Senior Practitioner Fellowship Scheme 2020
Secondment Opportunities April-July 2020

The Centre for Policing Research and Learning (CPRL) at the Open University invites applications for Senior Practitioner Fellows for its 2020 Scheme, based on secondments paid by the Centre. The closing date for applications is midnight 19 February 2020. This is potentially a high value (and free) opportunity for police and their organisations.

Senior Practitioner Fellows (SPF) are police officers or police staff with appropriate interests and expertise in research. The Centre aims to create high-quality research evidence which can be used in policy and practice, so much of its research is based on a genuinely collaborative working relationship which brings together the knowledge, skills and experience of academics with those of policing practitioners. The Scheme offers an opportunity for co-research, with police officers and staff joining a research team for a period, designing research, collecting data and writing up results. It offers police an opportunity to develop research skills and exchange knowledge with academics.

Successful Fellows will be seconded from their force to the Open University for 2-4 months between April and July 2020 to work collaboratively with Centre academics on a specific research project. For the 2020 Scheme, applications are specifically invited to join one of four projects:

- Domestic Abuse and Rape: Understanding victim reporting and engagement with the police
- Leadership with political astuteness: How police officers approach working with elected politicians
- Mobilising change in learning and development – Investigating the use of new approaches to Police Learning and Development
- Research into Practice & Practice into Research? Exploring the role and impact of CPRL in supporting the mobilisation of research evidence into policing and academic practice

Further details of each project and contact details of project leads can be found in the Appendices on page 4.

Benefits

Previous Fellows have written about the benefits they took from the Scheme. Matthew Adams from the PSNI (2019 Fellow) helped to conduct research into police demand management practices:¹

¹ The report An Evaluation of Demand Management Practices in UK Police Forces, by Dr Paul Walley and Mr Matthew Adams was published by the Centre for Policing Research and Learning in May 2019.
I spent four months visiting a number of forces across the United Kingdom, conducting research into demand management practices. This involved completing semi-structured interviews with members of staff and senior officers to evidence what forces are doing to manage the increased volume and complexity of demand.

This period of my career has been an incredibly enriching experience and has provided me with a wealth of knowledge on the topic of demand management in policing. However, the pinnacle learning point that I have taken from it is how important the partnership between police forces and universities is for meeting the demands of 21st century policing.

Quoc Thanh Vo from Thames Valley Police (2017 Fellow) worked on public value in policing:

The secondment has more than fulfilled what I had hoped to achieve from it. Not only have I further developed my academic research skills, but also I have taken away something much more valuable. It has given me a reminder that the public and our partners genuinely value what the Police do and are really interested in helping us make the society we all live in safer. I have returned more positive about the future of policing and feel a sense of responsibility to share everything I have experienced with my fellow officers.

Eligibility and practicalities

- The Scheme is open to any police officer or police staff of any rank from those police forces and agencies which are members of the Centre.
- The OU reimburses the secondee’s salary, on-costs and pension for the duration of the Fellowship.
- Fellows are appointed for a minimum of 0.6FTE (3 days per week), though 1FTE (full time) is preferred.
- SPFs will be offered a desk and computer at the Centre’s offices in the Open University Campus in Milton Keynes, but there is some flexibility for home working or working from another location in discussion with the project lead.
- Projects are likely to involve travel around the UK for data collection.

The academic community at the Centre for Policing Research and Learning


While SPFs are working at the Centre, there will be opportunities to get involved in wider Centre activities, including lunchtime seminars, meetings with international academics, police academics seminars and so on. There are around 50 academics at the OU with research or teaching interests relevant to policing. The OU itself runs courses in various research methods, which SPFs will be welcome to join, subject to the work schedule of the research project.

**Further information**

For general enquiries about the Scheme, please contact Professor Jean Hartley, Centre Academic Director ([jean.hartley@open.ac.uk](mailto:jean.hartley@open.ac.uk)).

For an informal discussion about the research projects, please contact the project leads (see appended project briefs).

**How to Apply**

- Complete the Secondment Application Form including addressing how you meet the criteria in the Person Specification below and indicating which project you are interested in.
- Applicants will be assessed on their relevant skills and experience for the project they are applying to.
- Email completed form to: [oupc@open.ac.uk](mailto:oupc@open.ac.uk) by **19 February 2020**
- Interviews will take place w/c 24 February 2020
- SPFs to start as soon as possible from March 2020. The shortest secondment would start on 1 June for 2 months.

Because the Fellowship will need to be conducted by July 2020, applicants are requested to secure at least agreement in principle from their force to a secondment before applying.

**Person specification**

Please address how you meet each point in your Personal Statement in the Secondment Application Form.

- A qualification at Undergraduate level, or equivalent professional experience
- Professional knowledge relevant to the project subject area
- Whether you have any experience in conducting research using methods relevant to the project applied to (e.g. interview skills, focus groups/consultations, case file analysis, literature reviews)
- Ability to work well in a team and collaborate on work projects

In addition, please indicate in the Benefits section of the Secondment Application Form what you hope to gain professionally from the secondment, and what your force will gain
Appendix 1

Domestic Abuse and Rape: Understanding victim reporting and engagement with the police

What is the project?

The police are receiving an unprecedented number of reports of domestic abuse and rape, but fewer are staying in the justice system through to charge and conviction (a high rate of attrition). One common reason for attrition is that victims do not support a police investigation. Outcome data for police cases shows that increasingly more cases are being closed where victims disengage.

We know from previous research some reasons why victims drop support for a police investigation (e.g. fear of the abuser, protecting children, hostility to police, not wanting to ‘relive’ abuse in court etc). But there is limited analysis which segments the different reasons for non-engagement in specific cases and looks at what different groups of victims want and need from the criminal justice system.

Therefore, improving understanding of why, when and in what circumstances different victims chose to support or not support an investigation is vital to improving the police response and achieving better outcomes for victims.

This project aims to understand the profile, reasons for, and implications of victim non-engagement with police and criminal justice processes in domestic abuse and rape cases. Findings will inform a range of police interventions and policies, and build an evidence base for which cases could and should be kept in the criminal justice system.

The project employs mixed methods:

(a) A retrospective sample of around 200 closed domestic abuse and rape cases from a small number of forces sampled for geographic spread. Cases will be read, coded and anonymised on-site at forces, to produce a quantitative and qualitative dataset. Statistical analysis will consider the relative impact of different factors on victim engagement.

(b) Interviews with 50 victims of domestic abuse and rape, recruited through NGO contacts.

(c) Focus groups with police officers / staff.

What is the role of the SPF?

The SPF will join the project for 2-4 months, ending in July 2020. They will work on one aspect of the project, as agreed with the research project lead - Dr Lis Bates, Senior Research Fellow in Violence Against Women and Girls at CPRL.

http://www.open.ac.uk/people/lb27747
The project has just started and runs until autumn 2021, so this is a great opportunity for an SPF to help shape the work from the outset. There is some scope to flex the role depending on the candidate appointed, but it is anticipated that the SPF would assist with one or more of:

- Development of research instruments (e.g. case file analysis template, interview schedules)
- Data collection and coding from police case files
- (Potentially) conducting victim interviews and police focus groups

The Fellowship as currently funded would finish before the project ends, but the SPF will be offered the chance to contribute to write up of findings for publication and other dissemination activities (e.g. events, practice briefings), alongside other members of the team.

**Who would it suit?**

Applicants should have an interest in domestic abuse, rape and/or other violence against women topics. Previous experience or knowledge of this area – whether operational, policy or analytical – in a police context is highly desirable.

The project offers the SPF a unique opportunity to learn from an experienced VAWG researcher and academic, and receive some training in research techniques (e.g. interviewing vulnerable participants, coding and analysis of case files).

In return, the project will benefit from the operational experience and/or subject expertise of the SPF. This is an exciting opportunity to share knowledge and skills in both directions!

**Logistics**

The data collection will involve travel across the UK, depending on which of the 21 partner police agencies wish to get involved in the research. Some work can be undertaken from home and some from the OU, where a desk will be provided in the Centre for Policing Research and Learning. Travel, accommodation and subsistence to research sites will be paid.

**Further discussion**

For an informal discussion of the project and role, please contact Dr Lis Bates on lis.bates@open.ac.uk.
Appendix 2

Leadership with political astuteness: How police officers approach working with elected politicians

What is the project?

Middle and senior ranks of police officers often have to work with elected politicians, whether local and national and most notably Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). However, little is known about how police officers think about and work with elected politicians. Yet the relationship is likely to have an impact on how the police tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and vulnerability. Complex, so-called wicked societal issues may well require sustained collaboration between politicians and senior police officers (and indeed other agencies) at a strategic level.

The key aim of this research is to better understand how senior police officers approach working with elected politicians: what is their understanding of the role of elected politicians (senior local councillors and/ or directly elected mayors, metro-mayors and MPs as well as Police and Crime Commissioners); how do senior police officers interact with elected politicians; and how important is political astuteness for effective working in senior policing? Political astuteness is a key attribute for middle and senior public servants who are not elected politicians. Political astuteness here refers to ‘the set of skills, knowledge and judgements about the interests, goals and values of stakeholders and how to exercise leadership in ways that take account of diverse and competing interests’ (Manzie and Hartley, 2013). It is seen as a constructive capability for public servants where combined with ethical judgement.

What is the role of the SPF?

The Senior Practitioner Fellow will join research project which plans to start in April 2020 and which builds on earlier research about political astuteness in other public service sectors (e.g. Hartley and others, 2015; Alford and others 2017). There is an opportunity to join in the literature review to understand what has already been written about police working with elected politicians and to contribute to writing this up with the research team into a report. The SPF will then also contribute to the research design of the interview stage of the research and may get involved in interviewing some police officers and staff (not from their own force) on this topic. If the SPF is working on the project after the May elections, there may also be opportunities to interview PCCs, and other elected politicians (not connected with their own force). The SPF is invited to contribute to the writing up of the research by the team, though the final report and any academic publications will take place after the end of the secondment.

Who would it suit?

This research project may appeal to those whose police work is bringing them or has brought them into contact with politicians in some way, and who would like to understand
more about “how it works”. The role will be aided by a curiosity about the role of politicians in a democratic society.

The project offers an opportunity to work with two academics who have both conducted research with elected politicians in earlier research projects and who have wide experience of other public services as well as policing.

The SPF will be expected to undertake directed reading to understand the academic literature, and will be shown how to contribute to the literature review and the interviewing for research purposes. As with other projects, the team hopes to gain from the experience and insights of experienced police professionals.

**Logistics**

The research could involve travel across the UK, depending on which of the 21 partner police agencies wish to get involved in the research. Some work can be undertaken from home and some from the OU, where a desk will be provided in the Centre for Policing Research and Learning. Travel, accommodation and subsistence to research sites will be paid.

**Further discussion**

For an informal discussion of the project and role, please contact Professor Jean Hartley jean.hartley@open.ac.uk.
Appendix 3

Mobilising change in learning and development – Investigating the use of new approaches to Police Learning and Development

What is the Project?

This research project that aims to explore and understand how new approaches to police learning and development which were co-developed between the CPRL and policing during the 2-year national ‘Implementing the Transformation of Police Learning and Development’ (ITPLD) research programme are being adopted and used in policing. Having co-created these new, evidence-based, approaches to engage the challenge of transforming the capability of policing set out in the NPCC’s Vision 2025 there is a high degree of confidence in their ability to be used by policing and to inform its policy practice and approach to learning and the delivery of learning. We know that these approaches are being used in practice, however it is critical to empirically test this hypothesis of efficacy by exploring their uptake and utility in use rather than theory. This project will focus on two products from this earlier research, the Destination Map (DM) and Tools techniques and Resources (TTR). In particular we wish to explore the impact of these products on innovation, knowledge exchange, and exploitation and absorptive capacity.

As these approaches are novel there is no existing empirical evidence base with which to assess their impact and efficacy. Given that they sit at the heart of current national policing strategy the opportunity to address this gap is both timely and critical, and this research is particularly timely given the current challenges and opportunities presented by the implementation of PEQF and the workforce uplift. This research project will look to work with and understand the perspectives of multiple stakeholder organizations from across UK policing.

For more information on the ITPLD project, The Destination Map and the Tools, Techniques and Resources please refer to the CPRL website: https://www.open.ac.uk/centres/policing/itpld/outputs

What is the role of the SPF?

The Senior Practitioner Fellow will have the opportunity to contribute directly to this important research. In addition, given the profile of this work they will also have the opportunity to gain greater understanding of and potentially contribute to the future direction of national policing policy. Whilst utilising, refining and expanding their existing academic and research skills their practitioner knowledge and experience will also be critical to their contribution. This blending of academic and practitioner perspective and expertise is central to the mission of the Centre and the SPF will contribute to this co-productive co-research approach.

It is anticipated that the SPF would be primarily involved in:
1. Mapping the models and approaches currently used by policing organizations in delivering their Learning and Development functions, and identifying those organizations using/seeking to use the DM and TTR.

2. Supporting the capture of data through developing, organizing and delivering such approaches as; workshops, focus groups, semi-structured interviews and designing and deploying survey tools.

3. Supporting communication with and understanding of policing organizations throughout the UK through their personal and professional knowledge and experience.

The exact participation of a successful SPF will be dependent upon the length of their secondment and the study stage/progress.

Depending on the length of the secondment there would also be an opportunity for the SPF to work with the wider research project.

Who would it suit?

This research project may appeal to police officers and/or staff whose work within policing involves the delivery or planning of learning within organizations at both strategic and tactical levels. In addition, it may appeal to those who are interested in understanding how academic research knowledge can be transferred to practical use within organizations or, given its national remit and approach, those who are interested in gaining exposure to the possibility of learning from organizations other than their own.

Logistics

This secondment will involve an element of desk-based research as well as the potential for field-based activity in relevant policing organizations. Some travel throughout the UK and the possibility of overnight stays may be required. Work can be undertaken from home (although there will be an initial expectation of attendance at the OU campus for orientation and set up) and some from the OU, where a desk will be provided in the Centre for Policing Research and Learning. Travel, accommodation and subsistence to research sites will be paid.

Further discussion

For an informal discussion of the project and role, please contact Richard Harding on richard.harding@open.ac.uk
Appendix 4

Research into Practice and Practice into Research? Exploring the role and impact of CPRL in supporting the mobilisation of research evidence into policing and academic practice

What is the project?

The SPF would support Phase 1 of a research project that aims to explore and understand how research evidence from the Centre is used and translated to improve policing practice. It is vital to demonstrate the uptake of the research evidence generated through the Centre and to more fully understand how to identify and meet the challenges of ensuring that good research is considered by policing practitioners. Providing research evidence alone is not enough to change behaviour and practice (e.g. Lavis et al, 2003; Walter et al, 2005; Langer et al, 2016).

A range of strategies and interventions are often used to promote the use of research evidence into practice – commonly referred to as knowledge mobilisation. Such interventions work by increasing knowledge and skills, predisposing the research ‘recipients’ to change; they can enable change by promoting conducive conditions in practice and reinforce change once it is made (e.g. Walter et al, 2004; Nutley et al, 2005). The Centre currently uses several interventions to mobilise its research evidence into practice such as Evidence Cafes, Peer Learning Visits, Evidence Champions, Seminars and Workshops. There has been little research to robustly establish if some more than others are likely to change or influence practice and why this might be.

What is the role of the SPF?

It is anticipated that the SPF would be primarily involved in:

1. Mapping the knowledge mobilisation interventions, tools and techniques currently used by member forces (outside of the Centre) in facilitating research into practice (e.g. EBP groups; web sites; seminar programmes).

2. Assessing the effectiveness of the different knowledge mobilisation interventions used by CPRL to promote and support the use of its research into practice. This would involve an element of desk-based research identifying the different mobilisation interventions used by the Centre, together with a series of interviews/focus groups with Centre members exploring their views and opinions on the success, or otherwise of these particular interventions in translating the research and in facilitating their use in practice.

Depending on the length of the secondment, there would also be an opportunity for the SPF to work with the wider research team to support the data collection in establishing police partners’ understanding and organisational receptiveness to research informed practice. This will be achieved through a combination of workshops and a survey.
Who would it suit?

This project would suit applicants with a keen interest in evidence-based policing and the desire to understand more about the challenges in translating and implementing research evidence into policing practice and decision-making. The project offers an opportunity to work with two academics who have significant experience in this area both from the academic and practitioner perspective.

Logistics

The research could involve travel across the UK, depending on which of the 21 partner police agencies wish to get involved in the research. Some work can be undertaken from home and some from the OU, where a desk will be provided in the Centre for Policing Research and Learning. Travel, accommodation and subsistence to research sites will be paid.

Further discussion

For an informal discussion of the project and role, please contact Dr Nicky Miller on Nicky.Miller@open.ac.uk