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College of Policing stop and search training experiment

An overview

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Executive summary

Six police forces trialled pilot stop and search training. The training was intended to focus on practical legal decision making, unconscious bias and procedural justice (ie, fairness and respectful treatment). A total of 1,323 police officers were randomly assigned to the treatment group (to be trained) or control group (not to be trained).

The impact of the pilot was mixed overall. The pilot training had some small positive effects on officers' knowledge, attitudes and anticipated behaviours immediately after the training was delivered. Some of these effects were sustained at a three-month follow-up. No effects were found on recorded stop and search practices (ie, the quality of written grounds for search or arrest rates). Substantial variation was found in training delivered by the pilot forces, although this was possibly because the trainer guidance was not sufficiently prescriptive.

The pilot training was generally well received by officers, though some challenged aspects of the training because it went against accepted officer practices. The findings of this study have been taken in account in developing the national stop and search learning programme to be introduced across England and Wales from 2016/17.

Background

In April 2014, the home secretary announced a series of reforms to stop and search in response to an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2013) and a related Home Office consultation. She stated that the misuse of stop and search wasted police time, was unfair (especially to young black men) and damaged public confidence. The reform package included a review of police stop and search training and the development of new national training. The College of Policing (the College) entered into a formal partnership with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to develop the national training for implementation from 2016/17 and to pilot a provisional version of it in 2015.

The training intervention

The pilot training programme was for frontline police officers and intended to focus on practical legal decision making, unconscious bias and procedural justice (ie, fairness and respectful treatment). The College created a Guidance for Trainers document, setting out the aims and learning outcomes and recommending training content and methods of delivery. Six volunteer pilot forces interpreted and implemented this document locally. The pilot training consisted of a pre-read document and written assessment, followed by a six-hour classroom training session.

Implementation and evaluation

The pilot training was implemented in the six pilot forces as a pragmatic randomised control trial. The aim was to find out whether implementing the pilot training in a real-world setting would improve officers' knowledge, attitudes and anticipated behaviour (the primary outcomes) and police stop and search practices (the secondary outcomes).

A total of 1,323 'regular users' of stop and search were randomly selected to take part in the trial. The officers were randomly assigned to the treatment group (to be trained) or control group (not to be trained). A good level of implementation was achieved overall, with 87 per cent of the treatment group attending a classroom training session.

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The College commissioned two related pieces of research to determine whether the pilot training ‘worked’ and to understand why and how (if it did or did not):

- The **impact evaluation**, carried out with the Research Advisory Service, tested whether the pilot training had a positive effect on primary and secondary outcomes. The evaluation was based on online officer surveys (carried out immediately after training implementation and three months later) and police stop and search data.
- The **process evaluation**, carried out with RAND Europe, explored the nature and quality of training implementation in the pilot forces. The research included observations of 12 classroom sessions and interviews with six national training designers and stakeholders, 18 force trainers and project leads and 30 trained officers. Observations of 30 patrol shifts were also carried out, during which time 99 police-initiated encounters were observed.

Impact evaluation findings

Primary outcomes (online officer survey)

It was hypothesised that the pilot training would improve officers’ knowledge, attitudes and anticipated behaviours. The pattern of effects was mixed but, on balance, broadly positive.

- **Effects on officers’ knowledge** – Officers were expected to have greater knowledge about and feel more prepared for stop and search as a consequence of being trained. The pilot training was found to have some positive effects. Officers were found to have a greater knowledge of stop and search regulations – an effect that was sustained after three months. They were also more questioning of the adequacy of written grounds for searches, especially when the grounds were weaker.

Contrary to expectations, treatment group officers were less enthusiastic than control group officers about their stop and search training. They were less likely to think their training experiences had contributed to their knowledge or interpersonal skills.

- **Effects on officers’ attitudes** – Officers were expected to have more favourable attitudes towards good practice in police-public interactions as a consequence of being trained. The results were broadly positive. Despite officers’ low overall support for using racial/ethnic stereotypes on patrol, the pilot training had a positive effect. Officers showed even lower support for racial/ethnic stereotypes as a result of the pilot training. Support for using non-racial/ethnic stereotyping (eg, based on age or clothing) remained the same.

Officers were found to be less cynical about the regulation of stop and search immediately after the training – this effect was not sustained after three months. They also showed less support for using stop and search in high volume – this effect was sustained, however. The pilot training was found to have no effect on support for principles of procedural justice in stop and search.

- **Effects on officers’ anticipated behaviour** – Officers were expected to say they would act in line with the training standards on decision making and practice as a result of being trained. The effect of the pilot training was, again, broadly positive. When presented with scenarios, treatment group officers were no more or less likely than control group officers to say they would question the suspect. The pilot training, as expected, had no effects. Trained officers were, however, less likely to say they would carry out a search. These effects were sustained three months after training.

There was evidence to suggest that these positive effects were due to officers not seeing the scenarios as providing them with sufficient grounds to search.

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Reassuringly, treatment and control group officers were just as likely to say they would search a suspect if they thought reasonable grounds were present. Taken together, these findings suggest the pilot training had an impact on **how** officers said they would intervene, rather than on **whether** they said they would intervene.

No treatment effects were found in terms of how officers said they would treat a suspect during a confrontational stop and search or the relevance of race/ethnicity in officer decision making.

Secondary outcomes (police stop and search data)

It was hypothesised that the pilot training would lead to officers' stop and search practices being more professional and effective, even though these secondary outcomes were thought less likely to be influenced by training. No treatment effects were found in terms of either the quality of officers' written grounds or the proportion of searches leading to arrest.

Process evaluation findings

Understanding and presenting the purpose of the pilot training

While there was general agreement among the national training designers and project stakeholders on the high-level aims of the training, respondents differed in how they thought the training goals were to be achieved. This lack of consistency at the national level appeared to filter down to the force level. The force trainers interviewed for the evaluation lacked clarity about the purpose for the training, and appeared to have formed their own understandings about it. The pilot was often (but not always) seen and presented by force trainers as providing refresher training and covering material 'already known' to officers.

The focus and content of the pilot training

The interviews and classroom observations strongly suggested that force trainers tried to develop and deliver local training that was of value and in line with their own understanding of the College's learning outcomes. They attempted to do so with what information the College had provided them and within a limited amount of time.

The observations and interviews revealed that there was substantial variation between the pilot forces in the approach they each adopted to the classroom sessions (eg, their structure, tone and balance of activities). The delivered training also concentrated on some learning outcomes more than others. It was seen to focus predominantly on practical legal decision making (eg, identifying reasonable grounds and legal procedure) possibly because it was a more comfortable topic for the trainers and officers. All the observed classroom sessions briefly covered unconscious bias, but there was little elaboration about the concept or how it might affect officer decision making. Procedural justice received limited coverage – it was largely implicit in the Guidance for Trainers and the observed classroom sessions.

The format and delivery methods of the pilot training

A participatory approach was adopted in all of the observed classroom sessions. Most force trainers were also seen to skilfully connect the training to officers' work and allow them to discuss their experiences. Role-play scenarios – a recommended training method – were largely absent, however. There was also no evidence of other participative methods being used (eg, problem-based and peer-to-peer learning).

Implementation issues

Force project leads and trainers were critical of the College for providing broad guidance,

which they had to use to design and deliver local training. Most had expected and wanted the College to produce a more prescriptive manual along with high-quality training materials. The lack of a training manual underpinned many of the implementation issues identified during the observations and interviews. Several force project leads and trainers also said the content of the train-the-trainer events did not meet their expectations and did not equip them to deliver training locally.

Force trainers were regularly challenged by officers when they were covering particular aspects of the training (ie, the definition of a fair and effective stop and search, and guidance that the smell of cannabis, on its own, provided insufficient grounds for a search). The trainers did not always know how to respond to these challenges, which often generated substantial classroom discussion

Officer perceptions of the pilot training

Officers were mostly positive about the pilot training, the quality of the trainers and the level of participation they were able to have. Of the 548 officers who completed a feedback sheet, 83 per cent rated the course as 'good' or 'excellent' and 75 per cent said that it was 'a little' or 'a lot better' than previous training on stop and search. They were also generally positive about the format of the classroom sessions and the training methods that were used.

When asked what they thought about the content of the pilot training, the officers who were interviewed tended to focus on three main issues:

- **The definition of a fair and effective stop and search** – While the definition caused no issues for some officers, specific elements proved to be particularly problematic for others. The expectation that a search had to be based on 'genuine belief' rather than 'reasonable suspicion' proved to be one of the most contentious issues during the pilot training and was raised by a notable number of officers. (The definition has since been revised to take account of officers' feedback.)
- **Guidance on the smell of cannabis** – The new guidance that the smell of cannabis, on its own, would not constitute reasonable grounds for a search also generated a largely negative response.
- **Unconscious bias** – Officers were generally positive about the training on unconscious bias. Most of those who talked about this part of the training pilot said that it was thought-provoking and well-managed

Perceived officer behaviour

Around two-thirds of officers reported that the quantity and quality of their searches were changing, although it was difficult to separate out the perceived effect of the pilot training from other potential influences. A notable minority felt the pilot training had led to a reduction in searches (although the impact evaluation found no evidence of a reduction). Some linked this perceived reduction to the emphasis placed in the training on raising the level of grounds required for a search, while others saw it more positively as a by-product of the training helping to ensure stop and search was used appropriately.

Other officers pointed, in smaller numbers, to the training having had a range of positive impacts on their own behaviour (eg, having increased confidence, communicating better, taking more time to consider the grounds for a search). A third of the officers, however, felt the pilot training had little or no impact on their stop and search practice.

Observed officer behaviour

It was difficult to determine from the observations of patrol, the extent to which officers

applied their learning in practice. The observations revealed, however, that officers were usually compliant with legal procedure when they carried out a search. They very rarely missed one of the required legal steps. There was much greater variation in officer behaviour around procedural justice and observations pointed to there being some room for improvement.

Suspects were seen to respond to officers more negatively during stop and search encounters than in other police-initiated interactions. There was, however, evidence to suggest the attitude of the suspect could significantly change during their interactions with officers, and usually for the better. Experience of procedural justice appeared to be an important influence on positive attitude change. Suspects were significantly more likely to be positive in their attitudes at the end of the encounter if officers were polite, enquired about their wellbeing or offered them reassurance. It seemed, however, officers were less likely to use procedural justice if the suspect was a young person or did not initially have a positive attitude. By reserving procedural justice to those suspects who already display a positive attitude, officers may be missing opportunities to improve the attitudes of other suspects and increase the chances of the interaction becoming increasingly bad-tempered.

Conclusion and implications

Read together, the findings of the impact and process evaluations present a fairly mixed picture. Officers' knowledge, attitudes and anticipated behaviours were seen as the trial's primary outcomes and the most important when assessing the overall impact of the intervention. The results for these outcomes pointed to the pilot having had a broadly positive impact. Several small effects were found, some of which were sustained over time. The impact of the pilot training on the trial's secondary outcomes (ie, recorded stop and search practices) was much more limited. No treatment effects were found.

Notably, there was no evidence of the pilot training having caused any harm (beyond treatment group officers being less enthusiastic about their training experiences). This is an important finding, given the sensitive nature of stop and search and the plan for a fully revised version of the training to be rolled out nationally from 2016/17.

A good level of implementation was achieved. Why, then, did the pilot training not have a larger and more consistently positive effect? The 'problems' with stop and search are complex and so may not be 'solved' by training alone. The way the pilot training was implemented could also have limited its impact. The design of the experiment may have made it more difficult to find positive effects of training. The fact that trained officers worked alongside other officers (and sometimes control group officers) could have dampened the effect of the training on outcomes. Nevertheless, some positive effects were found.

The national stop and search learning programme to be introduced from 2016/17 has been developed in light of the findings of the impact and process evaluations. Nevertheless, the experiment raises wider questions about the College's approach to the professional development of its members. The process evaluation clearly showed that the College's model can result in inconsistent local implementation. As greater central prescription is likely to face opposition from forces, the College will need to think about how to reconcile the tension between standardisation, local flexibility and inconsistency.

Moreover, given the competing demands on police time and the limited capacity of force training departments to deliver both national and local training, there may be some advantages in national learning programmes being more skills-based than topic-based in order to prevent duplication and ensure greater consistency in, and transferability of, knowledge and skills.

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1. Introduction

Overview of the training experiment

This report summarises the development, implementation and implications of a police stop and search training programme. Its intended focus was practical legal decision making, unconscious bias and procedural justice. Pilot training was developed by the College of Policing (the College) in partnership with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). It was implemented as a randomised controlled trial (RCT) by six pilot forces and involved 1,323 officers being randomly assigned to a treatment group (to be trained) or a control group (not to be trained).

Research was commissioned by and carried out in collaboration with the College to examine whether the pilot training had had an impact on officer knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (an impact evaluation) and explore the quality and nature of implementation (a process evaluation). The purpose of the pilot and the related research was to help ensure that the national learning programme to be implemented from 2016/17 was evidence-based.

The specific aim of this report is to provide an overview of the development of pilot training, the evaluation framework and the main results of the impact and process evaluations. It also seeks to draw out the wider issues arising from the pilot. Separate reports have been published describing the more technical aspects of the RCT (Quinton 2016) and the detailed results of the impact evaluation (Miller and Alexandrou 2016a and 2016b) and the process evaluation (Giacomantonio et al 2016a and 2016b).

Background to the training experiment

Developing national stop and search training

Since their introduction, the use of stop and search powers has been the subject of considerable public debate. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (Macpherson 1999) concluded that the police were institutionally racist, in part, because of the disproportionate searching of people from ethnic minorities. The EHRC (2010, 2013) has since raised concerns about the excessive and disproportionate use of police search powers. More recently, and prompted by research into the 2011 riots (Lewis et al 2011), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC 2013 and 2015) questioned whether stop and search was being used effectively and fairly by forces.

In April 2014, the home secretary announced a series of reforms in response to the first HMIC stop and search inspection and related Home Office consultation. She stated that the misuse of stop and search wasted police time, was unfair (especially to young black men) and damaged public confidence. As part of the reform package, the home secretary (2014) commissioned the College to 'review the national training of stop and search with a view to developing robust professional standards... [and] unconscious bias awareness training to reduce the possibility of prejudice informing officers' decisions'.

Later that year, the College entered into a formal partnership with the EHRC, receiving funding from them to deliver a work programme on stop and search. The overarching aims of this programme are outlined in box 1. In practical terms, the main objective of this programme was for the College to develop the following by March 2016, with a view to national implementation from 2016/17:

- National Policing Curriculum learning standards for all ranks of officer on stop and

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- search, based on new national guidance (ie, authorised professional practice)
- related training materials to support the delivery of those standards via existing or new learning programmes.

Box 1. Overarching aims of the College and EHRC’s work programme

1. Build capacity in the police to meet its statutory duties to respect, protect and promote human rights, including addressing potentially discriminatory behaviour and inequalities.
2. Improve the quality and effectiveness of police encounters, with a particular emphasis on reducing bias, improving interaction quality and targeting, and better understanding of equality and human rights by:
 - identifying training practice that directly changes attitudes and behaviour, and is sustainable
 - developing and testing a curriculum to improve practical skills and to make best use of existing equality and diversity training
 - aiming to improve police understanding of equality and human rights concepts and protections.
3. Ensure that knowledge and expertise gathered through previous EHRC work on stop and search is appropriately transferred to assist the College in meeting the home secretary’s commission on stop and search.
4. Explore the contribution voluntary organisations could play in strengthening the quality and impact of the programme, through expert advice, at a level that will be realistic and scalable.

It was agreed that the training curriculum would include the following topics:¹

- non-discriminatory and human rights-compliant encounters
- unconscious bias (including defining and understanding unconscious bias and how it may affect a range of police-initiated encounters)
- practical understanding and skills in applying the legal standard of ‘reasonable suspicion’, handling interactions in line with procedural justice and improving encounter outcomes
- skills to improve the capacity of the police to treat people with dignity and respect, and promote and protect human rights in line with the police’s statutory obligations.

The focus of the curriculum was to be on police-initiated encounters (ie, stop and search and other street encounters), although it was recognised that some of the learning may also be transferable into other contexts.

Evaluating pilot stop and search training

Provisional versions of the learning standards and training materials were prepared by the College, in advance of the final deadline, for piloting in a small number of police forces during the summer of 2015. It was agreed that the pilot training was to be implemented as an RCT – which would involve randomly assigning officers to a treatment group (to receive the pilot training) or control group (to not receive the pilot training) – so that causal statements could be made about its impact. While the final version of the police curriculum was to include all ranks, the training pilot was to focus on frontline police officers who routinely used stop and search powers (ie, not sergeants or more senior officers).

¹ This list has been adapted from the funding agreement with the EHRC and College project documents.

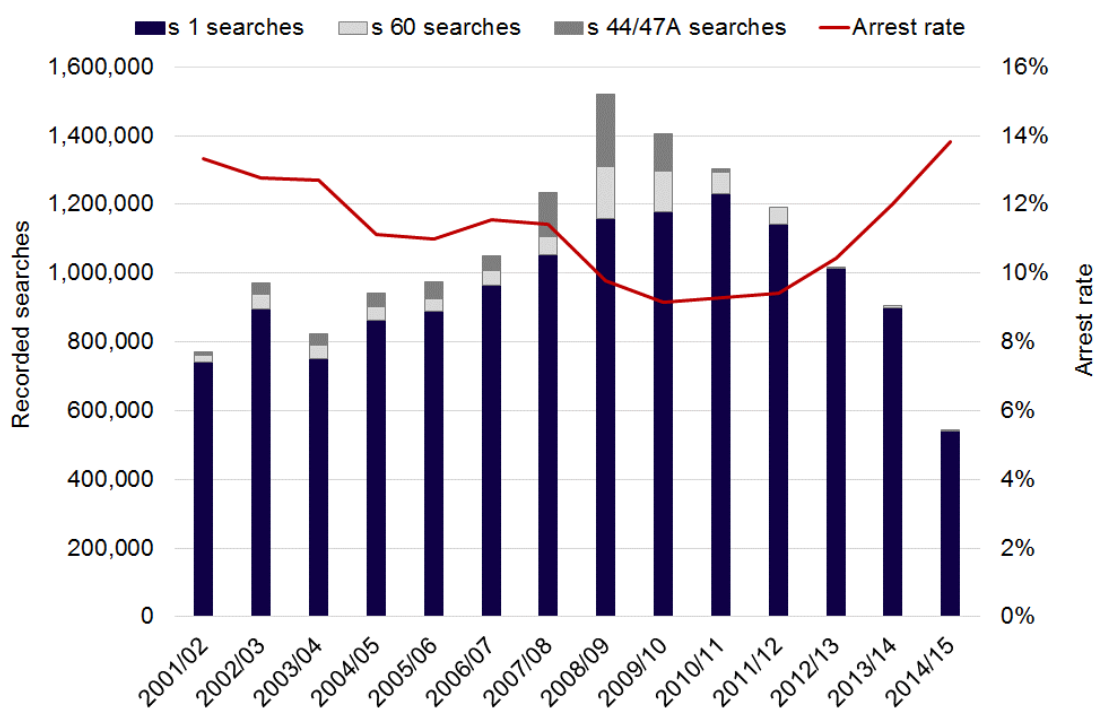
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To understand whether the pilot training had ‘worked’ and (if so) how, the College commissioned two related pieces of research – an impact evaluation (carried out with the Research Advisory Service) and a process evaluation (carried out with RAND Europe). Emerging findings from these evaluations informed the development of the final versions of learning standards and related training materials for roll-out across England and Wales. Use of the research in this way sought to ensure that the College’s approach to designing and implementation national training was evidence-based and took into account the learning from the pilot.

A changing context?

During the lifetime of the trial, national data were published showing that forces’ use of stop and search had changed markedly in the two years before the trial began. When the College entered into its formal partnership with the EHRC, data were only available up until 2012/13. The subsequent two years’ data (2013/14 and 2014/15), which were published by the Home Office during 2015, revealed that the number of recorded searches had fallen by 47 per cent during that time (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Recorded searches (by power) and resulting arrests, England and Wales



Source: Adapted from Home Office 2015.

As the Home Office (2015) noted: ‘The most recent fall was the largest year-on-year fall and led to the lowest number of stops under this power since the data collection began’. The proportion of searches leading to an arrest had also increased to 14 per cent. Moreover, the national statistics suggested that the level of race disproportionality had fallen since 2010/11, when people from black and minority ethnic groups were three times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people. In 2014/15, people from these ethnic groups were twice as likely to be subject to stop and search compared to white people. The disparity for people specifically identifying as ‘Black’ or ‘Black British’ fell from being nearly seven times more likely to be searched in 2010/11 to just over four times more likely in 2014/15.

These large changes, which could have been prompted by the increased scrutiny given to

stop and search by the EHRC, HMIC and the home secretary, provide important context for the trial and the evaluation. While the reduced use of stop and search, increased arrest rate and lower level of race disproportionality do not necessarily mean that stop and search was unproblematic during the trial, they suggested police practices had and were changing (even if only temporarily). This may have inadvertently limited the ability of the training pilot to cause change and the ability of the evaluation to detect it.

Use of an RCT design, however, should have guarded against the effect of these broader changes to some extent. Randomisation should have ensured that the treatment and control groups were affected equally by these external influences, thus allowing the specific impact of the pilot training to be determined.

Previous literature

The intention was for the pilot training to improve officers' understanding and skills in respect of practical legal decision making (ie, applying 'reasonable suspicion'), unconscious bias and handling interactions in line with procedural justice. The following sections aim to summarise some of the research literature on each of these topics to provide context and explore the underlying issue the training may have been seeking to address.

Practical legal decision making

Questions about officers' understanding and practical application of the law around stop and search were raised by HMIC in its 2013 thematic inspection. HMIC found that 27 per cent of sampled search records did not appear to contain sufficient grounds to justify the search and demonstrate it was lawful use of the power. A repeat of the exercise in 2015 pointed to some improvement (15 per cent), but a majority of records with insufficient grounds had been approved by supervisors (HMIC 2016). Issues with the lawfulness and appropriateness of written grounds have also been identified in force-level analysis of records (eg, Hine 2015).

It cannot be determined from the above analysis whether officers did not account for the decision making in enough detail or did not have the grounds in the first place. While records containing insufficient grounds is a problem in and of itself, it raises at least the possibility that some searches may have been carried out when reasonable grounds were not present.

Previous research has certainly pointed to officers' knowledge and practices varying in respect of the law (Quinton et al 2000 and Quinton 2011). Interviews for that research showed that officers were not always able to put into words what 'reasonable suspicion' meant. They talked generally about when they might carry out a search and the factors they might consider, rather than provide a clear description. There were also differences in the strength of grounds officers said they personally needed before carrying out a search. While a few talked about the grounds for a search being a similar threshold to those for an arrest, others said they worked to a much lower standard. Indeed, the grounds for many of the searches that were observed during the fieldwork for that research were thought to be weak (Quinton et al 2000 and Quinton 2011). Overall, legal considerations were not found to be in the forefront of officers' minds when they carried out stop and search.

These findings are not to suggest, however, that officers are 'at fault' and do not know or apply the rules. The literature has also suggested that the abstract, legal definition used in the regulation of stop and search is detached from the realities of day-to-day policing. The Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure, which proposed the use of 'reasonable suspicion' as the evidential standard for a search, acknowledged it could be a loosely-interpreted principle and difficult to apply in practice (Phillips 1981).

Commentators have since echoed this sentiment, suggesting 'reasonable suspicion' is highly

elastic, impossible to define and leaves its interpretation to the officer (eg, Baldwin and Kinsey 1982, Waddington 1999, Sanders and Young 2007). It has also been suggested that PACE Code A² sees suspicion as being individualised and, thus, at odds with the realities of patrol work, where suspicion is usually context-dependent and cumulative (Dixon et al 1989, Waddington 1999).

Therefore, in the context of practical legal decision making, the previous literature has pointed to a range of issues relating to how well stop and search is regulated, how consistently these regulations are then interpreted and applied in practice and how officers subsequently account for their decisions to search. No studies were identified, however, describing effective ways of improving legal decision making in practice.

Unconscious bias

'Unconscious bias' has become an increasingly popular way to talk about decisions, beliefs and thoughts that unintentionally favour or disadvantage people who are seen to belong to particular social groups. One possible reason for the term's current popularity is that it is perhaps less emotive than other related ideas (eg, racism) and may enable people to reflect on and talk about their own biases without feeling labelled.

Glaser's (2015) discussion of the psychological literature on implicit bias in the context of US policing distinguished between emotions (prejudice), thoughts (stereotypes) and motives for action (discrimination). Of the three, stereotyping was seen as a normal, everyday process in that everybody uses stereotypes to some extent, including people with good intentions, even though doing so could have extremely negative consequences. He described stereotyping as a by-product of the way people ordinarily make sense of the world around them, by quickly and easily placing things into categories, and as resulting from direct experiences and other indirect sources (eg, via friends, family, the media). When making sense of other people, a stereotype was seen as a generalised belief about a social group in which group members are thought to share a particular quality (eg, aggression, drug use). Stereotyping was also thought to serve several functions. As a 'mental shortcut', for example, it would help people deal with uncertainty and make snap decisions in ambiguous situations by 'filling in the blanks' (eg, as in stop and search). These uses, however, made stereotyping particularly resistant to change or control (eg, because people dismiss cases that do not conform to the stereotype as 'an exception to the rule').

Drawing on a wide range of studies, Glaser (2015) explored how stereotyping can be applied implicitly and automatically without people being aware (or conscious) of doing so.³ For example, it has been shown that, in laboratory simulations, US police officers were quicker to 'shoot' armed black men than they were white armed men and were also more likely to 'shoot' unarmed black men in error. Moreover, one particular experiment provided stronger evidence that stereotypes might underpin these behavioural biases (Correll et al 2007 cited in Glaser 2015). It showed that exposing officers to news stories about white criminals before the simulation reduced shooter bias against black people but led to a greater tendency for officers to 'shoot' unarmed white men.

Holdaway (2016) has questioned the extent to which the concept of 'unconscious bias' helps to explain police practices in England and Wales. He cautioned against simply assuming that research from the US can be applied in other contexts where police/public relations are likely to be different for a range of social and historical reasons. He also saw unconscious bias as lacking explanatory power because, in focusing on the thought processes of individual people at a psychological level, it failed to take account of the relevance of race/ethnicity

² Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) Code A aims to regulate the use of stop and search powers.

³ The well-known Harvard implicit association test (IAT) tests for such stereotyping.

within the police occupational subculture or of wider structural inequalities at a more sociological level. Moreover, he felt the idea did not allow for any distinction between 'typifications' (flexible common-sense rules-of-thumb) and 'stereotypes' (more rigid interpretations) (see also Quinton 2010). Finally, Holdaway also doubted whether officers were completely unaware of the significance of race/ethnicity to their decision making because of the sensitive and high-profile nature of race/ethnicity in policing.

UK research has examined implicit decision making in the context of stop and search, but has not adopted the language of 'unconscious bias'. Based on observations and interviews, Quinton (2010, 2011) explored how officers scanned their environment and picked up on cues that signalled something was suspicious and possibly required their attention.⁴ As these cues were not inherently meaningful, they needed to be framed by the officers. The officers appeared to make sense of them by drawing on their stock of practical knowledge from previous experience. These rules-of-thumb tended to result in suspicions being prompted by signals relating to particular social categories, physical appearances and behaviours (see also Quinton et al 2000).⁵ In line with previous research (eg, Holdaway 1983, Smith and Gray 1985, FitzGerald and Sibbitt 1997, May et al 2010), Quinton (2010, 2011) suggested race/ethnicity played a role in officer decision making and sometimes heightened suspicions. It was extremely difficult and incredibly rare, however, to identify concrete examples when someone was stopped because of their perceived race/ethnicity.⁶

Research has also highlighted that officers may be unaware (or unconscious) of the fact that – by thinking or acting in a seemingly neutral way – they could inadvertently 'transmit' bias from other sources.⁷ For example, the decisions of individual officers have been shown to be affected by the profile of suspect descriptions from public calls for service, the places where they patrol and existence of wider structural inequalities (Young 1994, FitzGerald 1999, MVA and Miller 2000, Waddington et al 2004, Chainey and Macdonald 2012, Quinton 2015).

Overall, therefore, the previous literature would suggest that stereotyping is an inescapable part of everyday police decision making, even though most officers are unlikely to be prejudiced or engage in overt discrimination. Moreover, officers – like everyone else – are likely to be unaware of the myriad ways in which stereotypes and transmitted biases can inform their practices. No studies were found that described successful training interventions for controlling or changing implicit stereotypes.⁸

Procedural justice

There is a large body of research on the role that procedural justice plays in policing (Tyler 2006, Jackson et al 2013a, Mazerolle 2013). These studies, which are typically survey-based, explore the extent to which officers are seen to make fair and legal decisions and to

⁴ Previous UK research identified similar prompts for police suspicions but presented them more as fixed 'working rules' that were flexibly applied and open to change (Smith and Gray 1985 and McConville et al 1991).

⁵ Stronger signals included: being 'known', signs of drugs use, automatic number plate recognition 'pings', criminal or disorderly behaviour and closely matching a description. Weaker signals included: signs of criminal or disorderly intent (eg, hanging around), vaguely matching a description, wearing sports clothes (eg, hooded tops and baseball caps), being young, being a black person. Some of non-categorical signals could lead to bias if they are closely associated with a particular social group (eg, sports clothes and street culture).

⁶ Instead, officers talked about offending patterns among different ethnic groups, though most (but not all) were at pains to contextualise their views and provide supporting evidence of there being a temporary and localised difference (see also May 2010). A small number of officers, however, expressed extremely prejudiced views.

⁷ See Reiner (2010) for a more detailed account of transmitted discrimination and five other types of discrimination (see also Quinton 2015).

⁸ Glaser (2015) has suggested that bias might be reduced by police training that focuses on regulating highly discretionary activities that provide opportunities for stereotypes to affect decision making, encouraging officers to be motivated to control stereotyping, exposing officers to information that seeks to act against common stereotypes and encouraging greater positive contact between officers and people from 'out-groups'.

treat people fairly.⁹ The research (summarised in Myhill and Quinton 2010) tends to show that public perceptions of procedural justice are associated with them seeing the police as a legitimate institution. In other words, people's direct and vicarious experiences of police contact help to shape whether they accept the police as an authority and believe that they share the same values. The studies also generally show that public perceptions of police legitimacy are associated with people not breaking the law and showing greater willingness to cooperate with the police. While legitimacy is an important end in itself, the quality of police/public encounters may have an important influence on crime levels and police demand in the long term.

The evidence on procedural justice in the context of stop and search is much more limited. Based on a random survey, Tyler et al (2014) found that young New Yorkers were less likely to see the police as legitimate if they felt they had been unfairly or unlawfully stopped by the police. Similarly, Jackson et al's (2012) analysis of the Metropolitan Police's public attitudes survey has shown that Londoners with personal experience of stop and search were less likely to trust the police and that this effect was more pronounced for people who had been searched multiple times. They also found that the quality of the encounter made a difference. People who felt their experience was fair were no more or less likely to trust the police than those who had not been stopped and searched. They may not have liked being searched, but they perhaps understood why and accepted what the police did. By contrast, when people thought they had been searched unfairly, it had had a large negative effect on their trust in the police. In other words, the quality of contact was found to have an asymmetrical or lop-sided effect on people's trust (see also Skogan 2006). An implication from this research would be the need for officers to minimise dissatisfaction in stop and search and to attend to distributive justice¹⁰ because of their longer-term consequences in terms of undermining people's willingness to help the police and not break the law.

Qualitative research has also pointed to there being scope to improve police/public interactions and pointed to ways of minimising dissatisfaction. Observations of police patrols in England and Wales have, for example, shown that officers were business-like or friendly in a large majority of police-initiated encounters and that the member of the public tended to be civil or deferential towards the officer (Quinton 2010). The officers' demeanour did not always reciprocate the manner of people they stopped, however. In a significant minority of encounters, officers were observed to be brusque, authoritarian or belittling. Interviews and focus groups with the public have highlighted a range of negative experiences but tended to suggest that satisfaction with stop and search rested on being treated fairly and with respect, being given a good reason, the encounter not lasting a long time and not feeling unfairly targeted (Fitzgerald 1999, Stone and Pettigrew 2000, May et al 2010).

There is fairly limited evidence on what interventions might be effective at encouraging officers to be more procedurally just during interactions with the public.¹¹ Mazerolle et al (2012) showed that the use of procedural justice scripts by officers when breath-testing drivers during routine road blocks in Queensland had a positive effect on drivers' satisfaction, perceptions of procedural justice and intended compliance with the law. A similar intervention trialled by Police Scotland, however, had the opposite effect (MacQueen and Bradford 2015). Drivers were more dissatisfied and less trusting of officers when officers

⁹ There are four elements to procedural justice: neutrality (eg, making impartial decisions, basing them on facts not prejudice, explaining their outcome and how they were reached), participation (eg, allowing people tell their side of the story, listening to what they have to say and taking their views into account when making decisions), trustworthiness (eg, being open, demonstrating honest intentions and providing reassurance) and respect (eg, being polite and treating people with respect and dignity).

¹⁰ Whether the **amount** of police attention people receive is perceived to be fair (eg, whether they feel 'over-police and under-protected').

¹¹ Mazerolle et al's (2013) systematic review presents the wider evidence base on what police practices have been shown to be effective in terms of increasing legitimacy.

gave them 'key messages', although the reasons for this were not clear.

Training has had some positive results. The procedural justice training trialled in Greater Manchester Police, which emphasised skills development and the use of role-play, had a positive impact on officer attitudes and role-play behaviour and on the perceptions of victims of crime (Wheller et al 2013). Chicago's officer training programme – which made use of presentations, video clips and group exercises – has also been shown to have a substantial positive effect on their support for procedural justice (Skogan et al 2015). Other studies have been less encouraging. The training of new recruits in Chicago had mixed results in terms of officer attitudes and role-play behaviour, although only a small proportion of their training focused on procedural justice (Rosenbaum and Lawrence 2012). A quasi-experiment carried out in Police Scotland showed that large class, knowledge-based training had no overall effect on officer attitudes and role-play behaviour (Robertson et al 2015).

Overall, the previous literature would suggest that handling stop and search in line with procedural justice is unlikely to have much of a positive effect but could help minimise public dissatisfaction. Doing so is crucial, as encounters that are distributively and procedurally unfair are likely to damage police legitimacy in the longer term. There was also evidence to suggest that officers' knowledge and skills can be improved through training, especially when it is relatively intensive and focused on practice. It remains unknown whether training is effective in a stop and search context.

Structure of the report

Chapter 2 outlines the design and delivery of the pilot training and briefly describes how the pilot was implemented as an RCT. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the aims of the two evaluations and the research methods they used. Chapters 5 and 6 summarise, respectively, the main results of the impact and process evaluation. The final chapter seeks to bring the research results together, draw out their main conclusions and discuss the wider implications of the work.

2. Implementing the training pilot

This chapter outlines the design and delivery of the pilot training and briefly describes how the pilot was implemented as an RCT.

The training intervention

Overview

The intervention was a pilot training programme for frontline police officers on stop and search that was expected to focus on three main areas of learning: practical legal decision making, unconscious bias and procedural justice. The programme was developed centrally by the College and interpreted and implemented locally by six volunteer pilot forces:

- British Transport Police (BTP)¹²
- Cleveland Police
- Greater Manchester Police (GMP)
- the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)¹³
- Sussex Police
- Thames Valley Police (TVP).

Designing the pilot training

The College produced a Guidance for Trainers document setting out the broad aims and content of the training, which was to be used by the pilot forces to develop and deliver local training.¹⁴ The guidance was prepared by members of the College's training design team, with advice and support from colleagues across the College and approved by the College's Stop and Search Project Board.¹⁵ Key stages in preparing the guidance were:

- a search for relevant research literature (eg, on officer decision making and evaluated interventions for reducing bias and encouraging procedural justice)
- a learning needs analysis, based on:
 - a review of the national policing curriculum and national reports (eg, EHRC 2010 and 2013, HMIC 2013 and 2015)
 - consultation with representatives of the police, community groups and academia at an event in February 2015
- discussions with the College's stop and search scrutiny group, on which community and campaign groups and academia were represented.

The Guidance for Trainers provided a broad framework within which local training was to be developed, rather than a prescriptive manual detailing precisely what should be trained and how. As such, the document described the learning outcomes of the pilot training and their broad method of delivery (see table 1).

¹² The pilot was carried out in A, B and C Divisions, which covered England and Wales. D Division, which covered Scotland, was not included in the pilot.

¹³ The training pilot was carried out in four operational command units: Brent, Havering, the Roads and Transport Policing Command and Tower Hamlets.

¹⁴ The Guidance for Trainers as well as other supporting College training documents used in the pilot are available on request (please email research@college.pnn.police.uk).

¹⁵ This group used a project management discipline to oversee delivery of the wider work programme. The board was chaired by the police standards manager with overall responsibility for the work and attended by all those in the College involved in the work programme and representatives from the EHRC.

Table 1. Learning outcomes and broad method of delivery

Learning outcome	Pre-read	Classroom
Explain the history surrounding the development and use of stop and search powers	✓	
Explain the purpose of stop and search and the benefits of using it correctly and appropriately		✓
Outline the different types of police-initiated encounters with members of the public		✓
Describe the potential adverse impact of a stop and search encounter on the officer, the individual and wider society	✓	✓
Explain the impact unconscious bias can have on decision making	✓	✓
Explain the impact that conscious bias can have on decision making	✓	✓
Explain how to establish whether there are reasonable grounds for a lawful stop and search under Code A of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984	✓	✓
Describe how people may be considered vulnerable in the context of stop and search	✓	
Explain when a stop and search can be conducted under section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994	✓	✓
Describe the steps that must be taken before a search takes place	✓	✓
Explain how searches should be conducted	✓	✓
Explain the extent to which individuals can be searched in public	✓	
Explain the legal requirement of accurately recording a stop and search encounter	✓	
Explain the actions to take when an individual expresses dissatisfaction with a stop and search encounter	✓	

The pilot training consisted of two main elements:

- **Pre-read and assessment¹⁶** – Officers were expected to read a short written document, prepared by the College, that sought to give them foundational knowledge about stop and search. Officers were then expected to complete a short assessment – consisting of a series of closed questions – to test their knowledge of the pre-read.
- **Classroom training** – After the pre-read and assessment, officers were expected to attend a six-hour classroom training session, with the aim of giving them ‘the theoretical and practical skills that are required when carrying out a stop and search’ (College of Policing 2015: p5).

The classroom sessions were designed and delivered by the pilot forces around the Guidance for Trainers. The guidance set out the key learning points that were expected to be covered in the sessions (such as the definition of a fair and effective stop and search¹⁷) and the logistical issues that needed to be considered when planning them (eg, trainer/officer ratio, facilities and additional resources).

The pilot forces were advised to adopt a ‘blended approach’ to training delivery and to ‘avoid over-use of didactic [ie, lecture-based] input’ (College of Policing 2015: p8). In line with the

¹⁶ Resource constraints meant it was not possible to develop an eLearning package for the pilot.

¹⁷ This definition was first published in August 2015 and was revised following the evaluation. The original version stated that a search was most likely to be fair and effective when it was justified and lawful, stood up to public scrutiny, was necessary and the least intrusive method available, was based on a genuine belief and resulted more often than not in the officer finding the prohibited item. The member of the public also needed to understand why had been searched and feel they had been treated with respect (College of Policing and National Police Chiefs’ Council 2015).

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evidence on effective training (eg, Wheller and Morris 2010, Wheller et al 2013), they were encouraged to use facilitation, role-play and practical exercises instead. To this end, the guidance recommended a series of more interactive resources and exercises (see table 2) and briefly described how they could be used/run.

Table 2. Exercises and resources recommended in the Guidance for Trainers

Exercise or resource	Summary
Ice-breaker exercise	An exercise for use at the start of the classroom session which was designed to prompt discussion of officers' own experiences of being stopped by the police and any disparities that might be apparent. The exercise was to involve the trainer, first, asking all the officers in the classroom to stand and, then, those officers who have never been stopped to sit down. The instructions were then repeated to identify those who had been stopped up to five times, between five and ten times and so on.
Videos	Two videos for young people, produced by Y-Stop (a community youth project funded by Release), designed to improve their knowledge of the law and their rights and enable them to manage interactions with the police with confidence, communicate more effectively with officers and end the encounters quicker.
Unconscious bias or stereotyping exercise	An exercise designed to demonstrate unconscious bias and stereotyping. The exercise was to involve trainers reading out a list, or showing images, of people who might be thought to conform to different socio-demographic categories (eg, a black man, a fundamentalist Christian, a female engineer). As each category of person was listed or shown, the trainer would ask the officers to write down the first thought they had about that person. The exercise was then to be debriefed in class.
Reasonable grounds exercise	An exercise designed to encourage officers to reflect on the quality of written stop and search records, particularly whether 'reasonable grounds for suspicion' had been recorded adequately. The exercise was to involve officers – on their own, in small groups or as a class – reading through and assessing real examples of written grounds. The exercise was to be debriefed in class, with officers discussing why they thought the grounds were strong or weak and how the grounds could be made stronger. Notably, one of the recommended examples would have highlighted to officers that the smell of cannabis, on its own, was not regarded as sufficient grounds for a search and that additional evidence indicating cannabis possession was also required.
Role-play exercise	An exercise designed to enable officers to identify their own ways of interacting fairly and respectfully with members of the public, with the view to eliciting their cooperation and reducing confrontation. The exercise was to involve officers taking part in a series of role-play scenarios where they would act out stop and search with different types of people played by a police trainer (eg, someone who was intoxicated, aggressive or accused the officer of racism). The exercise was to be debriefed in class, with officers discussing different methods of communication.

The Guidance for Trainers gave pilot forces considerable latitude over the content and delivery of the classroom sessions. The guidance stated that the learning outcomes were a minimum and that the training could be contextualised to meet local circumstance. Moreover, the College did not provide training materials for use in the classroom,¹⁸ and instructed the pilot forces to develop their own lesson plans.

¹⁸ The College provided a PowerPoint presentation and course handout summarising the key learning points, respectively, for trainers and officers.

Delivering the pilot training

To support the pilot forces, the College held two train-the-trainer events in July and August 2015 and arranged weekly conference calls before and during the implementation period. The pilot forces each made their own plans to deliver the training (eg, disseminating the pre-read, developing lesson plans and booking officers for classroom sessions), which were shared with the College for monitoring purposes.

The aim was for the pilot forces to implement the training pilot during September 2015. Most of the classroom sessions were held as planned (see table 3), although some forces had to carry out mop-up sessions in early October because some officers were unable to attend their scheduled session. Implementation was slightly delayed in the MPS – their classroom sessions were largely held in early October.

Table 3. The number and timing of classroom sessions

Pilot force	Classroom sessions		
	Number held	Date of first	Number held
BTP	14	8 Sep 2015	8 Oct 2015
Cleveland	10	7 Sep 2015	18 Sep 2015
GMP	10	27 Aug 2015	9 Oct 2015
MPS	7	16 Sep 2015	21 Oct 2015
Sussex	12	3 Sep 2015	2 Oct 2015
TVP	11	10 Sep 2015	12 Oct 2015

Implementing the pilot as a randomised controlled trial

The pilot was implemented in the six pilot forces as a pragmatic trial to determine whether the training had a causal impact on outcomes. A pragmatic trial tests the effectiveness of an intervention in a range of practical settings and with few checks on implementation so as to find out what is likely to actually happen when it is implemented at scale in the real-world (Roland and Torgerson 1998, Flay et al 2005).¹⁹

Around 220 eligible officers were randomly selected from each pilot force to participate in the trial. To be eligible, officers needed to be a serving constable, a ‘regular user’ of stop and search in 2014/15, currently in a role expected to use stop and search and available to take part in the training and subsequent evaluation. The random selection of officers meant that the results of the trial are likely to be generalisable to all ‘regular users’ of stop and search in the pilot forces.

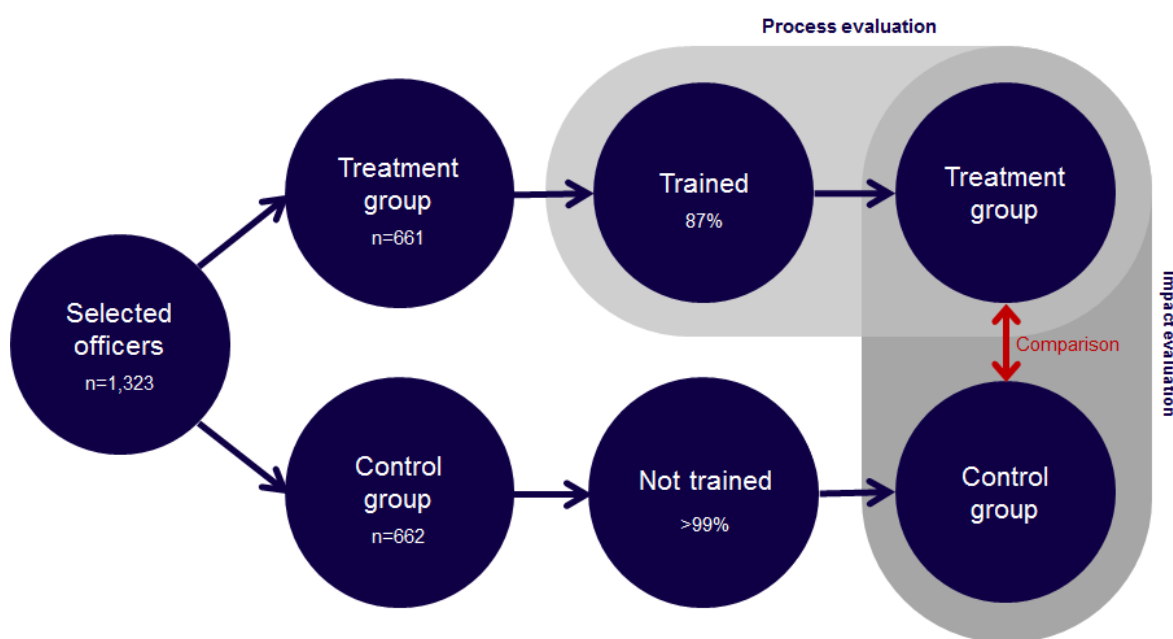
The officers who were selected to participate in the trial were then randomly assigned to the treatment group (to be trained) or control group (not to be trained). Individual officers were randomised to the treatment and control groups as it was not feasible to randomise officers in clusters. In theory, randomisation should have ensured that the treatment and control groups were broadly equivalent to one another before the training intervention was implemented (Shadish et al 2002). This would have meant that any differences identified afterwards, during the three-month evaluation period, could be directly attributed to the pilot training. Analysis of baseline data suggested that randomisation had been successful in creating two broadly equivalent groups and did not point to there being any systematic biases that would affect the results of the trial (see Quinton 2016 and Miller and Alexandrou

¹⁹ An exploratory trial, by contrast, tests the efficacy of an intervention on a smaller scale and in more tightly-controlled environments in order to determine its maximum likely effect.

2016a for details).

In total, 1,323 officers were selected to take part in the trial, of which 661 were randomly assigned to the treatment group and 662 to the control group (see figure 2).

Figure 2. The design of the training experiment



Note: The impact evaluation also made some comparisons between the treatment and control groups before and after the pilot training was implemented.

A good level of implementation was achieved overall, with 87 per cent of the treatment group attending a classroom training session.²⁰ The extent and nature of training non-attendance did not seem to point to any systematic biases that were likely to affect adversely the trial (Quinton 2016). Unexpectedly, however, five control group officers from one of the pilot forces also received the training as a result of supervisors mistakenly instructing them to book on to the course. While this would represent a direct form of contamination, the very small number of control group officers who actually attended (less than one per cent of the total) are likely to have had minimal effect on the overall results of the trial.

Regardless of whether officers completed the pilot training or not, they were all included in the evaluation as per their randomly assigned groups (ie, intention-to-treat analysis was carried out). Including untrained treatment group officers and trained control group officers in this way aimed to provide more of a real-world assessment of the training pilot and should have helped to reduce bias (Newell 1992).

The experiment's design and limitations, including the procedures for randomly selecting and assigning officers to the treatment and control groups, are described in much greater depth in a separate technical report (Quinton 2016).

²⁰ This was the same treatment level achieved by Wheller et al (2013) in their police training RCT.

3. Evaluating the training pilot

This chapter provides an overview of the evaluation framework and describes the aims and research methods of the impact and process evaluations.

Evaluation framework

The College commissioned two related pieces of research to understand the implementation of the training pilot and its effect:

- The **impact evaluation** aimed to test the effect of the pilot training on officer knowledge, attitudes and behaviour (ie, whether the training ‘worked’).
- The **process evaluation** aimed to explore the quality and nature of training implementation in the pilot forces and the context and mechanisms of change (ie, why and how the training ‘worked’ or did not).

The overall design of the trial and evaluation framework were proposed by the principal investigator (Paul Quinton) and approved by the College’s Stop and Search Project Board.

Independent research organisations were appointed via open competition to carry out the impact evaluation (the Research Advisory Service) and the process evaluation (RAND Europe). They worked in collaboration with the College. College researchers, for example, helped facilitate data collection on the impact evaluation and contributed to data collection on the process evaluation.

Steps were taken to help ensure the two evaluations remained impartial. The Research Advisory Service and RAND Europe were responsible for the overall design and delivery of their respective research work, which were subject to quality assurance by the principal investigator. They took the lead in developing the data collection instruments and had sole responsibility for all analysis and report writing. The views of an independent academic advisory group were also sought on the design of specific data collection instruments. All the research output from the evaluations has been subject to independent academic peer review.

Design of the impact evaluation (Research Advisory Service)

Research aims

The impact evaluation sought to test whether the pilot training had had an impact on the following outcomes during the three months after it had been delivered (October 2015 to January 2016):

- **Primary outcomes** – improvements in officers’ knowledge, attitudes and anticipated behaviour.
- **Secondary outcomes** – increases in the quality of the grounds for search recorded by officers and the proportion of searches leading to arrest.

From the outset, the primary outcomes were regarded as the most important for judging the overall success of the pilot because they were the most likely to be influenced by training. For reasons of impartiality, the Research Advisory Service proposed the specific indicators and related hypotheses under each of the outcomes (see table 4).

Table 4. Outcome measures, underlying hypotheses and specific indicators

Outcomes	Hypothesis	Specific indicators
Primary		
Knowledge	Trained officers have greater knowledge and feel more prepared for stop and search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more positive assessment of their experience of training in stop and search • Improved knowledge of stop and search regulations • Greater recognition of inadequate grounds for suspicion
Attitudes	Trained officers have attitudes more favourable to good practice in police-public interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less support for stereotyping in police suspicion • Less cynicism toward regulating stop and search practice • Less support for high-volume stop and search practices • Greater support for procedural justice in stop and search
Anticipated behaviours	Trained officers say they will behave in line with training standards on stop and search decision making and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater tendency to follow legal procedures during searches • Greater tendency to treat people with procedural justice during encounters • Lesser tendency to search when grounds are weak • Lesser ethnic bias in decision making
Secondary		
Quality of written grounds	Trained officers' practice is more professional and effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher quality of recorded grounds for search
Arrest rates		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher arrest rates from searches

In addition to the primary and secondary outcomes, the number of recorded searches and the level of race disproportionality were also monitored on the basis that trained officers might also show other changes in practice. They were not regarded as formal outcome measures for judging the success of the pilot because they were not expected to change in any particular direction as a result of the training.²¹

Research methods

The impact of the training was measured using online surveys and police data:

- **Online officer surveys (primary outcomes)** – Two waves of an online survey were carried out after the training. The knowledge, attitudes and anticipated behaviour of treatment group officers were compared with those of control group officers to determine whether the training had had the expected impact.
 - The Wave 1 survey was carried out soon after the training was delivered in order to assess its immediate effect. The response rate was 74 per cent.

²¹ From the outset, it was thought possible that the number of searches and level of race disproportionality might both decline as a result of the pilot if the training made officers more selective in their use of their powers. It was agreed, however, that neither was to be regarded as measures of success. One of the pilot forces was strongly of the opinion that the lawfulness of searches was more important than their number, meaning they could not agree an overall reduction as a positive outcome. There was also evidence to suggest that race disproportionality was affected by a wider range of factors than just officer decision making (Quinton 2015), which was the focus of the training, which meant it was unlikely to be appropriate as an outcome measure.

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- The Wave 2 survey was carried out about three months after the training had been delivered (in January 2016) to assess whether the impact of the training had been sustained over time. The response rate was 49 per cent.
- **Police stop and search data (secondary outcomes)** – Data on the searches carried out by treatment and control group officers were compared to determine whether the training had had the expected impact on recorded police practices:
 - Quality of recorded grounds for search – The record of the last stop and search carried out by each officer during the evaluation period (if they had done so) was blind-coded to measure the number and type of factors included in the written grounds. Comparisons between the treatment and control groups covered the three months after the training.
 - Proportion of searches leading to arrest – The change in the arrest rate for the officers in the treatment group, three months before and three months after the training, was compared with that of the control group.

The analysis of these outcomes took account of the stratified nature of the six-force sample. It also included all officers in the trial, where data were available, regardless of whether they had been trained or not (ie, intention-to-treat analysis).

Reporting

Summary results are presented in chapter 4. See the full impact evaluation report (Miller and Alexandrou 2016a) and related appendices (Miller and Alexandrou 2016b) for more detailed information.

Design of the process evaluation (RAND Europe)

Research aims

The process evaluation aimed to examine the quality and nature of implementation, as well as the context and mechanisms of change. It also sought to explore the possible impact of the training on officer behaviour, particularly the quality of police/public interaction during stop and search encounters. These broad aims were translated into a series of more specific research questions about training implementation and the behaviour of officers who had been trained:

- **Training implementation**
 - Was the intervention delivered as intended?
 - What were the main implementation issues?
 - To what extent did peers, supervisors, middle managers and senior leaders act as facilitators or barriers to change?
 - How was the training course perceived by officers and how did it reportedly influence their stop and search practices?
- **Behaviour of trained officers**
 - Did trained officers appear to apply their learning in practice and, if so, how?
 - How did the police and public interact during police-initiated encounters after the training and what factors were associated with better quality encounters?

Research methods

The process evaluation used the following methods:

- observations of 12 classroom training sessions (two per pilot force)
- in-depth interviews with 18 force trainers and project leads (three per force)
- a follow-up survey of force trainers (with responses from 22 trainers)
- in-depth interviews with six national training designers and project stakeholders
- in-depth interviews with 30 officers who had received the training
- feedback sheets provided by trained officers immediately after completing the classroom training (with responses from 548 trained officers).

The questions related to the behaviour of trained officers were explored via systematic social observation. This method involved researchers accompanying officers during a total of 30 patrol shifts (five per force) with a view to observing police-initiated encounters with the public. The observations were coded using a quantitative data collection tool and were described in qualitative field-notes. In total, 99 police-initiated encounters were observed (including nine searches). Where appropriate, directed conversations were also held with the observed officers to gather their views on the pilot and supplement the in-depth interviews.

Reporting

Summary results are presented in chapter 5. See the full impact evaluation report (Giacomantonio et al 2016a) and related appendices (Giacomantonio et al 2016b) for more detailed information..

4. Impact evaluation findings

This chapter summarises the main findings of the impact evaluation. It assesses the effect of the pilot training on the primary and secondary outcomes and whether it brought about other changes that were being monitored. Detailed findings can be found in the full impact evaluation report and related appendices (Miller and Alexandrou 2016a and 2016b).

The effect of the pilot training on primary outcomes

The impact evaluation sought to establish whether the pilot training had its expected effect on a series of primary outcomes relating to officers’ knowledge, attitudes and anticipated behaviours. These outcomes were measured by online surveys of officers carried out immediately after the training (Wave 1) and about three months later (Wave 2).

Effects on officers’ knowledge

Officers were hypothesised to have greater knowledge about and feel more prepared for stop and search as a result of the being trained. The pilot training was found to have some positive effects (see table 5). There was evidence of sustained improvements in an objective measure of officer knowledge. Officers were also better able to apply their knowledge in that they were more questioning about the adequacy of written grounds, especially when those grounds were weaker. Despite these positive effects, officers were less enthusiastic about the contribution of stop and search training to their knowledge and skills after they had been trained (more subjective measures about the training).

Table 5. Summary results for the primary outcomes (officers’ knowledge)

	Expected effect	Actual effect	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
Knowledge of stop and search regulation	↑	↑	↑
Perceived adequacy of example written grounds	↓	Not asked	↓
Perceived contribution of training to knowledge about stop and search	↑	↓	Not asked
Perceived contribution of training to interpersonal skills in stop and search	↑	↓	Not asked

- Knowledge of stop and search regulation (Waves 1 and 2)** – The pilot training was supposed to improve officers knowledge about stop and search law. Both waves of the survey showed that officer knowledge was good overall (ie, the averages were towards the top of the nine-point scale). Nevertheless, a small positive effect was found in the Wave 1 survey (control=6.46, treatment 6.71), suggesting officers had greater knowledge immediately after the pilot training was delivered. A small positive effect was also found in the Wave 2 survey (control=6.45, treatment=6.70), suggesting the impact of the pilot training was sustained after three months.
- Perceived adequacy of example written grounds (Wave 2)** – In order to test how good the treatment and control group officers were in applying their knowledge, they were asked to rate whether example written grounds were sufficient to justify a search. They each assessed five examples – two with stronger grounds and three with weaker grounds. We expected the treatment group officers to be less certain about the adequacy of grounds. A small positive effect was detected for four out of

the five examples. The effects were found to be larger when the grounds were weaker. These results would suggest the pilot training had resulted in officers being more questioning about the adequacy of grounds, especially weaker grounds, three months after it had been delivered.

- **Perceived contribution of training to knowledge about stop and search (Wave 1 only)** – We expected officers in the treatment group would be more favourable than those in the control group about the contribution of training (ie, the pilot training or any other previous learning experiences) to their knowledge about stop and search. A small negative effect was found (control=2.75, treatment=2.56), which suggests the pilot training made officers less positive about their training experiences.
- **Perceived contribution of training to interpersonal skills in stop and search (Wave 1 only)** – Officers in the treatment group were expected to be more favourable than those in the control group about the contribution of training to their interpersonal skills. As before, a small negative effect was found between the treatment and control groups (control=2.08, treatment=1.89). This would, again, suggest the pilot training made officers less enthusiastic about the role of training.

Effects on officers’ attitudes

The pilot training was expected to result in officers having more favourable attitudes towards good practice in police-public interactions. The results were broadly positive (see table 6). Officers were found to show less support for high-volume stop and search practices (a result that was sustained) and to be less cynical about the regulation of stop and search (a result that was not sustained) as result of being trained. Their support for the principles of procedural justice in the stop and search was, however, unaffected by the pilot training. The pilot training also lowered officers’ support for using racial/ethnic stereotypes on patrol, but not non-racial/ethnic stereotypes.

Table 6. Summary results for the primary outcomes (officers’ attitudes)

	Expected effect	Actual effect	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
Support for non-racial/ethnic stereotyping	↓	↔	Not asked
Support for racial/ethnic stereotyping	↓	↓	Not asked
Cynicism towards the regulation of stop and search	↓	↓	↔
Support for using stop and search in high volumes	↓	↓	↓
Support for procedural justice in stop and search	↑	↔	Not asked

- **Support for non-racial/ethnic stereotyping (Wave 1 only)** – We anticipated that the pilot training would result in officers showing less support for non-racial/ethnic stereotypes that might be used on patrol.²² The survey showed that support was fairly low overall (ie, the averages were below the middle of the five-point scale). No treatment effect was found (control=1.80, treatment=1.73), suggesting the pilot training had no impact on officers’ support for non-racial/ethnic stereotyping.
- **Support for racial/ethnic stereotyping (Wave 1 only)** – We also expected the pilot training to reduce officer’s support for racial/ethnic stereotypes.²³ The survey showed

²² Officers were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements tapping into stereotypes that have previously existed in stop and search (eg, ‘officers should give more attention to people they know have committed crime regularly in the past’) (see Quinton et al 2000, Quinton 2011 and 2015).

²³ Officers were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements tapping into stereotypes that have previously existed in stop and search (eg, ‘officers should pay more attention to young black males

that support was very low overall (ie, the averages were close to the bottom of the five-point scale). Nevertheless, a very small but positive treatment effect was found (control=1.04, treatment=0.95). This suggests that the pilot training made officers less supportive of using racial/ethnic stereotypes.

- **Cynicism towards the regulation of stop and search (Waves 1 and 2)** – The evaluation tested whether officers were less cynical about efforts to regulate stop and search practices as a result of the pilot training. The survey showed that cynicism was fairly low overall (ie, the averages were below the middle of the five-point scale). A small positive effect was found in the Wave 1 survey (control=1.75, treatment=1.65) which suggests officers were less cynical immediately after they were trained. No effect was found in the Wave 2 survey (control=1.77, treatment=1.72), suggesting the initial impact was not sustained after three months.
- **Support for using stop and search in high volumes (Waves 1 and 2)** – We anticipated that the pilot training would make officers less likely to support using stop and search in high volumes. Support for high-volume stop and search was moderate overall (ie, the averages were near the middle of the five-point scale). A small positive effect was found in the Wave 1 survey (control=2.11, treatment=1.95). This suggests officers were less likely to support high-volume stop and search immediately after training. A small positive effect was also found in the Wave 2 survey (control=2.23, treatment=2.03), suggesting the impact was sustained after three months.
- **Support for procedural justice in stop and search (Wave 1 only)** – Given the intended focus of the pilot training, we thought that treatment group officers would be more likely than control group officers to support the use of procedural justice in stop and search. The survey showed that support was fairly high overall (ie, the averages were above the middle of the five-point scale). No treatment effect was found, however (control=2.70, treatment=2.78).

Effects on officers' anticipated behaviours

The pilot training was expected to result in officers **saying** they would act in line with the training standards on stop and search decision making and practice. The effect of the pilot training was, again, found to be broadly positive (see table 7). As a direct result of being trained, officers were less likely to say they would search the suspect in a range of scenarios, but no less likely to say they would question them. The results were sustained.

There was evidence to suggest that these positive effects were due to officers not seeing the scenarios as providing them with sufficient grounds to search. Reassuringly, the treatment and control group officers were just as likely to say they would search if they thought grounds were present. Taken together, these findings suggest the pilot training had an impact on **how** officers said they would intervene (ie, to question rather than search), rather than **whether** they said they would intervene (ie, to question or search at all). No treatment effects were found in terms of how officers said they would treat a suspect during a confrontational stop and search or the relevance of race/ethnicity in officer decision making.

when policing street robbery, because they're more often involved in this type of crime') (see Quinton et al 2000, Quinton 2011 and 2015).

Table 7. Summary results for the primary outcomes (officers’ anticipated behaviour)

	Expected effect	Actual effect	
		Wave 1	Wave 2
Priority given to legal procedure during a confrontational stop and search encounter	↑	↔	Not asked
Priority given to procedural justice during a confrontational stop and search encounter	↑	↔	Not asked
Likelihood of questioning a suspect in scenarios	↔	↔	↔
Likelihood of searching a suspect in scenarios	↓	↓	↓
Perceived adequacy of scenarios as reasonable grounds	↓	Not asked	↓
Likelihood of searching when reasonable grounds were present	↔	Not asked	↔
Relevance of race/ethnicity to likelihood of questioning/searching a suspect in scenarios	↓	Not asked	↔

- Priority given to legal procedure during a confrontational stop and search scenario (Wave 1 only)** – We expected the pilot training to encourage officers to say that they would prioritise actions consistent with PACE Code A in a confrontational stop and search scenario.²⁴ While the priority given to legal procedure was very high overall (ie, the averages were close to the top of the five-point scale), the pilot training was found to have had no effect (control=3.25, treatment=3.28).
- Priority given to procedural justice during a confrontational stop and search scenario (Wave 1 only)** – We also expected the pilot training to encourage officers to say they would treat the suspect in the scenario in line with procedural justice.²⁵ The priority given to procedural justice was fairly high overall (ie, the averages were above the middle of the five-point scale) but, again, there was no evidence of the pilot training having had an effect (control=2.71, treatment=2.73).
- Likelihood of questioning and searching a suspect in four scenarios (Waves 1 and 2)** – The pilot training tried to encourage officers to ‘think twice’ before searching a suspect but did not try to discourage officers from questioning them. In order to test the impact of the pilot training, officers were presented with four scenarios and asked how likely they were to question and to search the suspect.²⁶ We expected treatment group officers would be no more or less likely than control group officers to say they would question the suspect and less likely to say they would search the suspect (especially when the grounds were weaker).

Officers were fairly likely to say they would question the suspect in the scenarios overall (ie, 68–90 per cent reported likelihood of questioning). No treatment effects were found in the Wave 1 survey, however (see figure 4), suggesting the pilot training did not dissuade officers from saying they would question suspects. No effect was found in the Wave 2, which suggests the result was sustained.

The officers were generally less likely to say they would search the suspect than question them. The likelihood of them saying they would search the suspect also varied markedly between scenarios. Positive effects were found in the Wave 1

²⁴ For example, ‘explaining why you are conducting a search’ and ‘telling the suspect what you are searching for’.

²⁵ For example, ‘letting the suspect tell their side of the story’.

²⁶ Two scenarios were robbery-related and two were drugs-related. Each pair had one scenario with stronger grounds and one with weaker grounds. None of the scenarios would have given officers watertight grounds for a search. They were deliberately phrased to be ambiguous so that differences between officers could be drawn out. See Miller and Alexandrou (2016a) for details.

survey for each scenario, the largest being for the drugs scenario with weaker grounds (see figure 5). The results, therefore, suggested that officers were less inclined to say they would carry out a search immediately after being trained. The fact that treatment effects were also found in the two the scenarios repeated in the Wave 2 survey suggests the impact was sustained after three months.

Figure 4. The reported likelihood of questioning a suspect in four scenarios (Wave 1)

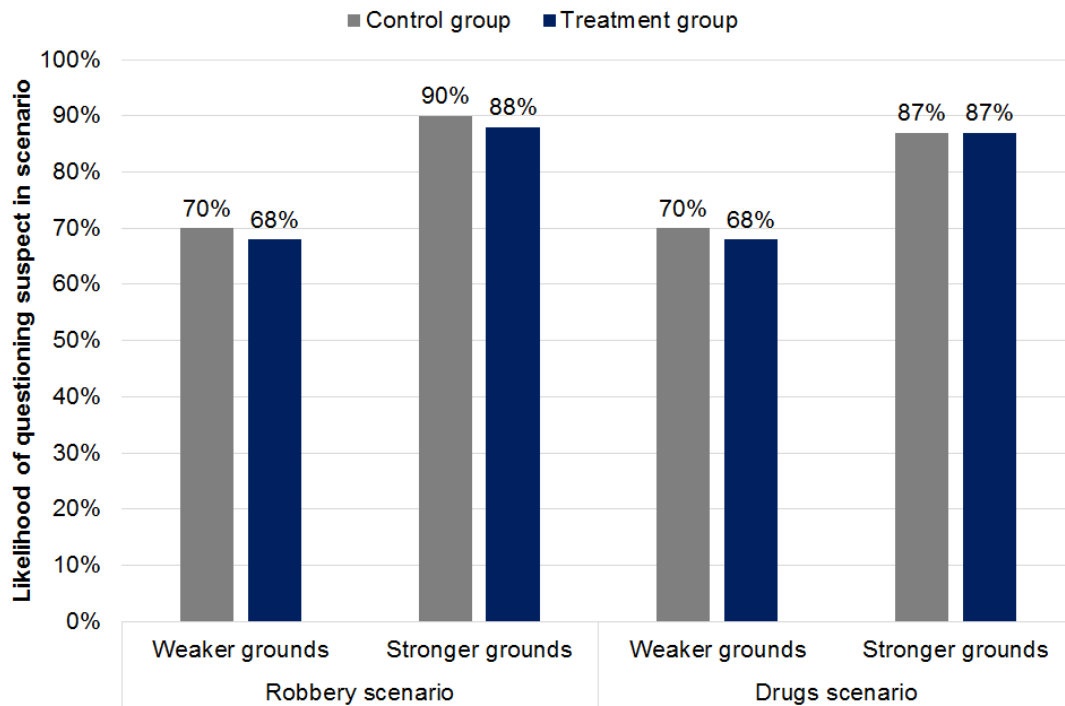
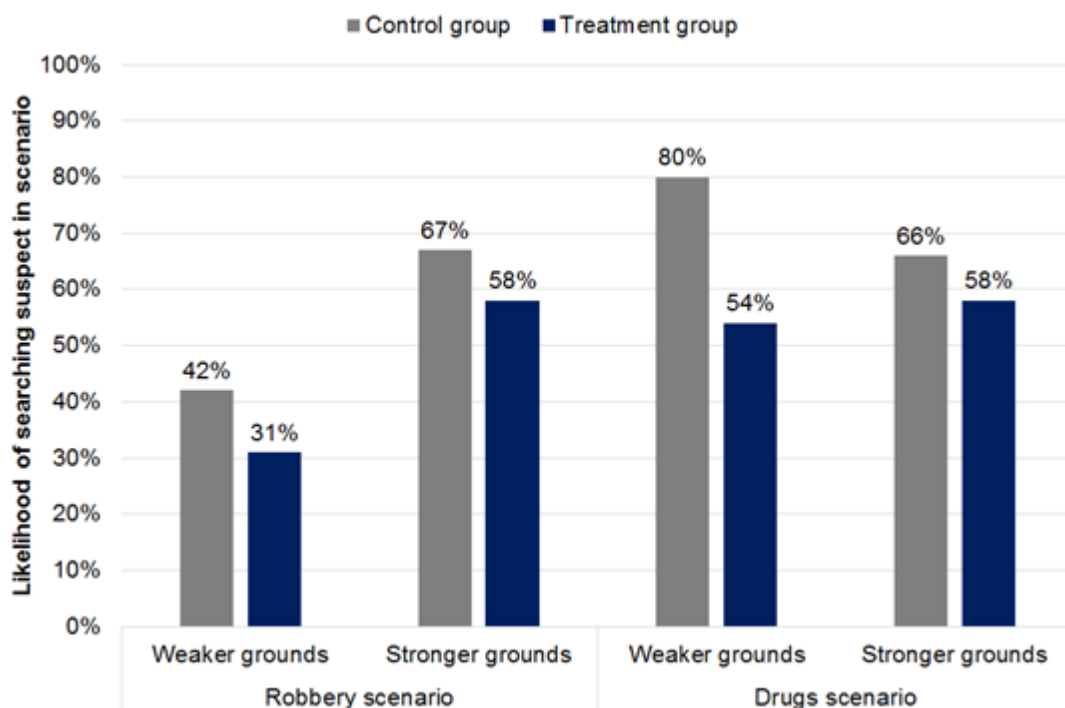


Figure 5. The reported likelihood of searching a suspect in four scenarios (Wave 1)



- **Perceived adequacy of grounds in the four scenarios (Wave 2 only)** – The officers in the treatment and control groups were asked whether they thought the grounds in the two Wave 2 scenarios were sufficient for them to be able to carry out search. The aim was to help explain why, after being trained, officers were less inclined to say they would search a suspect. We expected treatment group officers to be more likely than control group officers to say the scenarios did not provide them sufficient grounds on the basis that the pilot training emphasised the need for strong grounds. A treatment effect was found (scenario A – control=3.19, treatment=2.66, scenario B – control=2.51, treatment=2.11), which suggests that, as a result the pilot training, officers were less likely to say they would search a suspect because they did not think they had sufficient grounds to do so.
- **Likelihood of searching when reasonable grounds were present (Wave 2 only)** – In order to explore further the effect of the pilot training on the likelihood officers saying they would carry out a search, the officers were asked whether they would carry out a search if they thought the grounds were presented.²⁷ We expected to see no difference between the treatment and control groups, as this would indicate that treatment group officers were still inclined to search somebody if they thought they were justified in doing so. Overall, officers were very likely to say they would search when they had the grounds (ie, the averages were close to the top of the three-point scale). Moreover, there was no evidence on a treatment effect (control=2.91, treatment=2.87). As expected, the pilot training did not appear to undermine officers' confidence to carry out a search when they felt they had the grounds.
- **Relevance of race/ethnicity to the likelihood of questioning or searching a suspect in the four scenarios (Wave 1 only)** – We expected the pilot training to reduce any evidence of bias in officers' decisions to question and to search suspects. To test the effect of the training in this respect, the suspect description in the four scenarios in the Wave 1 survey were randomly alternated between 'black' and 'white'. No interaction effects were found on the likelihood of the officer saying they would question or search the suspect between the suspect's racial/ethnic appearance and the officer's assigned group (eg, treatment/control). The officers were, therefore, no more or less biased in the scenarios as a result the pilot training.²⁸

The effect of the pilot training on secondary outcomes

The impact evaluation also sought to establish whether the pilot training had an effect on the secondary outcomes. These outcomes were seen to be less likely to be influenced by training and so thought to be less central to the overall assessment of the intervention. Nevertheless, it was hoped that the pilot training would lead to officers' stop and search practices being more professional and effective. No treatment effects were found, however, in terms of either the quality of officers' recording practices or the yield resulting from searches (see table 8).

- **Quality of written grounds** – We expected that officers would record more detailed and stronger grounds whenever they carried out a search as a result of the pilot training. The last search records that treatment and control group officers completed

²⁷ This question was not linked to four scenarios.

²⁸ Black suspect descriptions were associated with lower anticipated likelihoods of questioning and searching suspects among both treatment and control group officers. The reason for the apparent lack of bias against black people is not clear. It could reflect how officer make decisions in practice or how they respond to sensitive survey questions. While interesting and important, it is beyond the scope of this summary paper to explore the issue in further detail as it is not evaluative of the pilot training.

during in the three-month evaluation period were blind-coded in terms of the number and type of factors in the written grounds. No effect was found (eg, average number of factors: control=2.11, treatment=2.25), which suggests the pilot training had no impact on the quality of officers’ written grounds.

- **Arrest rates** – As the pilot training emphasised the need for officers to have strong grounds for search, we anticipated it would result in a higher proportion of searches leading to arrest. There was no evidence of a treatment effect comparing arrest rates before and after the pilot (control=17 per cent before and 20 per cent after, treatment=17 per cent before and 18 per cent after). This suggests the pilot training had no impact on arrest rates.

Table 8. Summary results for the secondary outcomes and monitored changes

	Expected effect	Actual effect
Quality of written grounds (after only)	↑	↔
Arrest rates (before/after)	↑	↔
Number of recorded searches (before/after)	None	↔
Ethnic profile of recorded searches (before/after)	None	↔

Additional monitored changes

In addition to the primary and secondary outcomes measures, it was thought possible that the pilot training **might** lead to other changes in police practice. No change was necessarily expected and the results were not to inform the overall assessment of the intervention. The impact evaluation revealed that the pilot training had no effect on the number of searches carried out or their ethnic profile (see table 8).

- **Number of recorded searches** – The change in the number of searches before and after the pilot training for the treatment group was compared to the change for the control group. Despite an overall fall in the number of searches (consistent with recent national trends), no effect was found. This suggests the pilot training did not lead to a reduction in the number of searches.
- **The ethnic profile of recorded searches** – The change in the ethnic profile of searches before and after the pilot training for the treatment group was compared to the change for the control group. Despite an overall increase in the proportion of searches of people from black and minority ethnic groups, no effect was found. This suggests the pilot training had no impact on the ethnic profile of searches.

5. Process evaluation findings

This chapter summarises the main findings of the process evaluation. It describes the quality and nature of implementation, explores the perceived impact of the pilot training and examines the stop and search practices of a relatively small sample of trained officers. Detailed findings can be found in the full impact evaluation report and related appendices (Giacomantonio et al 2016a and 2016b).

Implementation of the pilot training

Understanding and presenting the purpose of the pilot training

The interviews showed there was general agreement among the national training designers and project stakeholders on the high-level aims of the training. In line with the outcome evaluation, they expected it would improve officer knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, arrest rates and the quality of written grounds. In addition, they felt the training would reduce race disproportionality and, in all likelihood, decrease the use of stop and search (although neither was a stated objective).

There also appeared to be general agreement that the training would lead to cultural change around stop and search. There were differences, though, in how this goal was understood and how respondents thought it was to be achieved.

This lack of consistency at the national level appeared to filter down to the force level, which may not have been helped by the College's communication with the pilot forces. The force trainers interviewed for the evaluation reported lacking clarity about the purpose for the training, and appeared to have formed their own understanding about it. There were also differences in opinion as to whether there were 'problems' with the use of stop and search and how any perceived problems were understood and described.

The pilot was often (but not always) seen and presented by force trainers as providing refresher training and covering material 'already known' to officers. This might help explain why the training that was delivered tended to focus on certain topics and be delivered in particular ways. Others presented the training as new learning that was designed to alter officers' views of stop and search and how they used their powers. Three aspects of the training were, however, consistently regarded by force trainers as being 'new':

- the guidance on the smell of cannabis, on its own without supporting evidence, providing insufficient grounds for a search
- the concept of unconscious bias
- the definition of a fair and effective search.

The following rationales for the training were offered by force trainers during the observed training sessions, namely to:

- address a training gap (eg, fading knowledge and skills)
- improve the 'hit rate' (ie, arrests and sometimes other criminal justice outcomes)
- encourage a more thoughtful or reflective approach to stop and search
- reduce the (perceived) threat of stop and search powers being removed or curtailed.

The focus and content of the pilot training

The interviews and classroom observations strongly suggested that force trainers tried to

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develop and deliver local training that was of value and in line with their own understanding of the College's learning outcomes. They attempted to do so with what information the College had provided them and within a limited amount of time. Most were generally pleased with the product they ended up delivering.

Beyond the decision in two forces to discuss the fair and effective definition with officers but to not train them in it, force trainers felt they made very few modifications to the pilot training. Most felt, however, that the length of the classroom session meant it was necessary for them to prioritise some areas of the training. They also were encouraged by the fact the pilot forces were given latitude to adapt the training to local context, although this appeared to matter less than how they interpreted the purpose of the training.

The observations and interviews revealed that the pilot training that was delivered was consistent **within** each pilot force. Substantial variation was, however, found **between** the forces in the approach they each adopted to the classroom sessions (eg, their structure, tone and balance of activities).

The training observations showed that the delivered training also concentrated on some learning outcomes more than others:²⁹

- **Practical legal decision making** – Most of the observed classroom sessions focused predominantly on identifying reasonable grounds, legal procedure and the extent to which a person could be searched in public. All of them made use of the reasonable grounds exercise (see table 2). Issues around compliance with PACE Code A generated the most discussion (eg, when grounds were sufficient, when searches could be carried out). While legal decision making was intended to be a core element of the pilot training, the focus on legal compliance may have been because it was a more comfortable topic for the trainers and officers.
- **Unconscious bias** – All of the observed classroom sessions involved discussion of unconscious bias. The recommended exercise (see table 2) was used in all pilot forces, although there was some variation in how this exercise was run. In most sessions, however, after a brief discussion about the exercise and biases in general, there was little elaboration about the concept or how it might affect officer decision making in stop and search. Officers were not provided with ways of overcoming or challenging unconscious biases. Conscious bias was also seen to receive little attention in the classroom, although it was covered in less detail in the Guidance for Trainers.
- **Procedural justice** – Despite procedural justice being an intended focus of the pilot training, its coverage in the Guidance for Trainers was limited and not explicit.³⁰ As a result, while all the observed sessions covered topics that implicitly touched on the principles of procedural justice, the idea of procedural justice and its implications for stop and search were not presented in a clear or coherent fashion.

The format and delivery methods of the pilot training

A participatory approach was adopted in all of the observed classroom sessions. In addition, most force trainers skilfully connected the training to officers' work and allowed them to discuss their experiences. Most of the training intended for the classroom involved some form of officer participation (eg, a discussion or exercise). The content that was intended only for the pre-read, but was nevertheless covered in class, tended to be delivered in a

²⁹ They also showed that some topics meant only for the pre-read (eg, the history of stop and search) were, sometimes, also covered in the classroom.

³⁰ Procedural justice was evident in the role-play exercise and included in the additional resources for trainers.

more lecture-based way.

In theory, using these adult education methods should have allowed officers to bring their experiences into the classroom, and reflect on and learn from them. Their use was also broadly in line with the Guidance for Trainers, which encouraged the pilot forces to avoid lecture-based inputs and use facilitated discussion, role-play and practical exercises.

Role-play scenarios – which were specifically recommended because of their effectiveness in an earlier police training experiment (Wheller et al 2013) – were largely absent from the observed classroom sessions. When role-play was used, it was only to deliver the role-play exercise included in the Guidance for Trainers (see table 2). The observed role-plays seemed fairly scripted and did not appear to allow for much reflection or personalised feedback. Their limited use, however, may have been due to the resources and technical support available to the pilot forces.

There was no evidence of other participative methods being used (eg, problem-based and peer-to-peer learning). Moreover, forces trainers tended not to refer to the pre-read during the observed classroom sessions (apart from where they trained it).

Implementation issues

The process evaluation highlighted three main issues with the way the pilot training was implemented:

- **The training guidance** – Force project leads and trainers were critical of the College for providing broad guidance for the pilot, which they had to use to design and deliver local training. Most had expected and wanted the College to produce a more prescriptive manual containing clear instructions on precisely what to deliver in the classroom and how to deliver it, along with a series of high-quality training materials. The guidance-based approach also left the pilot training open to local interpretation, which made possible the variations in the training that was delivered across the pilot forces. Despite the College's standard model being to produce training guidance, the lack of a training manual underpinned many of the implementation issues identified during the observations and interviews.
- **The train-the-trainer events** – Opinions were mixed about the value of the events among those who were interviewed. Echoing their concerns about the guidance, several force project leads and trainers said the content of the events did not meet their expectations. They did not think they were sufficiently guided through the training to a point where they felt they could have delivered it locally.
- **Challenge in the classroom** – A consistent issue to emerge was that trainers were regularly challenged by officers when they were covering the following parts of the training:
 - the definition of a fair and effective stop and search (specifically its reference to 'genuine belief' and that an item would be found 'more often than not')
 - the guidance on the smell of cannabis, on its own, not constituting reasonable grounds for a search.

Officers reportedly raised issues about these parts of the training being unfeasible, against common practice and incompatible with the law. The observations and interviews showed that force trainers did not always know how to respond to these challenges and that they often generated substantial classroom discussion. In some cases, trainers were able to deal pre-emptively with some challenge by treating the former as a working definition and the using the latter to illustrate broader considerations about decisions to stop and search.

More specific issues relating to the purpose of the pre-read, the use of the assessment in the classroom, the use of videos and the icebreaker exercise, and the perceived credibility of the trainers are described in the full process evaluation report (Giacomantonio et al 2016a).

Barriers and facilitators

The process evaluation also highlighted three main barriers and facilitators to implementing the pilot training:

- **Communicating and framing the training** – The extent to which officers appeared likely to accept the training seemed to be mainly shaped by how the training was communicated and framed. In one particular force, for example, a minority of officers who were seen to show up to classroom sessions were angry, worried or antagonistic because they had been informed the training was a ‘punishment’ for ‘problem officers’. A number of other officers said that they had been told they were deliberately selected to participate in the training (eg, because of the quantity or quality of searches they carried out) rather than selected at random.

These misconceptions may have affected how receptive officers were to the training and resulted in force trainers being seen to reassure officers about their attendance at the start of the training. In terms of how the training was framed in the classroom, the main difference was the extent to which trainers acknowledged there to be problems with stop and search in their force.

- **Supervisors’ and senior leaders’ knowledge** – Trainers acknowledged in classroom session observed in at least two pilot forces that supervisors and senior leaders would lack knowledge about the pilot training. This knowledge gap would have existed in all the pilot forces as result of individual officers – rather than teams of officers – being randomly assigned to the treatment group. While the consequences of this knowledge gap were unclear, it was possible that a lack of supervisory and senior management support on a day-to-day basis during the pilot may have prevented some attitudinal and behaviour change from taking root.
- **Involving senior leaders in delivery** – Involving senior officers in introducing or delivering the classroom sessions was singled out as valuable in two pilot forces. It was reported that their involvement encouraged officers to see the value of the training and accept that their forces were serious about changing their approaches. Conversely, there was evidence to suggest that more negative messages from senior officers could have the opposite effect.

More specific issues relating to organisational barriers (eg, performance culture and technology), the influence of peers and supervisors and the wider context are described in the full process evaluation report (Giacomantonio et al 2016a).

Officer perceptions of the pilot training

Overall perceptions of the pilot training

Officers were mostly positive about the pilot training, the quality of the trainers and the level of participation they were able to have in the classroom. Of the 548 officers who completed a feedback sheet at the end of their classroom session:

- 83 per cent rated the course as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’
- 75 per cent said that it was ‘a little’ or ‘a lot better’ than previous training on stop and search.

Perceptions of the pilot training's purpose

Officers varied in their views as to the purpose of the pilot training, why it had been introduced and its value. Their views generally echoed the differences in opinion at a national level and among force project leads and trainers. A notable minority of the officers who were interviewed (12 officers) said the training was a helpful refresher, particularly around legislation and procedure. Many of them also said, however, they had learned nothing new.

A small number of officers (2) – who saw the training as seeking to teach them 'from scratch' – were more critical, describing it as 'condescending' and 'basic'. A similarly small number (3) were more positive; saying the training was 'necessary' to restore officer confidence in using their powers.

Perceptions of the pilot training's focus and content

When asked what they thought about the content of the pilot training, the officers who were interviewed tended to focus on three main issues:

- **The definition of a fair and effective stop and search** – While the definition caused no issues for some officers, specific elements of the definition proved to be particularly problematic for others. In particular, the expectation that a search had to be based on 'genuine belief' rather than 'reasonable suspicion' proved to be one of the most contentious issues during the pilot training and was raised by a notable number of officers (15). Some expressed concerns that the change made the threshold for a search too high, needed to be balanced against their responsibilities for maintaining public safety and would lead to officers not carrying out searches when they previously would have been justified in doing so. This view was not supported by findings from the impact evaluation, however (see page 32). It was also suggested that, in some cases, officers might choose to arrest people over searching them.
- **Guidance on the smell of cannabis** – The new guidance that the smell of cannabis, on its own without supporting evidence, would not constitute reasonable grounds for a search also generated a largely negative response. While a small number of officers said they would simply follow the rule or already did (4), many more were critical of the guidance and its rationale (29). They tended to talk about how smell provided them with evidence of a criminal offence, which they felt obliged to investigate. Others also felt the rule went against the reality of policing and community expectations.
- **Unconscious bias** – Officers were generally positive about the training on unconscious bias. Most of those who talked about this part of the training pilot said that it was thought provoking and well managed (9) and mentioned the value of the discussions that followed. While other officers (2) thought the topic to be of interest and worthwhile, they felt the recommended exercise (see table 2) was fairly shallow.

Perceptions of the pilot training's format and delivery methods

Officers were also generally positive about the format of the classroom sessions and the training methods that were used:

- **Length** – Officers tended to say in interview that the duration of the classroom session was appropriate (13) and 80 per cent reported on their feedback sheets that its length was 'about right'.

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- **Classroom participation** – Interviewed officers (15) were particularly favourable about the levels of participation, how the trainers facilitated discussions and the willingness of officers to express and listen to different views. Overall, 99 per cent reported on their feedback sheets that they felt able to express their opinion in the classroom.
- **Trainer quality** – Officers were mostly positive about the trainers. They often found the trainers to be knowledgeable, have strong communication skills, have a good manner with the officers (eg, by inviting discussion and participation). A small minority said they would have preferred the trainers to have been active, full-time police officers.
- **Learning exercises and resources** – The written grounds exercise (see table 2) was particularly well-received by the officers who were interviewed. The views of the small number who took part in role-play scenarios also tended to be favourable (four out of five). Both were described as ‘thought-provoking’. The use of videos was much less well-received and alienated some officers. Concerns were expressed about how officers were depicted in them.
- **Pre-read and knowledge check** – Almost all the officers who were asked about the pre-read during the interviews could not remember its contents. Overall, 70 per cent reported on their feedback sheets that the pre-read was ‘very’ or ‘fairly useful’ (although 63 per cent reported reading all of it). The knowledge check was also generally well-received.

Suggestions for improving on the way the pilot training was delivered included:

- greater use of interactive exercises (eg, role-play scenarios)
- greater focus on how to interact and communicate with members of the public (ie, procedural justice)
- more guidance on how to document the grounds for a search
- further detail and discussion about reasonable grounds (eg, developing grounds and when to carry out a search)
- more information on chief officers’ priorities about stop and search.

Perceived and observed officer behaviour after the training pilot

Perceived officer behaviour

Officers reported that the quantity and quality of searches they carried out were changing, although it was difficult to separate out the perceived impact of the pilot training from wide range of potential influences (eg, the political context) on their practices. A third of the officers who were interviewed felt, however, that the pilot training had little or no impact on their stop and search practice.

A notable minority of officers (7) reported that the pilot training had led to a reduction in searches being carried out. This view was not supported by findings from the impact evaluation, however (see page 32). While some linked this reduction to the focus in the training on the grounds required for a search (eg, genuine belief), others saw it more positively as a by-product of the training helping to ensure stop and search was used appropriately (eg, quality over quantity). Across the officer interviews and observations, a wide range of reasons were highlighted as affecting the number of searches officers were carrying out (eg, public and media attitudes, increased demand and resource constraints, fear of complaints, messages from senior officers and the government).

Other officers (in smaller numbers) pointed to the training having had a range of positive

impacts on their own behaviour, including:

- having greater confidence to use their powers
- communicating better with members of the public
- taking more time before carrying out a search to consider the grounds: ‘...previously stop and search was stop-search-question, whereas now it’s stop-question-search isn’t it really?’
- being more willing to challenge colleagues
- recording more detail on the stop and search record to account for their decision making.

Observed officer behaviour – putting the pilot training into practice

It was difficult to determine from the observations the extent to which officers applied their learning from the pilot training in practice. The nature and implementation of the pilot training, the potential for observer effects and the small number of searches that were observed (nine), meant it was not possible to identify specific practices that could be attributed directly to officers’ learning. Some general patterns of behaviour, however, were identified that were consistent with the pilot training:

- **Legal procedure** – The pilot training consistently focused on the need for officers to follow PACE Code A with stop and search.³¹ The observations revealed that officers were usually compliant with legal procedure when they were seen to carry out a search. They very rarely missed one of the required legal steps.
- **Procedural justice** – The pilot training was much less consistent in its coverage of procedural justice (ie, fair decision making and respectful treatment) and how officers should communicate with members of the public. The observations showed greater variation in officer behaviour and pointed to there being some room for improvement. For encounters where data were available, officers:
 - usually explained the reason for making contact (8/8 searches and 74/88 other police-initiated encounters)
 - often invited the suspect to tell ‘their side of the story’ (5/8 searches and 60/82 other police-initiated encounters) and were usually active or attentive listeners (5/5 and 62/69 respectively)
 - sometimes explained how they chose to resolve the situation (5/8 searches and 52/86 other encounter) and why (4/8 and 39/85 respectively)
 - sometimes used effective communication techniques with the suspect (4/8 searches and 51/88 other encounters)
 - often were overtly polite to the suspect (5/9 searches and 64/87 other encounters).

Observed officer behaviour – interacting with suspects

The observations also provided an opportunity to explore how trained officers interacted with the people with whom they initiated contact. While limited by the relatively small number of encounters that were observed during the fieldwork, the observations highlighted issues related to the attitude of suspects during police/public interaction, the extent to which these attitudes were open to change, the role that procedural justice played in improving the attitude of the suspect and when officers were more likely to behave with procedural justice.

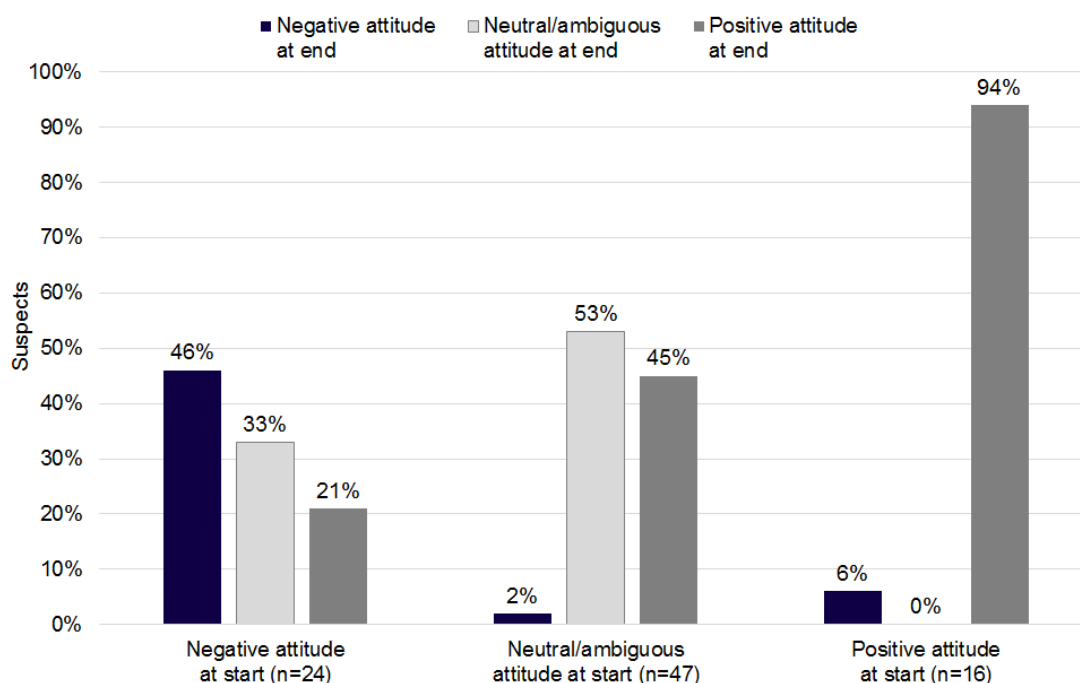
Suspects appeared to be more negative in their attitudes towards the police when they were

³¹ Legal procedure was often taught using the GOWISELY mnemonic (ie, grounds, object, warrant card, identification, station, entitlement to a record, legislation and ‘you are detained’).

searched than when they were involved in other police-initiated encounters. During the observed searches, none of the eight suspects were seen to have a positive attitude towards the police at the start of the encounter, while half (4) were overtly negative in their attitudes. The proportion displaying a negative attitude was higher than for other types of encounter.

Looking across all of the observed searches and other police-initiated encounters, there seemed to be some significant changes in the attitude of suspects during their interactions with officers and usually for the better (see figure 6). This might suggest that encounters that were seen during the observations were relatively well handled.

Figure 6. Change in the attitude of the suspect (all observed encounters*)



* Includes searches and other police-initiated encounters where data were available (n=87).

Statistical models were developed to identify the factors associated with suspects who were initially negative or neutral/ambiguous becoming positive in their attitudes at the end of the encounter.³² Taking into account their attitudes at the start, suspects were significantly more likely to be positive in their attitudes at the end of the encounter if officers were polite, enquired about their wellbeing or offered them reassurance. For example, there was a:

- 30 per cent chance of a suspect who was initially negative or neutral being positive at the end if officers were polite, compared to 14 per cent chance if officers were not
- 77 per cent chance of a suspect being positive at the end if officers offered them reassurance, compared to a 34 per cent chance if they did not.

There was a positive association between officers explaining the reason for the encounter and the suspect later becoming positive in their attitude but the association was not statistically significant.

The analysis was based on a small sample and did not take account of clustering in the data. The results, nevertheless, strongly suggest that police behaviour in line with procedural

³² Encounters where the suspect displayed a positive attitude at the beginning of the encounter were excluded.

justice can help to improve the attitudes of the people they stop or search.

Further statistical analysis was carried out to identify the types of suspect towards whom officers were more or less likely to behave in line with procedural justice:³³

- **Officers explaining their involvement** – significantly less likely for suspects aged 13–18.
- **Officers being polite** – significantly less likely for suspects aged 13–18 and more likely for suspects who were scruffy or dishevelled.
- **Officers asking about wellbeing** – significantly more likely for suspects who were scruffy or dishevelled and for suspects who initially had a positive attitude.
- **Officers offering reassurance** – significantly less likely for white suspects and more likely for suspects who initially had a positive attitude.

While this analysis is far from conclusive, it suggests the appearance and demeanour of suspects can shape how they are subsequently treated by officers.

It seems from the analysis carried out for the process evaluation that officers were less likely to use procedural justice if the suspect was a young person or did not initially have a positive attitude. With this latter group of suspects, there is potential for negative feedback loops to develop. If officers reserve fair and respectful treatment for those who are already positive towards them, they may be missing opportunities to improve the attitudes of other suspects and increase the chances of the interaction becoming increasingly bad-tempered.

³³ Comparisons were with made to suspects in the appropriate reference category (eg, suspects who were positive relative to those who were not positive).

6. Conclusions and implications

Assessing the training pilot

How is the implementation and effectiveness of the training pilot to be judged overall? Read together, the findings of the two evaluations present a fairly mixed picture. Officers' knowledge, attitudes and anticipated behaviours were seen as the trial's primary outcomes and the most important when assessing the overall impact of the intervention. The results for these outcomes pointed to the pilot having had a broadly positive impact. Several small effects were found, some of which were sustained over time. The impact of the pilot training on the trial's secondary outcomes (ie, recorded stop and search practices) was much more limited. No treatment effects were found. It was recognised from the outset, however, that these outcomes were less likely to respond to a training intervention, and were to be given less weight in assessing overall effectiveness. Notably, there was no evidence of the pilot training having caused any harm (beyond treatment group officers being less enthusiastic about their training experiences). This is an important finding, given the sensitive nature of stop and search, and the plan for a fully revised version of the training to be rolled out nationally from 2016/17.

A good level of implementation was achieved during the pilot, with 87 per cent of treatment group officers attending a classroom session. There are several possible explanations as to why the effect of the pilot training was not larger and most consistently positive. First, many of the 'problems' with stop and search (eg, race disproportionality) are complex and likely to have multiple causes, and so may not be 'solved' by training alone. If training is to be effective, it presumably needs to address a problem associated with officers' knowledge and skills. Other interventions, alone or in combination, might have had more impact. Secondly, there were issues with the way the pilot training was implemented that could have limited its impact. There was clear evidence that the Guidance for Trainers developed by the College led to inconsistencies in local training delivery. Providing clearer instructions on what the pilot forces were to train and how could have resulted in a more consistent and stimulating intervention. Few practical tools were provided as part of the pilot training and limited use was made of some participative training methods (eg, scenario- and problem-based learning).

The pilot may also have had more of an impact if it had emphasised skills development and given officers more of an opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in a training environment. The training that was delivered also tended to focus on more comfortable subjects (like legal compliance) and some of its content met resistance from officers. In addition, introducing the pilot training as a refresher may have inadvertently reduced the extent to which officers felt they were expected to change their behaviour.

Thirdly, the experiment's design may have made it more difficult to find positive effects of training. It was acknowledged at the design stage that indirect contamination resulting from treatment group officers working alongside other officers (and sometimes control group officers) risked dampening the overall effect of the training (see Quinton 2016 for details). While the large sample size would have mitigated this risk to some extent, trained officers would have had to 'swim against the current' and change their working practices without the support of, and in opposition to, their peers. A different result may have been achieved if it had been feasible to train officers in clusters (eg, discrete operational units). The design also meant that supervisors and senior leaders were not able to provide their support and reinforce the learning from the pilot training.

Explaining the pilot's impact

The impact and process evaluations provide different perspectives, and this methodological triangulation (Denzin 1970) enables a more rounded assessment of the pilot to be made. The process evaluation helps to explain why the pilot training had some effects but not others and prevents the trial from being a 'black box'. The findings of the impact and process evaluations were generally in harmony.

The impact evaluation found that the pilot training had some positive effects on officers' knowledge. As a result of training, officers were likely to have greater knowledge of the law and less likely to see written grounds as providing sufficient justification for a search. These effects were consistent with the process evaluation, which showed the delivered training focused on legal procedure, developing grounds and the reasonable grounds exercise. The effect of the pilot training in making officers less enthusiastic about their training experiences on stop and search is perhaps harder to explain. Officers' responses to the feedback sheets showed the pilot training was generally well-received (ie, 83 per cent rated it as 'good' or 'excellent'). These negative effects might reflect officers' resistance to those parts of the pilot training that they felt went against accepted practice (eg, 'genuine belief' and the smell of cannabis guidance). The low priority generally given to the quality of encounters and the limited use of role-plays may also help to explain the specific negative effect the pilot training had on officers' views about how training had informed their interpersonal skills.

The effect of the pilot training on officers' attitudes was mixed but broadly positive. As a result of being trained, officers were less cynical about stop and search regulation and less likely to support using stop and search in high volumes. These results might suggest officers took something away from the pilot training about needing to use their powers sparingly and in a more considered way. It is not clear, however, what aspects of the pilot training were most influential, although these effects could have been brought about by the training content on reasonable suspicion. The fact that only one of these effects was sustained highlights that changes brought about by training can fade over time (Leonard 2007) and that lasting change may only be possible with additional support and intervention. The lack of any effect on officers' support for procedural justice is more easily explained given that it did not receive much attention in the Guidance for Trainers and, hence, the classroom. It is possible, however, for training on procedural justice to be effective (Wheller et al 2013, Skogan et al 2015).

Officers were less likely to support the use of racial/ethnic stereotypes (even though support was low) as a direct result of being trained. This is one of the most important findings of the evaluation as it suggests that stereotyping can be affected by training. It is notable that this effect was brought about even though the pilot training tended not to delve into what unconscious bias meant in practice or draw out its practical implications. It would seem that the training that was delivered (ie, exercise and discussion on unconscious bias) was sufficient to change attitudes. Why the pilot training should have lowered support for racial/ethnic stereotypes but not for other stereotypes is less clear. Perhaps the close association between race/ethnicity and stop and search acted a trigger, or maybe the use of other types of stereotypes (eg, being young, how someone dressed and not fitting into an area) was regarded by officers as a more accepted and legitimate practice.

The impact of the pilot training on officers' anticipated behaviours was also mixed but broadly positive. The training had no effect on how officers said they would treat a suspect during a confrontational stop and search. This nil result probably reflects, again, the lack of training that was delivered on procedural justice. The effect on anticipated decision making was more consistently positive, however. As a result of being trained, officers were no more or less likely to say they would question a suspect in scenarios, but were less likely to say they would search them (especially when the grounds were weaker). There was no evidence

to suggest trained officers were 'more scared' to use their powers. In fact, the training made them less likely to think that grounds for search existed in the scenarios.

Reassuringly, the training had no adverse effect on officers saying they would carry out a search if they thought grounds were present. Taken together, these findings suggest the pilot training had an impact on **how** officers said they would intervene rather than **whether** they said they would intervene. As some officers indicated in the process evaluation, the training may have encouraged them to adopt a more thoughtful approach to stop and search. It seems likely that the general emphasis placed on legal decision making and reasonable grounds in the pilot training contributed to these effects.

It was notable that the largest effect on anticipated behaviour was for the reported likelihood of carrying out a search in the drugs scenario based on the smell of cannabis. Despite officer opposition to the smell of cannabis guidance, the size of the effect would suggest the pilot training was largely successful in getting its message across. The fact that just over half of treatment group officers said they would carry out a search in these circumstances highlights, however, that training may not be enough to change longstanding practices.

While the pilot training had a positive effect on support for racial/ethnic stereotyping, it had no impact on the relevance of race/ethnicity in officers' decisions to question or to search the suspect in the written scenarios. There are three possible explanations. First, if stereotyping is an implicit process about which people are generally unaware, it may not be amenable to change by training. Indeed, Glaser (2015) has suggested that it might be more effective to regulate highly discretionary activity, encourage officers to be motivated to control stereotyping, expose officers to information that counters common stereotypes and promote positive informal contact between officers and out-groups. Secondly, the pilot training focused on raising awareness of unconscious bias and did not draw out its implications or provide officers with ways for overcoming and challenging stereotyping. In this context, it is perhaps no surprise that support for racial/ethnic stereotyping was affected but bias in decision making was not. Thirdly, bias is difficult to measure and a sensitive research topic. It is possible, therefore, that the online survey was unable to detect any effect or that officers responded to the scenarios in unexpected ways.

Training officers

The experiment has a number of implications for police training. Some of the more specific issues for the national stop and search learning programme to be introduced from 2016/17 have been touched on above. Indeed, the national programme has been developed in light of the impact and process evaluations. The programme still uses a Guidance for Trainers document, but it is more detailed (eg, with debriefing instructions for all exercises) and is supported by new authorised professional practice (ie, national guidance) and a revised definition of a fair and effective stop and search³⁴.

It includes training packages for senior leaders, supervisors and frontline officers. The package for frontline officers consists of e-learning with a pass/fail assessment, followed by two one-day classroom sessions. Day one focuses on officer decision making³⁵ and day two on procedural justice³⁶. The inclusion of the second day was in direct response to:

³⁴ This definition no longer makes reference to 'genuine belief' or 'more often than not'.

³⁵ It includes: a video with a clear statement on the aims of the training, a structured discussion on reasonable grounds, a revised reasonable grounds exercise (with additional supporting material), a video and presentation on the idea of unconscious bias and its relevance to policing, an exercise and structured discussion on the use of mental shortcuts and their implications and an exercise on what actions to take in different scenarios.

³⁶ It includes: a presentation on the principles of procedural justice and GOWISELY and an extended role-play exercise for developing and practicing interaction skills.

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- the limited focus on procedural justice in the pilot training
- the finding that procedural justice was not consistently used in stop and search encounters but did seem to encourage suspects to adopt a more positive attitude
- the evidence on the effectiveness of procedural justice training (eg, Wheller et al 2013, Skogan et al 2015).

The experiment also raises wider questions about the College's approach to the professional development of its members.

With national learning programmes, such as stop and search, the College model is to issue forces with a Guidance for Trainers document and provide support via train-the-trainer events. While the nature of the guidance and support will inevitably vary between programmes, there is question as to the appropriateness of this model in high-risk areas of policing where greater uniformity in knowledge and skills might be needed.

The process evaluation clearly showed that the College's model led to inconsistent implementation. Local training varied in both content and method of delivery, and made limited use of more participative training techniques that have shown to be effective (Wheller and Morris 2010). Greater prescription, perhaps in the form of providing a detailed training manual, might seem like an obvious solution, but is likely to face resistance from those forces unable or unwilling to adopt the prescribed approach. The inherent tension between standardisation, local flexibility and inconsistency is an issue the College will need to consider and overcome in the future.

The training pilot and national learning programme on stop and search is also one example of where the College has been commissioned to develop new topic-based learning standards. Other examples include national training on vulnerability, domestic abuse and mental health. While each of these topic-based programmes responds to a particular need and will have unique content, some of the knowledge and skills they seek to develop are likely to be transferable. For example, they will all cover – to a greater or lesser extent – decision making, interaction with the public and risk assessment. Given the competing demands on police time and the limited capacity of force training departments to deliver both national and local training, there may be some advantages in national learning programmes becoming more focused on developing generic skills.³⁷ Such an approach might help prevent duplication and ensure greater consistency in and the transferability of knowledge and skills across policing functions (eg, stereotyping will be relevant to other roles).

³⁷ The skills-based approach could include topic-based content (selected according to need and role) and would need to be supplemented by specific topic-based information (eg, on the law).

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