

## Long Read: Guidance notes



Each issue of Going equipped includes at least two long read articles. Long reads will usually be based on a piece of academic research carried out by an officer or member of staff. Although based on academic research, the long read is intended to be accessible without some of the constraints of academic writing requirements in terms of style and technique. The focus of the long read should be of general interest in policing with an emphasis on operational policing issues.

Usually, the article will include recommendations for addressing the researched issue and these will be based on the findings. If contributors are writing an article based on work submitted to a programme of study, the course should be completed and the dissertation element should have been awarded/passed.

Long reads have a word limit of 2000 words. They should follow the basic structure of a dissertation or thesis with each section being much shorter. The following structure is a possible guide to structure, but this may vary depending on the type of research that you have conducted:

- **Include some brief information about yourself**, your role/experience and identify why you chose to research this topic to provide some background about identify your standpoint.
- **Introduce the topic** and why it is an important issue for policing, reducing crime or public safety. Include any definitions i.e. what is meant and understood by key terms such as ‘modern slavery’.
- **Describe the existing literature (briefly)**. It is difficult to distil a full literature review into a short section for a long read. It can help to focus solely on empirical studies and theory directly linked to your study/article or most pertinent to operational policing.
- **Outline your methodology** in plain English with a brief explanation of the methods you used and what you did, including sampling methods and sample sizes. Readers who require a more thorough overview of your methods can go to your full dissertation.
- **Report your findings** using a range of reporting techniques where possible e.g. tables, bullet points, figures etc. You do not need to include all of your findings, select those most relevant to the focus of the article. This section can also include links back to the literature and/or empirical studies and/or include some brief discussion or commentary about the findings.
- **Discuss** the findings and how they relate to the literature.
- **Conclude** your article, noting the significance of the research for policing, listing any recommendations, limitations and areas for further research.

### General writing hints and tips

- 1) Write in your own style. We want articles to be written in your ‘voice’.
- 2) Use plain English and avoid jargon and local or force specific acronyms. If you do use a well- established, nationally recognised acronym, put it in full when you first use it with the shortened version in brackets afterwards. From that point on use the acronym.
- 3) Be conservative with referencing, although necessary for academic writing it can be distracting for readers. Focus on adding references for pivotal articles/books rather than to add weight to a point or argument.

- 4) Use sub-headings, tables and bullet points for emphasis and to break up larger chunks of text.
- 5) Consider including relevant quotes from research participants to add context and illustrate your findings, discussion and conclusion.
- 6) Consider the usefulness of adapting chapter summaries (if you used them) that you included in your dissertation.
- 7) Avoid any information which could identify incidents, cases, participants or police forces (unless you have permission to refer to them).
- 8) If you refer to statistics, state your source (briefly). You could also add a link in the text or a reference at the end of your article.
- 9) Articles should normally identify you and your police force/agency as the contributor unless there is an operational issue or a personal requirement to the contrary.