)	Information and Media Services	2006	Content management system costs them £7000 per year	No	Yes	Yes
Lancashire Police	6604/15	Media and Engagement Dept. (since April 2015)	Previously known as Corporate Communications (2007), Media and Marketing and prior to that Information Unit.	2011	£67,994	No	Yes - currently under review	Yes
Leicestershire Police	002034/15	Communications and Public Engagement Department (Name changed 1st April 2015)	Corporate Communications	2012	Between £35 & £40k to develop	No	Yes	Yes
Lincolnshire Police	33/14	Communications and Public Affairs (since April 2014)	Corporate Communications ; Media Services.	2009/10	Not Answered	No	Yes	Not given
Merseyside Police	DJ 129/14	Communications and Public Relations activities shared between two departments: Corporate Support	Communication and Marketing Department				Yes	Yes

		and Development and the Community Engagement Department						
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	2015040000124	Directorate of Media and Communication (since 2013)	Directorate of Public Affairs	Launched 2010	Total development cost: £968,000	No	Yes	Yes
Norfolk Police	FOI 958/14/15	The Joint Corporate Communications Department	Communications and Public Affairs; The Press Office	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Awaiting sign 0ff	No
North Yorkshire Police	1094.2014-15	Corporate Communications	Press Office				Yes	Yes
Northamptonshire Police	001308/15	News and Publishing (since 2014)	Not Known	Dec-13	Developed in house	No	Yes	Yes
Northumbria Police	334/15	The Strategic Corporate Communications Department	Media Services (changed 2008)				Yes	Yes
Nottinghamshire Police	002243/15	Corporate Communication	Not Known	Jul-13	Total cost £11,936	No	Yes	Yes
South Yorkshire Police	20150320	Corporate Communications (since 2013)	Press Office and Press and Public Relations Department and Media and	2012	Not Answered	No	No – in the process of drafting	No – in the process of drafting

							it	it
		Marketing						
Staffordshire Police	5759	Corporate Communications	Not Known	2010/11	Developed in House so no listed cost	No	Yes	Yes
Suffolk Police	F-2015-01013	The Joint Corporate Communications Department	Corporate Communications	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Awaiting sign 0ff	No
Surrey Police	165-15-317	Corporate Communications	Not Known	2012	£85,000 approximately	No	Yes	Yes
Sussex Police	313/15	Corporate Communications & Public Engagement Department (since 2011)	Corporate Communications	2011	Done in-house	No	Yes	Not Answered
Thames Valley Police	HQ/PA/000872/15	Corporate Communications	Not Known	Designed 2008, launched January 2009	£70,000 for ICT costs re hosting, servers, licences, software etc. however, other costs incurred have not been specifically recorded.	No	Yes	Yes
Warwickshire Police	**RFI 5233**	Corporate Communications (since Feb 2013 when it became one function delivering services for both Warwickshire and West Mercia Police forces)	Not Answered				Yes	Yes

West Mercia Police	RFI 6165	Corporate Communications (since Feb 2013 when it became one function delivering services for both Warwickshire and West Mercia Police forces)	Not Known	March 2015	£75, 110 (created jointly for West Mercia and Warwickshire)	Warwickshire	Yes	Yes
West Midlands Police	001026/15	Corporate Communications (since 2012)	Press and PR	2014	Not given	No	Yes	Yes
West Yorkshire Police	2014-303	Corporate Communications	Press Department				Yes	Yes
Wiltshire Police	Request not answered	*website shows name of department is Corporate Communications						

FOI 2: March 2015 (Part 2)							
	FOI Reference	Amount spent on external communications in the years 2009 - 2014	Break down by type	Percentage of the Communications department budget	Amount Spent on Internal Communications in the years 2009 - 2014	Amount Spent on Staff in Communications department	Percentage of Communications Budget
Avon and Somerset Police	Request not answered						
Bedfordshire Police	F-2015-00790	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2009/10 £622,800 2010/11 £690,000 2011/12 £704,700 2012/13 £485,800 2013/14 £ 459,600 2014/15 £ 491,800	Not Answered	Not Answered
Cambridgeshire Police	Request not answered						
Cheshire Police	5460	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2009 £335,840 2010 £425,946 2011 £521,893 2012 £501,893 2013 £549,699	67% 56% 56% 52% 57%

						2014 £522,521	
City of London Police	**Request not answered**						
Cleveland Police	**Request not answered**						
Cumbria Police	**289/15**	2009/10 £63,067 2010/11 £38,665 2011/12 £53,826 2012/13 £66,240 2013/14 £33,228 2014/15 £53,423	Not Answered	13% 8% 12% 21% 11% 16%	Not Answered	2009/10 £250,749 2010/11 £253,515 2011/12 £248054 2012/13 £229,432 2013/14 £220,925 2014/15 £225,532	50% 56% 54% 74% 70% 67%
Derbyshire Police	**000923/15**	2009 £93,084.90 2010 £47,141.14 2011 £84,108.90 2012 £52,277.95 2013 £49,449.20 2014 £50,520.67	Marketing, campaigns and advertising contact numbers. 2009 £41,750.53 2010 £13,426.65 2011 £4,161.46 2012 £4,142.44 2013 £3,026.62 2014 £0.119.26	Not Answered	Not Answered	2009 £462,223.55 2010 £487,960.88 2011 £611,294.28 2012 £633,945.56 2013 £667,903.22	22.07% 24.36% 29.48% 30.17% 27.27% 25.83%

						2014 £613,435.06	
Devon and Cornwall Police	**Request not answered**						
Dorset Police	**Request not answered**						
Durham Police	<u>263/15</u>	Total Media 2009 £186,911 2010 £258,030 2011 £216,547 2012 £248,644 2013 £236,735 2014 £230,375	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Total budget 2009 £119,414,000 2010 £122,930,000 2011 £121,350,000 2012 £116,085,000 2013 £118,695,000 2014 £115,892,000	0.16% 0.21% 0.18% 0.21% 0.20% 0.20%
Essex Police	7214	Total budget 2009/10 £106,355.00 2010/11 £103,638.00 2011/12 £75,307.60 2012/13 £60,861.00 2013/14 £64,041.00	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2009/10 £1,036,772. 2010/11 £1,090,732 2011/12 £1,108,193 2012/13	Not Answered

						£881,783.00 2013/14 £718,103.78	
Gloucestershire Police	**2015.267 2014.5441**	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2008/9 £477,909 2009/10 £530,839 2010/11 £478,645 2011/12 £389,517 2012/13 £412,971 2013/14 £502,143	82.69 % 83.49% 84.80% 88.70% 86.56% 80.61%
Greater Manchester Police	**Request not answered**						
Hampshire Police	**HC/000835/15**	2009/10 £127,156 2010/11 £31,590 2011/12 £14,099 2012/13 £29,304 2013/14 £2,259 2014/15 £10,759	Not Answered	19.46% 5.29% 2.13% 3.20% 0.26% 1.35%	Only information is on cost of Frontline - their magazine 2009/10 £8,966 2010/11 £27,827 2011/12 £12,205 2012/13 £12,490 2013/14 £13,814 2014/15 £3,267	2009/10 £446,661 2010/11 £498,301 2011/12 £577,859 2012/13 £760,213 2013/14 £781,840	

					2014/15 £717,311	
Hertfordshire Police	FOI/313/15	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2011 £735,365 2012 £734,800 2013 £758,259 2014 £726156	85% 91% 93% 97%
Humberside Police	Request not answered						
Kent Police	15/03/362	Between £5000 and £20000	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2009/10 £1,071,389 2010/11 £1,334,537 2011/12 £999,920 2012/13 £942,156 2013/14 £1,007,452 2014/15 £1,062,988	77% 85% 98% 82% 90% 87%
Lancashire Police	6604/15	2009/10 £39,784.00 2010/11 £76,901.74	Not Answered	Not Answered	2012/13 Beyond Expectations and	2009/10 £619,431 2010/11 £636,186	88% 89%

		2011/12 £16,026.37 2012/13 £30,850.75 2013/14 £18,668.57 2014/15 £18,545.33			Special Constabulary Campaign: £3533.50 2013/14 Buzz Campaign ICT Platform: £4615.42 2013/14 Buzz Campaign - Maintenance of ICT Platform: £600	2011/12 £752,242 2012/13 £701,596 2013/14 £700,366 2014/15 £461,906	95% 91% 91% 87%
Leicestershir e Police	002034/15	Not Answered	Printing and Publicity 2009/10 £98,449% 2010/11 £27,954 2011/12 £23,240 2012/13 £43,035 2013/14 £43,703 2014/15 £36,416 Website and Social Media 2009/10 £4,372 2010/11 £14,997 2011/12 £35,194 2012/13 £21,336 2013/14 £19,012 2014/15 £11,073	Not Answered	Not Answered	2009/10 £541,603 2010/11 £607,744 2011/12 £512,231 2012/13 £566,945 2013/14 £471,832 2014/15 £471,832	80% 89% 86% 82% 81% 79%

Lincolnshire Police	**33/14**	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2008/09 £214,000 2009/10 £213,000 2010/11 £248,000 2011/12 £334,000 2012/13 £426,000 2013/14 £431,000	62% 60% 80% 87% 89% 88%
Merseyside Police	**Request not answered**						
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	**2015040000124**	2009/10 Budget: £6,695,943 Spend: £6,357,650 2010/11 Budget: £7,550,642 Spend: £6,871,606 2011/12 Budget: £ 6,946.861 Spend: £ 6,538,213 2012/13 Budget: £6,981,308 Spend: £ 4,884,414 2013/14 Budget: £9,555,516 Spend: £ 7,630,754	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2009/10 Pay budget: 3,871,500 Overtime budget: £126,083 Pay spend: £3,727,948 Overtime spend:£ 87,474 2010/11 Pay budget: £ 3,810,842 Overtime budget: £ £101,095 Pay spend: £387,731 Overtime spend: £ 74,577	Not Answered

						2011/12 Pay budget: £ 3,767,020 Overtime budget: £101,000 Pay spend: £ 3,355,138 Overtime spend: £ 98,990 2012/13 Pay budget: £3,865,180 Overtime budget: £ 106,520 Pay spend: £3,355,138 Overtime spend: £70,931 2013/14 Pay budget: £5,514,469 Overtime budget: £ 119,551 Pay spend: £ 4,463,220 Overtime spend:	

						376,879	
Norfolk Police	**FOI 958/14/15**	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2011/12 £973,541 2112/13 £892,465 2013/14 £918,053 2014/15 £950,480 Norfolk & Suffolk combined	84.62% 90.41% 94.15% 99.53% Norfolk & Suffolk combined
North Yorkshire Police	**Request not answered**						
Northamptonshire Police	**001308/15**	2010/11 and 2011/12 Strategic Marketing budget £50,000 per annum 2012/13 Budget for 3 months before cessation of Dept.: £12,500 2014/15 Budget £81,195	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2009/10 £641,000 2010/11 £699,000 2011/12 £668,000 2012/13 £589,000 2013/14 £149,000 (3mths)	Total budget 2009/10 £672,000 2010/11 £793,000 2011/12 £797,000 2012/13 £674,000 2013/14 £174,000 (3mths)
Northumbria Police	**Request not answered**						
Nottinghamshire Police	**002243/15**	2009/10 £134,808 2010/11 £55,317	Not Answered	30.59% 10.35%	Not Answered	2009/10 £586,829 2010/11 £546,217	83.91% 79.57%

		2011/12 £12,306 2012/13 £42,827 2013/14 £44,366 2014/15 15,511		2.67% 9.16% 6.97% 2.91%		2011/12 £519,839 2012/13 £ 565,971 2013/14 £623,614 2014/15 £569,731	98.50% 97.57% 81.27% 93.17%
South Yorkshire Police	**Request not answered**						
Staffordshire Police	**5759**	Only information is for marketing: 2009/10 £6,915 2010/11 £14,505 2011/12 £41,301 2012/13 £43,222 2013/14 £35,152 2014/15 £35,152	Not given	1.44% 2.48% 5.83% 6.60% 5.32% 5.32%	Not Answered	2009/10 £450,580 2010/11 £524,383 2011/12 £555,804 2012/13 £577,669 2013/14 £587,022 2014/15 £462,154	93.68% 89.79% 78.49% 88.18% 85.36% 69.98%
Suffolk Police	**F-2015-01013**	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2011/12 £973,541 2112/13 £892,465 2013/14 £918,053 2014/15 £950,480 Norfolk & Suffolk combined	84.62% 90.41% 94.15% 99.53% Norfolk & Suffolk combined

| Surrey Police | 165-15-317 | 2009/10 £237,723
2010/11 £447,791
2011/12 £331,487
2012/13 £271,767
2013/14 £285,915
2014/15 £251,780 | Publicity and Marketing
2009/10 £186,901
2010/11 £192,379
2011/12 £194,202
2012/13 £89,617
2013/14 £140,111
2014/15 £66,560

Publicity and A/C Publications
2009/10 £30,245
2010/11 £192,379
2011/12 £105,168
2012/13 £150,243
2013/14 £135,020
2014/15 £176,587 | 12.26%
21.34%
19.75%
16.85%
18.82%
17.47% | Not Answered | 2009/10 £1,328,081
2010/11 £1,331,855
2011/12 £1,029,286
2012/13 £1,024,755
2013/14 £952,074
2014/15 £1,010,076 | Not Answered |

			Market Research 2009/10 £20,577 2010/11 £32,054 2011/12 £32,117 2012/13 £31,907 2013/14 £10,784 2014/15 £8,633				
Sussex Police	313/15	Non-employee costs 2010/11 £270,660.01 2011/12 £111,042.80 2012/13 £177,964.89 2013/14 £132,994.55 2014/15 £103,616.00	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Employee costs 2010/11 £922,537.30 2011/12 £923,329.38 2012/13 £1,023,287.68 2013/14 £1,014,100.34 2014/15 £1,003,746.62	77.32% 89.26% 85.19% 88.41% 90.64%
Thames Valley Police	**HQ/PA/00 0872/15**	Total budget 2009/10 £1,628,594.91 2010/11 £1,584,648.01 2011/12 £1,230,599.36 2012/13 £1,151,049.79	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	2009/10 £1,422,890.00 2010/11 £1,456,036.00 2011/12 £1,083,361.00 2012/13 £1081,557.00 2013/14	Not Answered

		2013/14 £1,301,714.46 2014/15 £1,280,606.08				£1,096,720.00 2014/15 £1,089,944.00	
Warwickshire Police	**Request not answered**						
West Mercia Police	**RFI 6165**	No split between external and internal comms, also marketing spend is included from 2013/14. Figures after the Strategic Alliance of Warwickshire and West Mercia are a split of 69% of the overall spend of the 2 forces. 2009/10 £110,460.00 2010/11 £32,004.00 2011/12 £23,490.00 2012/13 £25,576.00 2013/14 £71,562.00 2014/15 £127,784.00	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Changes to coding structure have impacted on information available 2009/10 £176,449.00 2010/11 £165,242.00 2011/12 £470,762.00 2012/13 £418,461.00 2013/14 £542,304.00 2014/15 £583,738.00	Not Answered
West Midlands	**001026/15**	2009/10	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered	Not Answered

Police		£1024,010.88 2010/11 £1332,902.67 2011/12 £1027,191.29 2012/13 £1046,354.49 2013/14 £ 1179,656 2014/15 £1123,377					
West Yorkshire Police	**Request not answered**						
Wiltshire Police	**Request not answered**						

FOI 3: July 2015 (Part 1)

	FOI Reference	In which year was the communications department first established?	In which year was the communications department established in its current structure?	Who does the head of the communications department report to? (E.g. Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable, Superintendent).	Does the head of the communications department sit on the force executive/command team?	If yes, is this as a voting member or in an advisory capacity?	How long has the current head of communications held their position as head of department?
Avon and Somerset Police	**1046/15**	2000/2001	2014	DCC	Yes	Voting	6 years
Bedfordshire Police	**F-2015-01436**	2010	August 2014	CC and PCC	Yes	Not Answered	1 year
Cambridgeshire Police	**0570/15**	Not known	Apr-14	Chief Constable	Yes	All heads of departments are members.	August 2013
Cheshire Police	**6663**	Not known	2015	DCC	Yes	Advisory	Currently operating with an interim Head of Dept. under new structure
City of London Police	**Refused on the grounds of Similar requests / Information available**						

Cleveland Police	**2015/6574**	c1987	2015	Chief Superintendent	Not as a member	Advisory	Temporary post holder since Nov 2014
Cumbria Police	**FOI 529/15**	2005	Dec 2012	Superintendent	Not Answered	Not Answered	Dec 2012
Derbyshire Police	**001789/15**	1960s	2003	Superintendent, Deputy Head of Corporate Services	No	Not Answered	Since 2003
Devon and Cornwall Police	**3594/15**	Not known	2014	Director of Legal Services	No	Not Answered	Since August 2007
Dorset Police	**2015-557**	2004	July 2015	DCC	Yes	Advisory	February 2014
Durham Police	**493/15**	1991	2010	Head of Performance and Analysis	No	Not Answered	9 months
Essex Police	**Request not answered**						
Gloucestershire Police	**2015.501**	Mid 1980s	No information held	No information held	Yes	Advisory	2 years
Greater Manchester Police	**001710/15**	Not certain. Possibly since 1970s, perhaps earlier.	2010 with slight changes 2013	DCC	Yes	Both advisory and decision making	Since 2008
Hampshire Police	**HC/001627/15**	Not known	2015	No information held	Yes	Full member	17th April 2013
Hertfordshire Police	**FOI/616/15**	mid 1990s	2013	DCC	Yes	Advisory	August 2001
Humberside Police	**F-2015-00811**	2006	Mid 2014	DCC	Yes	They are there in their capacity as head of Corporate Comms	Approx. 2 weeks

Kent Police	**15/07/672**	1990	2004 with modifications in 2007	DCC	Yes	Not Answered	2010
Lancashire Police	**6881/15**	Media & Marketing Dept. created 1998	April 2015	Chief Superintendent of HQ Operations	No	Not Answered	Since April 2014
Leicestershire Police	**003971/15**	Always existed in some form	2014	DCC	The Director of the Directorate attends weekly meetings of both the PCC Senior Management Team, and meetings between the PCC's SMT and the Chief Office Team.	He has voting rights on the former, but not the second. He sits on the Force Executive Board and has voting rights.	On 30 June 2014 the current incumbent was appointed the Interim Director as a consultant. Since May 1 he has been the substantive Director as a permanent member of Force employed staff.
Lincolnshire Police	**11/15**	More than 40 years	April 2014	Deputy Chief Executive to PCC	No	Not Answered	Since 1980
Merseyside Police	**SM191/15**	1999	2014	There is no Head of Communications for the Force. There is a Corporate Communications Manager and a Media Manager.	As stated above there is no Head of Communications – both the Corporate Communications Manager and the Media Manager	Advisory	As stated above there is no Head of Communications. The Corporate Communications Manager and the Media Manager have held their positions since the

				The Corporate Communications Manager reports to the Chief Superintendent Community Engagement and Corporate Communications and the Media Manager reports to the Head of Corporate Support	sit on their relevant departments Command Team		restructure in 2014
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	**FOI 2015070000 415**	DPA responsible until 2012/3	2013	Deputy Commissioner	Yes	Advisory	August 2012
Norfolk Police	**F-2015-01883**	No exact details held; early 90s	2012	Both DCCs	Yes	Advisory	November 2014
North Yorkshire Police	**Request not answered**						
Northamptons hire Police	**002512/15**	c 1985	July 2014	Assistant Chief Executive to PCC	No	Not Answered	Sept 2013
Northumbria Police	**639/15**	2009	2014	Deputy Chief Constable	No	Not Answered	Post currently vacant
Nottinghamshi re Police	**004505/15**	Not known	2015	DCC	Yes	Advisory	20th April 2015
South Yorkshire	**20150673**	2013	2013	DCC	No	Not Answered	March 2014

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Police							
Staffordshire Police	**6005**	Over 20 years ago	2014	DCC	No	Not Answered	June 2015
Suffolk Police	**F-2015-01883**	No exact details held; early 90s	2012	Both DCCs	Yes	Advisory	November 2014
Surrey Police	**165-15-587**	Not known	2012, minor changes 2015	DCC	Yes	Voting	30th April 2013
Sussex Police	**FOI 589/15**	Not known	2015	Chief Superintendent	Yes	Advisory	Acting since April 2014, confirmed in post Jan 2015
Thames Valley Police	**HQ/PA/001 830/15**	Since 1968	Sept 2014	DCC	Yes	Advisory	Since Sept 2011
Warwickshire Police	**Request not answered**						
West Mercia Police	**Request not answered**						
West Midlands Police	**002513/15**	2012	2012	DCC	Yes	Advisory	June 2012
West Yorkshire Police	**00728/15**	c1970s	2012	Chief Superintendent	No	Not Answered	2012
Wiltshire Police	**FOI 2015-459**	1990 or earlier	2014	Assistant Chief Officer: Business and people development	No but attends Senior Command Team meetings when required and is a member of the Force Senior Leadership Team	Advisory for both teams	2 and a half years

FOI 3: July 2015 (Part 2)					
	FOI Reference	**Does your force have a written document that sets out long term objectives for communication, media and public relations activity? (e.g. a communications strategy)**	**If yes, since when?**	**Force Organisation Chart**	**Communications Department Structure Chart**
Avon and Somerset Police	1046/15	No	Not Applicable	No	Yes
Bedfordshire Police	F-2015-01436	No, only in early draft	Not Applicable	No	Yes
Cambridgeshire Police	0570/15	Yes	Always, most recent this year	Yes	On website
Cheshire Police	6663	Yes	No information	Yes	Yes
City of London Police	**Similar requests / Information available**				
Cleveland Police	2015/6574	No	Not Applicable	Yes	No
Cumbria Police	FOI 529/15	No	Not Applicable	Yes	Yes
Derbyshire Police	001789/15	No information held	Not Applicable	Yes	Yes
Devon and Cornwall Police	3594/15	No	Not Applicable	No	Yes, although this is now out of date and a current version is being worked on.
Dorset Police	2015-557	Yes	2011	No	Yes
Durham Police	493/15	Yes	January 2015	No	No
Essex Police	**Request not answered**				

Gloucestershire Police	**2015.501**	Yes	2013	No information	No
Greater Manchester Police	**001710/15**	Yes	Approx. 10 years	No	Yes
Hampshire Police	**HC/001627/15**	Under development	Not Applicable	No	Yes
Hertfordshire Police	**FOI/616/15**	No. Follows NPCC (ACPO) guidelines	Not Applicable	Yes	Yes
Humberside Police	**F-2015-00811**	No	Not Applicable	No	Yes
Kent Police	**15/07/672**	No information	Not Applicable	Corporate Comms department lies directly within DCC's portfolio	Yes
Lancashire Police	**6881/15**	Yes	Since June 2014	No	Yes
Leicestershire Police	**003971/15**	No	Not Applicable	Yes	Yes
Lincolnshire Police	**11/15**	Yes	Not Answered	Yes	Yes
Merseyside Police	**SM191/15**	Not long term. Plan only covers 6 months	Completed every 6 months	Yes	No
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	**FOI 2015070000415**	FOI Comms stat	Not Answered	FOI DMC- structure chart	FOI executive structure
Norfolk Police	**F-2015-01883**	No	N/A	Yes	No
North Yorkshire Police	**Request not answered**				
Northamptonshire Police	**002512/15**	No	N/A	Yes	Yes
Northumbria Police	**639/15**	Yes. Police and Crime Plan 2013/2018	2013	Not Answered	Not Answered

Nottinghamshire Police	**004505/15**	Yes	Not Answered	No	Yes
South Yorkshire Police	**20150673**	Not Answered	Not Answered	No	Yes
Staffordshire Police	**6005**	A draft strategy is awaiting sign-off	N/A	Yes	Yes
Suffolk Police	**F-2015-01883**	No	N/A	Yes	No
Surrey Police	**165-15-587**	Yes	2013	Yes	Yes
Sussex Police	**FOI 589/15**	Draft plan	For this financial year	No	Yes
Thames Valley Police	**HQ/PA/001830/15**	Yes	Not Answered	Yes	Yes
Warwickshire Police	**Request not answered**				
West Mercia Police	**Request not answered**				
West Midlands Police	**002513/15**	No	Not Applicable	Yes	Yes
West Yorkshire Police	**00728/15**	Corporate Communications Events calendar	Not Answered	No specific structure chart	Yes
Wiltshire Police	**FOI 2015-459**	No	Not Applicable	Yes	Yes

The following FOI data comes from the disclosure logs available on police websites which houses previous FOI requests fulfilled by those police forces.

	FOI Reference	Does your force have a dedicated or Shared Communications Department?	What is the Name of this Department?	Previous Department Names	Date department established	Who has operational control of department?	Any plan to change who has control?
FOI Data from Disclosure Log (Part 1)							
Avon and Somerset Police	**469/14**	Dedicated	Corporate Communications	Not Known	11+ years ago	Chief Constable	No
Bedfordshire Police	**2014-00828**	Dedicated but also seem to do stuff for other forces - need to ask for clarification on this	Media Office Social media is shared with E-Communications dep.	Not Known	early 90s	Chief Constable	Yes: over the next year control will be shared by CC and PCC
Cambridgeshire Police	**0354/2014**	Yes	Corporate Communications	Not Known	Not Known	Chief Constable	No
Cheshire Police	**5460**	Dedicated	Corporate Communications	Press and Public Relations and before that Press Office	Pre-dates 1985	Chief Constable	No
City of London Police	No Similar Information Found						
Cleveland Police	**2014/5535**	Yes	Corporate Communications	Press Office and before that Media and Marketing	Not Known but 20+ years	Chief Constable	Not Known
Cumbria Police	No similar information found						
Derbyshire Police	**001154/14**	Dedicated	Corporate	No other names	2003	Chief Constable	No

			Communications				
Devon and Cornwall Police	**2652/14**	Dedicated	Corporate Communications Department which has two sub-departments: Press and Events Unit and the Media Services Unit	Not Known	Not Known	Chief Constable	No
Dorset Police	**2014-351**	Dedicated	Media and Corporate Communications Department	Press and Media Department	1996 (name change in 2003)	Deputy Chief Constable	No
Durham Police	**306/14.**	Dedicated	Media and Marketing Team	Corporate Communications and before that Press Office	Media and Marketing established in 2010	Chief Constable	No
Essex Police	**6120**	Dedicated	Media department	Not Known	Not Known	Chief Constable	No
Gloucestershire Police	**2014.5441**	Dedicated	Communications and Engagement	Corporate Communications		Chief Constable. However, Head of Public Affairs (head of dep) also answers to PCC	
Greater Manchester Police	**1282/14**	Dedicated	Corporate Communications	Name changed in 2003 from Press and Public	1959	Chief Constable	No

					Relations Branch			
Hampshire Police	No similar information found						
Hertfordshire Police	FOI/369/14	Dedicated	Corporate Communications	Media Office	1998	Chief Constable	Not Stated
Humberside Police	No similar information found						
Kent Police	No similar information found						
Lancashire Police	5672/14	Dedicated	Corporate Communications	Media and Marketing, and Press Office	Lancashire have had a comms department for over 20 years. Name was changed to Corporate Comms in 2008, before that it was known as Media and Marketing	Chief Constable	No
Leicestershire Police	003750/14	Dedicated	Corporate Communications	Press Office	20+ years	Chief Constable	Currently under revisement - may change to PCC
Lincolnshire Police	001598/14	Shared between police and PCC	Corporate Communications and Public Affairs	Corporate Communications, Media Services, Public Relations and Press Office	New shared department established 1/04/2014, original Press Office dates back to the 70s.	Operational control is the responsibility of the Chief Constable. However, line management is	No

						the responsibility of the PCC's office	
Merseyside Police	DJ 129/14	Yes	Two departments: Corporate Support and Development and the Community Engagement Department	Communication and Marketing Department	changes came into effect April 2014 but there has been a press office since 1976	Chief Constable	No
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	201450000601	Dedicated	Directorate of Media and Communications (DMC)	Directorate of Public Affairs	2012 but there has been a press office function since the 1960s	Commissioner of the MPS	No
Norfolk Police	FOI 68/14/15 & 69/14/15	Shared with Suffolk	Corporate Communications	Communications and Public Affairs, and the Press Office	Joint Communications team created in 2011. Not known when first press office was established in Norfolk as this has traditionally been staffed by police officers	Chief Constables of Suffolk and Norfolk have joint control	No
North Yorkshire Police	84.2014-15	Shared with PCC	Corporate Communications	Press Office	Corporate Communications created in 2010 but existed as	PCC	No

					press office before this.		
Northamptonshire Police	002150/14	Shared between Police and PCC	News and Public Involvement Team	Corporate Communications Team and Research Team	01/07/2014	Peter Heaton – Assistant Commissioner Public Involvement Works in the PCC's office	No
Northumbria Police	326/14	Shared between Police and PCC	The Strategic Corporate Communications Department	Media Services (changed 2008)	Not Known: 10+ years	Chief Constable	No
Nottinghamshire Police	003016/14	Dedicated	Corporate Communications	Media Department' and 'Public Relations' Department	approximately 1994	Chief Constable	No
South Yorkshire Police	20140402	Dedicated	Corporate Communications Team (name change in 2014)	Press Office and Press and Public Relations Department and Media and Marketing	Press officer for at least 25 years	Chief Constable has operational control but the department is seconded from the PCC's office	16 full time + 1 temporary
Staffordshire Police	FOI 4851	Dedicated	Corporate Communications	Press Office and Media and Marketing	15 years in current form, but there has been a press office function since the 70s Corporate Communications	Chief Constable	No

					was reorganised into it's own department in 2010/11		
Suffolk Police	**F-2014-01255 & F-2014-01256**	Shared with Norfolk Police	Corporate Communications	Corporate Communications	Collaborated unit established 2011 but there has been a Press Office in Suffolk from early 90s	Chief Constables of Suffolk and Norfolk	No
Surrey Police	**165-14-379**	Yes	Corporate Communications (consists of Media relations team, projects and campaigns team and online and production team)	Not Known	Not Known	Deputy Chief Constable	No
Sussex Police	No similar information found						
Thames Valley Police	**HQ/PA/001360/14**	Dedicated	Corporate Communications	Corporate Information	Not Known	Chief Constable	No
Warwickshire Police	**RFI 5233**	Shared with Wiltshire	Corporate Communications	Several but not stated in reply	Not Known	Chief Constables of both forces	No
West Mercia Police	**5006**	Yes	Corporate Communications	Press Office and Public Relations	2012 as Corporate Communications	Chief Constable	Not known
West Midlands Police	**2014127/2552**	Yes	Corporate Communications	Press and PR	name changed in 2012	Chief Constable	Not known
West Yorkshire	**2014-303**	Dedicated	Corporate	Press	Corporate	Staff are	Fixed for the

Police		although PCC communication officers sit within this department	Communications (made up of four hubs: PR/Marketing, E Comms and Graphic Design, PCC Communications and Media Services)	Department	Communications established in 2006 but Press Office has been around for over 25 years	employed by PCC but operational control remains with the Chief Constable	next two years
Wiltshire Police	No similar information found						

FOI Data from Disclosure Log (Part 2)							
	FOI Reference No.	No. of people working in department now	No, of People working in Department in 2004	No, of People working in Department in 1994	Department Budgets 2000 - 2014	List of Social Media Sites used by Police force	Number of Sites
Avon and Somerset Police	469/14	19	11	No information available	2014/15 £735,000 2013/14 £701,600 2012/13 £694,650 2011/12 £800,300 2010/11 £838,300 2009/10 £760,100 2008/09 £553,400 2007/08 £602,300 2006/07 £504,900 2005/06 £421,200 2004/05 £287,000 2003/04 £312,300 2002/03 £274,700 2001/02 £273,300 2000/01 £224,400	Twitter Facebook Flickr YouTube Google+ LinkedIn	59 (1 main, 35 local neighbourhood accounts, 17 individual officers and 6 special interest accounts 8 (1 main, 3 local neighbourhood and 4 special interest accounts 1 1 1 1
Bedfordshire Police	2014-00828	5 full time staff in media office and 2 in E-Communications	5	2	2013/14 £355,000	Twitter, Facebook, Audioboo,	8 1 1
Cambridgeshire Police	0354/2014	8 full time and 2 people job	8 full time	No information	approximately £500,000 for all years	Twitter, Facebook,	12, 13,

497

		sharing		available			YouTube, Word Press.	1, 1,
Cheshire Police	**5460**	15 permanent staff and 2 temporary	11	2	2014/15 £920,459 2013/14 £1,058,521 2012/13 £889,311 2011/12 £926,405		Twitter Facebook Hootsuite	26 5 1
City of London Police	No information available							
Cleveland Police	**2014/5535**	7	6	No information available	2013/14 £207,510 2012/13 £201,370 2011/12 £220,508 2010/11 £199,584 2009/10 £172,759 2008/09 £167,500 2007/08 £167,500 2006/07 £206,323 2005/06 £206,323 2004/05 £203,274		Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube,	31 14 1 1
Cumbria Police	No information available							
Derbyshire Police	**001154/14**	7.8 full time equivalents	4	1	2013 £570,000 2012 £578,200 2011 £578,600 2010 £493,800 2009 £494,100 2008 £177,735 2007 £138,808 2006 £128,300 2005 £0 2004 £11,400		Twitter Facebook	1 1

					2003	£0		
Devon and Cornwall Police	**2652/14**	30	No information available	No information available	2014/15 2013/14 2012/13 2011/12 2010/11 2009/10 2008/09 2007/08 2006/07 2005/06	£247,000 £11,000 £60,000 £46,000 £266,000 £265,000 £259,000 £133,000 £122,000 £98,000	Twitter Facebook YouTube Flickr Pinterest Audioboo	84 36 1 1 1 1
Dorset Police	**2014-351**	11	13	No information available	2013/14 2012/13 2011/12 2010/11 2009/10 2008/09 2007/08 2006/07 2005/06 2004/05 2003/04 2002/03 2001/02 2000/01	£422,700 £480,700 £345,400 £402,900 £445,500 £420,000 £444,600 £422,500 £397,200 £364,100 £249,400 £372,400 £476,400 £90,100	Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr	No information on the number of sites.
Durham Police	**306/14.**	7	4	4	2014/15 2013/14 £236,735 2012/13	£229,775	Twitter, Facebook, Vine, Vimeo,	75 15 1 1

					£248,644 2011/12 £216,547 2010/11 £235,165	YouTube, Instagram	1 1
Essex Police	**6120**	16 full time	No information available	No information available	No information available	Twitter Facebook Audioboo Flickr Storify Bambuster YouTube	60+ 1 1 1 1 1 1
Gloucestershire Police	**2014.5441**	12 for CC 1 for PCC	20	2	No information available	Facebook Twitter, Pinterest	19 Twitter 2 Facebook 1 Pinterest
Greater Manchester Police	**1282/14**	34	32	No information available	2013/14 £1,312,653 2012/13 £1,335,504 2011/12 £1,520,551 2010/11 £1,766,355 2009/10 £1,840,479 2008/09 £1,673,744 2007/08 £1,660,923 2006/07 £1,600,699 2005/06 £1,446,553	Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Pinterest, Google+	40 64
Hampshire Police	No information available						
Hertfordshire Police	**FOI/369/14**	14 full time	14	No information available	2013/14 £816,911 2012/13 £876,675 2011/12	Twitter Facebook	52 1

				£874,347			
Humberside Police	No information available						
Kent Police	No information available						
Lancashire Police	**5672/14**	14 full time posts	15	No information available	2013/14 £772,121 2012/13 £776,813 2011/12 £782,493 2010/11 £798,915 2009/10 £739,688 2008/09 £820,138	Twitter Facebook YouTube	33 39 1
Leicestershire Police	**003750/14**	16	9	No information available	No information available	Facebook Twitter YouTube Pinterest EBay	19 96 1 1 1
Lincolnshire Police	**001598/14**	10 full time posts	No information available	No information available	2014/15 £549,000	Facebook Twitter YouTube Flickr	24 41
Merseyside Police	**DJ 129/14**	12 (6 in each department)	18	No information available	2013/14 £768,623 2012/13 £883,820 2011/12 £1,223,058 2010/11 £1,384,824 2009/10 £1,467,119 2008/09 £1,334,509 2007/08 £1,246,705 2006/07 £1,179,424	Twitter YouTube	1 1
Metropolitan Police Service	**201450000601**	98	145	No information	2013/14 £9,600,000 2012/13 £7,000,000	Twitter Facebook	120 1

(MPS)				available		YouTube Instagram Flipboard Flickr	1 1 1 1
Norfolk Police	**FOI 68/14/15 & 69/14/15**	12 people in 10 jobs. Total in joint department = 25	Not Known	No information available	2014/15 £1,066,786 2013/14 £996,220 2012/13 £1,025,420 2011/12 £494,929 2010/11 £1,075,401 2009/10 £1,136,562 2008/09 £1,116,644	Twitter Facebook Google+ YouTube Audioboo	7 2 1 1 1
North Yorkshire Police	**84.2014-15**	13	4	3	No information available	Twitter Facebook	78 3
Northamptonshire Police	**002150/14**	18	Information not held but has provided staff levels for last 5 years: hovers around 17-20	No information available	2013/14 £685,000 2012/13 £589,000 2011/12 £668,000 2010/11 £699,000 2009/10 £596,000	Facebook Twitter	1 83
Northumbria Police	**326/14**	24 full time posts (currently under review)	No information available	No information available	2014/15 £1,054,628 2013/14 £1,173,754 2012/13 £1,200,408 2011/12 £1,229,349 2010/11 £1,580,294 2009/10 £1,428,536 2008/09 £901,547	Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest, Audioboo	11 9 1 1 1 1

Nottinghamshire Police	**003016/14**	16 full time posts	8 full time posts	No information available	2010/2011 £686,490 2011/12 £529,150 2012/13 £675,101 2013/14 £671,360	Facebook, Twitter, YouTube	1 40+ 1
South Yorkshire Police	**20140402**	No information available	No information available	No information available	No information available	Twitter, Facebook, Google+ YouTube Audioboo FourSquare	214 14 1 1 2 1
Staffordshire Police	**FOI 4851**	13 full time posts	No information available	No information available	2014/15 £527,000 2013/14 £559,000 2012/13 £649,000 2011/12 £487,000	Facebook Twitter YouTube Flickr	7 45 1 1
Suffolk Police	**F-2014-01255 & F-2014-01256**	13 people sharing 11 posts	No information available	No information available	2014/15 £1,066,786 2013/14 £996,220 2012/13 £1,025,420 2011/12 £494,929 2010/11 £631,226 2009/10 £572,209 2008/09 £501,190	Twitter, Facebook, Google+ YouTube	7 + 3 personal senior officer accounts 1 1 1
Surrey Police	**165-14-379**	28	Not Known	No	2014/15 £1,459,332	Twitter	15

					Year	Amount	Platform	Count
			although there were 32 people in 2010	information available	2013/14 2012/13 2011/12 2010/11	£1,519,433 £1,612,506 £1,678,591 £2,098,266	Facebook YouTube Storify Audioboo Flickr Pinterest	16 1 1 1 1 1
Sussex Police	No information available							
Thames Valley Police	HQ/PA/001360/14	30 of which 7 are dedicated Press Officers	No information available	No information available	2013/14 2012/13 2011/12 2010/11 2009/10 2008/09 2007/08 2006/07 2005/06 2004/05 2003/04 2002/03 2001/02 2000/01	£1,169,199 £1,131,753 £1,133,199 £1,643,240 £1,677,060 £1,626,853 £1,511,298 £1,467,981 £1,382,951 £1,414,839 £1,366,438 £1,182,239 £1,051,480 £1,039,798	Twitter Facebook YouTube	32 1 1
Warwickshire Police	RFI 5233	18 Full time posts and 2 temporary posts	8	No information available	2014/15 2013/14 2012/13 2011/12 2010/11 2009/10 2008/09 2007/08 2006/07	£1,082,448 £895,190 £602,126 £663,132 £519,920 £629,319 £485,634 £456,179 £380,267	Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Cover it Live, Audioboo, Four Square, Word Press/ Blogger Blogs	69, 3, 1, 1, 1 1 1 1

					2005/06 £374,510			
					2004/05 £352,549			
West Mercia Police	**5006**	37	No information available	No information available	2014 £1,400,000	Twitter Facebook YouTube Flickr Instagram Stormcloud	220 8
West Midlands Police	**2014127/2552**	37 full time positions	No information available	No information available	No information available	Twitter, Facebook Stormcloud Instagram Flickr YouTube	220+ Twitter 8 x Facebook
West Yorkshire Police	**2014-303**	14 - including 2 managers and 2 part time posts	10 civilian staff	1	2014/15 £603,628 2013/14 £609,404 2012/13 £599,595 2011/12 £606,498 2010/11 £712,320 2009/10 £696,558 2008/09 £569,831	Facebook Twitter YouTube	1 45 1
Wiltshire Police	No similar information found						

APPENDIX 3.3: Communications Department Staff Levels

Size of Department (number of full time equivalent posts)					
Police Force	**Number of Staff 2004**	**Number of Staff 2010**	**Number of Staff 2014 / 2015**	**Percentage Decrease Between 2010 - 2015**	**Is this Number Expected to Increase or Decrease?**
Avon and Somerset Police	11	32	20	12.74%	Not Known
Bedfordshire Police	5	18	15	31.03%	Only 9.5 posts currently filled. Plan is to increase to fill vacant posts but not to increase overall size of department.
Cambridgeshire Police	8	8	8	0%	Not Known
Cheshire Police	11	14	13	7.14%	Not Known
City of London Police	Not Known	Not Known	12		Increase
Cleveland Police	6	10	8	20.00%	Not Known
Cumbria Police	Not Known	9	6	33.33%	No plans to change
Derbyshire Police	4	17	7.8	54.12%	Decrease
Devon and Cornwall Police	Not Known	53	31.29	40.96%	Not Known
Dorset Police	13	Not Known	11		Expected to stay the same
Durham Police	4	5	5.6	Increased	No, it is expected to stay the same
Essex Police	Not Known	29.5	17.5	40.68%	Not Known
Gloucestershire Police	20 full time posts	Not Known	13		Not Known
Greater Manchester Police	32	51	35	31.37%	Not Known
Hampshire Police	Not Known	Not Known	26		Not Known
Hertfordshire	14	22	16	27.27%	Not Known

Police					
Humberside Police	Not Known	12	8	33.33%	Not Known
Kent Police	Not Known	36	29	19.44%	Not Known
Lancashire Police	15	Not Known	14		probably decrease
Leicestershire Police	9	Not Known	18		Not Known
Lincolnshire Police	Not Known	8	11	Increased	Not Known
Merseyside Police	18	16	12	25.00%	May decrease following further budget cuts but won't increase
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	145	145	98	32.41%	Not Known
Norfolk Police	Not Known	22	12.4	43.64%	Not Known
North Yorkshire Police	4	13	9	30.77%	Not Known
Northamptonshire Police	17	20.8	17	18.27%	Not Known
Northumbria Police	Not Known	46	24	47.83%	No plans to change this number
Nottinghamshire Police	8	19	14	26.32%	Currently in consultation but likely to decrease
South Yorkshire Police	Not Known	Not Known	14		Not Known
Staffordshire Police	Not Known	Not Known	13.1		No plans at this stage to increase or decrease
Suffolk Police	Not Known	19	14.4	24.21%	Not Known
Surrey Police	Not Known	35	28	20.00%	No Current Plans to change the number
Sussex Police	Not Known	27	26	3.70%	Decrease
Thames Valley Police	Not Known	8	21		Not Known
Warwickshire Police	8	Not Known	24		Not Known
West Mercia	Not	Not	21		Not Known

Police	Known	Known			
					508
West Midlands Police	Not Known	42	36.65	12.74%	Not Known
West Yorkshire Police	10	29	20	31.03%	Not Known
Wiltshire Police	Not Known	15	19	Increased	Intention is to retain the same number of staff

APPENDIX 3.4:   Social Media Policies

Table 1 Police Force Social Media Policy Comparison Summary Table			
	Yes	**No**	**Did Not Answer / No Policy**
Stated Aim of Document	22	5	12
Twitter	8	19	12
Facebook	7	20	12
Other Social Media Sites	5	22	12
Blogs	4	23	12
Friends / Following	11	16	12
Acceptable Posts / What Not To Post	21	6	12
Legal Information on social media use	17	10	12
What to do if something goes wrong	7	20	12
Dangers / Risks of Social Media use	15	12	12
Writing for your audience	13	14	12
Public Trust and Confidence	20	7	12
Force Reputation	18	9	12
Covert Policing	7	20	12
Confidentiality	16	11	12
Rules for Personal Use	17	10	12
Rules for Professional Use	18	9	12
Privacy Settings	10	17	12

TABLE 2	Guidance On (Part 1)										
Police Force	Length of Document	Twitter	Facebook	Other Social Media Sites	Blogs	Friends/ Following	Acceptable Post Material / what not to post	Legal info on social media use for police	What to do if something goes wrong	Dangers/ Risks of Social Media Use	Writing for your Audience
Avon and Somerset Police	2	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Bedfordshire Police	4	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Cambridgeshire Police	No Policy										
Cheshire Police	5	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
City of London Police	Did Not Reply										
Cleveland Police	10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Cumbria Police	Did Not Answer Question										
Derbyshire Police	12	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Devon and Cornwall Police	8	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Dorset Police	4	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Durham Police	30	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Essex Police	No Policy										
Gloucestershire Police	They do have a policy but did not provide one										
Greater Manchester Police	7	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Hampshire Police	They do have a policy but did not provide one										

Hertfordshire Police	3	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Humberside Police	Did not reply										
Kent Police	They do have a policy but did not provide one										
Lancashire Police	3	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Leicestershire Police	3	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Lincolnshire Police	6	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Merseyside Police	They do have a policy but did not provide one										
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	18	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Norfolk Police (joint with Suffolk)	26	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
North Yorkshire Police	8	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Northamptonshire Police	They do have a policy but did not provide one										
Northumbria Police	1	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Nottinghamshire Police	12	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
South Yorkshire Police	No – in process of drafting it										
Staffordshire Police	6	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Suffolk Police (Joint with Norfolk)	26	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Surrey Police	5	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Sussex Police	4	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Thames Valley Police	15	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Warwickshire Police (joint with West	12	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Mercia)										
West Mercia Police (joint with Warwickshire)	12	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
West Midlands Police	12	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
West Yorkshire Police	They do have a policy but did not provide one										
Wiltshire Police	27 (Split over 2 documents	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 3	Guidance On (Part 2)							
Police Force	Aims of Document	Public Trust and Confidence	Force Reputation	Covert Policing	Information Confidentiality	Rules for Personal Use	Rules for Professional Use	Privacy Settings
Avon and Somerset Police	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Bedfordshire Police	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Cambridgeshire Police	No Policy							
Cheshire Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
City of London Police	Did Not Reply							
Cleveland Police	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Cumbria Police	Did Not Answer Question							
Derbyshire Police	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Devon and Cornwall Police	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dorset Police	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Durham Police	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Essex Police	No Policy							
Gloucestershire Police	They Have a Policy But Did Not Send One							
Greater Manchester Police	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Hampshire Police	They Have a Policy But Did Not Send One							
Hertfordshire Police	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Humberside Police	Did Not Reply							
Kent Police	They Have a Policy But Did Not Send One							
Lancashire Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Leicestershire Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Lincolnshire Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Merseyside Police	They Have a Policy But Did Not Send One							
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Norfolk Police (joint with Suffolk)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Yorkshire Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Northamptonshire Police	They Have a Policy But Did Not Send One							
Northumbria Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Nottinghamshire Police	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
South Yorkshire Police	No – in process of drafting it							

Staffordshire Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Suffolk Police (Joint with Norfolk)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Surrey Police	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sussex Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Thames Valley Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Warwickshire Police (joint with West Mercia)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
West Mercia Police (joint with Warwickshire)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
West Midlands Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
West Yorkshire Police	They Have a Policy But Did Not Send One							
Wiltshire Police	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No

APPENDIX 3.5: Social Media Sites

	Twitter	Facebook	Google+	YouTube	Personal Blog	Official Blog	Pinterest	Flickr	Instagram	Soundcloud	Storyfy	AudioBoom
Avon and Somerset Police	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Bedfordshire Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	Yes	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Cambridgeshire Police	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Cheshire Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
City of London Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Cleveland Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Cumbria Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
Derbyshire Police	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Devon and Cornwall Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES
Dorset Police	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Durham Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Essex Police	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
Gloucestershire Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Greater Manchester Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES
Hampshire Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Hertfordshire Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Humberside	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

Police												
Kent Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Lancashire Police	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Leicestershire Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Lincolnshire Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Merseyside Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	Yes	NO	NO	NO	NO
Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	Yes	NO	NO	NO	NO
Norfolk Police	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
North Yorkshire Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	Yes	NO
Northamptonshire Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Northumbria Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Nottinghamshire Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
South Yorkshire Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Staffordshire Police	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	Yes	NO	NO	NO	NO
Suffolk Police	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Surrey Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES
Sussex Police	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Thames Valley Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Warwickshire Police	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES

West Mercia Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
West Midlands Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO
West Yorkshire Police	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Wiltshire Police	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

APPENDIX 3.7:   Supplementary Interview Data

Table 3.7a		Interviewee Background Information and Training		
Interview Ref.	**Gender**	**Training / Experience**	**Number of Years in Current Post**	**Staff or Warranted Officer**
PI.1	Male	N/A	5	Officer
PI.2	Male	10+ years working in the communications department - but no formal training.	10+	Officer
PI.3	Male	University education in comms + experience working in corporate PR before moving to the public service sector (police) for a challenge.	11 months	Staff
PI.4	Male	Trained as a journalist and worked in a newspaper for over 20 years	2 years	Staff
PI.5	Male	N/A	18 months	Staff
PI.6	Female	10 + Corporate PR background	7 years	Staff
PI.7	Female	Professional training and CIPR accredited

Has worked in another comms unit in another police force | Less than a year | Staff |
PI.8	Female	Trained as a journalist, then moved into corporate PR. Joined the Police as a press officer and then worked her way up to head of comms.	2.5 years	Staff
PI.9	Female	Trained in Corporate PR in private sector	3 years	Staff
PI.10	Female	Background is in communications in various public services.	7 years	Staff
PI.11	Male	Degree in communications and 10+ years working in two other police comms teams	2 years	Staff
PI.12	Male	Joined the police 15 years ago as a divisional press officer. No official comms qualifications. Later studied for his CIPR and is	1 year	Staff

		now an accredited comms professional.		
PI.13	Male	Work experience only	30+ years	Staff
PI.14	Male	Variety of private and public industries in communications roles.	11+ years	Staff
PI.15	Female	Trained as a journalist before moving into police comms 15 years ago.	Less than 1 year	Staff
PI.16	Female	Trained as a journalist	5 years	Staff
PI.17	Female	Worked in corporate PR/comms for 10+ years	4+ years	Staff
PI.18	Male	trained as a journalist for the broadsheet press before moving into police communications.	10+ years	Staff
PI.19A	Female	University degree in comms.	5 years	Staff
PI.19B	Male	University degree in computing, joined department straight out of uni	8 years	Staff
PI.20A	Female	Worked in private sector corporate comms. Joined department 11 years ago	4 years	Staff
PI.20B	Male	Trained as a journalist and then worked on a newspaper for 5+ years	Less than a year	Staff
PI.21	Female	10+ years working in corporate comms but no formal qualifications	1 year	Officer
PI.22	Male	Advertising specialist for a newspaper. Joined police comms about 5 years ago.	5 years	Staff
PI.23	Female	Background working in comms for various public sector agencies, including another police force before joining her current force as head of department. CIPR registered	14 years	Staff
PI.24	Male	N/A	Less than a year	Officer
PI.25A	Male	background training is in Marketing and PR	7 years	Staff
PI.25B	Female	Background in police comms	28 years	Staff

		but no formal qualifications		
PI.26	Female	14 years working in private and public sector comms	8+ years	Staff
PI.27	Male	Journalism background, worked in TV News	1 year	Staff
PI.28	Female	Trained as a journalist and worked on several newspapers before moving into public sector communications work	17 years	Staff

3.7b	Communications Strategy	
Interview Ref.	Current Comms Strategy	What Should The Comms Strategy Be/Ideal
PI.1	N/A	N/A
PI.2	Push. "Police communications is still basically about broadcasting. We might talk about increasing engagement but at the moment we just don't have the capacity to actually manage it".	Pull
PI.3	Push	Pull
PI.4	Pull	Transformative
PI.5	Push. Comms not being used intelligently due to "poor leadership"; has a long way to go before it catches up with other departments	N/A
PI.6	Pull	Pull
PI.7	Mixture of Push and Pull	Mixture of Push and Pull
PI.8	Push Should be pull and transformative - but so much of police comms has to be about 'push' that dialogue can get a little lost at times.	Pull and Transformative
PI.9	Pull	Transformative
PI.10	Push	Pull
PI.11	Push	Transformative "I want the majority of the activity to be focused on – to be around at the least, engagement, ideally actual behaviour change, so I hope it makes them, – that will happily stop them being a victim, happily made them take preventative actions. Those are the kind of outcomes I want to see. A lot of police officers still see effective coms as delivering that awareness, just the understanding. "
PI.12	Push and Pull	Pull and Transformative
PI.13	Push	Push
PI.14	Pull	Pull
PI.15	Push	Pull
PI.16	Push	Transformative
PI.17	Pull	Transformative

PI.18	Push	Pull
PI.19A	Push	Transformative
PI.19B	Push and Transformative	Transformative through push " I would say, we do practising behaviours that why we do these campaigns to say lock your house, lock it or lose it, all of these kind of messages, if you're going out after dark, so I would say that bit is trying to change behaviours. In terms of the Push and Pull, it is more along the lines of yeah, here is the messages, here's what's going on, and we do, we leave it open for direction but we're a small team, so the more interaction you get, the more you've got to manage that so we do get interaction… "
PI.20A	Push	Pull
PI.20B	Push	Pull and Transformative
PI.21	Push unless it is there is an appeal, then it is pull	Transformative
PI.22	Push and Transformative	Push and Transformative
PI.23	Pull	Transformative
PI.24	Transformative	Transformative
PI.25A	Pull	Pull
PI.25B	Pull	Transformative
PI.26	Pull but certain amount push is inevitable with police comms	Pull
PI.27	Push	Pull
PI.28	Push and Transformative	"yes push and transformative and again it's a personal view, but I think we aspire to be pull, but I don't think we're actually very good at it… I think we're very used to telling people, I think it comes from a command ethos that's in the police, you know, we'll tell you what we're doing, we don't actually engage you in the debate about what we're doing. "

APPENDIX 3.8: Interview Data

3.2.1 Interviewee Information

Staff

"when I arrived here, I had the different components of my team were all in different, those houses are basically like houses, and they're not like a building you would work in. So someone's got this living room and different parts of the team were in different bits of the house. So they're not actually a team, kind of like integrated together and that's an interesting set up as well and I think that's about the coms not necessarily being in line. So you're internal bit, your media bit and your other bit need to be integrated together so that, in simple terms, if you're announcing a big thing about your organisation, you want your people to know first. You don't want them to pick up the kind of, Daily Echo or whatever papers we have here and say, oh I just read this morning that my jobs kind of, on the line. And I think people don't always get that right in big organisations that are complicated geographically spread. You have to have that control essentially so that you can avoid that". (PI.3)

"we had structures where we had area based communications teams in our five basic command units as they were called. So you would have had a coms manager, plus one or two coms officers and we had a central bit here at HQ where the internal coms sat and where this team, the graphic design, etc. sat. So in order to reduce costs and to take that budget hit they centralised the service, so we took all of the area people, brought them in house. Got rid of that whole middle level of managers, if you like, the middle layers of managers. Put a couple more seniors in and then kind of levelled everyone out... So we lost I think five, full time equivalents of. Most were redeployed so redundancies were kept to a minimum". (PI.6)

"I think at the moment that we are in that place where everybody does have a dedicated job, someone saying well I do this and that's the web so that's not in my role… I think their roles could almost become a similar one, could be one team that do all that stuff together really." (PI.18)

"Breaking down boundaries - so much of social media use now is cross department work. Service provision through S.M. isn't strictly comms work, it's operational as well. Same with intelligence gathering - we get a lot of information through social media which is then passed onto the investigating teams - so yeah, roles are less defined". (PI.23)

"we're looking at pushing out our Twitter account to our control room for a lot of the reactive stuff. So things like road closures, destruction, burglaries, where you need an instant response. The guys in the control room are dealing with that and pushing stuff out straight away, rather than it then coming to us as a press release and sent off back for approval from the officer… So it's moving more into a customer service function, as opposed to a comms function in its traditional sense… There isn't a choice. You can't have it both ways… For me personally, it's about the integrated comms. It's about them seeing the bigger picture and thinking outside of those silos, breaking those silos down". (PI.8)

Training and Experience

"I think it's great when we do shake up the business by bringing people in from outside. But, I think there's benefit in someone who knows the job of policing. I say to people, I've said to my bosses here when I came down, yes, I'll be your head of corp coms but I've also got 12 years of policing experience so I know the business of policing. I know how things stick together politically, I get the culture of the place, I get what you're operationally trying to do. So, you know, I have seen kind of peers come in from outside the industry and find quite a learning curve but at the same time, as long as they shake things up and bring in new ideas as well and it's healthy, have a mixture… I don't think bringing in people with strong journalism background is right for this kind of role. Sometimes people will be brought in because they've got a strong journalistic background, actually they haven't worked in the wider communications and engagement so, that for me is a concern. Less of a concern if they are people from a different sector moving with comms experience." (PI.11)

The Association of Police Communicators (APComm)

<u>Usefulness and Attendance:</u>

"yeah and it's good, I still get interest and a kick out of hearing how other people have coped with crisis management, that's one of the most difficult things, you know, and it's very easy to sit on the side lines say why on earth did you do that, why didn't you do that and then when you actually hear what goes on behind the scenes yeah very interesting." (PI.28)

"It's virtually across all forces now I think we had one or two outstanding non payers but the vast majority are now members, membership is a pittance … and from that you get subsidised training that we do, media law training we did this year and we put a conference on for next to nothing so there's much better links now, more contacts and emails for people so you get information out to them, there's still loads of work to do but it is improving and we did the first conference for a few years last year and were thinking we could get away with not having to do one until 2015 but everybody wanted it, because people in a world where training budgets are virtually non-existent and given the opportunity to network is increasingly reduced because you can't get out the office, to be able to do it at least one point during the year, cling to it." (PI.23)

"Yes, I mean like all conferences it depends on the subject matter, whether it's interesting, you know, I mean I haven't been to one for several years, because we tend to share it round, so the same people don't go every year and I mean when I've gone I found it useful, I found the chat… probably more useful than the actual presentations themselves." (PI.28)

3.2.2 Overview of Department

Staff:

"we had structures where we had area based communications teams in our five basic command units as they were called. So you would have had a comms manager, plus one or two comms officers and we had a central bit here at HQ where the internal comms sat and where this team, the graphic design, etc. sat. So in order to reduce costs and to take that budget hit they centralised the service, so we took all of the

area people, brought them in house. Got rid of that whole middle level of managers…
Put a couple more seniors in and then kind of levelled everyone out… So we lost I
think five, full time equivalents. Most were redeployed so redundancies were kept to
a minimum". (PI.6)

"we've got an assistant pool of people, they provide what we call our news hub and
they are central, everything coming in. So requests from officers for press releases,
media inquiries, responding to social media, so they do our social media monitoring,
responding to inquiries, everything that we do on a day-to-day base comes in there.
Then, we've got an operational side of the business and an organisational side… The
operational officers take on those proactive campaigns and the major incidents, so
your murders, serious sexual offences, those inquiries and your organisational take
on your change projects. So all of those officers have priority projects, and they are
split by the organisational operational need as opposed to you're a press officer,
you're a web content, you're a marketer." (PI.17)

Professionalisation:

"But from what I've seen I would argue it's better to have professional people
running departments to kind of make decisions based on their knowledge about how
you can use communications". (PI.3)

"I don't know why we have policeman in charge of comms or working in these
departments; they are not qualified, they don't know what they are talking about,
and that's why it's a mess… All backroom functions should be run by professionals
who know what they are doing - we don't have untrained civilians policing the
streets, so why should we have untrained police officers running the business side of
things?" (PI.5)

"when I started, the press office, for example, was run by a, he was by then, an ex-
Chief Inspector but he started in the role as a Chief Inspector and then retired into
the role. It had a Sargent in it and a PC and it also employed a couple of ex-officers as
well and I think the thing was that Corporate Communications was, kind of, seen as
mainly press and they thought as long as you had people who are used to dealing
with the media and having an understanding of law, then that's ok, and yeah, over

the years, that has really changed, ok, I mean, I followed a Chief Super Intendant who used to do this role, the problem, one of the problems that I see with having Police Officers in the role is that they tend to come in particularly at my level, they tend to come in, change things and move on for promotion, so there is very much a culture that if you want to get promoted you have to appeared to have changed things, so they would tinker with the way that communications was done, which meant there was no stability, there was no understanding throughout the organisation of the way that communications should be dealt with, so yes, I think there has been a real move towards professionalisation of it." (PI.10)

"It's changed very much from then to now, so this is the other change in comms, where you will employ a professional head of service, not expect a police officer to be able to run it. The department here previously had a professional head of communications, but you should be really careful about what skills and what type of department you wanted to be. Because my understanding is, when they first had a professional head of comms seven or eight years ago, the advert created a post where somebody was a bit of a media personality, as opposed to running a professional corporate comms department. So despite them wanting a head of corporate comms to be a professional role, they didn't get one seven years ago, it was somebody who was more interested in media spin, if you like, than running a corporate comms department. So that's how we ended up going back to a police officer running it." (PI.21)

 "I'm the first professional head as far as we know, in forty years. There was a chief inspector or a superintendent to do this job. And you might think, why would you make a chief inspector head of coms? What do they know about coms? Well yeah. But what do they know about learning development? What do they know about HR? Well now all these jobs are covered by staff coz warranted officers are given jobs where you have to be a trained, warranted officer to do it. And you might say well, that sounds pretty obvious doesn't it? But there was never any need for the police to think differently till the money started drying out." (PI.4)

"I think probably what happened, in a sense, that public relations has been a sort of evolving skill hasn't it and as it's evolved it's become more sophisticated and as it's

become more sophisticated it's been obvious you need specialised people to do it. Whereas I think when it was in its infancy there was this assumption that anybody could take it on. That would be the same probably for public relations in any organisation because I used to work in television publicity for example and all we really did there was literally write press releases. We didn't ring up the media get the media to come on location there wouldn't be any other sides of it like there would these days, like doing internal communications or public relations, it was all very much operations." (PI.15)

"All right first question no, we don't have any police officers or ex-police officers in the unit anymore… prior to that it was also a senior officer at the end of their tenure just riding out the clock ever so slightly. So I think there is a level of recognition around the fact that this is a very specialist service that's being provided and you either invest in it properly, you either get the right staff to do it and you employ the right tactics, the right methods, the right science to fully understand what you need to do and the difference you're making and doing it or you don't do it at all. I think, you know, that's the reality of it from a policing point of view and I say that because you go back to probably 10, 15 years ago… you probably could argue that a comms function within a police force was maybe a bit of a luxury, because there were processes in place there where crime reporters and local area reporters went straight to the local sergeant or inspector or they sat down once a week with a detective chief inspector and, you know, in some senses they were just looking through the logbook and they were picking out jobs directly from the logbook and they were talking to the sergeant about it, getting some detail and that prompted their stories. So a lot of the stuff, although it was quite slow in getting out, they were getting it directly from the horse's mouth and I think comms teams were probably seen as a bit of a delay tactic rather than something of actual use in serving the press." (PI.22).

Operational Position:

"when I first came here, comms was optional… it was a different world then to be fair in lots of respects. Back 10 years ago we had a different Chief Constable, focused on media so we started to get a bit more about people being bothered where communication sits and that's just grown and grown and sometimes it frustrates because comms is the last on the agenda!" (PI.23)

"Back in the 90s, the communications office was mostly left out of operational policing. Police officers had preferred journalists and it was very common that the first thing the press office would hear of a situation would be from the newspaper the next day… Some officers still don't like the communications department, but they know they have to talk to us now". (PI.26)

"I think it is absolutely seen as part of what we do, I think people absolutely understand the importance of it and part of that is because people understand the importance of it because it helps, so they understand you can put out witness appeals and do things like that, so that actually it can help them with solving some issues but also they've seen a lot of cases where it goes wrong and reputation gets, you know, damaged, irreparably. So, yeah, so my team for example, the press office are always involved in things very early, we have regular meetings with PSD around misconduct type cases, so we are aware of those. I sit at every single COG meeting, our Chief Officer Group meeting; I report into the Deputy Chief Constable, so as before, it was a Chief Super Intendant and it wasn't seen as… it was part of something else, it's now seen … as an incredibly important integral part of things and I think that's, sort of, changed right across the country. Although interestingly, the cuts have meant in some areas it has gone back to where it was before and I think that they will, quite honestly, live to regret that because I just don't think that it's a sustainable way of dealing with things really". (PI.10)

"We have very strong links into the operational side of the business. We are effectively an operational department. There's quite a rub, I think, between us and the home office - around the home office including coms in what you would call back office support. Well we're not. We are an operational team, we 're deployable. Whenever there's something happening, we're part of that resourcing, we're part of the operation. So there are bits of it that aren't operational, but primarily we are there to support the investigation team, to support front line policing and to help get the intelligence and the witness appeals and information back to help progress investigations". (PI.6)

'Embedded':

> "It's certainly embedded… I see the chief constable every Monday morning for half an hour and take all the senior officers through what public relations and comms activity we've got planned for the next eight days every Monday morning. So we are a key part of what we do and during our response, absolutely, we are part of the big responsible, even more and more now, the part of how do we deliver the service, sit closer to the training. When does training become internal communication and when does internal comms become a training issue. And we're working through those at the moment because that's absolutely critical to deliver the service properly." (PI.12)

> "The communications team is involved at all levels of operation, culture change, improvements and changes. We're not just broadcasting message for police officers we're part of crafting them, setting the communications strategy and fully involved in all aspects of policing". (PI.14)

> "I think we're embedded, because we're cross-operations and organisational, and both of those are just as important, because actually organisational risk, a lot of it is managed through your communications… I think that we are very fortunate... because we are respected and just as an officer would call a tactical fire arms officer to give them professional advice, we are seen as those professional advisors. There's still more to embed that, but absolutely, we're at the heart of reputation management and operational success. So I think from that position, I'd say that we are an enabling service to the rest of the organisation." (PI.17)

'Complementary':

> "the good thing is that the police officers are more aware of communications these days and it's not just done by the police. They're more likely to call the communications team and particularly for media now that may of course have something to do with all the bad publicity about officers being arrested for tipping off the media with information etc". (PI.15)

'Optional':

> "I think quite often - I think too often to be honest – it's a bit of an add on. So something that is kind of pulled out of the box when they need it. A lot of activity

that goes on in the force we quite often get brought into too late in the day really. So typically we'd be asked can you do this rather than should we do this, if that makes sense. So we've been brought in at the back end of the process whereas if we were at the start we would be saying actually there is a real comms opportunity here because we think we should be doing this, this… You can see it in every meeting we go to on the agenda is like media is on the end of the spiel - don't take it personally. Even the whole sort of re-structure that we had, previously my role would be reporting direct into some of my Chief Officer teams probably the Chief Constable whereas now my role sits below a Super Intendant who reports to a Chief Super up to Chief Officer team. So that symbolically pushes comms a bit down the agenda I think". (PI.18)

In Transition:

"It was seen as something optional and additional. Certainly that corner has been turned. The review they did a year ago before I came in, realigned corporate communications back to the deputy chief constable's portfolio which I think is the most common model for most other forces. It recommended getting rid of temporary police officers overseeing it and bringing it back in as subject specialist in department – which is where I came in." (PI.11)

"I think we're not ignored, we're very much a part of the planning that goes in to any operation for instance. Media is an essential part on the operation order that they produce. So we're in there from the start. I think maybe that's on sort of the big operations, I think maybe on the smaller things that happen I think just very occasionally an officer will be going through their checklist and think well I haven't told the media, so I think you're there's a little bit of the last thought sometimes..." (PI.28)

Responsibility for Operational Position:

"you do need the senior officer buy-in and one of the difficulties is facing forces and it faces us as well is having enough influence at the top table in terms of comms. If you go back to the model of the ideal models of PR, should the PR be influencing the behaviour of the executive? Yeah because we're being influenced by the public if we're listening properly." (PI.12)

"I know from speaking to other colleagues in other forces if you've got a senior command team that think it's just a bit of fluffy PR we can get the officers to do that tweeting stuff and facebooking so we don't need them, completely misses the implications and they sometimes make decisions that they don't understand." (PI.23)

3.2.3 Public Relations in the Police

Role and Purpose of Police Communications:

List:

"1) to manage press enquiries and keep them happy to police officers are left alone.

2) creating the corporate identity of the force

3) promoting visibility of police officers and key messages

4) dealing with enquiries from the public

5) providing tactical advice to police officers

6) Answering FOI requests

7) primary role, however, is to "warn and inform" and "sell the police force". (PI.2)

Ideological:

"So if you want to say, what is our purpose? Well our purpose is actually to help either solve crime or to make people feel better about the police and so on." (PI.4)

"I'd say we're the guardian of the brunt. Whatever that might entail, whether it's the proactive things that we are putting out or whether it's reactive stuff coming in. I think it's our role to ensure that the organization is represented in a way that's consistent with the values that we have as a police force; being professional and friendly and interested is one of them and I think openness, transparency, that's what we need to be driving and pushing through and also set in that agenda from an internal perspective." (PI.9)

"But the underlining theme is the mission, the policing mission… We should be achieving operational policing outcomes.   And I include in that solving crime, preventing crime by doing awareness campaigns and providing that reassurance and

confidence because they're key policing outcomes. That's what we should be doing."
(PI.12)

 "I see the purpose of the coms department to work with frontline police officers and investigators to prevent and reduce and solve crime. That's our fundamental as far as I'm concerned. That is our fundamental purpose here. As part of that though there'll be things like reputation managements, crisis management, etc. But that all kind of forms part of that… We are not nor should we be a public relations department or a marketing department. We want to promote the successes of the police, absolutely, but our fundamental reason for being is that we're an operational department putting operational police officers on the ground and on the frontline." (PI.6)

Most Important Aspects of Modern Police Communications:

"I think internal comms is as important if not more important than external comms… Because if we're dealing with a big case then I'm interested in telling the force what's going on first before they read it in the papers. Because sure as hell the papers will distort it anyway so that's quite important to me to get a message to the force, this is what's going on, these are the facts before it goes out to the media in general." (PI.13)

"I think it's twofold and I think the roles have probably reversed ever so slightly or certainly the level of importance bestowed on certain aspects has changed ever so slightly. Clearly the two main arms of what we do are to keep the force, to keep our police officers and staff updated… Equally you've then got the public side of the business whereby we need to provide the public with a window into the world of policing, whether that be to help us solve crimes, to help us catch bad people, to help them know where to avoid if there's a major road closure in place, all that realtime information, but also that ethics, the integrity side of the business and the open and transparency stuff where they need to be able to see what their police forces do, who we are, what we do, what we're doing for them and they need to be able to call us to account if they think that something's wrong. So, you know, whereas before up until maybe a few years ago it was very much media and marketing, it was very much external and internal, I think chief officers are realising now that, you know, the bulk of the people that do your bidding need to be absolutely pivotal right slap-bang at

the centre of everything that we do and we need to do everything that we can do to keep them fully abreast of what's going on around the force, because they're the ones that we need to buy in, they're the key stakeholders for the police, they're the ones that will deliver this level of service in the future, it's vital to have that internal comms element right." (PI.22)

"For me, the brand is probably the most important thing and whether that's what our external communication looks like in terms of print format or whether that's what people look like when they're out on the street talking to people, it's all about the brand. And I think that's one of the things we lacked. We lacked that consistency. We lacked that co-operation, almost… We have what I like to think as our Tesco brand, so we don't deviate from that. We've got quite strict brand guidelines, which has taken people a long time to get used to. But it means that there's a consistency in all of our communications, whether that's online, offline, things that we don't use, photographs." (PI.8)

"primarily we are there to support the investigation team, to support front line policing and to help get the intelligence and the witness appeals and information back to help progress investigations." (PI.6)

Definitions of Public Relations:

"I don't really know, I really don't. It's quit confusing. I suppose It's about managing the public and our relationship with them so that everyone is happy". (PI.7)

"You know if you said to people what is public relations well there isn't actually anything they could point at and say that was public relations... It can be what you choose to make it and it's an inexact science isn't it?" (PI.13)

"Public relations, done properly, is about listening and engagement… Well, we're listening and engaging all the time… You're creating a conversation. You're targeting an audience. You're understanding what you're trying to deliver. Have they understood it? have they changed their behaviour? Have they changed their opinion? Those are the things you're doing. That's public relations work, isn't it, at the end of the day… Marketing, I think, is more output based… Marketing is a tool within the

public relations mix to reach an audience, but we don't like to see marketing purely as the end result. It's the engagement that that marketing can generate that turns it, in my view, into the public relations or engagements and content all engagement is marketing in some ways, isn't it?" (PI.12)

"So we've never really had this public relations element to what goes on, because I think, you know, aside from anything we still have officers now who will walk around and go how much have you spun today and I pride myself on never having been in that position. So I think the public relations element of it can have quite negative connotations to a unit itself if you're deemed to be more interested in making sure we spin the right level of information at the right time or we keep back as much as we can do until we potentially put it out there." (PI.22)

Is PR Still Relevant to Police Communications?

For:

 "Police communications is still fundamentally public relations - we just don't call it that anymore". (PI.7)

"I found the PR bit of my background was far more useful in terms of the positive coverage, rather than fire-fighting, than knowing the law. There are still people in there who'd argue with me." (PI.8)

"Public Relations does come in for bad PR, ironically. I suppose the district officers, I would say, would get more involved in the traditional PR element if you like, where we might have local community tensions and things like that. But they play a really key role in supporting officers around some of that and the sensitivities that they maybe hire best to manage it. But from a central perspective, of course we all do PR but it's an interesting one because yeah, I don't differentiate it in my mind if I'm honest. I see it as all the same thing because whatever the reason you are doing it as for the ultimate end goal of actually whether it's protecting the force's reputation or promoting the force's reputation. So – and the same things run through both." (PI.9)

"Public relations, done properly, is about listening and engagement. Well, we're listening and engaging all the time." (PI.12)

Against:

"Definitely coms. Definitely… I've worked in PR so I know. I come from a PR consultancy background, so and that's not what we do." (PI.6)

"It's very top down isn't it like communication theory, it's very like top down approach, sort of 1970s top down with top cat people I think, they associate that model of PR with kind of that period of the way that we used to sort of do communications and talking at people rather than it being bottom up sort of grassroots approaches and public led… So my kind of job title's evolved with the kind of public image of PR, I've kind of cut that off, because I don't think it's helpful." (PI.16)

"I don't use the phrase to be perfectly honest. We talk about ourselves as a communications team. We service the media, we service stake holders, we service the public directly and we service our internal customers.[long pause] I wouldn't really know how to define public relations which doesn't mean that I'm not interested in our relationship with the public, obviously that's what we're all about. It just feels a little but redundant as a concept." (PI.27)

Change of Department Name

<u>Department Priorities:</u>

"Corporate communications better reflects what we are trying to achieve and the professional nature of our work". (PI.2)

"the reason why we're called the media department, not the kind of communications department, because actually there's a difference there and it means you always prioritise media stuff." (PI.3)

"Where as we used to call this press and PR, it's now called corporate coms, it's about us publishing information through our own sources and not and fundamentally giving it to media nets last or second… But what I find is interesting, almost every police force has a team called corporate communications now, and they're not called head of press or PR or whatever, it's all called corporate communications, so they're obviously, there's a bit of a trend, sometimes there's a bit of a trend towards it.

Certainly, you know it's interesting, I think that's probably a bit too sophisticated. I don't think there's any cunning plan behind why it's been changed. But I think all the coms reflects the role that we do here, because it's about internal coms as much as marketing, as much as about local coms… So it's quite wide spread really… I think, who uses really public relations anymore? In fact who used press office anymore apart from me? You know, it's not so, it's all a bit misleading. So corporate coms actually does say it's about communications and we're called corporate coz we're a corporate function and not a local function. It actually makes sense". (PI.4)

"The name's evolved with what we do; because it did used to be just the press office so it just used to deal with media and stuff and then we became media and marketing to cover the fact that we did events, corporate design work and all that kind of thing…" (PI.18)

"No, I don't think it's a conscious thing, I don't think it's been done deliberately, certainly hasn't from our point of view. We've never been anything other than marketing and media… and now we've gone into corporate communications and that's mainly because we've got that many platforms we're now looking to service, marketing and media certainly doesn't cover it anymore, we do so much more than marketing and we do so much more than media. So for us it's about changing into corporate communications". (PI.22)

<u>Distancing from Associations with Public Relations:</u>

 "People seem to see PR as being something we do to avoid being accountable and honest with them." (PI.1)

"We are not nor should we be a public relations department or a marketing department. We want to promote the successes of the police, absolutely, but our fundamental reason for being is that we're an operational department putting operational police officers on the ground and on the frontline." (PI.6)

"I don't like to use the term PR… people rightly or wrongly associate PR with spin and politicians. PR itself is all about open communication but the negative connotations is why we use Communications for a name and not Public Relations". (PI.26)

<u>Part of Professionalization:</u>

"I think this is the profession is changing as well in terms of public relations… And it's where we've been able to professionalise it because we don't want to be… just marketing because marketing is less palatable, I think, than public relations. Yes, we are corporate communications". (PI.12)

"So I do wonder if the name corporate communications came out to almost subliminal effort to control communications… what actually quite interests me is that… has all the ring of we'll tell you like corporate what the company line is… I think it has that connotation of corporate… there was a time when people were very reassured by 'this is the company line' whereas now…" (PI.15)

<u>Easier to Understand:</u>

"corporate communications is an easier name to explain… public relations gives people ideas that are then hard to sort out." (PI.7)

"but certainly, the new world that we're in, we are corporate communications. There is a very clear rational behind that, that actually we are not just press. There is a misconception even within the force that previously we were part of the press. Still, people would say 'can I tell you that?' 'Yes, you can tell us that'. So it was breaking down the barriers internally, but also recognising that communications is so much broader than just press and public relations now, as you've obviously identified." (PI.17)

<u>Aspirational:</u>

"mine's been called corporate communications since I've been here because I called it corporate comms right from the start, it used to be called media services. I think it's partly, if I talk to people, even people within the force, they'll still refer to me as the media person, not really understanding that it is much, much wider than that , I think it's actually part of the, kind of, police culture, it's actually that that was what the focus was before. … I think it's just that for me, public relations is a part of it and always has been, it's been a part of the wider mix and in some forces… some people would say it's marketing, you see, so it really does depend on almost on what your

background is, as to what you, sort of, think it should be and also what makes up your department". (PI.10)

"Yeah I think it more reflects though... we've gone broader so it didn't reflect a lot of it. I think it's not deliberate attempt because we used to be called press and public relations, well one the press doesn't exist as press anymore and the other thing is that because of the expanding nature of what we were doing across the organisation it was more to reflect the whole of the people that are here so that I haven't got two teams that think they're press and PR and that's all that matters and all these other bits that we do are less important so it's more focused for us on an internal need rather than external kind of facing..." (PI.23)

3.2.4 Communications Strategy

 "another area which I think our department particularly focusses on is prevention awareness raising and behaviour change communications in terms of helping people to not become victims of crime, so what can we do to help ensure that people have the information, the knowledge that's going to prevent them from becoming a victim, whether that's a victim of a burglary or a victim of domestic abuse it's quite varied, but that kind of range I would say." (PI.16)

 "I would say we do practising behaviours. That's why we do these campaigns to say lock your house, lock it or lose it, all of these kind of messages, if you're going out after dark, so I would say that bit is trying to change behaviours. In terms of the Push and Pull, it is more along the lines of yeah, here is the message, here's what's going on, and we do, we leave it open for direction but we're a small team, so the more interaction you get, the more you've got to manage that so we do get interaction..." (PI.19b)

"I want the majority of the activity to be focused on – to be around at the least, engagement, ideally actual behaviour change, so I hope it makes them, – that will happily stop them being a victim, happily made them take preventative actions. Those are the kind of outcomes I want to see. A lot of police officers still see effective coms as delivering that awareness, just the understanding." (PI.11)

"If you go up to the four models from public relations etc., we were very much press agency. We shout out what we did. That's how police comms was, and particularly when you had police officers running it. But now we're not symmetrical, but we're not far off at times. We will respond to demand… If we're picking up rumours of child abductions, we will put posts out there to provide the facts and that people make the decision. We try and be the most credible, trusted voice. Whenever I train anybody on social media, that's the absolute value that they have, to protect to being the credible trusted voice. It's okay to say you don't know what's going on until you do know what's going on. I'd much rather that than us guess and put something out wrong." (PI.12).

"It's about having those conversations. So yes, we push stuff out, but we should also be jumping into conversations that are happening in our local communities. So a big part of the local social media accounts is to keep an eye out about what's your local council saying and what are local people saying. Are they talking about something that actually, we should be talking about too. Is there a way for us to jump into the conversation and be part of that community? I don't like the word engagement because you don't engage with somebody in a pub, do you? You don't engage with your friend in the pub. You talk to them. You talk with them and this is what this is about. It's talking with and that's what all our social media accounts should be about. It should be about talking." (PI.25a)

"it's a personal view, but I think we aspire to be pull [long pause] but I don't think we're actually very good at it… I think we're very used to telling people, I think it comes from a command ethos that's in the police, you know, we'll tell you what we're doing, we don't actually engage you in the debate about what we're doing." (PI.28)

4.2.5 Social and Digital Media

Social Media:

"I think more and more we're going to be communicating with the public online. I think you're probably going to see fewer offices out there. You'll be expecting more conversations online, more online reporting and responding and so on. So I think

that's the way it's going to go. And the media will be provided with more and more video so that it's not just flat press releases and so on and the public will see officers talking. So it will be raising their profile and getting the odd messages of, I don't know, building our integrity of how the public see us, like building their confidence in us as they probably see us less." (PI.25B)

"Certainly if it's information and advice you want, how do I do X? You'll go to the website first, almost certainly. If it's a slightly more complex problem, and I will do this as well, you might just google, how do I fix a leaky battery in my Toyota and actually you'll probably find the answer in a forum somewhere. And only if you get really stuck will you then go to the phone, because you know that you'll probably end up in a phone queuing system, the person you speak to on the phone might not be able to offer you a very good service anyway, they might not even understand your problem and it will take you five to ten minutes. Whereas bang bang bang and you're in control if you're googling and you can filter our bad advice. That's what public customer behaviour is like and we're not in that space, we're not playing at this space. So what we, our next phase if you like of social media activity is about using it as a public contact channel, so that people can get in touch with us for advice and information and then also it becomes part of a customer service channel as well." (PI.27)

"I mean I think, clearly the future has to be that social media or whatever it becomes, or whatever is the proper description. Online, lets say online. Online reporting, which some police forces do, clearly that's going to be there coz if I wanted to report a crime, that's how I'd want to do it. You know, unless there was a 999 emergency, I'd say I'd wanna do it my email or by text or whatever it turns out to be. It doesn't sit with our department to do that, but I think it's inevitable that that's the way… actually I think people are emotionally attached to police stations. But reality is, virtually nobody goes into them. It's the thought of having it, rather than the reality of using it." (PI.4)

Interviewees Stance on Social Media:

"Personally, I'm not on Facebook. I'm not on Twitter. And I have absolutely no idea why anybody would want to be, honestly." (PI.8)

Pro Social Media:

   "fantastic way to engage with the public". (PI.17)

"Policing is not done in isolation - it needs all of the public because it is part of the public. Social media helps with this as it encourages public participation and opens up a new audience who don't look at the news - young people". (PI.26)

"This is the biggest tool and the biggest opportunity the police have had to directly engage with the public that they serve. It's brilliant. Yes it has risks, but it's actually you know, brilliant and valuable beyond anything else really in terms of getting that information back." (PI.6)

"Social media could be one of the most valuable and important developments in policing for many years. No comment isn't an option with social media, so we have to talk to the public, we have to keep them updated". (PI.1)

"There are some areas where they want to follow us on twitter and follow social media, but they don't want to see a police car… coz it might imply there's a crime in their road… So some areas they want to see police patrolling, coz that's reassuring. In other areas, people are put off… So it's not even as simple as get more cops out, coz in some areas it doesn't work." (PI.4)

Against:

   "what I've found over the last few years is that most of the information police put out on social media is just "noise" that doesn't get noticed, or if it does, it gets ignored or forgotten about very quickly (traffic, good news stories, appeals for information, campaigns) the only things that seem to capture attention and are likely to be retweeted are missing persons campaigns and if there is a murder". (PI.7)

Engagement and Dialogue:

Yes:

"We do get a lot of interaction, so obviously what we do is engage with them, and I think with the messages we put out, we do attract certain audiences… And we try to respond, we don't just put the stuff out there and think oh it's out there, we try to

respond to everything that we get in media or a live call, if there's a question asked we try to have that engagement side of social media rather than just pushing lots of information out". (PI.19A)

"It's important to make people who reach out to us feel valued and listened to - and that means responding quickly". (PI.26)

Getting There:

"It's very hit and miss and it's about, we're still learning what works and what doesn't. In terms of what we do when there's an incident, it works really well and we get lots of hits on it if we've got something where we, like the murder, and we're doing our own video of the officer speaking, that gets a lot of hits. It's also then imbedded in news by the press, which increased the hits. So something like that I think it's really really worth while." (PI.6)

To Some Extent:

"To some extent we do. Mostly social media is still used as a means for getting the police message out." (PI.1)

"I think police forces have got quite a long way to go in terms of the way that we use social media, even us. I know where I want us to be, but it's not where we are, you know, if social media's used correctly it will be more about a two-way conversation, it will be about like communication as a two-way, but like we're still not there where we want to be in terms of having that kind of proper engagement with the public, so I think there's potential," (PI.16)

No:

"It's not up to that level of engagement… not yet anyway". (PI.7)

"we've realised we've got to get better at is responding on Twitter, so not just putting information out there but actually responding to people who are coming through and one of the things we want to do is to get our control room to use it a little bit more to help with, kind of, that reduction in demand". (PI.10)

"we don't at the moment have the resources to respond to those tweets." (PI.15)

Preferred Platform:

Twitter:

"more people tend to engage on Twitter than on Facebook" (PI.2).

"We find Twitter the most effective. Pretty much. It's just, we've got our biggest following is on twitter. It's the easiest way to engage, particularly when we talk about doing the multimedia kind of package of the photos, etc. Instant responses from people". (PI.6)

Facebook:

"We're finding Facebook's taking off really really well for us. I'm pretty sure that Facebook is a slightly different audience, an older audience to Twitter and so on. We're using Instagram, we're using everything we can. We've done Thunderclap, we've done Storify. We're trying lots of different ways of engaging and I think what it means is, you're reaching lots of different groups of people." (PI.4)

Facebook and Twitter:

"I think they are both really important but they really differ for what you want to get out of them, so I don't think I would put one above the other, to be honest, I think it's that both are of equal importance but it depends who you are trying to reach and what your campaign's about or what your appeal or whatever is about as to which one is the best one." (PI.10)

"But the difference between the Facebook and Twitter audience is really clear in one of those papers about only 15% of our Facebook audience use Twitter and similar proportion back. Everybody thinks you just use social media, you use both. They're different audiences… And what we found through trial and error… is that Twitter works better on a geographic approach. Facebook works on a big mass and because the way people live". (PI.12)

"I think different things for different jobs and I would say historically, it's been Twitter. I personally and from a department perspective, I would say that Facebook has a greater potential… I would say, we get 90% more interaction on Facebook than we do Twitter so we don't – well, occasionally we chose not to put something on Twitter if we don't feel it's going to add value but most of the time, it goes out on both and now we are probably approaching similar audiences." (PI.9)

"So Martin Sorrell sums it up in a really good way… he said Facebooks for your brand, Twitter's for public relations. I think that's quite a good way to put it". (PI.27)

"In terms of engagement, Facebook is better. We get more engagement through Facebook than we do through Twitter. I have no idea why that is… Twitter's good for the quick time. Let's just get stuff out, so the road closures. Yeah, from a reactive point of view, certainly, Twitter is preferred, whereas Facebook is better for giving a bit more information, a bit more detail." (PI.8)

Other platforms:

"We're using Instagram, we're using everything we can. We've done Thunderclap, we've done Storify. We're trying lots of different ways of engaging and I think what it means is, you're reaching lots of different groups of people."

"I know that I've had a couple of requests of why don't we use Instagram or why don't we get involved with Snapchat, but really for us for Instagram we don't really have a lot of pictures to put on it and I think Instagram for me is a creative, it's I dunno, mass images, I think West Midlands are using it and it's worked well for them, they've got some great pictures and they've got a big team so maybe they've got someone who's just dealing with that". (PI.19A)

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"One of the great examples of that is we've got Flickr, and I know some of the bigger Forces use Flickr, like, for all kinds of things like witness appeals and when there's riots... Lost property, all this, we kind of dip in and out of it because again it's resources to manage it, so we use it a bit for lost property, we tend to use it if there's a big batch of photos of stuff we've found, recently we've found all this property that's been stolen, so we've put the pictures on there and linked that to the Press Release, but it's not one that we use a regularly as we'd like to... if we had more resources we'd probably use it more regularly... there's this pressure when a new one comes out that takes off, there's this pressure that oh you have to do that because it's so popular but yeah, when you actually take a back step and go well, is it going to benefit us that much, is there anything we can do on that that we can't do on these?" (PI.19B)

4.2.6 Traditional Media

1) The Police-Media Relationship:

 "I think we're quite highly regarded by media, including nationals, because they know they will get a response from us. We never do a no comment and we're pretty swift."

"Some of the papers we have very good relationships with and, if they're short on the front page or two, they'll come and ask if we've got anything and we're still trying to have that quite open dialogue. We can speak quite openly. There are a couple of papers where the turnaround in staff is so high that you never really get to know. They're just a name and an email address with the odd phone call, but you just don't… But that's more a lack of interaction on their part with us than our part with them, if that makes sense." (PI.8)

"I think we generally do have quite close relationships with them but post Leveson it's a lot more cautious. But no, I think there's good working relationships there and I think that's sort of quite important. Some are easier to work with than others which is natural, just human nature and we sort of work through that". (PI.9)

 "So it worked out really well, but it's just making sure that you know what they're after, so you can get it". (PI.20B)

"a lot of it was about timing, you know, they didn't feel they were receiving the information timely enough and that is an issue for a press office, because you're working with officers who are investigating a crime, they want to be sure what they're investigating before they give out loads of information and you can understand that, you know, you'll have a call, your officers will respond, they'll get to a scene, it isn't always how it is portrayed on the phone to you as, you know, what has happened, so they want to make an assessment, they may arrest people, they may have them in custody, there may be limited information they want to give out while they question that person." (PI.28)

"sometimes I listen to the radio 4 today programme for example and in theory you would think that BBC, Radio 4 today programme that covered current affairs would be a factual round up of the day's news. But if you actually listen to it I find that they manage to put a negative slant on everything. I've heard people go on there with a positive story and then suddenly this is all very good let's forget that what about this possible negative implication. And, you just think what are you trying to achieve here." (PI.15)

"Difficult and time consuming; it's hard to build rapport like we used to when it's a different face every week… We don't know them and they don't know us". (PI.7)

"we've got quite a few crime reporters... who have been static, they have been there for 10/15 years… so not only do they have really good contacts with the press office, they have really good contacts within the force because they have been here for so long, they met somebody when they were a PC, who is now a Chief Super Intendant and so they have those contacts, that's quite difficult for us in terms of managing that because, you know, people have grown up with a Journalist, they trust them, they, you know, so actually some of those traditional relationships are still there." (PI.10)

2) Changes to the Police-Media Relationship

"[the] power balance has shifted dramatically I would say. Even from when I started in the policing, it was everything that you did and everything that was around an incident or operation, it was all focussed on media management., press management… but the shift with the digital channels now, the kind of levels of

audience that we've got who are actively wanting to engage with us and they've chosen to sign up and to follow us on twitter. They choose to be Facebook friends or likes of ours. They choose to sign up to our community messaging. They're an active audience that has said we want to engage with you. That is far more powerful, potentially, than what we do necessarily through the newspapers and the more traditional press… But the power balance has shifted dramatically and you see it even with the chief officers now. Once upon a time a negative story in our local newspaper… would send them into disarray. They'd be wanting to know how that happened. But now, it's kind of like, yeah they've written a negative story, they kind of do that, but what we can now do is we can put our side out through our channels or we can put some good news out to counter balance it." (PI.6)

"I had a meeting with the local paper only a couple of months ago, to discuss how they were feeling left out and it's not that they're less important than they were. It's that our communities are more important than they were and they've got more, as a sort of press function because we can communicate direct with them." (PI.12)

"[the press used to] see us as a block to the police officers who will give them more and better stories… Now we are a necessary evil as local journalists no longer have time to go investigating on their own and post Leveson has placed restrictions of these relationships". (PI.27)

"It is although I think sometimes I think it's over egged because the change in London is significant because you know I have had quite a few dealings with the MPS over the years and have seen a kind of Leveson kinda of happen and various other things, it was an old culture, it was that kinda old school thing, which is a world away from where we were to be honest because we hadn't done those sorts of briefings and kind of meetings in pubs for many many years… I think the relationship's there and the impact on Leveson were huge for us we hadn't been working in that sort of environment so it wasn't a massive issue and we still say to officers you can have friendships with journalists provided you are always happy that whatever you share with them you would be happy that everybody knew that you'd shared it with them cos if you're not that's where there is a problem and most officers are fine you know some of them will still know a lot of the journalists." (PI.23)

3) Local journalists

<u>Decrease:</u>

"and it's clear the newspapers are all dying, certainly locally … Big local newspapers used to have a circulation of up to 350,000 ten years ago. Latest figures shows that this has reduced to 81,000 in 2014. Far fewer journalists having to cover more areas so few journalists now specialise in just one area, like crime" (PI.4).

"in reality, there's hardly any journalists to speak to for one, but we don't have as much interaction and a lot of what we do with journalists is done socially… we used to have two dailies. We've gone to one daily. We had probably at least three crime reporters 10 years ago. We've got one and he has to do everything else as well. Yeah, they're just not there, with the decline of the proper journalist, if that's the right word, you get citizen journalists. And social media, obviously, encourages people to ask a lot more questions than we would have ever dealt with through a press office, a traditional press office." (PI.8)

<u>Increase:</u>

"We are unusual… [in that] our daily paper has just launched a Sunday edition… [in a] climate where every other paper is shutting down or, you know, going to weekly, they've started doing another paper during the week and that's partly because actually … the readership is actually fairly strong still for us, so we can't leave it behind". (PI.10)

"I think possibly the rural demographic and the age demographic does make a difference here because, people still do read their local papers. The local papers still do have quite a high reach. I think the local here, is one of the few that's bucked the circulation trends and its readership and that's the increased readership online as well." (PI.11)

"I think there are more around at the moment". (PI.19A)

"It's about the same really. We have active local journalists and local newspapers round here. National is probably where we've seen the biggest reductions in dedicated crime journalists". (PI.1)

"Our locals [are] still doing really well, they've just changed the model so papers have now gone to a digital-first model, where it's basically everything is online, first and foremost. So the paper's only one edition during the day. It used to be four or five when I was there. But it's gradually deteriorated because the circulation has dropped. But the online has just gone through the roof. So they have now five or six, we call them spikes, through the day where their hits at the morning where people commuting to work. Lunchtime, people going on to work, when people get home at night, it's more of a social media thing. Basically, you hit those spikes with different content. So it's almost like having different editions of a newspaper." (PI.20B)

Implications of reduction:

"whereas you think newspapers going out of business that's good for us as far as busyness is concerned it's not. It's arguably even more busy now because they're all wanting to keep their websites up to date. That's why we've moved to this almost self-serve system whereby anything that's vaguely big that we want to give out will be on our news centre and we'd still have to deal with the trivia which I'm trying to move away from. You still get calls from local newspapers saying, "We've seen two cars crashed and in the hedge what's that all about?" It's getting to the stage where we haven't got time to deal with all that and if there's something significant about it, if there's a fatality in those two cars or if there's serious injury then that will go on the news centre. I think we're getting to the stage where we're going to have to tell them to go away because we've not got time to deal with that kind of thing." (PI.13)

"Local newspapers are closing. There's fewer and fewer reporters so they don't get out. So they expect to be fed". (PI.25B)

"That would be like the best thing actually if we had no newspapers anymore and, you know, I think the more we can get people to receive information directly from the police rather than through the media the better, so for me it'll be like okay if

people have to receive their information from us they're hearing it from the horse's mouth, they're not hearing what part of a report the media's chosen to focus on, they're hearing the bit that we want to know this time. So it can't be a negative." (PI.16)

"We don't know them and they don't know us. [our relationship] is difficult and time consuming because of that; it's hard to build rapport like we used to when it's a different face every week".

"we've noticed that the kind of quality of the crime reporters in terms of their training has really reduced, you know, we'll have reporters asking us very obvious legal questions that you think well surely you should've learnt that when you trained to be a journalist. So I think the quality of crime reporters and their training and their background we've noticed the difference and they are less of them, newspapers can't send people to court all day now unless it's a really big case. So yeah, I think the way that local journalists kind of report has definitely changed." (PI.16)

4) Self-service model

"We couldn't move to the time kind of web firsts, breaking news ourselves, it just wouldn't work here." (PI.11)

"Most journalists no longer have time to go out and find stories on their own now, so they basically regurgitate and rewrite press statements".

"But yes, I think that actually people can get information first hand from us, so if you go back five, six years, a lot of police forces would write a press release, they would issue it to an email distribution list of media. We don't issue anything to the media, everything that we put out on the public domain goes on our website, the media can set up an RSS feed just as any member of the public can, but we're putting out public information now, so we can tell the public what we're saying, as opposed to relying on the media to interpret that. So our website and social media have proved a massive opportunity for us to tell the public things in our voice". (PI.17)

"Yeah, so it is moving more towards we've got the control over what the message says, which is what we never had before, why not use it?" (PI.8)

"We're trying to keep up with the demand, but it is a struggle and likely to be more so if there are further budget cuts. Self-service press releases would save us time and mean that the investigating officer can just add the relevant details to a template which they then put on the website rather than contacting the comms departments and giving us the information which we then have to write up and put in a press release that we've probably already confirmed verbally to five journalists by the time we get round to publishing it." (PI.2)

"Now, journalistically I would almost question that and say well actually, they shouldn't always take everything we say for granted, because they should question it. I mean I know we do a professional job and I know we do it as well as we possibly can, but is that short changing their public? Their readers? By always accepting what we do?" (PI.4)

5) Watchdog function

<u>Yes:</u>

"very critical… and what's really lovely now is that they are not only critical in the paper they are also critical on social media so, you know, you get a double hit frankly and online because they have all the papers online, so yeah, they definitely still do the watchdog function and, as I say, they are not shy at putting things up on Twitter and they are not shy at putting things on Twitter if they feel they are not getting a good service as well and that has changed things for us because you will have a, you know, the key crime reporter for one of the daily papers, who puts up something about the terrible service they have received from the police press office and actually that changes the relationship a little bit as well". (PI.10)

"One of the editors of one of the papers had a meeting with me and the chief constable, just a regular meeting and he said to both of us, I accept our job is never to break the news about police stuff anymore. He said I know you're going to do that. He said I know our job, his job is to analyse and question and check the work of the police and I said yeah I think that's right. Because you're not gonna have, unless

they've got something amazing, they're not gonna get scoops about the police. They're not gonna find out first coz we're going to publish it first, but they're right to then say, is this right? To question it, coz we should be questioned, we should be checked." (PI.4)

No:

"I think there's bad journalism and I think there's good journalism and there's a lot of lazy journalism these days unfortunately because … And resourcing is being reduced so much that good investigative journalism is much thinner on the ground than when I started." (PI.11)

"No, I don't think so. Yeah, I think we're very aware of them and I say aware and we're not wary I don't think, you know, we've got active… local newspapers still, which from a journalist background is good to see and yes there is an element of, you know, they want to know what's happening and where we are, but I don't think they're really a watchdog." (PI.28)

"I would say, for the ones we have a relationship with, not so much, but the ones that we don't have a relationship with, then yeah, very often they'll just print what we give. Very rarely do they come back with questions or a challenge. The two main newspapers that we have, they do. They come back and will stick a few FOI requests in and that kind of thing and then come back wanting a response. But yeah, we still get that, but just not anywhere near as much as we used to. And we don't have masses of interactions with nationals anymore. We used to have quite a bit. It's only on the odd story whereas now a lot of it goes through FOI." (PI.8)

"I just remember some people who used to be sort of old school I sort of suppose in the past who would dig up some fairly interesting stories and sometimes not very positive for the force but things they would find out about that we didn't know about at all and they had clearly got some contacts out there I'm not sure that contacts network exists anymore. I don't know if that's because of Leveson or they are just a different breed now but they are very reliant on what comes out of the centre now." (PI.18)

"I think that certain newspapers have certain agendas... I don't, I think the issue probably is that at the end of the day I don't believe that the media necessarily works for the good of the country, it works for the good of its own doesn't it in that they want to be seen to be the first and exclusive or they want to be seen to be being bold and brave in breaking news and I'm not sure that that comes with a lot of sense of responsibility to realise what the impact of that might be." (PI.15)

"criticism isn't necessarily the same thing as being a watchdog". (PI.23)

3.2.7 Audience

1) Who is the Audience?

"well I'd like to say the audience is the people of [our county] and the communities that pay for them through the precept for the policing but I don't know. It goes back to what I said before that we're very good at telling them, I don't think we're enormously good at listening to what they tell us." (PI.28)

"I think the easiest answer is at the moment we don't know enough to stipulate who our audiences are. Broadly speaking, everyone is potentially a stakeholder at some point, you know, while they live within the area. They might be ten now [but] if they stay with us all the way through their lives then, you know, we've got to be in a position where we start to talk to that person as early as possible and we maintain that relationship with them right the way through to the point of death - as morbid as it sounds". (PI.22)

"Race, age etc. don't actually make much of a difference when it comes to communication - either people want to engage or they don't... and if they don't there isn't really anything you can do about it."

"Our audiences? There's a difference between audiences and clients. So I would say our audiences are the public. Just the general public of [our area] and I think we have client relationships with everyone internally and the media, if you like, as opposed to an audience. I would say audiences are the public we serve. That's got to be our main audience." (PI.6)

"The people who have a connection… so people who live… or work in this area, or who have relatives in this area." (PI.23)

"My strategy is to move the direction away from journalists and to citizens, our public. But I would kind of emphasise that within that I wouldn't want it to be written that way without reflecting the fact that the media are actually one of the channels that we need the most to do that… So when you ask who the ultimate client is, it's the public. But probably on the other end of this is actually the officers too. We're a service organisation really within the force. We provide a service to our, to senior people in the organisation, that enables the organisation to do coms. So it's kind of like both ends of the scale. Coz really the client is the public… the face they see are the officers and we're there making sure the officers can do the job they need to. They're providing an overlay where we'll probably manage the very high level kind of digital messages that go out plus the media bit, but we'll try and use the officers to front it up, coz it works better." (PI.3)

"So priority stakeholders are those that we want to take action or to do something differently. Secondary stakeholders are people who we want awareness or they've used the conduits to get to the priority stakeholders. On a witness appeal for a murder our external stakeholders are members of the public who are likely to recognise and know this person, members of the public who have been directly impacted or were worried by this incident, they would be on my priorities. My secondary externals would be the media because the media are conduits to the first. And a secondary might be local counsellors or opinion formers who can influence my primaries. And I'd do the same for internal. So internals would be I want to engage with the officers and staff who are on that investigation to make sure that they're trained… to have the information they need." (PI.11)

"So firstly we have the general public, then members of the press – those people working in journalism. Then there's the third way - which is for people who aren't quite the public and aren't quite qualified journalists, but have massive followings. There's a guy who runs... a blog... He's almost the classic, sort of geeky type. But we feed him information. He can get a hundred to two hundred thousand people instantly. So why wouldn't we tap into that resource? I reckon we could reach people

more quickly than the papers can and the public can and if we get them on side. And of course mostly people are untrained so they're amateurs at it, so they're not as well written. They've certainly not got any journalistic qualifications. They wouldn't know a lie if it came and bit them. But they know if it comes from us, it gives them the literal legal privilege to publish that information, they know they're protected by us." (PI.4)

"[We have three major stakeholder groups] our political stake-holders... home office, IPCC, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and that's where you start from and then you can extend to that, you know, we have partnerships with business; business can be very important stake holders with some of the things you want to do. There might be third sector stake-holders who we're working with on particular projects... You know, journalists are our customers. Ummmm...We want them to believe we give them a good service because we think that will increase their respect for the organisation. The reference to digital production capability recognises that there are increasing audiences for digital content on the web and that we have had a largely analogue print media focussed operation, used to dealing with tabloid and broad sheet journalists, not an operation geared towards producing content for websites, be it our website or a newspaper website." (PI.27)

"We have very, very limited defined audiences. So in the case of cybercrime who is your audience? Everyone in county? Well no, it's not. The audience is going to be probably anyone that actually engages online, so if they're not using the internet, they're not going to be at risk of cybercrime. And let's be more specific your risk group is very different for potential online victims of sexual exploitation and that's going to be a very big difference to those at risk of financial exploitation versus those at risk of identity fraud. So let's... narrow it down. It might be a demographic, it might be personality-based, there are loads of factors. It's as if, if I ask the question of who is my audience, they tend to be anyone. Certainly potentially anyone in [my county] also potentially anyone elsewhere if that's necessary but ... It's a hard question to answer [long pause] I don't think there is an obvious answer. It's going to be different depending on what is the message every single time."

"It depends completely on what we're talking about. I suppose our three main audiences are victims of crime, the general public and vulnerable people; the elderly, the young, the disabled. They would be our three main audiences. The general public is a massive audience, obviously". (PI.25A)

"It's very much people are picky and they decide this is the method of communication I want and that's kind of what they stick with, so we try our best to offer different kinds of communications so you've still got your traditional channels but then still got the more modern ones, but the more modern ones are now becoming that commonplace to call them more modern channels it's like how long have they, being going like seven, eight years so you know it's just the digital channels I guess but we sort of, we use them all and different people use them in different ways, so try to hit as many bases as we can." (PI.20B)

"The vast majority of time people don't actually want contact from the police. So that's a hard sell from a communication perspective, isn't it, if you're trying to get a message out... No matter how many communication campaigns we do to stop people leaving things in cars, they either don't understand it, don't want to read it because it'll never happen to me, we still have theft from motor vehicle and there are still hundreds of people who leave things on the backseat of their car. So it doesn't matter what communications campaign you run, people still leave stuff in their cars." (PI.21)

2) Targeted Communications:

"There'll be certain crimes that affect certain communities and then our comms is targeted. It might be different languages; it might be where we send information, which publications we use, where we might send out officers to deliver leaflets. So we definitely target the different audiences and communities when we need to" (PI.6).

"During a campaign, yes. In general targeting is only done by geographic location, so targeting a town for a witness appeal where someone was hurt/went missing. But if it's just like a general message each day then we're not thinking right well this message has to be relevant for a specific audience group… like as if you were editor

of a newspaper or you're the editor of a radio station or whatever and you've got your specific audience. We don't take that approach, it is kind of everybody". (PI.16)

"We take a problem profile now that the intelligence team are developing for operational policing and it comes to me… Some things we'll say Facebook audience will work on that. Some posts will only be targeted to a town, if it's a crime appeal about a burglary in a town centre, we will only deliver it to that town because the rest of the audience aren't interested." (PI.12)

"why would we blanket everybody about something that actually is only going to hit a small percentage of the city?"

PI.12:
"The clue to me really, or the key to all of this is bespoke communication because we talk about what's the best way to communicate with the public on this issue. The little old lady who lives down the street with no internet, no computer, doesn't have an Android phone etc., probably wants you to knock on the door and have a conversation. There is no one single way, I think, of engaging with the community. It's about understanding that there are different people who want to be engaged with in different ways. Unless you engage with them in that way, they won't respond to it because they wouldn't communicate with anybody else in that way, so why would they communicate with the police in that way?"

We take a problem profile now that the intelligence team are developing for operational policing and it comes to me… Some things we'll say Facebook audience will work on that. Some posts will only be targeted to a town, if it's a crime appeal about a burglary in a town centre, we will only deliver it to that town because the rest of the audience aren't interested. So we do filter it on that.

A classic example of that would be the campaign we did a couple of years ago now… We'd done the press releases. We'd done the essential media messages. Neighbourhood officers had been talking to people. No effect had been made on reducing this crime. And, yes, we were doing the enforcement work and we were targeting the individuals who we believed to be involved. That work was going on,

but what we needed was the public to help us, just by securing the doors, taking the things off display. And the crime would stop because it's always three things to a crime, isn't there.

Yeah. Location, offender, victim, which we can influence the victim. We can influence them. So that's what we wanted to do. So we looked at that geographic area and we saw that we'd done press release with [a newspaper] and nothing had gone in. Radio station the local officer had been on, nothing, no effect.

So we looked at the problem profile and we went to the Mosaic data, Acorn data. We get public sector access to that. Punched in the postcode, let's have a look at this area. Right, okay, they don't read the local paper. They don't engage with the local media. It's all on the profile. It's all on the profile. Buy the lottery on a Friday night.

They work in factories and offices, work mainly eight 'til five. Okay, and there's all the things in there, wealthy achievers and all those sort of ones. These were industrial workers, effectively. And they've got kids and all that sort of thing. So no wonder nothing was happening because we weren't reaching them at all.

The absolute solution to that one was face-to-face. So our team went out with six neighbourhood police officers, PCSOs. I got a lady, who's got a really nice voice for radio, out there. Recorded me something on an MP3 player, soldered together with the PA system to stick on top of a police car and got an e-board on the back of a truck. And we did house-to-house down the streets that were being affected, because it was 20 streets.

So we knew the area. We knew the profile. We did it between five and seven at night because we knew that's what time they were getting in from work. Knocked on the door, you need to be aware of this. Here's a crime prevention leaflet, but, look your car's are locked. Demonstrated what they needed to do, but took a moment to gather their email addresses and postcodes and details as well.

So you effectively had a circus down your street of six officers, a PA system on top of a police car, flashing lights and an e-board. You got the message delivered. It was

delivered. You got the message. Twenty-five percent reduction in crime within a week." (PI.12)

3) How Effective or Success is the Team at Reaching These Audiences:

"I don't think we reach everybody as successfully as we should do, no, I think… we have a very, kind of, disparate population down in… [this area] because we have a lot of elderly people, you know, a lot of people come down this way to retire…a lot of holiday people, yeah, so we have to do a lot of work through our traditional media to reach older people because most of them still aren't quite as digitally savvy as they should be, some of them are but not all of them, so we have to do quite a lot of work around that but young people of course just aren't reading, you know, they're not reading national papers, never mind reading their local papers, so we are doing quite a lot of work to try and target them and we've had domestic abuse campaigns… which was all around domestic abuse for teenagers and that was done a couple of years ago initially and has been rolled out since and we've done a lot on Facebook, worked really, really well… and then as you say, holiday makers because actually, you know, they are still targets of [long pause], you know, people think that because they are on holiday, they can leave all their stuff on the beach and that nobody's going to [pause] Yeah and actually, the minority communities has traditionally been a very difficult area in this part of the world because actually, we don't have the same volume of minority communities, as some other parts of the country do and that has meant, I think, in the past, that they have been forgotten a little bit. So we know we have pockets where we have significant communities... and I think we are getting a lot better at targeting them but I still don't think we do everything that perhaps we should do". (PI.10)

"So you need that sort of double layer of communication strategies. Key one is probably always going to be a geographical one, but you need another layer which is based on ethnicity or different types of community." (PI.27)

"I mean we're telling people they should feel reassured, but actually are they reassured by the being given information or do they have to be told and the R word used, you can be reassured." (PI.28).

"So why aren't we chatting? Why aren't we doing more of this? [pause] There's always been communities we can't reach. We've always struggled to reach communities; whether they're itinerant and travelling communities, whether they're people that don't want to reach us, some of the ethnic communities sometimes erm, I policed [one area] for a long time and very very little crime reported from the Hindu there, was it Hindu? No, the Sikh community. Very little reporting crime because they sorted it out between themselves. So the thing is, there comes a push back, what about the people that don't get it? There will always be people who don't get it." (PI.24)

"Moderately successful, I would say. I think we do pretty well capturing sort of mid-twenties probably and then older because even the people not captured through digital media are captured in traditional media but I would say it's our younger generation that are the hardest to capture. That's a mixture of them being apathetic-safe or 'Why would I have any interest in the police force?' because they are not home owners, they don't see themselves as having many assets, so there is no risk in it for them. So why would they want or have an interest in the police?" (PI.9)

"We get the message out but whether anyone is a) interested, b) actually paying attention or c) going to do anything with it, we don't know." (PI.9)

"I think unless that person wants contact with the police, why are we enforcing ourselves on them? So that we can say we've engaged with that hard to reach community, whether they wanted to be engaged with or not. It's like – well to me it's like anything in life, imagine if the pharmaceutical society said we want to be more inclusive in our communities as a pharmacist. Unless I need a pharmacist, I don't want to go and engage with the pharmacist in my local chemist." (PI.21)

3.2.8 Measuring Effectiveness and Success

Assessing the Effectiveness of the Evaluation Metrics:

"we now don't measure fans as our measure. It's reach. All we're about is reach. So that's how you measure success in social media, in my eyes. You can't measure it just by number of fans. It means nothing… Yeah, it's outputs and outcomes, isn't it? Your

output is how many impressions, your output is confidence or number of reports and we're trying to have, whenever I've got a strategy being developed, I try and have the differential on the document. These are the outputs which will be easy to measure. The outcomes are hard to measure effectively, but they're the ones I'm really interested in and if a campaign plan comes to me and it's got one outcome, that's fine. It might be absolutely fine as long as there's some way of saying, how do we say this worked and it's really tricky at times. There are campaigns we do which are output-based because of the speed we need to work at. We do have to say we've had a certain million impressions on this campaign. That will do for this evaluation. But we know that it's been of the right audience, at least, since we've got the profile in Mosaic. So again, we can do targeted posts to owners of 125 and smaller cc engine motorbikes who live in [a specific area] because we've got a thief targeting them at the moment. That's the problem profile. Fine, we can do something with that. I can make a very deliverable message because we know what the messages are. We've got the crime prevention messages. We know how to engage with them, the young people, because of the channels we're using, but we can now target and tailor to make sure that our activity reaches the right people. But measuring impact is much more difficult." (PI.12)

"The one area that all police forces struggle with is around evaluation and marketing campaigns." (PI.3)

"That's one area where I think we're bad and I think most coms teams are bad." (PI.6)

"the whole thing about digital is you can evaluate it too much. The trick is to work out what you want to evaluate when you're starting to plan. What are you trying to generate? Why are you doing it? What's your objective?" (PI.12)

Measurement:

"Part of the problem is that we just don't know what effective looks like in social media. With the press it was easier, but with social media we're trying to do so many different things at the same time…" (PI.2)

"success is a tricky concept to measure. Is it reach? The number of followers? The Number of retweets/reposts? Likes? Comments? - I don't know! The traditional methods of assessing success aren't yet suitable for using on social media". (PI.26)

"It's really hard, you'll see we put some measures in there. Some areas, the challenge is measuring the outcomes and not the activity and policing is very good at measuring activity and not so good at measuring outcomes." (PI.27)

"We've started to move away from what I call the vanity stats. So we're not measuring how many followers we've got. We're measuring the engagement that we're having and actually making what we're doing on those channels more meaningful than what we necessarily previously were… Just because something appears in a paper, it doesn't mean you read it. So because something appears in your Facebook feed, it doesn't mean you read it. If you like it, you comment on it. If you put it as a favourite it suggests that you've done some sort of interaction with it and we would class that as an engagement". (PI.8)

"what's the point in having a reach of 55,000 people in one particular area if not one person has acted on what we're doing and not one person has interacted with that bit and have got anywhere else or, you know". (PI.22)

"So when you talk about measuring the success of or the different between traditional and social media, I think we need to go back to what are we trying to measure? Unless you can prove the thing you're measuring has had an impact, then it doesn't hold any substance. You can't evaluate the benefits of social media unless you create a sterile environment and you can attribute that behaviour to doing that social media, and I don't think we can in most circumstances". (PI.21)

"Trying to separate out the impacts of that from other changes to legislation, alcohol limits and all that is always very very hard". (PI.27)

"I think it's really hard to say actually because a lot of your bigger successes are things that don't happen…"

Analysis:

"I suppose it's the impossible thing, which is the how we evaluate the success of social media in policing. That's my big issue. I can show you the numbers... I can give you examples of success. I can show you all of that, but how do we... Now our trouble is, is how do you evaluate? How do you say, we are reaching these people? And of course it's really hard to say on Twitter. Coz well we do know the numbers; but, we don't know who they are, we don't know how old they are". (PI.4)

Culture of Antipathy:

"we don't evaluate the outputs – the outcomes or the outputs from our comms office, so we've no idea if what we're doing is working…" (PI.21)

"If you're not operating in a strategic advisory capacity, you're not doing the job for me. And there's a lot of that in [here] where, even people in my team, they'll be part of a project team and success for them is doing what they're asked, creating a post that they were asked for, writing a leaflet they were asked for, not what are you trying to achieve, how are we going to get there, what do you want to do?" (PI.11)

Time and Resources:

"The last campaign we did... we paid to have a proper evaluation done by an evaluation company. And I think we'll be doing more of that moving forwards with things like that. Because otherwise, it's kind of like, you don't know whether it's done what it needs to do. And generally coms teams don't have the resources or the abilities as such to do much evaluation themselves". (PI.6)

"We do some measurement; most of the measurement is around the particular number of followers and that kind of thing, so really basic stuff. And again evaluation is something we really need to do that more and I think we're kind of struggling with that at the moment just because of sheer numbers of people that we don't have but I think again evaluation is something that we are going to have to get into otherwise how to you know what's working and what's not working." (PI.18)

"ultimately in policing it [success] is a very personal, subjective thing, which means we can't properly, and shouldn't, put a measurement on it as this inevitably draws attention away from the victim who should be the first and only concern… The thing is, communications can't be target driven - it ends up destroying, or at least impeding, what you are trying to do". (PI.14)

"Policing is terrible for chasing figures anyway I think we're moving away from that because of the target but it comes back and bites you on the bum you know like this stuff with why South Yorkshire bothered about burglary but they're not bothered about CSE, because they were being hauled before the home office for their burglary rates they weren't being hauled before the home office for their CSE rates." (PI.23)

3.2.9 Areas that need Improvement

Social Media:

"I would say we had a very different tone of voice and positioning through social media than we did elsewhere. I think there's still a difference but gap is closing". (PI.9)

"So I think we did very good at the start to get to this stage but when we look at some of the other forces they're really flying with it [social media] and I think we're maybe a little bit behind now, but that will hopefully change when we get the tools in place." (PI.19A)

"I think there's more that we can do about social media, I see it working quite well in other forces and I think we need to probably invest in a little more time in making officers do their five a day, you know". (PI.28)

YouTube:

"We're nowhere near that. We are very much kind of like putting our little toe in the swimming pool kind of territory, we're not there. We wanna get there, but we need to kind of have the right channels to be able to push that stuff through. There's no point in just sticking it on YouTube and not being able to promote it properly." (PI.3)

"We don't use it [YouTube] enough to say at the moment. We're just sort of rolling out the fact that we've got technology to be able to go and take some short clips. It used to be that you would create these nice, formal, corporate videos and stuff. It's not now, you need to be able to take quick, little, short snap shots". (PI.17)

Websites:

"I don't think we've got a very good website at the moment. It's poorly designed, doesn't get a massive amount of traffic and certainly since I've been here I've not invested a lot of time in improving it because it's very expensive to do so and social media channels are much more accessible to the public and actually most of the news and information we want to get out, we can get out much more effectively using social media channels." (PI.27)

"The website should be a one stop shop but we're working with an antique content management system, I mean it's awful and it's become a big priority because of course the force control room are getting over a million calls a year of which only about 100,000 of those are actually victim based crimes, a lot of those other calls are for other incidents that involve our partner organisations or people don't really need the police anyway, so we need to find a way of reducing that demand and there is a lot of work going on in that area and it's about making the website, you know, more informative, more easy to use." (PI.28)

Effective Campaigns:

"we just don't have enough resource at the moment focussing on the creative content side of the business. So that is something that we are definitely focussing on moving forward." (PI.6)

"when lots of communications departments are designing campaigns they are focussing on a mixture of awareness raising and behaviour change and they're not focussing clearly enough on whether they want one or the other, so for example we just ran a really big domestic abuse campaign [here] and I was really clear that we needed to have a view as a force do we want this campaign just to raise awareness about domestic abuse and make people know kind of where they can go for information and help or are we trying to change a behaviour, are we trying to make

somebody sort of move from here to here… because awareness raising is a completely different type of communication to actually making somebody change the way that they behave and things that'll motivate people to change their behaviour vary depending on what that behaviour is… lots of forces aren't really doing this." (PI.16)

Internal Communications:

"What is really interesting is that internal communications used to be, in the police service, almost non-existent and I can remember when I started at [here] and… I reviewed the structure and it was obvious to me that what they were missing was an internal communications officer. So I produced this review saying they needed that and my line manager at the time, the Deputy Constable… said to me police officers don't need internal communications they do what they're told." (PI.16)

"We currently have no internal coms function because the view was taken that it made sense to create a big campaigns team, not big but like four people, campaigns team and not have an internal coms function. For an organisation that's going through a massive change and has just taken fifty-five million out, about to go and restructure itself to take another twenty-five out... and exploring collaboration with other public sector organisations... to have no internal comms function just doesn't make any sense" (PI.3)

"internal comms I think we're really bad at, I don't think we're really good at internal comms, but I think that's a generic thing across lots of big organizations, it's not just in policing." (PI.21)

Policy and Guidance:

 "there is some guidance on it rather than actual policy but it's so loose really that you can just do whatever you want really. The impact area is if it comes under the area of you could make it fit pretty much anything. I just think that everybody should be working to some fairly fixed rules." (PI.18)

"This is a conversation that happens a lot at the moment, in an age of massive cuts and austerity, whether it'd be the Home Office, whether it'd be the policing minister,

whether it be the Association of Chief Police Officers, whoever, the College of Policing, you would think now would be the time to say here's your literature, because burglary's burglary, doesn't matter what force you're in, car crime is car crime, here's your literature, stick your crest on there, go away and use it. Here are your website templates, we need you to tackle these areas, these are the core issues, so simply dropping your priorities and that way we know that everyone's website meets with whatever the Home Office require us to meet... and there are some forces across the country that are spending thousands on various different forms of public engagement and consultancy in order to try and establish what people want from online channels." (PI.22)

Listening to Audiences:

"I don't think we're very good at listening sometimes [pause] I think it comes on the back of telling, we're good at telling, we're not so good at listening." (PI.28)

3.2.10 Threats

"I think money is the primary threat because money is dwindling and will continue to do so for a stable future. So I think that is the one threat and everything else comes after that because from that we could see our team reducing or almost disappearing altogether really. It might be left to individual officers to be doing that media stuff so without doubt money more than legislation, technology or anything. We can always adapt to those sorts of things but if the money is not there then the team goes so think over the next ten years that will be quite critical." (PI.18)

"The budget is constantly getting smaller and as people/police officers get more used to new technology they expect more from it for less. Over the last few years, I've noticed that there is a lot more pressure being put on the function of corporate communications in policing – police officers are learning and developing new expectations for what they want out of communications and we're struggling to keep up". (PI.7)

"in reality to reach a significant portion of our audience, [through] offline media, it's the best way to reach them because they are not necessarily engaged digitally. But

with budget cuts, that becomes increasingly difficult to be able to do other than the traditional media routes which I say we do a good job of and we get good coverage in local broadcast and print media." (PI.9)

"Well budget's going to be the thing. I mean we're going to be going through the hoop in a couple of years' time again because we're going to have to cut... according to current government although it could all change next May. But according to the current government they reckon they're going to lob us another 20% off. We're going to have to find our cuts. So threats, that's the key threat because if they come to me and say, "Right you've got to cut some staff". Okay that's fine I'll cut some staff but by cutting those staff this is what you won't get. If I cut the press office any well the service certainly to the media is going to go down and potentially to officers. Because there's one guy off at the minute dealing with a big fraud inquiry that's gone on that they're going to charge tomorrow on so we wouldn't have that resource to do that. There's all sorts of implications for operational support, our support to operations and also if they want nice graphics then if you jeopardise having graphics people. The same with the whole department I've described to you. That is the biggest threat and depending on how harsh the cuts are is depending on how much of a service I can continue to provide. Other threats really I don't... I suppose in that same context a threat of the ever increasing media whether you're including social media. Then we would be incapable of dealing with any great expansion if we were cutting back." (PI.13)

"I've had to reduce in other areas and I just don't have the people to be able to provide the service that people want, so I think that is one of the biggest threats". (PI.10)

"we've gone from having had 27 people doing corp coms in 2009 to having 10 now so ... yeah I've done the correlations, the drop in confidence levels totally correlates the lack of investment in the gaps in corp coms and engagement activity.... reductions here have been over 60%. I've done a kind of benchmarking, it's the highest degree of cuts anywhere in the country that's affected a corp coms departments." (PI.11)

"It's a huge amount of work and this is the challenge now facing policing and certainly a challenge for us, how do we cope with the demand, 24/7. People are beginning to report incidents and calls for assistance though social media and how does the force respond to that. How can we make sure we pick them up in a timely fashion?" (PI.12)

"the more you engage with people the more they expect and want out of the service - requiring more resources in order to deal with expectation management. Social media is not 'the easy option' not when it comes to long term management". (PI.14)

"the bottom line is people are over worked, people feel the real pressure" (PI.23)

"And we're all extremely busy and it's not just the comms that are busy. Every police officer, every staff member have got extra work on. We're all too busy." (PI.25A)

"we don't have the money, so people leave when they get a better offer" (PI.28)

"I think a lot of the time they are concerned about loss of skills because of the reduced budgets and obviously some places don't have a head of comms they have a police officer in there or they have somebody in there that is a head of unit but isn't reflected in the pay and the reporting lines or anything so the loss of skills and experience and knowledge which has come through, or am told. I spoke to [a senior official] about the report he was doing on South Yorkshire with Cliff Richard and one of the things that came through that was that the new team weren't quite sure who to turn to and I was thinking why not? if you'd just phoned me we'd have told you, we've had loads of things like that " (PI.23)

"but I do find it a lot harder than what it used to be because people don't have the time to share information as much, I used to know all the actual names of the Web Managers in different Forces whereas now I've just lost it." (PI.25A)

"We mentioned earlier about, you know, you find it strange that there isn't one website template for the forces, one set of marketing material, but there's also not one set of best practice for social media." (PI.22)

"Externally, it's a huge challenge for us to service the different requirements of our demographics" (PI.9)

"My only worry is we tell them this sort of stuff we told you, like no this is, and they're like, no we're doing this, shut it down and they end up in a problem because they haven't really listened to the people who are actually doing it." (PI.19B)

"Senior police managers and lower police officers have a very high expectation of what social media can deliver in terms of cost-reduced and effective communication. The thing is these expectations are increasingly unrealistic and problematic for them doing their job. Social media is one tool but it should never be allowed to dominate as you would be cut off from too many audiences". (PI.7)

"Policing cannot afford to be a dinosaur" (PI.1)

"just keeping pace with the changing landscape of communications or so, it is rapidly evolving, it presents challenges operationally for policing but also for us from a communications perspective actually which channels we should be investing time and effort in versus those that we don't. Do we keep it simple and develop certain channels massively and not worry about some of the other emerging ones but actually then we could get left behind the curve and also accessing our younger audience". (PI.9)

"we are constantly fighting a rear-guard action against information leaks and incorrect information" (PI.2)

"Citizen journalism is more an inconvenience than a problem – the usual policy is to ignore it unless we can't. By comparison, however, the new generation of crime journalists are a big problem for [us]. With the death of the dedicated crime reporter we've seen a rise of spotlighting reporters – journalists who do a bit of this, a bit of that and a bit of crime on the side. The problem is with this approach is that these reporters really don't understand the reporting rules in place – especially since Leveson – and so report things wrongly, libellously, slanderously or on occasion illegally". (PI.7)

"So there may be fewer traditional journalists, but also there's now citizen journalists or bloggers or community activists who've sprung up. The barrier between what's a journalist and what's somebody who's just interested in what you're up to is very grey. We've got former MP…, she writes a blog now. She comes in and expects a service that a traditional journalist would get and it's quite hard to say we're not gonna answer your questions, but we will answer somebody from the Daily Mails, doesn't really make a great lot of sense." (PI.27)

"I guess a couple of threats are obviously, some have got issues with the police and crime commissioners who have stolen some of the corporate communications teams." (PI.6)

3.2.11 Police Crime Commissioners

For:

"We have stayed within the police force structure but… A lot of our work is structured around – our proactive campaign work is structured around the PCC priorities but if I am honest, I'm quite comfortable with that because there are the things that public have set their priorities what's key to them and we obviously have internal working groups here operationally to be driving improvement in those areas. So, it makes sense that we adopt them from a campaign perspective."

"[A]s it turned out with the day to day it didn't seem to make a lot of difference at the time because we were still primarily doing things for the force. So I think the focus of all the work we were doing was all around delivery of the police and crime plan. Of course it the PCC's plan is actually the work the force should be doing anyway, so we didn't really get marred in any of the politics of things; that might be different when it comes to the next PCC election because politics will come into play a bit then; but then they have their own comms lead now."

"It's working as far as I'm concerned because I get on with the people and make a point of it. But I was bit wary about it at first as to whether it would work; but it's all down… like I said at the start it's all down to individuals in the end. And if you can get on with the people that you're dealing with then you're fine but if there's any

awkwardness or they're doing things off the cuff without consulting you then or telling you what's going on then it could be incredibly awkward. I know that happens in other places but as far as I'm concerned here it's working and working very well… Well one thing that police and crime commissioners can't do whatever they take over is deal with operational policing. So generally our news branch for want of a better phrase deals with operational policing so however big and bold they are if the crime commissioner come in and said "I don't want you to answer that" I can tell him to push off because it's nothing to do with him." (PI.13)

"Yeah, it works, I mean, you know, we're professionals, you know, I work for the Commissioner, the Commissioner has an agenda of what she needs to achieve during the year of what her responsibilities are, what she has to deliver on, so I will work to that agenda. But it works because she's an Independent. I'm not sure how it would work if she wasn't." (PI.28).

Neutral:

"It seems to work in some forces. It's unlikely to happen here as [the PCC] is keen to keep his office separate from the police force. I think it needs to stay separate otherwise how can the PCC hold policing to account and ensure transparency?" (PI.2)

"I think it's a good idea to share resources. I'm quite happy for it to be a kind of professional advisory role that I can give to the PCC's office… As long as it's not a commanded control scenario." (PI.11)

"A lot of them will see it as more of a – they don't understand, they're coming from outside the sector and think this is like a political press office, it could be around spin, perception... [the PCC here] presumed that the chief constable must have like a private office managing their profile and managing their perception. And when they came into being he said okay, we accept we can't have all corporate communications functions but can we have the part of it that delivers and drives the chief officer's personal profiles, well, we don't have a function that does that. But they presume that the police have that kind of function from the backgrounds that they've worked in before."

Against:

1) <u>Operational Communications</u>:

"Other places, some police and crime commissioners were very keen to take their corporate communication department because it was about publicity...But not here, because I think we're considered to be very much part of operational policing." (PI.3)

"There's a very strong line between PCC's office and us. We are operational… "And our chief was very adamant that, actually, there needs to be an operational function and PCC's political function and it would be unfair to ask somebody to do that." (PI.8)

"The PCC should have no control over operational policing but when they take over the comms team it veers dangerously into this territory". (PI.26)

"[It] took maybe about six months to a year to really realise, really know what messages were coming out from the PCC and it is completely different to what we're putting out. So basically their messages are kind of promoting what the PCC is doing about the meetings, what the PCC is doing about the funding that he's giving out… whereas we're very much operational. But at the same time he's got some key targets in his plan such as domestic violence or child sexual exploitation, so if we're ever doing a campaign about that he'll want to comment in it". (PI.19a)

2) <u>Openness, Transparency and Politicisation</u>:

"My view is it needs to [be separate] because the PCCs were always to hold the chief constable on the force to account. So at times there may be issues where the PCC needs to be saying something negative about the police. So how can the police comms team be in that position and defend itself, or whatever, and the PCC is about strategic direction of the organisation. We're about the operational delivery." (PI.12)

"police communications belongs with the police service. We have to remain a-political and that could be a challenge if communications is controlled by the PCC… which is a political position". (Pi.14)

"we identified very early on that we felt that we needed that openness and transparency and separation to have that accountability, so the communications for both PCC's are delivered by separate comms professionals." (PI.17)

"Yeah, it just wouldn't work… they need to be separate really because they hold us to account". (PI.19A)

"Huge, huge conflict of interest. Every force went through the same process with their PCCs and it was something that the Home Secretary wanted us to do when the PCCs were up to speed. So there was a stage one and a stage two transfer process, stage one was no different to the way that it worked under the police authority, i.e. the police authority were the budget holders, at some stage all of those resources that belonged to the police authority were just transferred over to the control of the chief constables and it was an automatic thing, it was one of these great, you know, we put the clocks back and forward things that doesn't really serve a purpose, but it happened… The advent of the PCC saw the stage two transfer side of it, which was for all of the enabling services, for all of the civilian roles started off under the control of the PCC and he then reviewed them all to look at what he wanted to keep and what went back to the control of the chief constables. Communications was a huge bugbear, because it didn't take a genius to figure out that they wanted a certain amount of control of what went out, so they could be seen to be delivering on their manifestos and they could be seen to be meeting the needs of the public. We argued right from the word go that there would be a huge, huge impact on the level of trust between the police and the press, the PCC and the press. There would be this massive conflict of interest, because it wasn't by any means unthinkable to be in a situation where the PCC is calling the Chief to account, but we're doing both sets of comms for it. So we're defending the Chief, but we're also doing the PCC stuff and as if by magic Lincs Police then went through that process where, you know, the PCC fired the Acting Chief Constable at the time and it just acted as the demonstration that we needed. So how would you deal with that if you were one comms office? Because ethically it's all wrong and then we argued about the political side of things, we know you're not a political animal, but have you not got close links with the Conservative Party? So there are all of these different things that were taken into account, but fortunately it was all built on quite a good initial working relationship and a fairly firm platform with the PCC, so we stayed." (PI.22).

"I said I couldn't do it. If they did that here I wouldn't be here to do that dual role. I know lots of people that do, do a head of comms for both pcc and the force and I have said here quite openly I would not be here to do it, I couldn't do it because for me I always see it as like doing PR for an energy company and for the energy regulator, you can't provide that level of advice to both at the same time so no, people do the job, some do the job pretty well I'm not convinced that when things got hard that they could still do that and I think as we head to the election it's going to get increasingly difficult… it's sad really and doomed for me to collapse at some point because you can't operate like that…" (PI.23)

3.2.12 Public Confidence

1) Is Confidence Still Important?

"I don't think it is that simple as that but I do think it's a massive factor because we've lived it. In areas where we've had problems because people don't feel as though they're going to get listened to nobody tells us anything because they have no confidence that they will be protected, that we will be able to deal with it, that we are taking the issue seriously so you can see how that impacts. There are other factors affecting public confidence, absolutely the stuff that we're doing here in terms of communication is important but there will be other factors that impact on peoples' confidence. However, if you know the local officer or you know the area where you work or you live and you know how to get hold of them and you're confident that you needed them, you would get a response or they would help you, or whatever that might be then you are going to have more confidence because if your friends needed the police and the response has been good then you'll probably be more confident because they've given you the good experience. In a similar way if we give a bad service then everybody knows it was a bad service and with social media now everybody knows it's a bad service."

2) Is Confidence Still Measured in the Interviewee's Force?

"It's a really difficult one to measure and we probably don't do it as well as we could." (PI.6)

"I think it's really hard because it tells you what it tells you. I know that sounds stupid, but it tells you if this group of people, who you've approached think this. I think we probably need to get a bit more sophisticated in terms of how we do it. But I'm not quite sure what that sophisticated way of doing it is yet." (PI.4)

"I think historically, there'd been quite a significant link being made internally, here anyway, with how informed people felt affected in their confidence score. So, those of you [who say] that we should be doing more newsletters etcetera because when people feel more informed, they feel more confident - I challenge some of the methodology as to how they are asking that. So that's also changed slightly for this year. So we are waiting on Q1 outputs at the moment so it'd be quite interesting to see whether we are learning anything different from the way were are now asking it because I think the questions weren't leading but the structure of them certainly would make certain things jump into ahead of others. So, I wanted to try and neutralize some of that with things - because the force has been very wedded to newsletters, [but] I know that newsletters don't get distributed when we send them out to stations." (PI.9)

"That is a difficult one isn't it because you know when you look at surveys and things how you phrase the question is so important to the answers you get and actually phrasing the question in a way that doesn't prompt people to a positive or negative response is actually a science." (PI.15)

"But we've never really landed or understood what truly works in confidence… what is going to have the biggest bang for buck on confidence. Not surprisingly, it's hugely complicated because confidence is a very remote tool. Yeah, a very, very remote tool, so what does it mean?... With confidence, what we found was that the four questions just hung in isolation and they weren't particularly useful". (PI.20A)

"You know, what is confidence? Confidence that an officer's going to turn up? Confidence that when you ring you're going to get your query answered? If we don't know, then what are we measuring?" (PI.28).

"We measure it because it's one of the measures that we're measured against by the home office. But at the moment, I chair the engagement board, which is sort of force-

wide overarching look at how we engage and why we engage and who we engage with and where issues are that we need to address.

And one of the measures initially for that was confidence and satisfaction. And I've, in the last three months, been looking at that, saying actually, is that… There was a big piece of work done by Cambridge University that was released this month around actually does engagement affect confidence or is it just… I literally started reading it yesterday and I was like, well, this contradicts everything that we've put in place... But basically, they conclude that there is no correlation between engagement and confidence, which kind of blows our measures of engagement right out the water." (PI.8)

"Satisfaction is much easier to measure and of more use in a practical sense - we can do something to improve satisfaction; confidence on the other hand…" (PI.7)

"it's like customer service if you want people to feel satisfied with your service and the police don't see the public as customers the way they are increasingly beginning to do so you know if you speak to people nicely if you keep them informed I mean there is obvious things that wind us all up but one would be lack of information if there's a problem like when the train's if there is a delay and no one explains to you, you get more and more wound up don't you. Just like if there is a traffic jam and no one tells you why you get more and more cross whereas if someone was keeping you informed and saying this is happening of course this is why it takes so long you would probably have a completely different reaction to that." (PI.15)

"Victim satisfaction is really important - it's at the heart of the circle of trust; if victims have a good experience of the police their friends and families know about it and the circle of trust expands organically." (PI.20A)

3) Is There a 'Crisis' in Confidence?

Yes

"there are issues nationally at the moment as we all know, public confidence is not where it should be and where it needs to be, but it is pretty okay here." (PI.5)

"We're in crisis, yeah." (PI.20A)

<u>No</u>

"Not in our county; but it doesn't really matter if there is or there isn't, when it comes down to it you're never going to be able to win everyone over, not really. There will always be someone who doesn't like the police- it just can't be done - not when we have to juggle being a deterrent and approachable. Too many conflicting messages". (PI.7)

"Yeah, it has, I think confidence is really interesting because I think the, sort of, national stories that we've had running recently so you know, Plebgate and all of the [pause] Hillsborough and all of the integrity issues, a lot of Chief Constables have gone, there's been a lot of issues recently but if you look at the confidence stats and satisfaction stats, actually people are still pretty happy with their local police force, so I think people don't think that this is their police". (PI.10)

"I think yeah, that's a misconception. It's interesting though. Overall the vast majority of people have got confidence in the police, but you get minor blips where something happens to shake that confidence and it becomes the overarching view of the police as opposed to that one event. So it's really interesting when you look at British Crime Survey, because that was really important from comms perspective. That the thing that impacts on the British Crime Survey, and I think Ipsos MORI have done some work on this, where it shows that, for example, when the Ipswich prostitute murders happened…So when that happens, or a job like that happens and it's all over the front of every national newspaper, when the British Crime Survey happens and they ring people up who live 200 miles away from there, who don't have any lifestyle link to prostitution or anything else and there is no connection whatsoever, with what's happened in Ipswich and their life, they will quote a greater fear of crime for themselves because that's on the front of a national newspaper. There's a piece of research about it that shows the thing that impacts most on people's fear of crime is not what's happening in their street today, it's what they read on the front of the national newspapers." (PI.21)

"Yes and No. Politicians certainly want us to think there is a crisis and maybe there is on a national level - but on a local one, in this county confidence has remained steady". (PI.1)

"No! No, it's not true if you assume that the public attitude survey that we do every quarter, is accurate… One of our [senior officers] last week… made this point that journalese and political circles as well have referred to crisis of confidence in policing, it's not born out by what the public say and the things that give the public confidence of policing are, are they tackling with the anti-social behaviour in my street? Are they there when I need them? Not, what are journalists saying about what happened thirty years ago or whatever or even what's happening now. We have a very important role in that. A lot of our marketing activities is devoted towards that, but some of our social media activity as well will be producing supportive messages as well. So that's an important objective for us." (PI.27)

"So I think there is an element who we will never satisfy, because we'll never be able to do it the way that they think it should be done, but I think for the most part what the austerity measures have shown is that actually there's a lot of support for UK policing out there and actually more people are worried about the service in a crisis, because they feel that they've got no confidence in our ability to do the job. I think the actual crisis in confidence comes when you look at the political side of things and people are saying well the police could do what they wanted if the government stopped taking money away from them or stopped lumbering these stupid things that they've got to keep doing or remove the red tape. I think it's really, really awkward, because, you know, when the government talk about crisis in policing or crisis in confidence in policing you agree certainly with forces that are constantly under the microscope for making mistakes like South Yorkshire.., but then the other side of it is we're not talking about things that happened yesterday and I think this is where police forces sometimes need to grow a pair a bit more and yes be hugely sympathetic to families of victims of Hillsborough or, you know, be extremely sympathetic to any victims of this, the Rotherham sex abuse scandal and, you know, your Yewtrees of this world and all of those sorts of investigations, whilst also reminding people of the fact that because of horrible things like this these things reshaped policing as we know it today, so without that we wouldn't be here and this is what's changed." (PI.22)

"I think confidence generally in the police is still fairly high. If you look at all the polls, etc. They're still pretty good. I don't think that there's a general sense that their

confidence in the police is lacking and you tend to see, you know, there tends not to be a massive correlation between a big national story about how bad the police are, with then how your local people feel about you as a force. I think it's a very localised thing... But I genuinely don't believe there is a massive issue with confidence in the police in this country. I think there are pockets that need improving and we still need to do more work with our BME communities across the board and that's around making sure that the BME communities are much better represented within the police service as officers and as police staff. And I know a lot of forces are doing work on that, but it's difficult." (PI.6)

"I don't think trust has been lost in the police as much as people think." (PI.12)

"how do you define... crisis, because people still will tell you and will tell the Commissioner on the doorstep that they want officers in their neighbourhood. Well if they had a crisis in the confidence in those officers would they want them in their neighbourhood?" (PI.28)

"I think that there are two levels of police identity - the local and the national, which is usually confused with the MPS" (PI.1)

"Yeah, it has, I think confidence is really interesting because I think the, sort of, national stories that we've had running recently so you know, Plebgate and all of the [pause] Hillsborough and all of the integrity issues, a lot of Chief Constables have gone, there's been a lot of issues recently but if you look at the confidence stats and satisfaction stats, actually people are still pretty happy with their local police force, so I think people don't think that this is their police. I think it's really interesting because I think people do and don't think of it as a, kind of, homogeneous body, I don't think people understand how policing works, so, and understandably actually because, you know, if you look at it from the outside, it is slightly confusing as to why this Bernard Hogan-Howe person is always commenting on policing and yet appears to be nothing to do with Devon and Cornwall, for example, so I think they get a bit confused, I think people think there are their local police... and then I think, they think, there is some other sort of police that sits above that and I don't think they really understand quite

how that works but they think there is something, there is, you know, some sort of body and that leads to confusion when we ask questions about confidence" (PI.10)

"When you look at surveys I think people tend to think fairly well of the police actually generally. I think sometimes there is a difference between it is almost an abstract vision of the police sometimes in that people have they are not good at this because this this and this happened but then my local cops are really good. So I think at ground level people really like them and we are getting back to that Neighbourhood policing thing up here they might not be detecting or preventing a lot of crime probably but they are keeping people on their side and that is probably worth a lot actually going forward I think. I think inwardly the police worry a bit too much about what the public think but I don't think it is as bad as they think it is. We don't want everybody to like because there are some people that we want to be scared of us really. I think some of that has been lost over the years because everybody knows their rights now don't they - we will never win everyone over these days because not everyone is nice are they that's the thing." (PI.18)

4) Causes of the 'Crisis in Confidence'

Engagement:

"We've moved from being – 2000 to 2010, the second highest confidence levels in the country out of 43 forces that were in that assessment to now 20. All of that, yeah I've done the correlations, the drop in confidence levels totally correlates to the lack of investment in the gaps in corp coms and engagement activity." (PI.11)

"there's research that says that people feel more engaged when they have more information but on the other side of it, there's also an awful lot of research which shows that more information people have information about something, the less confident they feel. It's almost like are only more confident in ignorance. The 'apathetic safe' we call them." (PI.9)

Public Expectation:

"One of the problems that the police face is the gap between what the victim wants and what the police can actually do about the situation". (PI.14)

"Yeah, if you get a service that's better than the one you expected to get then your confidence is going to go up right?" (PI.16)

"you know you watch the Inspector Morse of this world or whatever the current one is. It is obviously miles away from the reality of everyday policing because you've got a copper who spends all of his time leisurely investigating one incident where as in reality they would probably be investigating two dozen incidents at once and going from here to there and doing all sorts of things. Traditionally have an antagonistic relationship with public in this area -they still exist those feelings and relationships I think in the former mining communities which are still pretty downtrodden in terms of there is not much economic growth. If you look at some of the smaller towns and villages that were sort of centred on mining they've not really come along that much and I still think there is some old feelings there so we've got that, we've got addressing the demographic makeup of large centres of BME populations. There is a couple of things really, certainly the nostalgia thing it is a bit like let's go back to the time when there was a copper on every street corner well I don't think that ever happened really that there was a policeman stood on every corner but that was what everybody always said. I think it's we've not managed expectations that well in the past because everybody knows then they ring the doctors for an appointment they're probably not going to get in that morning are they? - You know you are in for a long wait and when you go somewhere likes the doctor's you are going to be sitting around a long time. People by and large tend to live with that really but that a police officer won't be there immediately for everything still seems to wind people up a lot really - police are 'victims of our own success'" (PI.18)

Politicians:

 "Politicians like having something they can fight for or against. Confidence is just one of their long standing favourites". (PI.10)

Dual Identity:

"We are the ones that come running towards you when you need us, but we're also the ones who will come and, if you're breaking the law, deal with you and issue you a fine for speeding. And that's the classic divisive issue, one of the biggest issues for concern in our communities is speeding and parking. And we ask the public, always

have done, well we have done for a long time, what are the issues affecting your neighbourhood right now. And most people say no issues. The second most common thing is parking and traffic issues. Crime hardly ever appears as being their issue that they want us to address. But nobody wants anybody to speed down their street, but you're happy to speed down somebody else's." (PI.12)

Inherited:

"a lot of it [when it comes to confidence] inherited… , it is a challenge and some of it does go back to things like the miners' strikes and real issues where people have gone head to head with the police, you know, for their rights at that stage. So you've almost ended up with maybe two or three generations whose whole I suppose perception of policing is this well they're just a government heavy-handed bunch of idiots that'll come in and sweep up afterwards and although it translates differently, you know, it does translate down, it is passed down into this generation. that child then grows up at least with no trust or confidence in the policing, they're certainly not going to want to report anything to us or speak to us about any problems that they might have, because they've been fed this staple diet of if you don't pack it in I'm going to have you arrested by that copper over there... The imported views, I suppose a lot of the negativity and a lot of bigoted feelings around certainly BME communities or Eastern European communities, the minority groups in general, a lot of those inherited things are hugely unhelpful and there's no easy way around it, because again, you know, my parents have bred me on this for the past 20 odd years that's now what I think, my dad says that this is what he thinks of that Indian shopkeeper over there and that's right. So, you know, how do you open people's minds up to be more tolerant of the fact that we are multinational companies, now we are multinational communities, we're not in a position like we were 50 or 60 years ago when minority groups were real minority groups because, you know, you look at some of the BME communities they're third and fourth generation, they've got as much right to be in here as anyone in the city of Hull or Grimsby or Scunthorpe." (PI.22)

4.2.13 Collaboration and Awareness

2) Attitude towards Collaboration:

 "So we're not against collaboration by any stretch of the imagination, but it's got to be beneficial for us. We won't do it just because it says collaboration is a good thing to do."

"We are all looking at what collaboration we can do with county partners. What can we do better with our county council colleagues in terms of campaigning. We work closely with [neighbouring forces] in particular, in terms of sharing ideas on campaigns. Because of the geography, it means that we can use similar materials and messaging without the audience seeing it being similar because that's important. Otherwise, you can have difficulties with a regional campaign that its seen as a, for example, West Midlands campaign and not a [your] campaign. It is because it then might not be relevant to them. They might not see it as relevant. If they live in [here] and they're seeing a West Midlands badge on it, they might not think it's relevant. If it's on Midlands Today, the regional television and it's not got [our badge] on it, do they switch off a little bit? Is it relevant to them?"

"There's a regional burglary campaign at the moment that we're collaborating with... there's four forces there, so somebody's doing the internal and we're doing the press releases and there's the posters and so on, so that we're being efficient, I think." (PI.25A)

3) Problems with Collaboration:

"considering that we're comms professionals we can be notoriously poor communicators when it comes to talking to and sharing with other departments". (PI.10)

"but yeah sometimes even more hassle than it's worth. Other times it's fine, other times, you know, they'll send the design through and we can put [our] badge on it and stuff, but again that stuff all seemed easier in the past as well cos now everyone's so busy it's like we haven't got the time, do you know what we're dealing with here? So yea, it's just getting more and more". (PI.19B)

"The Association of Chief Police Officers attempted last year into this year to do national weeks of action to focus forces' attention on certain subjects all at the same time, it caused a few issues, you know, that it wasn't very well thought out, so a lot of forces opted out after the first few, but it shows that, you know, policing in general is trying to get its act together for want of even worse way of phrasing it". (PI.22)

 "I'm proud to say we actually do try to look at what other forces have done and learn from their experiences." (PI.17)

"I used to be really on board with web online activities back in the day when we used to meet up once a month at the Constabulary and have a chat and a lunch and all of that. I find it a lot harder to keep in touch with what everything's going on and for Web Managers they have a Facebook group and Nick Keen from the College of Policing tries to send messages out to keep on board but sometimes I really struggle nowadays to know what're the key messages that we should be doing. For example there's this Policing eCommerce initiative so they're saying about putting firearms licencing online and I know that there were going to be some Forces rolling this out but I still don't know who them Forces are, whether it's happened and I do find it hard, and I make a note, now that I'm saying this I'm like, I really need to know that. I know [our boss] goes to a Communications meeting that still takes place maybe once every three months or something like that and she finds that quite useful so they'll talk about what they're using… so I think we're quite good that way, but I do find it a lot harder than what it used to be because people don't have the time to share information as much, I used to know all the actual names of the Web Managers in different Forces whereas now I've just lost it." (PI.19A).

"I mean there are forums where, you know, police communicators get together and that sort of thing and there is an annual conference isn't there that Lincolnshire are very keen they run, but I suppose, you know, I think the funding has focussed minds and, you know, we are perhaps 43 different forces setting off in different directions sometimes, where it would be better if there was some sharing of best practice perhaps a little more widely." (PI.28)

"I think it's more as and when we have time to look across forces, the college of policing is useful, they have done a couple of social media events that we have attended and that's been really useful to get a review. Social media is easier because I follow a load of them and see what they are doing on my feeds and then there's the APCOM Conference once a year that we go to which brings – well, not everyone attends but a lot of forces come together at that point so sort of share learnings, best practices etcetera." (PI.9)

"But the other forces I've spoken to, they were like 'no, we don't touch other people's campaigns, we do them all in-house, because if we had shared across the borders campaigns, people might get confused about the branding'." (PI.17)

"Surely it's about what you're saying to them and the message. I don't think anybody, you know, goes back to what I was saying before about whether you put a uniform or a plain clothes officer [pause] I don't think they remember their name or where they're from, they just remember seeing a police officer… Because I don't think actually the public care that much. What they care about is when they call the police they get an answer and if they need somebody there they get somebody there. And maybe our efforts should be, you know, better just on how we communicate with the public". (PI.28)

"is the information that the public want is that so very different from each area? I'm not sure it is and I would feel personally, again this is a personal view, that I could go and work in Suffolk, I could go and work in Hampshire and I could go and work in North Yorkshire and the way I did my job, the basics of the way I did my job would be the same, there'll be nuances for each area, that would largely reflect how you were policing each area, but that's not an essential part of the job, the essentials I think are the same nationwide." (PI.28)

"I personally always wondered why the police service doesn't just doesn't have a central unit doing national campaigns because you'll find domestic abuse is quite high on the police agenda and everyone is doing individual campaigns and replicating it why does everybody not just make a contribution to the central unit which produces a national poster with the messages that the police services want to get out and that why you've got consistency haven't you. So you're more likely to get the message

across. That has always puzzled me... Some forces are worried about Brand because the police service remains quite parochial isn't it, in that in general it has never had a particularly strategic overview it hasn't looked in the whole what messages you need to get out to the public to reduce crime and they tend to be quite insular in saying this is The City of London Police or this is The Metropolitan Police and actually people don't really care do they. They are more interested in the messaging generally... I would be very surprised if people could pick out the individual logos for their county from the 43 wondering around the UK at the moment". (PI.15)

"we went out to the region and said, 'Look, you are probably doing your own thing, this is what we are doing, here's our materials, if you want any of it, you know, grab away. Let us know what you want and we'll send it over.' There was [only one force] who did. So, yeah, I think culturally we have got a way to go but I think some – I know there's other forces that are doing more collaboration." (PI.9)

"And actually with the next stage that we're getting into would be, campaign sharing. So if we're both dealing with how we use the classics, we're both doing a Halloween poster, I'll bet there's 43 versions of the same Halloween poster being used across multiple forces, why the heck can't we be doing one version and sharing it? That's not a contentious issue for, there's not a localisation issue there for me that's going to be the same problem with every single force area. And it, and I was on about the same thing in [my last force] when I was trying to get them to collaborate more. A lot of things where the causation practice, the risk factors and the outcomes are identical... probably the majority of crime issues are generic... Problem with this was highlighted at a recent meeting between 5 forces over calendar sharing... Potentially over time it would have led to staff reductions as well as you don't need five people all designing a Halloween poster or five people all doing a slightly different version of a drink-drive campaign. That's is efficient coms for me, cutting those roles which is unpalatable when it's people losing jobs but, we have to be thinking in that way and a lot of forces don't." (PI.11)

"I think it would be really amazing if that [collaboration by communication teams] could happen, but my experience of the police has been that a lot of police forces, particularly comms team are really, really like... insular - This is my area. I mean we

were doing a domestic abuse campaign, you know, we offer our materials out to other people and it's like well we're doing our own, thanks for that, but we're doing our own, it's like well hang on a minute I don't know what it's going to take for there to be more of a joined up approach even within a region where I meet with other heads of comms and even with forces like [this one] who collaborate with [another force] on more than half of their back office and some of their front office shared services like we collaborate on serious crime directorate, IT, HR, training, all those sorts of things, even on collaborative forces it's really difficult to do joint campaigns, yeah... but generally when I joined the police I found that there was quite a 'this is mine, we do it this way'; we really want to work with other forces and it's not really helped at a national level either by the things like ACPO or the College of Policing and even like the Home Office for example, so the Home Office have their own kind of policing comms team who will kind of like just put a campaign on you and tell you that this is a campaign that they're doing and they haven't engaged forces across the country in that journey or look to work with you, they just sort of do things to you, so forces have become very like this is mine and this is what I'm going to deliver and I think it would be so good if it could be much more joined up and it makes ever so much sense like we lead on [one things here], but somebody else leads on burglary behaviour change and someone else leads on some other form of crime reduction or robbery or some sort of a sexual assault or rape or whatever it is and we learn from one another and we kind of share that best practice, but I think we're really far off that...". (PI.16)

"Well the way that we've approached it, because we have at the moment a zero marketing budget, but we ran our recent domestic abuse campaign with [our] County Council, I can tell you the cost, it cost about £27,000 and they paid the money and we put in the kind of equivalent staff time, so we made the films, we did all the work, did all the graphic work, all the images, all the digital images, all the digital adverts etc etc, so we sort of contributed in sort of staffing time the equivalent, but they put up the actual cash for the advertising on the buses and online and social media and that sort of thing, so we've kind of gone to like the council really as our kind of key partner in terms of collaborative working instead of them having a domestic abuse campaign and us having one, we'll do joint and we've got the plans to do like a rogue kind of trader/fraud campaign later this year with them". (PI.16)

"I think there's some core elements between all forces that are relatively similar whether it's a small force or a big force, there are some key bits that are kind of universal, so some of the media law stuff is universal, some of the areas and the boundaries and the way you work has to be similar, I think where the differences are are probably due to environmental factors, internally and externally. I think the difficulty is different forces have different priorities, I think there are things we should absolutely share and you could do it, you absolutely could do it, but you would then have to say that's your template so effectively some PCCs will get hacked off because they'll go 'but I have this whole area that we do this with…..well, no, you're not having it'….do you know what I mean….we're not in the world where you are able to do that…..but for a lot of the basic information you could do it you could say well we know you're gonna need to know this, this, this, etc and we can do you a basic website which has all that in it… but I think we are further away from there now than we have ever been because I just don't see how you'll get PCCs to agree, you can't even get them to agree to the national policing requirement in the way that you would want to and all that says is you know with some areas of policing quite rightly it's a national response and possibly an international response but yeah you have to have that as a consideration. I know in some areas PCCs have said I'm not bothered about that I'm bothered about this happening I don't care if there's organised criminals coming over from that as long as they're not doing anything here and they can go over there and do it." (PI.23).

"but in the long term, I think we can imagine a smaller comms department, a joined up one probably. And I think that's happened elsewhere, hasn't it?" (PI.25B)

"I think merging is something that is going to happen more in the future, with forces and more in the regional work in terms of the amount of money that is going to be in the public sector in future. I think there has got to be more of that merging of forces and I think we will see a lot more close working between forces and other blue light agencies and local authorities so a lot of services being provided on a shared basis." (PI.18)

"I really don't know. I think after everything we've been through and all the different cuts and reshuffles and restructures, the fact that we're still here I don't think there's

a case of well, we'll wipe you all out and we're not going to have a Comms Team and we'll have Police Officers doing it. There might be if there's talk of Constabularies merging together which could be the case that they do it a bit differently." (PI.19A)

"Whoever you merge us with you get this thing of well we have rural crime and we have these issues over here, but you compare that with, I dunno… where it's like city crime and there's only so many Officers, well they're going to send the Officers over there and well, out low level stuff that we used to be on top of is going to go up, so it's not going to help [this county]. Things like that make you a bit concerned that if they do put it all together it like, well we need all the Officers over here. You know this is lower level stuff, but the low level stuff becomes high level stuff and then you'll have, oh this was a bad idea, what were we thinking. Let's go back to how it was, but it's too late because now we're living in Gotham City. Gotham City… At some point the wheels will probably fall off if they keep trying to do this and then someone will decide 'hang on a second this isn't working very well, let's stick bits back on again and it'll go a big full circle." (PI.19B)

"Yeah, well look at Police Force Scotland, you know, ultimately as an example it's just one giant police force now isn't it and, you know, everyone looked at that with a hell of a lot of cynicism and trepidation when it all came together, how well's that actually going to work? The reality of it is we all work to one set of laws, we all work to one set of practice directions for obvious reasons. Yeah, we're going to have to come to a point if something doesn't give financially where the next stage is looking at - all right so what can was just do together, now where can we either merge police forces, become one big giant police force, provide one set of governance or one set of material that'll be used, you know, you can guarantee not only the marketing material or probably even down to the stock check forms or the penalty notices or the speeding fine tickets, you know, all of these sorts of things probably look different force to force, but the information on them will have to be exactly the same. So, you know, it probably isn't too far away at all if things stay the way that they are and forces are still having to make some drastic cuts." (PI.22)

"It used to be a lot more coordinated. It's a lot more difficult now with PCCs involved because some PCCs wanted to lead on some of the campaign areas." (PI.12)

"When you're looking at collaboration, you have to collaborate almost from a similar baseline, particularly in policing and, when you look at funding arrangements in policing, the variability is massive... And then it's a case of, okay, so what baseline are you coming from, when have you gone with your savings because the savings are, say, over three years. What's the appetite for collaboration from your PCC? Who do you want to collaborate with? Have you got the same kind of operating standards, policies and procedures because forces work differently?" (PI.20A)

"We've already discussed it'd probably be very bad for [this area] because of the rural kind of, the very different way our county is." (PI.19B)

"okay that might work for Sussex but it doesn't work here. And that's the great difficulty." (PI.13)

"The problem is, obviously, you've got different types of burglary [here] to London. You've got different residents, you've got different audiences." (PI.24)

"And then the HMIC and the government are pushing it as a money saving opportunity, but often these things need funding to make them work and then who recognises the savings and who realises them. So we're not against collaboration by any stretch of the imagination, but it's got to be beneficial for us. We won't do it just because it says collaboration is a good thing to do." (PI.20A)

"We've done the odd thing but it hasn't really worked for use, it ends up being more expensive but we've done things, let's say, we did an advent calendar a couple of years ago and [another force] helped us with that but by the time it all added up it wasn't really that much cheaper than going to a designer." (PI.19A)

APPENDIX 3.9:   Website Functionality

Website Functionality

The ability for the public to engage online with the police is becoming increasingly essential, according to the HMIC (2015). In their report 'Policing in Austerity', HMIC (2015, p109) judged that "the options available for the public to interact with forces online and the level of importance the forces place on communication differ, to a large degree, between forces".

In 2009 the majority of police websites were repositories for news and appeals for information with contact information and advice on crime prevention. These sites tended to be quite cumbersome to use with a sometimes complicated navigation system. Most of the current police websites have increased user functions and applications and are fully compatible with phones and tablets. Five forces had specifically designed websites to be touchscreen friendly[34] opting for tabs in favour of the drop down menus police websites have previously favoured. Most police websites are between two and five years old (see appendix 3.2) with a small number who have updated this year or are in the process of updating. The oldest website still in use is Kent Constabulary's which was launched in 2006.

As can be seen from Fig 3.22 current police websites range between a one-stop-shop for policing matters and those that offer "little else for the public beyond a basic information website" (HMIC, 2015 p110). Accessibility options were also inconsistent across websites with some, like Avon and Somerset Police, offering comprehensive language and accessibility options for users with visual and other disabilities while other websites provided neither (see Appendix 3.10 for a comparison of police websites).

<u>Accessibility</u>

27 websites have a number of in built language options available for users of different nationalities. This ranges from one site with seven options to another that has over 50 language options. A further 19 also have one or more options for those with visual, audio or learning disabilities.

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[34] Humberside, Wiltshire and Northamptonshire are examples of this new touch screen style website.

Appeals

All force websites have a news/appeals for information section – although with a differing level of cover and frequency of updating. 20 forces have also included a picture gallery of people they are looking for in connection with various crimes.

Do It Online

Police forces are being encouraged to move services online as a cost saving measure (Ford, 2015). 29 websites now have the ability for people to report crimes online (an increase of 13 from the HMIC study in 2014) but only five allow victims to follow the progression of their cases. The majority of forces now offer the ability to make a complaint or pay a compliment through an online form, and an increasing number (27) are hosting community web chats to discuss local policing issues with residents.

Miscellaneous

A number of police forces are branching out and including non-standard features like department pages so that the public can see their police force's management team and learn about how the different backroom departments contribute to modern policing in their area.

A growing number[35] have also incorporated youth zone areas into their main website. In some cases, this zone included informative games designed to help children and teenagers learn about crime prevention and danger awareness both online and in the real world.

13 websites are also proactively publishing 'success' stories to update the public on how crimes they might have been aware of have progressed to court and sentencing.

six websites still offer a dedicated press area for journalists to go and find, or request, information. This has almost halved since 2012.

Social Media

All 39 websites have links to the corporate social media pages; although considerably fewer (22) also have links to the local neighbourhood social media accounts and only 19 forces have twitter updates actually on their webpages.

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[35] 17 in 2015 up from 13 in 2012

Police Website Functions		Yes	No
Miscellaneous	**Corporate Communications / Media Page**	13	26
	Weather	3	36
	Children and Teenagers Area	17	22
	In Court / Success Stories	13	26
	Dedicated Press Area	6	33
Do It Online	**Option to Report Crimes**	29 4 with the option to report hate crimes only	6
	Option to Track Crimes	5	34
	Report Lost Property	10	29
	Web Chats	27	12
	Make an FOI Request through their website	12	27 (Email or by letter only)
	Make a Complaint	34	5
	Make a Compliment	33	6
Appeals	**Most Wanted / Photo Appeals**	20	19
	News / Appeals for Information Section	39	0
Accessibility	**Language Option**	27	12
	Alternative Communication Methods (e.g. Browse Aloud, BSI).	19	20
Social Media	**Scrolling Social Media Updates**	19	20
	Links to Force Social Media Sites	37	2