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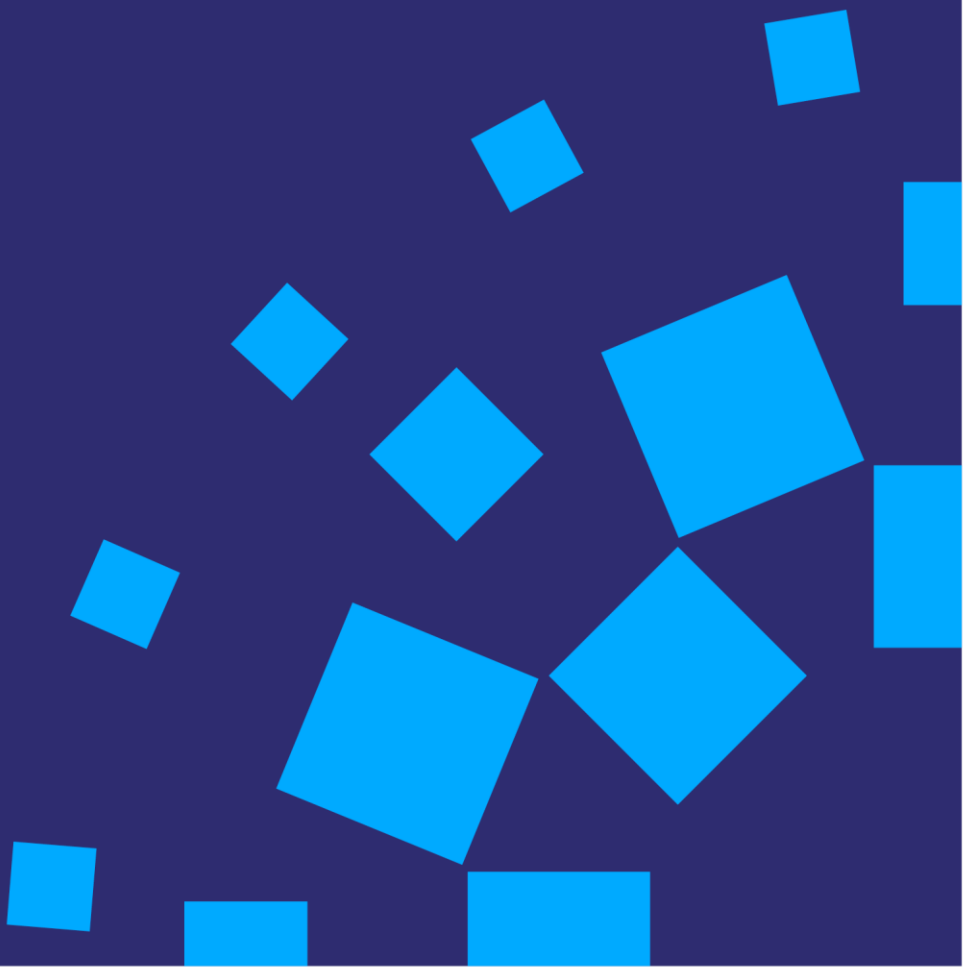
Ethical decision-making in policing

A rapid evidence assessment

Rebecca Bruce-Smith, Eve Middleton, Karen Moreton, Jitka Smith and Paul Quinton



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Executive summary

Introduction

This report presents the findings of a rapid evidence assessment (REA) that was carried out in support of a review of the Ethical Policing Principles in the **Police Code of Ethics** (CoE). A transparent, structured and systematic process was followed to search for, screen and bring together the results of 44 studies that help to answer the following question:

> **How do officers, staff and volunteers identify, approach and resolve ethical issues in policing?**

How philosophy matters to police decision-making

In addition to the 44 studies on ethical decision-making in policing, the REA aimed to summarise learning from philosophy on the moral standards that people **should** use when making decisions as to what is right or wrong. This learning can act as a guide for behaviour. It can therefore help to underpin principles that officers and staff can draw on when they are presented only with bad options and have to choose between 'the lesser of two evils'. This situation is inevitable in policing because evidence does not exist to inform all policing activities and no rule book can cover every eventuality.

The three main philosophical traditions can inform principles for ethical decision-making because of their focus on the following.

- **Good outcomes** (consequentialism): The idea that a person's decision is morally good if the consequences of that decision are good and improve outcomes overall. Examples include evidence-based policing, harm reduction strategies and 'noble-cause corruption' (where the ends are used to justify the means).
- **Good process** (deontology): A perspective suggesting that a person's decision is morally good if that decision is consistent with established rules, principles, obligations and duties. Examples include law enforcement and professional standards.
- **Good character** (virtue ethics): An approach that claims a person's decision is morally good if that person displays the character traits that are needed for us all to live good lives (the 'common good'). Examples include the Principles of Public Life and value statements.

Other ethical perspectives focus more on **care**, **fairness** and **policing by consent** (the

idea that there is an informal contract between the police and the public).

Ways to understand ethical decision-making in policing

Of the studies included in the REA, 12 tried to make sense of police decision-making from the different traditions in moral philosophy. No single ethical perspective was found to dominate in the literature.

- Studies from a **good outcomes** (consequentialist) perspective highlighted the need to think about harm in the broadest sense when making decisions, and to co-opt the idea of ‘doing the least harm’ from the medical professions.
- The research in the **good process** (deontology) tradition emphasised the need for the police to share common values with – and recognise its moral obligations towards – the public, particularly in terms of protecting them.
- All the studies on **good character** (virtue ethics) highlighted, to a greater or lesser extent, the importance of police having the personal responsibility and ethical competence to manage competing demands. Some talked about the need for practice and, in one particular study, for decisions to be informed by an understanding of the ‘public good’.

The conditions needed for ethical decision-making in policing

Research in the REA also examined the factors or conditions that were thought to make ethical decision-making in policing more likely. The studies that were included used a range of methods, so causal impact should not be assumed.

- The research on **leadership and culture** tended to highlight the processes by which officers came to develop their own moral frameworks for decision-making. Learning from peers, supervisors and senior police leaders was seen to be particularly influential, suggesting the potential for these frameworks to develop over time depending on context and experience. However, one study suggested that the views of senior leaders and those on the front line could differ.
- There were several studies showing the importance of senior police leaders and supervisors **modelling** behaviours associated with fairness. Police officers were more likely to report higher levels of integrity, commitment and support for ethical policing

when they felt that decisions were made fairly and that they had been treated with respect.

- **Whistleblowing** and active bystandership were found to be associated with both:
  - personal factors, such as self-reported honesty and control
  - social and organisational factors, such as worry about the consequences

Interventions to support ethical decision-making in policing

Some studies speculated about interventions that might improve ethical decision-making or presented evaluation findings. Due to the research designs used, conclusions about 'what works' are not possible. However, these studies may still provide clues about what could be effective, inspire innovation and encourage testing.

- **Decision-making tools** can be developed or adapted to take account of ethics in more explicit ways and with a view to helping police to resolve challenging situations.
- While **education and learning** were not seen as the sole solution, the evidence emphasised the value of police officers developing through:
  - practical experience of dealing with dilemmas and ethical grey areas
  - being trained in a range of ethical issues, not just in misconduct matters
  - a focus on self-reflection, discussion and practice in a safe environment
  - developing personal strategies for coping with personal distress

  However, a small number of studies pointed to the ways in which education and learning interventions might have limited impact.
- One study talked about the need for **multiple interventions** based around:
  - mitigation (reducing the likelihood of ethical problems)
  - advice (providing direction for ethical decision-making)

Conclusions

The evidence from the REA was used to underpin the revised Ethical Policing Principles in the Police CoE. The table below presents the moral philosophical perspectives and evidence that informed each of the principles.

Revised principle	Related perspective	Related evidence
Prioritising public service		
Taking pride in delivering a professional service	▪ Good character ▪ Fairness	▪ Evidence suggesting the importance of peers, supervisors and senior leaders in developing the police service's moral compass. ▪ Evidence on organisational fairness showing that support for ethical policing was associated with police officers being confident in themselves and identifying with the police organisation.
Acting in the public interest	▪ Good outcomes ▪ Good process ▪ Good character ▪ Fairness ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence suggesting that policing is a public good, which derives its legitimacy from having shared moral values with citizens, and that the police have a moral obligation towards the public. ▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust that the police have trustworthy motives.
Acting lawfully	▪ Good process ▪ Fairness ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence suggesting that the police service derives its legitimacy from its use of formal rules and has a moral obligation to protect the public. ▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to work within the bounds of its authority.
Being open and transparent	▪ Good process ▪ Fairness	▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to be open and honest about its decisions.
Communicating and explaining decisions clearly	▪ Good process ▪ Fairness	▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to be open and honest about its decisions.

Leading with professional courage		
Taking responsibility and leading by example	▪ Good character ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence suggesting that the police need to be morally aware, to take personal responsibility for decisions, to demonstrate practical wisdom and to be judged by the reasonableness of their actions. ▪ Evidence on the importance of peers, supervisors and senior leaders to the development of the police service's moral compass.
Being honest and trustworthy	▪ Fairness ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to be trustworthy.
Thinking through the consequences of decisions	▪ Good outcomes ▪ Good character	▪ Evidence suggesting that the police should co-opt ideas from public health about improving outcomes and protecting life, with evidence-based policing being centred on the medical idea of doing least harm. ▪ Evidence suggesting that the police have a moral obligation to protect the public and should be judged by the reasonableness of their actions.
Challenging unprofessional behaviour and practice	▪ Good process ▪ Fairness	▪ Evidence on whistleblowing and active bystandership, particularly the adverse effects on reporting of worrying about possible negative consequences, and the risks associated with the police conforming to cultural norms.
Inviting scrutiny, feedback and challenge	▪ Good character	▪ Evidence suggesting the importance to moral reasoning and practical wisdom of self-reflection and personal development.
Responding with respect and empathy		
Listening with care and respect	▪ Good character ▪ Care ▪ Fairness ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence suggesting that the police need to act with wisdom and sensitivity, to show respect and to see respect as a character strength. ▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to

		trust the police to give people a voice, to listen and to treat them with dignity.
Recognising and understanding other perspectives	▪ Good character ▪ Care ▪ Fairness ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to take account of people's opinions when making decisions.
Recognising the impact of emotions	▪ Good character ▪ Care	▪ Evidence suggesting that officers see kindness as a character strength.
Responding to individual and community needs	▪ Good character ▪ Fairness ▪ Care ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence suggesting that the police have a moral obligation to protect the public, and that officers see respect and kindness as a character strength. ▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to make unbiased decisions based on the facts.
Being fair and impartial	▪ Good character ▪ Fairness ▪ Care	▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to make fair and unbiased decisions based on the facts, to explain those decisions, and to be trustworthy.
Considering own and other welfare	▪ Good character ▪ Fairness ▪ Care	▪ Evidence suggesting the importance of personal wellbeing to ethical decision-making, as well as officers seeing kindness as a character strength. ▪ Evidence on organisational fairness suggesting that support for ethical policing was associated with police officers feeling that supervisors and senior leaders made fair decisions and treated them with respect.

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Contents

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of a rapid evidence assessment (REA) that was carried out in support of a review of the Ethical Policing Principles in the **Police Code of Ethics** (CoE).

The REA sought to provide the best available evidence on how officers, staff and volunteers identify, approach and resolve ethical issues in policing. In presenting this evidence, the REA aimed to support the development of revised Ethical Policing Principles that are accessible and relevant to the ethical issues routinely faced by police officers and staff. The revised principles can also be used as a practical guide in decision-making.

A total of 44 studies were included in the REA. More detailed information about each of these studies can be found in a series of tables at the end of this document (Appendix B).

What is an REA?

An REA uses transparent, structured and systematic processes to search for and screen relevant research on a particular topic and to bring together its findings. An REA is not intended to be an exhaustive summary of the literature. Limits are placed on the review process to deliver results more rapidly than with a full systematic review. However, the transparent and systematic nature of the REA process helps to reduce selection and reporting biases, and enables the review to be replicated.[i]

Background

The College of Policing – the professional for body for everyone in policing in England and Wales – was founded in 2013. The following year, the College published the **Code of Ethics**. The aim of the Code was described by the College as follows.

> ‘The Code of Ethics was produced by the College of Policing in 2014 in its role as the professional body for policing. It sets and defines the exemplary standards of behaviour for everyone who works in policing.

[i] Further information on REAs is available from: Government Social Research Service. (2014). **Rapid evidence assessment toolkit** [internet]. [Accessed 24 October 2022]

> It is a supportive, positive, everyday decision-making framework and is a constant reinforcement of the values and standards that policing is proud of. It is intended to encourage personal responsibility and the exercise of professional judgement; empowering everyone in policing to ensure they always do the right thing.'

In 2021, the College announced a review of the Police CoE. The **scope of the review** was consulted upon publicly between July and September. It was subsequently agreed that the following three components of the CoE were to be reviewed separately using different processes:

- the Ethical Policing Principles (adapted from the **Principles of Public Life**)
- explanatory text on the Standards of Professional Behaviour (derived from the **Police (Conduct) Regulations**)
- supplementary notes on the National Decision Model and breaches of the CoE

The Ethical Policing Principles were revisited by a Review Committee made up of frontline officers, staff and volunteers, experts in policing, and academics. The review followed the process established by the College for the development of evidence-based guidelines. For the Ethical Policing Principles, the process involved a College development team:

- summarising learning from philosophy on the moral standards that people **should** use when making decisions as to what is right or wrong (see the textbox on 'why moral philosophy matters to police decision-making' below)
- carrying out an REA on ethical decision-making in policing (summarised in this report)
- gathering practice-based evidence from officers, staff, volunteers and stakeholders
- collating codes of ethics used by police organisations in other countries, and by other professions and occupations.

Outputs from each of these pieces were shared with the Review Committee, who used them in the drafting of the revised Ethical Policing Principles.

Report structure

This report consists of six chapters.

- Chapter 2 describes the methods that were used in carrying out the REA.
- Chapters 3 to 5 present summaries of findings under the REA's organising themes:

  - ways to understand ethical decision-making in policing (chapter 3)
  - the conditions needed for ethical decision-making in policing (chapter 4)
  - interventions to support ethical decision-making in policing (chapter 5)
- Chapter 6 highlights how the revised Ethical Policing Principles were informed by the evidence gathered in this REA.

How philosophy matters to police decision-making

Evidence-based policing may not always overtly consider philosophical perspectives, but it can inform thinking when empirical evidence is not available.

So-called normative moral philosophy is mainly concerned with setting standards for how people **should** make decisions, rather than describing how people actually make decisions. It seeks to answer questions about:

- what it means to be ‘good’
- how a ‘good’ person ought to make decisions
- how to judge whether a person’s decision is ‘good’

There are three main traditions in moral philosophy.

- **Consequentialism** is exclusively concerned with ***good outcomes***. It suggests that a person’s decision should be regarded as morally good if the consequences of that decision are good. The outcome or impact of a decision is what is thought to matter, rather than the character of the person making the decision or the consistency of that decision with higher ideals.

  The focus of consequentialism is on improving outcomes overall, which would be consistent with models of evidence-based practice and harm reduction in policing. Perversely, the idea also underpins the idea of ‘noble-cause corruption’, where the ends (the outcomes) are used to justify the means (the process). For example, this may include fabricating evidence to ensure the convictions of offenders who are believed to have broken the law.

  Consequentialism has been criticised because:

  - what constitutes a good outcome is not always clear

  - it can be challenging for someone to predict the likely outcome of a decision in advance
  - in its extreme form, it could result in a minority of people being made to suffer if their suffering benefits the majority

- **Deontology** is a perspective that emphasises ***good process***. It proposes that a person's decision should be considered morally good if that decision is consistent with established rules and principles. The decision-making process and the person's intention is what is thought to matter, not the character of the person or the outcome of that person's decision.

  Deontology is likely to find support in policing, with its role in enforcing laws and commitment to internal discipline. However, deontology encompasses a wide set of rules, including obligations, duties and higher ideals that can be derived from rational thought and moral reasoning (such as human rights), and not just those found in legislation and policy.

  Common criticisms of this perspective include:

  - the possibility of people following rules unthinkingly regardless of their impact (for example, the 'just following orders' defence)
  - a person's primary duty being unclear in ambiguous situations
  - the conflict that can sometimes exist between different rules and obligations

- **Virtue ethics** highlights the importance of someone being of ***good character***. A person's decision is judged to be morally good if that person displays the character traits that are needed for us all to live good lives. The emphasis is less on someone possessing particular characteristics, and more on that person having the virtues that enable them to achieve a particular goal (such as the 'common good').

  Self-development is central to virtue ethics. A person should seek to develop moral character and ethical competence, so that they have the practical wisdom ('phronesis') to understand and balance competing demands in specific situations.

  Examples of virtue ethics in policing include the Seven Principles of Public Life and forces' value statements.

  Critics of virtue ethics point to:

  - the challenge of defining the 'common good' in highly individualised societies

- the need for different people to display different virtues at different times
- the potential for inconsistency in decision-making because a person's decisions can be situationally justified and may not follow the rules

Other perspectives do exist outside the three main philosophical traditions, including the following.

- **Justice ethics**: An approach that places importance on the **fairness** a person's decision in terms of distributive fairness (fair distribution of decision outcomes) and procedural fairness (fair process of decision-making and respectful treatment).

  These ideas have become widespread in policing. A large body of international research evidence has shown that when the public trust the police to be fair and respectful, and to work within the bounds of their authority, they are more likely to see the police as an institution with legitimacy (in other words, believing that it is right for the police to hold power and that police authority is justified).
- **Care ethics**: A perspective that emphasises inter-personal relationships, the importance of responding to the needs of different people, and the need to **care** for the wellbeing of the person making a decision and those affected by it.
- **Contractualism**: Aligned to **policing by consent**, the perspective that a person should make a decision in line with a 'social contract' and that everyone is of equal moral importance. In some versions of contractualism, people agree to give up some of their freedoms to an authority on the basis that the authority will protect their other freedoms and maintain social order. This approach underpins the idea of policing by consent.

There are similarities and differences between the various philosophical perspectives. Some people take a purist view that each approach is mutually exclusive, and a person should use only one to guide her or his ethical decision-making. Other people take a more pragmatic view and suggest that a person can use the different frameworks as practical guides to ethical decision-making in the real world, and should seek to manage any conflicts that result from doing so.

2. Review methods

Chapter 2 of this report describes the methods used in carrying out the REA. It details the:

- question that the REA sought to answer
- stages that were followed to identify, screen and bring together the findings of relevant research
- flow of literature through the review process
- key characteristics of the 44 studies that were included in the REA

Review question

The aim of this REA was to identify and summarise the findings of research that would help answer the following question:

> **How do officers, staff and volunteers identify, approach and resolve ethical issues in policing?**

Review stages

Scoping

The views of the Review Committee on the review process were sought at the outset, to help ensure that the REA had practical relevance to policing and could be used in the development of new Ethical Policing Principles. The Committee agreed the scope of the review and its overarching question. Members were also invited to recommend studies for consideration in the REA. Exploratory searches and further discussions with academic members of the Review Committee were also carried out, after which a protocol for the review process was developed (see Appendix A).

The purpose of the review was to collate insights from research about how policing is done, or should be done, rather than to reach overall conclusions about 'what works'. The Committee therefore agreed that there would be no restrictions on the type of methods used in studies that would be included in the REA. Given the focus on ethics, it was anticipated that some studies might be exclusively theoretical or philosophical in nature, or might use an eclectic range of methods. Decisions about whether to include certain studies focused primarily on the relevance of studies to the research question.

It was agreed with the Review Committee that relevance would mainly be judged in terms of ethical decision-making in policing, either:

- describing how police have resolved ethical problems in practice
- prescribing how police should resolve ethical problems in theory

The focus of the REA was on ethical policing and the responses to ethical dilemmas (for example, situations requiring someone having to choose between the 'lesser of two evils'), rather than unethical policing and issues of police wrongdoing (such as misconduct, corruption and excessive force).

The review team decided not to search for, or screen in, studies on police discretion that did not explicitly discuss ethics. Similarly, no attempt was made to identify research specifically on the 'blue code of silence' (the social norm in the police about officers and staff not reporting colleagues for wrongdoing), although studies on this topic were included in the REA if they were identified through searching considered to be relevant. Resource constraints prevented the research team from taking a more comprehensive approach to the large bodies of literature that exist on discretion and the 'blue code of silence'.

Searching

Searches of the databases accessible to the National Police Library were carried out in November 2021 using search terms that were structured around a PICO framework.

- **Population:** policing and law enforcement.
- **Interest:** ethics (including the main traditions in moral philosophy).
- **Context:** decision-making and dilemmas.

The specific search terms and databases that were used are detailed in the review protocol (see Appendix A).

A total of 4,899 studies were identified as a result of the database searches. Duplicate references were identified and removed when they were imported into Endnote (reference management software) and Rayyan (an online reference screening tool).

Screening

The 3,631 references that remained after de-duplication were screened in two stages, as per the protocol:

- **Title and abstract screening**: First, three reviewers each independently screened the

titles and abstracts of 200 references[ii] to ensure that they could apply the inclusion and exclusion criteria consistently. After comparing their decisions, they had a discussion to reach a common understanding if their decisions had differed or any of the reviewers had been unsure.

Next, the review team screened the titles and abstracts of the other references. Any uncertainties were discussed and resolved between reviewers. Overall, 183 of the 3,631 references were screened in at this stage.

- **Full-text screening**: The review team read the full texts of the references, applied the inclusion and exclusion criteria as before, and again discussed and resolved any uncertainties. Most papers excluded at this stage were out of scope because they did not focus on decision-making. A smaller number were screened out because specific exclusion criteria could be applied (for example, the study location being named only in the full text, but being out of scope).

  The number of references subject to full-text screening increased to 203 because 20 additional references had been identified as potentially relevant from reading the screened-in references in full, or were recommended by Review Committee members.

  A total of 44 references were screened in and 159 were screened out at this stage. All final screening decisions were reviewed by a senior member of the review team.

The studies were not screened in terms of the research methods that were used. It was expected that any research – regardless of whether it was empirical or theoretical, and regardless of the methods it used – could have had insights that were relevant to the review question.

The inclusion and exclusion criteria are set out in the review protocol (see Appendix A).

Reviewing

The reviewers used a data extraction tool to record and manage information from the 44 studies that had been screened in for inclusion. Information included bibliographic details, aims, research methods, location, population and key findings.

Every study was scored in terms of its relevance to the review question (low, medium or

[ii] This number of references was considered manageable, given the resources available for screening, and sufficient to identify disparities in decision-making.

high relevance). The studies were not scored in terms of their research methods because of the inclusive nature of the REA, although each one will have had its own methodological strengths and weakness.

The studies included in the REA were sorted alphabetically according to the first author's surname, then given identity numbers according to their position in that alphabetical list. A full list of references is available at the end of this report.

Synthesising

The aims, methods and results of the 44 included studies were summarised into a series of tables (see Appendix B). The tables were organised under themes, which eventually formed the basis of this report's structure. The themes and tables were shared with the Review Committee for review and to inform its discussions about revising the Ethical Policing Principles. Short narrative summaries were subsequently produced for the organising themes to provide an overview of the studies under each theme and to help readers navigate the tables. These summaries are presented in the next three chapters (chapters 3 to 5).

The references for the studies included in the REA are not written in full in the text but are denoted by their identity number, a full list of which is available at the end of this report.

PRISMA flow diagram

Figure 1 provides an overview of the flow of the literature through the review process, showing the number of studies at different stages and reasons for references having been excluded. The flow diagram follows the PRISMA[iii] framework.

Characteristics of included studies

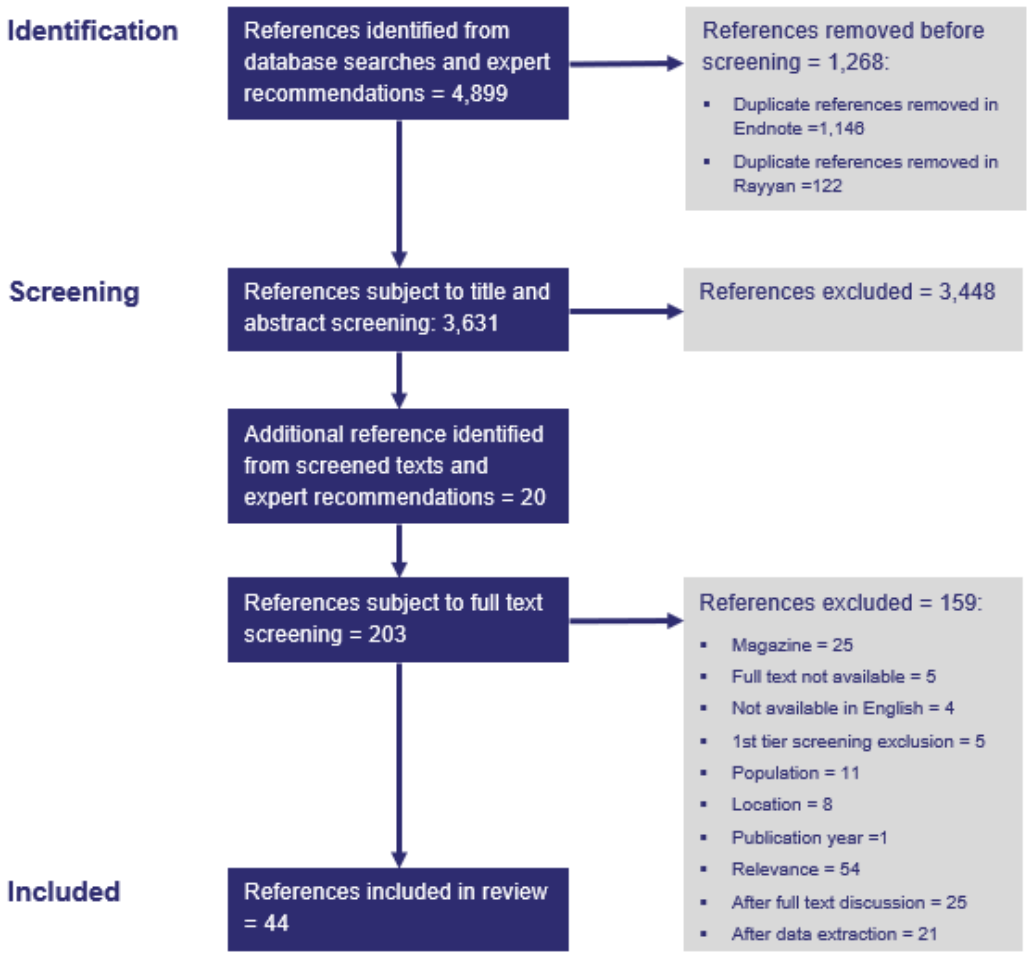
All the studies included in this REA examined policing, while some also looked at policing alongside other occupations, such as the military. The studies were fairly evenly spread over eligible publication dates, with just over half having been published between 2018 and 2022. Just under two-thirds of the studies were based on empirical research (28). There were similar numbers of quantitative (14) and qualitative studies (11), plus a handful that

[iii] Further information on the PRISMA framework is available from: PRISMA. **Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)** [internet]. [Accessed 24 October 2022].

used mixed methods (3). The quantitative studies largely used survey data (mainly primary analysis of new survey data, though a small number were based on secondary analysis of existing data). The qualitative studies were based on a wide range of methods, including interviews, focus groups, workshops and participant observations. In addition to the empirical studies, there were 12 theoretical papers that typically explored policing from different philosophical perspectives (consequentialism, deontology or virtue ethics), and 4 opinion pieces on relevant issues.

The studies were carried out in a range of countries, most often in the USA (15) or the UK (13). The review also included studies from Belgium (4), Australia (2), Norway (2), Sweden (2), Canada (1) and the Netherlands (1). Additionally, four references explored ethical decision-making in policing comparatively: the Netherlands and the UK (1), Norway and Sweden (1), the UK and the USA (1), and a systematic review of international evidence (1).

Figure 1: PRISMA flow diagram.



3. The evidence on ways to understand ethical decision-making in policing

Key points

- No single ethical perspective was found to dominate in the literature.
- Studies from a **good outcomes** (consequentialist) perspective highlighted the need to think about harm in the broadest sense when making decisions, and to co-opt the idea of 'doing the least harm' from the medical professions.
- The research that focused on **good process** (deontology) emphasised the need for the police to have shared common values with – and recognise its moral obligations towards – the public, particularly in terms of protecting them.
- All the studies that focused on **good character** (virtue ethics) highlighted, to a greater or lesser extent, the importance of police having the personal responsibility and ethical competence to manage competing demands. Some talked about the need for practice and, in one particular study, for decisions to be informed by an understanding of the 'public good'.

This chapter summarises the findings of 12 studies that tried to make sense of police decision-making from an ethical perspective. The evidence has been presented below under each of the three main traditions in moral philosophy (see the textbox on 'how philosophy matters to police decision-making' in chapter 1). Almost all of the studies were carried out from the perspective of good outcomes (consequentialism), good process (deontology) or good character (virtue ethics). Only one study was carried out from the perspective of care ethics. Several studies were consistent with justice ethics but have been summarised in the next chapter, as they focused on the idea of organisational fairness providing a basis for ethical decision-making in policing.

Good outcomes (consequentialism)

There were two theoretical papers that focused on consequentialism in policing. Both drew inspiration from medical ethics and highlighted the need for the police to consider harm and focus on harm reduction.

- **Broader understandings of harm**: One of these theoretical papers proposed that

officers should follow public health ethics (such as improving health outcomes and protecting life) when making decisions regarding illicit drug use.[6]

- **Doing the least harm**: The second paper suggested that evidence-based medicine, with its focus on implementing the interventions that have been identified as effective and least harmful, had implications for policing. The authors suggested that the development of evidence-based policing could enable police ethics to be approached from a consequentialist perspective ('doing the least harm'), as well as a deontological perspective ('doing wrong', such as lying or stealing). The authors highlighted that existing research on 'what works' and 'what looks promising' allowed police decisions to be based on evidence, rather than tradition, and to help minimise harm.[23]

Good process (deontology)

Four theoretical papers approached policing from a deontological perspective, one of which highlighted the importance of good process in limiting a simplistic focus on outcomes.

- **Police legitimacy and shared values**: One author reviewed the work of Weber and Durkheim in explaining the role of the police in democratic societies. The author highlighted how Weber advocated the idea that the police can achieve legitimacy through the use of formal rules that do not rely on citizen approval, while Durkheim[iv] promoted the notion that the public would trust the police and accept their authority if they had shared common values. For Durkheim, the police had a moral role to play in society.[37]

The other papers were broadly in keeping with Durkheim's perspective. All of these papers emphasised the moral obligations that the police have towards the public and, to varying degrees, highlighted the importance of the potential harms of police action (and inaction).

- **A moral obligation to protect the public**: A second paper argued that the power imbalance between police and citizens meant that the police had a special moral obligation to protect citizens when enforcing laws. The authors suggested that these obligations varied in police organisations, with operational officers requiring knowledge of relevant moral issues (such as the morality of drug prohibition) and more senior

[iv] Durkheim's perspective has since provided the theoretical basis for much of the research that has been carried out on procedural justice and legitimacy in policing (see the textbox on 'how philosophy matters to police decision-making' in chapter 1).

leaders needing to ensure that officers and staff had appropriate knowledge.[25] An earlier paper by the same author followed a similar line of argument, suggesting that officers needed to use discretion when asked to enforce an 'unjust law' that could cause harm.[24]

- **A moral obligation to limit simplistic consequentialism**: The last paper under this subtheme cautioned against officers making simplistic understandings and assessments of likely outcomes. Using a case study to illustrate their argument, the authors explained how an operational decision to not shut down a child abuse website – because doing so would have adversely affected the outcome of an investigation – failed to take account of the special moral obligation that officers had towards abuse victims. Such deontological obligations should limit officers' moral freedom when seeking the 'best' overall outcome.[12]

Good character (virtue ethics)

Three papers focused exclusively on virtue ethics, highlighting the need for ethical behaviours to be embedded in the actions of individual officers, rather than being wholly directed by the law, principles or senior leadership.

- **Being morally aware and showing respect**: A qualitative case study on the ethical dimensions of officer decision-making discussed a particular ethical dilemma faced by a female officer in Sweden. The author highlighted the internal conflict between the officer following the law or acting in line with her personal morals. According to the author, as it was not possible or appropriate for the officer to be guided by the law in the scenario, the officer had to act with moral wisdom and sensitivity ('phronesis') and display respect ('casuistry'). For the author, the question of whether the officer acted ethically should be determined by the reasonableness of her actions (was the decision and following action reasonable in the circumstance?).[31]
- **Having personal responsibility**: Adopting a similar viewpoint, a qualitative study on public order policing in the UK highlighted the need for individual officers to remain personally responsible for decisions. Furthermore, the authors suggested that training was unlikely, in itself, to lead to officers developing positive character traits (moral virtues), but could help positive decisions to become more routine, which could contribute to the development of character.[27]
- **Reasoning ethically and reflecting**: A theoretical paper highlighted the importance of a bottom-up approach to ethics, with virtues being embedded in the ethical reasoning

practised by officers rather than being driven by principles or senior leaders. The author suggested that reflective practice (a process of continuous learning based on thinking about experiences) could be used more frequently in policing to help officers to make informed, ethical decisions.[44]

Two papers explored virtue ethics alongside a deontological or consequentialist approach.

- **Showing practical wisdom**: Surveys and interviews conducted with a sample of UK officers sought to understand character virtues in policing. Survey results suggested that respondents tended to rely on deontological approaches when given a choice of how to respond to ethical dilemmas (for example, situations involving racism, potential suicide, and work and personal life conflict). Similarly, in interviews, respondents described themselves as 'enforcers of the law'. However, respondents also frequently talked about virtues, highlighting kindness and fairness as their most important character strengths. The authors therefore advocated for virtue ethics, and in particular the idea of practice wisdom ('phronesis'), to be given more prominence in the Police CoE.[17]
- **Thinking about policing as a public good**: One theoretical paper contrasted virtue ethics (good character) with the consequentialist (good outcomes) perspective and argued that governance in policing should not simply focus on limiting harm. The authors highlighted challenges with applying consequentialism in policing in terms of measuring harm and predicting what the consequences of an action might be. The paper also highlighted challenges with the good process (deontological) perspective, especially in situations where the duties and obligations of officers came into conflict. From a good character (virtue ethics) perspective, the authors highlighted the importance of the police providing a 'public good' by helping to create the conditions necessary for people to flourish (such as public safety).[26]

Care ethics

A UK-based study involving interviews and a participatory ethnography raised concerns that evidence-based policing could result in decisions that did not pay sufficient attention to the concept of care. According to the authors, care ethics focuses on how particular interventions affect particular people in specific circumstances. In line with this approach, the authors proposed that a focus on 'what matters' should complement the focus on 'what works', encouraging the police to prioritise interventions that are restorative and seek to empower people, rather than those that try to 'fix' problems.[38]

4. The evidence on the conditions needed for ethical decision-making in policing

Key points

- The research on leadership and culture tended to highlight the processes by which officers came to develop their own moral frameworks for decision-making. Learning from peers, supervisors and senior police leaders was seen to be particularly influential, suggesting the potential for these frameworks to develop over time depending on context and experience. However, one study suggested that the views of senior police leaders and those on the front line could differ.
- There were several studies showing the importance of senior police leaders and supervisors modelling organisational fairness behaviours. Police officers were more likely to report higher levels of integrity, commitment and support for ethical policing when they felt that decisions were made fairly and that they had been treated with respect.
- Whistleblowing and active bystandership were found to be associated with both:
  - personal factors, such as self-reported honest and control
  - social and organisational factors, such as worry about the consequences

Chapter 4 covers the research that tried to identify the factors or conditions that made ethical decision-making in policing more likely. The studies used a range of methods, so it should not be assumed that the factors or conditions identified were causally linked to good decision-making. All of the studies under the first three subthemes focused on different internal aspects of police organisations: leadership and culture, organisational fairness, and wellbeing. One study has been summarised under the subtheme of community policing. Lastly, there were several studies that looked at the factors and conditions associated with whistleblowing and active bystandership in policing (the reporting of wrongdoing and challenging of inappropriate behaviours).

Leadership and culture

The studies on leadership and culture explored the contribution of ethical leadership and ethical working environments towards good decision-making.[15,18]

- **Evidence-based policing**: One theoretical paper suggested that recent drives towards evidence-based policing supported the idea of police leaders making the ethical decisions by encouraging them to assess both operational and community benefits of their decisions.[19]
- **Recruitment and socialisation**: A second paper contrasted two models that attempted to explain the development of ethics in police organisations. In the values-predisposition model, police ethics were seen as the product of societal values that were imported into the police through recruitment. In the values-learned model, new recruits were seen to be socialised by their profession, with formal and informal experiences shaping their views on ethical behaviour.[11]
- **Rank-based differences**: Survey research carried out for a PhD in the police agencies in one US state suggested that senior police leaders typically saw their own agencies to be more ethical than members of the rank and file did. The author suggested that such divisions in perceptions needed to be better understood and addressed by senior leaders, in order to develop stronger ethical cultures in their forces.[14]
- **Opportunities for rule-bending**: One ethnographic study carried out in two police forces in an unnamed European country examined whether detectives who were morally disengaged were also more likely to engage in rule-bending. On the basis that rule-bending could happen in specific situations and not necessarily because officers were predisposed to bending the rules, the authors suggested ways by which senior police leaders could reshape their organisation to reduce opportunities for such practices. These included increased supervision, restricting discretion, monitoring decisions, raising moral awareness and scenario-based ethics training. This paper, while ostensibly about potential wrongdoing, raised important questions about whether rule-bending could ever be situationally justified, as might be the case from a consequentialist or virtue ethics perspective, and how appropriate limits to officer discretion are defined and ensured.[18]
- **Moral compass development**: The respondents in a qualitative Belgium study described how they had developed moral frameworks throughout their careers to decide what was allowed in specific use-of-force situations. The author suggested that officers developed these moral frameworks through a process or ‘trial and error’ and by observing senior colleagues. Supervisors were highlighted as making essential contributions to the development of officers’ moral compasses.[29]

- **Adapting to cultural norms**: In a quantitative study carried out in Belgium, the same author found that officers' moral beliefs about the use of force shaped their practices. It also showed that officers with a high propensity to use force were more sensitive to provocation. However, officers appeared to adapt to group norms of the teams in which they worked at the time, suggesting that officers' working styles could change throughout their careers.[30]

  The authors of another Belgium study, which used surveys and observations over time, speculated that the desire of new recruits to conform to existing cultural norms in the police could work against the strong moral reasoning skills that they had at the start of their careers.[8] In a similar vein, PhD research from a longitudinal study in the UK suggested that experienced officers had more of an impact than training on new recruit decision-making.[43]

Organisational fairness

Related to leadership and culture, three studies explored whether fair decision-making and respectful treatment by senior police leaders and supervisors (procedural fairness) and the fair distribution of rewards and resources within a force (distributive fairness) affected the attitudes and reported behaviours of frontline officers and staff.[1]

The studies – based on surveys carried out in Canada, the US and the UK – were consistent in showing that, if officers perceived higher levels of organisational fairness in their police forces, they were more likely to:

- feel confident in their own legitimacy as police officers[1]
- have higher levels of integrity, commitment and support for ethical policing[1,21]
- say that they used procedural fairness in interactions with the public[1,10]

Wellbeing

One of the opinion pieces included in the REA suggested that officer wellbeing and ethical police decision-making should go hand in hand. The authors claimed that officers:

- remained psychologically healthier when they took active steps to remain committed to their ethical principles
- were reportedly less likely to experience lapses in ethical decision-making when they attended wellness programmes (such as those including strategies to boost resilience)

The authors suggested that initiatives to address officer wellbeing needed to include and address ethical police decision-making at the same time, and vice versa.[4]

Community policing

PhD research, which was based on a small survey of officers from one region in the US who had attended a training event, examined whether those involved in community policing had a different ethical perspective than those who were not. The author hypothesised that the need for officers on community policing programmes to take the views of members of the public into account might have influenced their ethical development. However, the survey results suggested that experience of community policing made no difference to whether officers had fixed views on what was right and wrong (idealism) or saw morality as being context-specific (relativism).[5]

Support for whistleblowing and active bystandership

The search terms used in this REA were not designed to identify the large body of literature that exists on whistleblowing and active bystandership in policing. Nevertheless, several references were picked up and met the criteria for inclusion. These studies examined the factors associated with the willingness or unwillingness of officers and staff to report or intervene in examples of unethical behaviour.

- **Personal factors**: Willingness to report or intervene was associated with higher levels of reported honesty and self-control, and with perceiving the unethical behaviour to be serious.[9,28,34]
- **Social and organisational factors**: Unwillingness to report was associated with worries about breaking the ‘code of silence’, fears of retaliation and being less likely to trust force reporting systems.[36,39,40,41,42]

The research in this area suggested that police forces needed to empower, reassure and reward whistleblowers.[33] Other ideas to support whistleblowing and active bystandership included screening recruits for undesirable personal characteristics, punishing failures to report unethical behaviour, and providing clearer communications around reporting channels.[9,16]

5. The evidence on interventions to support ethical decision-making in policing

Key points

- Decision-making tools can be developed or adapted to take account of ethics in more explicit ways and with a view to helping police to resolve challenging situations.
- While education and learning were not seen as the sole solution, the evidence emphasised the value of police developing through:
  - practical experience of dealing with dilemmas and ethical grey areas
  - being trained in a range of ethical issues, not just in misconduct matters
  - a focus on self-reflection, discussion and practice in a safe environment
  - developing personal strategies for coping with personal distress
- However, a small number of studies pointed to the ways in which education and learning interventions might have limited impact.
- One study talked about the need for multiple interventions based around:
  - mitigation (reducing the likelihood of ethical problems)
  - advice (providing direction for ethical decision-making)

This chapter describes the studies that speculated about which interventions might improve ethical decision-making or that presented evaluation findings. Conclusions about 'what works' cannot be drawn from any of the studies because of their research designs. However, the studies may provide clues about what could be effective, inspire innovation and encourage testing. The studies have been categorised under three subthemes:

- decision-making tools
- education and learning
- multiple interventions for behaviour change

Almost all of the studies were on education and training (whether officers and staff can be taught how to make ethical decisions).

Decision-making tools

One theoretical paper outlined a six-step model, which the author believed may prove useful for officers reflecting on policing incidents after they have occurred. The model required officers to identify a problem and then formulate actions through a series of intermediary steps. These steps included identifying values and principles relevant to the situation.[32]

A second theoretical paper focused more specifically on decision-making tools in use-of-force situations. The authors recommended use of a framework to help officers struggling with use-of-force decisions. This framework outlines factors such as intention and proportionality as requiring consideration in such scenarios.[20]

Education and training

- **Developing moral reasoning through practice**: The results of surveys and observations conducted in papers on education and training emphasised the importance of officers having direct experience of trying to apply codes of ethics to dilemmas and ethical grey areas during training sessions and in the workplace.[8,13]
- **Training in a wider range of ethical dilemmas**: One paper in particular emphasised the need for officers to be trained in a wide range of ethical dilemmas, not just in those related to police misconduct. The authors suggested that discussions should cover issues such as whether to issue a ticket and what to do in a domestic disturbance, as well as more serious issues like police brutality.[33]
- **Recommended approaches to learning and development**: Research from the US, Norway and Australia on learning and development variously advocated:
    - self-reflection
    - safe spaces where officers could test out their decision-making without repercussions
    - assignments that involved a degree of stress to allow students to learn about themselves as police officers[7,13,22]
    - discussions between officers on how best to respond to ethical challenges[7,33]
    - trauma-informed training, which involved helping officers to recognise – and have strategies to cope with – any emotional distress they experience on duty, to prevent the distress from interfering with how they function[3]

- **Limits to learning and development as mechanisms for change**: While no evidence was found on the impact of training on ethical decision-making in the police, a few of the included studies described why learning and development may not be the sole solution for police ethics.
    - Two studies, one from the US and one from Belgium, suggested that training did not have an impact on the moral reasoning skills of police recruits, as recruits were highly principled and had good moral reasoning skills at the start of their policing careers.[2,8]
    - Similarly, interview-based PhD research in a UK police force suggested that the decision-making of new recruits was influenced more by experienced officers than by training they received on the topic. [43]

Multiple behaviour change mechanisms

One paper included in the REA conducted interviews with professionals and academics with expertise in applied ethics, primarily from the Netherlands and the UK. The authors recommended the use of multiple behaviour change mechanisms to support ethical decision-making in policing. The authors focused on the decision-making in counter-terrorism, suggesting that the work required trade-offs involving moral values and broader human rights considerations. The researchers proposed that methods such as ethics-focused recruitment, mentoring and whistleblowing processes are supportive of ethical decision-making. These methods were categorised into those that sought to:

- reduce the likelihood of ethical problems occurring (mitigation strategies)
- provide direction for ethical decision-making (advice strategies)[35]

6. Conclusions

No attempt is made in this concluding chapter to bring together the available research or draw out the implications from its findings. The number of references included in the REA, and the breadth of their research methods and topics of study, precludes the possibility of reaching a coherent set of conclusions. Instead, Table 1 below shows how the revised Ethical Policing Principles in the Police CoE were informed by the moral philosophical perspectives and by evidence presented in this REA.

Table 1: Revised Ethical Policing Principles and related philosophical perspectives and evidence.

Revised principle	Related perspective	Related evidence
Prioritising public service		
Taking pride in delivering a professional service	▪ Good character ▪ Fairness	▪ Evidence suggesting the importance of peers, supervisors and senior leaders in developing the police service's moral compass. ▪ Evidence on organisational fairness showing that support for ethical policing was associated with police officers being confident in themselves and identifying with the police organisation.
Acting in the public interest	▪ Good outcomes ▪ Good process ▪ Good character ▪ Fairness ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence suggesting that policing is a public good, which derives its legitimacy from having shared moral values with citizens, and that the police have a moral obligation towards the public. ▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust that the police have trustworthy motives.
Acting lawfully	▪ Good process ▪ Fairness ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence suggesting that the police service derives its legitimacy from its use

		of formal rules and has a moral obligation to protect the public. ▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to work within the bounds of its authority.
Being open and transparent	▪ Good process ▪ Fairness	▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to be open and honest about its decisions.
Communicating and explaining decisions clearly	▪ Good process ▪ Fairness	▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to be open and honest about its decisions.
Leading with professional courage		
Taking responsibility and leading by example	▪ Good character ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence suggesting that the police need to be morally aware, to take personal responsibility for decisions, to demonstrate practical wisdom and to be judged by the reasonableness of their actions. ▪ Evidence on the importance of peers, supervisors and senior leaders to the development of the police service's moral compass.
Being honest and trustworthy	▪ Fairness ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to be trustworthy.
Thinking through the consequences of decisions	▪ Good outcomes ▪ Good character	▪ Evidence suggesting that the police should co-opt ideas from public health about improving outcomes and protecting life, with evidence-based policing being centred on the medical idea of doing least harm.

		▪ Evidence suggesting that the police have a moral obligation to protect the public and should be judged by the reasonableness of their actions.
Challenging unprofessional behaviour and practice	▪ Good process ▪ Fairness	▪ Evidence on whistleblowing and active bystandership, particularly the adverse effects on reporting of worrying about possible negative consequences, and the risks associated with the police conforming to cultural norms.
Inviting scrutiny, feedback and challenge	▪ Good character	▪ Evidence suggesting the importance to moral reasoning and practical wisdom of self-reflection and personal development.
Responding with respect and empathy		
Listening with care and respect	▪ Good character ▪ Care ▪ Fairness ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence suggesting that the police need to act with wisdom and sensitivity, to show respect and to see respect as a character strength. ▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to give people a voice, to listen and to treat them with dignity.
Recognising and understanding other perspectives	▪ Good character ▪ Care ▪ Fairness ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to take account of people's opinions when making decisions.
Recognising the impact of emotions	▪ Good character ▪ Care	▪ Evidence suggesting that officers see kindness as a character strength.
Responding to individual and community needs	▪ Good character ▪ Fairness ▪ Care ▪ Policing by consent	▪ Evidence suggesting that the police have a moral obligation to protect the public, and that officers see respect and kindness as a character strength. ▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for

		the public to trust the police to make unbiased decisions based on the facts.
Being fair and impartial	▪ Good character ▪ Fairness ▪ Care	▪ Evidence on procedural fairness showing that it is important to police legitimacy for the public to trust the police to make fair and unbiased decisions based on the facts, to explain those decisions, and to be trustworthy.
Considering own and other welfare	▪ Good character ▪ Fairness ▪ Care	▪ Evidence suggesting the importance of personal wellbeing to ethical decision-making, as well as officers seeing kindness as a character strength. ▪ Evidence on organisational fairness suggesting that support for ethical policing was associated with police officers feeling that supervisors and senior leaders made fair decisions and treated them with respect.

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Appendix A: Review protocol

Component	Description
Review question	How do officers, staff and volunteers identify, approach and resolve ethical issues in policing?
Databases	▪ ProQuest (Criminal Collection, Education Collection, IBSS, Political Collection, publicly available content and Sociology Collection) ▪ Web of Science Core Collection ▪ EBSCO Criminal Justice Abstracts
Search terms	▪ police OR policing OR 'law enforcement' AND ▪ ethics OR ethical OR morality OR moralistic OR moral OR morals OR morally OR deontolog* OR consequentialis* OR utilitarian* OR virtue OR virtues OR virtuous OR existential* OR pragmatis* OR normativ* OR relativis* OR phronesis OR 'common sense' OR wisdom OR 'practical reasoning' OR 'public good' OR identity OR identities OR 'human rights' AND ▪ decision* OR deliberation OR deliberations OR dilemma OR dilemmas OR quandar* OR discretion OR autonomy OR autonomous OR behavio*r* OR choice*
Inclusion criteria	▪ Population: policing, other law enforcement ▪ Interest: ethical decision-making, decision-making processes (describing how decisions are currently made or prescribing how decision should be made), frameworks, tools or guidelines assisting ethical decision-making ▪ Contexts: UK, elsewhere in Europe, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand ▪ Source: academic (for example, journals, books, dissertations) ▪ Language: English ▪ Publication date: between 2011 and 2022
Exclusion criteria	▪ Population: Other criminal justice (for example, prisons) ▪ Interest: ethics of using particular policing methods and tactic (for example, carrying guns, using artificial intelligence), only about police wrongdoing (for example, abuse of authority, corruption), only about the law or legal cases ▪ Sources: magazines, online webpages ▪ Language: non-English ▪ Publication date: before 2011
Screening	The review team will screen the titles and abstracts of studies returned from the initial search. A proportion of these studies will be screened by three members of the review team to ensure consistency in applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The remaining abstracts will be reviewed independently by a single reviewer. After the initial screen, full copies of all potentially relevant studies will be

	obtained where possible and screened for relevance based on the full text. The full articles will be screened independently by a single reviewer. Any uncertainty will be discussed and resolved between members of the review team. All final decisions to include, and any instances where uncertainty persists, will be reviewed by the most senior researcher. All excluded studies and reasons for their exclusion will be documented. A PRISMA flowchart will be included in the review, which will show details of the search.
Extraction and quality assessment	Each reviewer will independently extract data from relevant studies. Any disagreement will be resolved through discussion between reviewers. Any unresolved conflict will be discussed collaboratively in a group discussion with all reviewers. If the volume of studies makes this unfeasible, two reviewers will extract data from a proportion of studies and inter-rater reliability will be assessed. An extraction tool will be used to record, manage and extract data. At a minimum, the extracted data will include: bibliographic details, study aims, study design, location, population and key findings. Studies will be assessed on relevance and weighted on a scale from low, medium to high according to the relevance focus on the REA. A quality assessment is not anticipated as part of the REA, due to the anticipated nature of the studies, which are likely to use a wide range of methods. Suitable caveats will be placed alongside any presentation of findings.
Synthesis	A narrative summary of the evidence will be produced through a thematic synthesis. The studies will be mapped according to themes relevant to our research interest on how officers approach ethical dilemmas (for example, philosophical frameworks, ethical leadership, use of force). A summary of the themes will be provided in evidence statements.

Appendix B: Summary tables

Table B1. Consequentialism

Ref ID: 6	
Author(s): del Pozo and others (2021) **Title:** Beyond decriminalization: Ending the war on drugs requires recasting police discretion through the lens of a public health ethic	
Study type: Opinion piece	**Study location:** N/A
This article aims to explore the application of a public health ethic to guide police discretion when responding to drug use. The authors suggest that officers should use the discretion they are granted to solve societal issues, such as drug use and its consequences, and propose that ethical decision-making should be guided by improving health outcomes, along with delivering public safety and protecting life. They propose that police leaders and officers should choose treatment over arrest, should refer people to harm reduction resources and should seek the help of professionals who are trained to deal with behavioural health problems when necessary. The authors suggest that a public health ethic of policing can be conveyed to officers as a way of enhancing officers' own wellness and safety, as they will experience less of the emotional trauma related to responding to addiction issues.	
Ref ID: 23	
Author(s): Mitchell and Lewis (2017) **Title:** Intention is not method, belief is not evidence, rank is not proof: Ethical policing needs evidence-based decision making	
Study type: Theoretical	**Study location:** N/A
This paper argues that police research has reached a level of acceptance such that executive management has an ethical obligation to their communities to use evidence-based practices. Using an evidence-based medicine framework, the authors apply an ethical-based decision-making model to policing decisions. Evidence-based medicine does not allow physicians to ignore research when giving guidance to patients. The authors compare the two professional approaches to decision-making and argue that policing has reached such a level of research that if ignored, as with medicine, this should be considered unethical. Police interventions can potentially be harmful. Rather than do no harm, the authors argue that police managers should implement practices that are the least harmful based on the current research. The authors found that policing has a substantial amount of research showing what works, what does not and what looks promising, in order to allow police executives to make decisions based on evidence rather than tradition, culture or 'best practice'. There is a deep enough fund of knowledge to enable law enforcement leadership to evaluate policies on how well the policies and procedures that they enforce prevent crime, with a minimum of harm to the communities they are sworn to protect and serve. Policing has yet to view community interventions as potentially harmful. Realigning police ethics from a 'lying', 'cheating', 'stealing' lens to a 'doing the least harm' lens can alter practitioners' views of why evidence-based policing is important. Viewing executive decision from an evidence-based ethical platform is the future of evaluating police executive decisions.	

Table B2. Deontology

Ref ID: 37	
Author: Terpstra (2011) **Title:** Two theories on the police: The relevance of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim to the study of the police	
Study type: Theoretical	**Study location:** N/A
This essay reviews the work of Weber and Durkheim in explaining the role of the police in a democratic society. Weber focused on the relevance of the use of force to the police's role, saying that in order to do justice to the power they have, officers must have passion, a feeling of responsibility and a sense of proportion. He viewed the relationship between police and citizens in negative terms and advocated 'normative legitimacy', the idea that the police can achieve legitimacy through the use of formal, rational rules that don't rely on citizen approval or shared values. Durkheim believed the police have an important moral and symbolic role, rather than simply a functional one. He advocated 'social legitimacy', the idea that the public will trust the police and accept their authority if they have common shared values.	
Ref ID: 25	
Author(s): Monaghan (2017) **Title:** The special moral obligations of law enforcement	
Study type: Theoretical	**Study location:** N/A
This article aims to investigate the professional ethics in law enforcement and to explain why police officers have special moral obligations to protect citizens and to refrain from harming them. The author argues that it would be morally wrong for an officer to kill – or violate the rights of – a citizen, and that this would be more morally wrong than if a regular citizen were to do so. This is because the officer: ▪ is particularly well-suited to provide aid ▪ is causally responsible for the citizen's vulnerability (through an imbalance of power) ▪ has voluntarily taken on a variety of obligations towards citizens The author suggests that the special moral obligations of the police differ by rank. ▪ Higher-ranking officers: o lobby politicians to change harmful laws o avoid enforcing rules that violate citizens' rights o ensure that officers have appropriate education and knowledge o effect cultural change (such as eliminating the 'blue code of silence') ▪ Lower ranking officers: o avoid enforcing laws that are obviously seriously harmful or unjust o ensure that they have knowledge of relevant moral questions	
Ref ID: 24	
Author(s): Monaghan (2012) **Title:** On enforcing unjust laws in a just society	
Study type: Theoretical	**Study location:** N/A

This theoretical piece assesses whether it is morally permissible for the police to enforce laws or obey orders that are unjust. The author concludes that police officers usually do not have permission to enforce unjust laws but should instead disregard those laws, even if they were generated by a legitimate state. The author challenges the view that officers should enforce unjust laws on patriotic, 'epistemic' (knowledge-based) and procedural grounds.

- First, against the patriotic view that the police have a moral obligation to the state, the author argues that they also have a moral obligation to the nation's citizens.
- Second, against the epistemic position that it is the job of the police simply to enforce laws and not to form a view on the fairness of those laws, the author argues that it would be irresponsible for the police to enforce laws that are likely to be unjust – or to obey orders – without reflection.
- Finally, against the procedural claim that the police should enforce laws if the political procedure that generated those laws was reliable and legitimate, the author argues that officer decision-making is part of that procedure, meaning that the police should use their discretion if enforcing an unjust law could cause harm.

Ref ID: 12

Author(s): Hadjimatheou and Nathan (2022)

Title: Policing the gaps: Legitimacy, special obligations, and omissions in law enforcement

Study type: Theoretical **Study location:** N/A

This paper argues that the police have special moral obligations to prevent harm. The authors focus on scenarios where officers decide to refrain from intervening in a given situation. The authors believe that officers are morally culpable for any failures to fulfil their special obligations when they choose inaction, if such failures are neither proportionate nor necessary to the prevention of greater harms. However, the authors also acknowledge that tactical omissions to prevent harm are not unusual in operational policing, especially with undercover investigations that require officers to make difficult choices about whether and when to intervene.

Providing an example of such a scenario, the authors discuss a covert operation in Australia where officers secretly monitored a child abuse website. This operation, labelled Child's Play, involved the decision by officers to let the website remain live while they gathered evidence against abusers. This decision was made in the knowledge that the site was still actively facilitating child abuse. The officers believed that the operational advantages to maintaining the site outweighed the harms, only closing the website when they no longer believed this to be the case. In the view of the authors, the officers involved in Child's Play should not have made simple consequentialist decisions in conducting their investigation, given that the operation had burdened them with obligations that limited their moral freedom to follow the best overall consequences.

Table B3. Virtue ethics

Ref ID: 31

Author(s): Norberg (2013)

Title: Legislation vs. morality: A police officer's ethical dilemma

Study type: Theoretical / Qualitative **Study location:** Sweden

This paper introduces philosophical concepts that relate to the ethical dimensions of the officer's decision-making. Phronesis (the art of judging wisely) emphasises the importance of developing practical ethical awareness and problem solving. This can be done by examining routine tasks and everyday activities from different perspectives. The paper emphasises the importance of forums for officers to discuss ethical dilemmas and identify alternative actions.

Casuistry (the right thing to do) examines the right thing to do given the particular circumstances of a case. The authors suggest that this approach could be particularly useful when trying to resolve cases where legislation and ethics may not be aligned. It considers how a case may fit general norms, standards, rules and principles of morality. In the context of policing, casuistry may prove useful when officers face a dilemma that implies a choice between different alternatives. In such scenarios, the critical question is suggested as: 'Was the decision and following action reasonable in the circumstance?'

The paper mentions different philosophical perspectives for consideration, such as:

- the ethics of justice, which can be used to evaluate actions objectively against laws, rights and standards
- the ethics of critique, which thinks about how inequalities and biases surrounding social class, gender and race can influence laws, policies and decision-making
- the ethics of care, which considers the long-term effects of decisions, including the benefits and harms

The paper draws on a case study provided by a female police officer during an in-service middle manager training programme. Participants of that programme were asked to give examples of ethical dilemmas they had encountered in critical situations. This officer provided an example that illustrated a clash between legislation and morality. In her example, this officer and a colleague had spotted a man collecting toys from a rubbish dump where entry was prohibited. The colleague had confiscated the toys from the man, ensured that he left the dump and spoken to him without sensitivity due to his rule breaking. The female officer agreed that the man should have left the dump but questioned her colleague's disrespectful manner. According to the author, there is no section of the law that serves as guidance for this particular situation. Furthermore, the best decision according to the law in this scenario may be less than ideal. The situation required moral sensitivity (phronesis) in the particular circumstance, where principles such as respect and veracity should have been used (casuistry).

Ref ID: 27

Author(s): Morrell and Brammer (2016)

Title: Governance and virtue: The case of public order policing

Study type: Qualitative **Study location:** UK

The authors sought to apply Aristotelian virtue ethics to the actions of police officers during large-scale public disorder or rioting. The authors focused on mass public disorder as officers can encounter dilemmas, because they must preserve order and public safety while simultaneously protecting human rights (such as the right to protest). Officers may also have to make quick decisions that have significant consequences for others (such as making an arrest or using force). The authors interviewed long-serving and retired police officers who had carried out public order roles. They also observed public order training and analysed Parliamentary evidence, reports and media footage of strikes and riots.

Officers described rehearsing the reasoning behind their actions. Doing so reportedly helped them to think about whether they would be able to account for their choices (for example, to use force) both before and after the event. Participants also highlighted the need to remain individually responsible for their specific decisions and actions, rather than believing that they are obeying a general order. Finally, the interviews emphasised the way in which training helps officers to make rational choices and to remain calm in tense situations. Officers' emotions are trained, and their decisions to protect themselves and follow procedure become habitual and 'second nature'. While the authors do not go as far as to claim that habits formed by training lead directly to moral virtues (such as courage), they do suggest that emotions can be trained, and that habituation could be relevant to the development of character (particularly the role of emotion in decision-making).

Ref ID:44

Author(s): Wood (2020)

Title: Embedding ethics within police practice

Study type: Theoretical **Study location:** UK

This chapter emphasises the need for police discretion, suggesting that officers should be given the moral space and trust by leaders to make their own decisions. According to the author, policing principles can be unhelpful if they become morally binding obligations, with a CoE at risk of becoming a compliance mechanism. The author praises the emphasis of virtue ethics on a bottom-up approach, where virtues are embedded within the ethical reasoning practised by officers, rather than being established at the top of the organisation. However, the author acknowledges that officers should justify their actions within the context of their role as a police officer, not their personal value system.

The author also expresses particular support for reflective practice as part of virtue ethics. Schon's reflective practice (based on the idea of learning through doing) is suggested to enable officers to make informed, ethical decisions. This practice is proposed to be an influential approach in many professions, but is traditionally neglected in policing.

Ref ID: 17

Author(s): Kristjansson and others (2021)

Title: Character virtues in policing

Study type: Mixed methods **Study location:** UK

The aim of this mixed-methods study was to explore the role of character and virtues in the professional practice and education of policing. Surveys were completed by 571 respondents at three career stages (first-year university students, second-year university students and experienced officers). Of the 571 respondents, 50 also took part in a semi-structured interview. Police educators were also interviewed.

The results suggested that the main form of moral reasoning used by officers when dealing with moral dilemmas was deontological (rule-based), with respondents describing themselves as 'enforcers of the law'.

There was also frequent mention of virtues and qualities necessary to perform the police officer role, such as kindness, patience, empathy, perspective and understanding.

Respondents felt that officers understood their roles to be examples of virtue and professionalism in the public eye. In many cases, explicit reference to 'doing what is right' in a particular situation was mentioned, as well as the need to understand personal circumstances and context before deciding how to act.

Respondents suggested that they would rely upon the CoE when dealing with ethical dilemmas. This was particularly the case for students, whereas more experienced respondents indicated that the Code was 'second nature' for them.

The findings led the researchers to recommend that virtue ethics should be given more prominence in professional ethics education, and also that the CoE should be revised to reflect virtue ethics, in particular 'phronesis' (the ability to make sense of competing demands in different contexts).

Ref ID:26	
Author(s): Morrell and Bradford (2019)	
Title: Policing and public management: Governance, vices and virtues	
Study type: Theoretical	**Study location:** UK

This chapter discusses governance in policing using a virtue ethics framework. The authors see virtue ethics as requiring consideration of 'ultimate goals', which – in policing – is based around the question, 'what is the public good?'. This question requires a focus on:

- the immediate goals of policing and criminal justice
- their ultimate goal in creating the conditions that enable the public 'to flourish'
- how the police (individually and collectively) exhibit virtue

The authors argue that good governance in policing is not simply about limiting harm. A key consideration is whether individual officers or forces exhibit virtue. The authors outline why they subscribe to virtue ethics over other approaches. They suggest that it is difficult in policing to apply:

- consequentialism because of the challenges in measuring harm and predicting what the consequences of action might be
- deontology because different duties might come into conflict, and resources are limited

Table B4. Care ethics and other perspectives

Ref ID: 38	
Author(s): Tomkins and Bristow (2021)	
Title: Evidence-based practice and the ethics of care: 'What works' or 'what matters'?	
Study type: Qualitative	**Study location:** UK

This study presents qualitative data from an action-research project on organisational learning in policing using views provided by staff and officers employed by the Metropolitan Police Service. The study involved semi-structured one-to-one interviews and participative-ethnographic research consisting of meetings and research encounters (200 days of engagement over a four-year period).

The study suggests that evidence-based practice could be distorting both strategic and operational decision-making without ethics playing a significant role, particularly in the form of care ethics.

A care ethics approach focuses on how particular interventions will affect particular people in particular circumstances, in terms of values, relational expertise and elements of practical reasoning. The approach emphasises restoring, healing and re-empowering, rather than fixing, transacting and handling (for example, of conflicting information in any given situation). From this perspective, police interventions could be seen as needing to be less coercive, more restorative and re-empowering. The author argues that care ethics offers a framework in which 'what matters' is not simply considered as part of 'what works', but is valued on its own terms and as complementary.

Table B5. Leadership and culture

Ref ID: 15	
Author(s): Hyllengren and others (2016)	
Title: Contextual factors affecting moral stress: A study of military and police officers	
Study type: Qualitative	**Study location:** Sweden and Norway
The aim of this qualitative study was to identify and understand the environmental, organisational and group conditions (in particular leadership-related issues) that were reported by military and police officers to be important in extremely stressful situations involving moral stressors. A 'moral stressor' was described as a legal or institutional obstacle (such as lack of leader support) that prevents a person performing an action they know to be morally appropriate in a given situation. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with a total of 23 military and police officers who had experience of morally difficult decision-making during stressful conditions. The study suggested that the ability of senior officers to communicate the importance of values, exhibit confidence in their own values and correct morally dubious behaviour was seen as important for junior officers to: ▪ manage their own moral stressors ▪ challenge senior managers who gave orders that were perceived to be unclear or inappropriate The findings also indicated that established methods used in the prevention of, and recovery from, work-related stress can also be used in the case of extreme situations involving moral stressors.	
Ref ID: 18	
Author(s): Loyens (2014)	
Title: Rule bending by morally disengaged detectives: An ethnographic study	
Study type: Qualitative (ethnographic)	**Study location:** Unnamed European country
This ethnographic study involved observations of, and interviews (n=20) with, police detectives in two agencies who primarily conduct investigations into illegal employment and illegal residence investigations. The aims were to explore whether the role strain theory and the moral disengagement framework could deepen understanding of underlying mechanisms that explain rule-bending practices. The study hypothesised that rule bending in the police was not necessarily linked to the propensity of individual detectives to engage in such behaviour, but that it could also be triggered by mechanisms that operate under specific situational conditions. Rule bending is considered to be context-dependent (in certain circumstances, police officers may be susceptible to this type of misbehaviour). The author theorises further that police chiefs who want to decrease rule bending could take measures that influence the organisational context, such as increasing managerial supervision by joining detectives during observations, closely monitoring decisions, and decreasing individual discretion or autonomy. Such measures could diminish the impact of 'insulation from observability'. Police chiefs could attempt to stimulate moral awareness in these issues by regularly mentioning them in staff meetings or by organising ethics training in which real-life dilemmas are discussed in a 'safe' environment. In addition, supervisors should take up their managerial responsibility by not only reprimanding detectives for rule bending, but also helping them to cope with these 'tough' decisions. Morally disengaged detectives can only be given the necessary 'tools' to resist the temptation to bend rules through sufficient managerial support.	

Ref ID: 19

Author(s): MacVean and Neyroud (2012)

Title: Ethical leadership and management in policing

Study type: Theoretical **Study location:** UK

This chapter examines police leadership and the role of ethics in leadership. The authors suggest that the debate surrounding transformational leadership (inspiring their followers) versus transactional leadership (focusing on reward and correction) is highly relevant to the issue of ethics. According to the authors, the Home Office has historically pushed for transformational leadership to be the dominant style. However, the authors suggest that police leadership is affected by, and should adapt to, context and challenges.

The authors highlight the Neyroud review, which included ethics in its proposed framework for police leadership. The Neyroud review argued that strong evidence-supported links exist between leadership approaches and frontline behaviour. The authors conclude that recent drives towards evidence-based policing incorporate the notion of police leaders making the 'right' or ethical decisions, assessing both operational and community benefits in their decision-making processes.

Ref ID: 11

Author(s): Ellwanger and Hall (2020)

Title: Learning police ethics: Sources, content and implications

Study type: Theoretical **Study location:** US

The authors of this chapter outline two models that attempt to explain police ethics. The first model, the value-predisposition model, suggests that police ethics are the product of societal values that have been imported into policing. According to this outlook, media depictions of the police help to shape these imported values through determining who is likely to be attracted to the occupation. An alternative model is the values-learned perspective. This model suggests that the police are socialised by their profession, with informal and formal instructions at training stages suggested to shape recruit views on ethical behaviour. During this stage, officers learn about shared experiences and start to use these as shortcuts to identify potentially dangerous subjects (for example, associations of being black and male with criminality is suggested to have led to instances of excessive force).

The authors conclude that if new ways of policing – such as problem-oriented policing – are going to offer officers more discretion in their decision-making, then behaviours and attitudes have to be informed by positive police values, such as leading by example. The authors recommend introducing measures of performance that encourage ethical behaviour, rather than forces focusing on outputs, such as numbers of arrests.

Ref ID: 14

Author(s): Holtzclaw (2011)

Paper title: An examination of the differences in perceptions of the ethical climate within law enforcement agencies

Study type: Quantitative **Study location:** US

This PhD dissertation examined the differences in perceptions of the ethical climate within law enforcement agencies in a single state in the US, based on officers' positions and length of service. The study used a self-reporting online survey to examine the perceptions of the ethics of law enforcement leadership and the ethics of the agency, using the ethical climate questionnaire developed by Victor and Cullen (1988). A range of officers were invited to complete the survey, including probationary officers, experienced officers, first-line supervisors and agency level

leadership. It surveyed full-time officers only.

The survey received a poor response rate of 12% and a usable response rate of 9%, once incomplete questionnaires were removed. Some officers, typically more junior officers, expressed fear of reprisals if they participated. The findings are only representative of those who responded to the survey and cannot be generalised to the state law enforcements agencies overall.

The analysis indicated that differences do exist based on the position of the individual within the agency. Those in leadership roles were found to possess a higher level of ethical perception of the agency than rank-and-file members. The analysis did not find any indication that length of service produced any differences in ethical perceptions. Factors including gender, field training officer, education and agency size were found to have a slight positive relationship with the position that officers held in relation to ethical climate.

The lack of participation from two of the four professional associations that were included in the sample is taken as an indication of the level of mistrust within organisations, which may also in part explain the differences found in the perceptions of the ethical climate between agencies. Executive leadership demonstrated less mistrust of subordinates, as they have less to fear in terms of punitive actions that can be taken against them. The subordinates showed a greater level of fear and mistrust of the executive leadership. The greatest differences were observed in the ethical perceptions of the executive leadership compared to subordinates. This was taken as an indicator that subordinates had a lower perception of the ethics of the agency than members of the executive leadership did.

The author recommends that this divide in perceptions needs to be better understood and addressed by law enforcement executives, to help develop a greater ‘atmosphere of ethics’.

Ref ID: 29

Author(s): Noppe (2020)

Title: Dealing with the authority to use force: Reflections of Belgian police officers

Study type: Qualitative **Study location:** Belgium

The aim of this qualitative study was to use semi-structured interviews to gain insight into how frontline officers perceived their authority to use force.

Respondents said that they felt uneasy about using force at the start of their career because they were uncertain about their competence, as well as their ability to assess and handle situations correctly. Respondents described developing their own moral frameworks for use of force that indicated what was and was not allowed in specific situations. These frameworks were reportedly developed through hands-on experience and trial-and-error through their careers.

The findings demonstrated the important influence of the occupational environment (for example, peers and seniors) on how officers evolved in their approaches to using force. Officers seemed to develop their moral frameworks by observing senior colleagues and by adopting group norms and standards. Several respondents said that direct supervisors can make an essential contribution to the development of an officer’s moral compass for using force.

Ref ID: 30

Author(s): Noppe (2018)

Title: Are all police officers equally triggered? A test of the interaction between moral support for the use of force and exposure to provocation

Study type: Quantitative **Study location:** Belgium

This quantitative study used situational action theory to suggest that officers were more likely to use force when encouraged by:

- their personal moral rules
- the moral context of the setting they were in (for example, the dominant culture in their team)

The author surveyed 197 officers about their moral beliefs on the use of force, as well as the extent to which they had used force. The results showed that officers with a high propensity to use force were more sensitive to provocation. Additionally, even experienced officers appeared to adapt themselves to group customs when they changed teams or transferred forces. However, while the researchers concluded that most officers initially seem to adopt the dominant style within their team, they could also change their working style during their careers.

As a result of their findings, the authors recommend:

- keeping officers with a high propensity for using force out of areas where provocation was common
- police chiefs gaining insights into their officers' beliefs about the use of force
- discussing these beliefs and their possible consequences during training sessions.

Ref ID: 8

Author(s): De Schrijver and Maesschalck (2015)

Title: The development of moral reasoning skills in police recruits

Study type: Mixed methods **Study location:** Belgium

The aim of this mixed-methods study was to understand the impact of socialisation on police recruits' knowledge of a CoE and their moral reasoning skills. The researchers used a longitudinal, mixed-methods design on 384 recruits during their academy training. The researchers observed integrity training sessions at five academies and asked the recruits to answer a survey at three points in time.

The results suggested that the thoroughness of CoE training did not match up with recruits' knowledge of the Code. Instead, it was the amount of hands-on experience with the Code that seemed to matter most. The two academies with the highest-scoring recruits were those where instructors encouraged recruits to apply the Code consistently throughout training sessions.

When it came to moral reasoning, differences in teaching approaches across the academies did not reflect different developmental patterns of recruits' moral reasoning skills. All recruits maintained stable scores throughout their training. However, the researchers speculated whether this stability was due to recruits starting training with high levels of moral reasoning skills. Questions remained about whether officers had internalised the right reasoning skills and were prone to misconduct because they wanted to conform to police culture.

Table B6. Organisational justice

Ref ID: 1

Author(s): Bradford and Quinton (2014)

Title: Self-legitimacy, police culture and support for democratic policing in an English constabulary

Study type: Quantitative **Study location:** UK

The aim of this quantitative study was to understand the factors that influenced officers' sense of their own legitimacy, as well as the influence that self-legitimacy had on their support for democratic (or ethical) policing. Survey data were collected from 438 officers in Durham Constabulary on the following.

- **Self-legitimacy:** confidence in one's own authority as a police officer.
- **Organisational justice:** procedural justice (perceptions of fair decision-making and respectful

treatment by senior leaders and supervisors) and distributive justice (perceptions of the fair distribution of resources).

- **Democratic policing:** respecting the rights of suspects, only using force proportionately, and treating the public with procedural justice.

The findings suggested that officers identified more strongly with their organisation when they felt they were fairly treated by senior officers and supervisors.

Organisational justice appeared to be an important factor in officers identifying with their own force, and in shaping officers' sense of their own legitimacy. Officers who perceived fair decisions and respectful treatment in the organisation were more likely to be confident in their own position as authority figures in society. These officers were also more likely to express commitment to democratic styles of policing.

The results also suggested that officers drew a sense of legitimacy from the extent to which they experienced public cooperation while doing their jobs. This raised the possibility of 'positive feedback loops', whereby internal and external procedural justice would mutually reinforce each other. The authors emphasised the promotion of organisationally just management practices and a clearly expressed central mandate (such as the CoE) as key to the police promoting democratic policing and external procedural justice.

Ref ID: 21

Author(s): Maguire and Dyke (2012)

Title: Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) Professionalism in Policing Research Project

Study type: Quantitative **Study location:** Canada

A survey of 10,264 police officers (staff sergeants and below) was conducted to examine the factors affecting police professionalism. The findings showed that participants who rated their own and their colleagues' integrity and commitment as high, also felt:

- their supervisors and organisation to be supportive
- that leaders incorporated ethics, fairness and openness into their decision-making processes

Integrity and commitment were also linked to the acceptance of the organisation's values and the belief that the community respected the police.

The authors concluded that agencies could enhance professionalism among their officers by addressing these six key factors:

- supportive supervision
- perceived organisational support
- ethical leadership
- procedural justice
- internalisation of values
- perceived community respect

Specifically, the authors recommend that senior leaders should show more support for police officer's wellbeing and goals and enhance their communication with officers (for example, asking officers for their input and clarifying the reasoning behind decisions).

Ref ID: 10	
Author(s): Donner and Olson (2020) **Title:** Fair treatment in policing: Testing the relationship between internal and external procedural justice	
Study type: Quantitative	**Study location:** USA
The aim of this study was to explore whether a police officer's perception of internal procedural justice might predict their perception of external procedural justice. Internal procedural justice is the fairness and equity of supervisory decision-making within the organisation, while external procedural justice refers to the fairness and equity of police officer decision-making process during police-public encounters. 113 officers from the Rockford Police Department (Illinois) were surveyed. The results suggested that officers who believed they were treated fairly by their own organisation were more likely to report using fairness in their interactions with citizens. The authors concluded that officers modelled the behaviour of their supervisors in public, and proposed that supervisors receive training that encouraged them to: ▪ give officers an opportunity to share their opinions and concerns ▪ show greater fairness and transparency in job assignments, promotions and disciplinary decisions	

Table B7. Wellbeing

Ref ID: 4	
Author(s): Blumberg and others (2020) **Title:** The importance of WE in POWER: Integrating police wellness and ethics	
Study type: Opinion piece	**Study location:** N/A
In this article, the authors introduce POWER (police officer wellness, ethics and resilience). This perspective represents the view that wellness and ethics cannot be discussed separately, as they are inextricably connected to each other. Initiatives to address one should always include the other. The article recognises that although there is a need for wellness and ethics to be addressed at an organisational level, it is of key importance to apply POWER to individual police officers. The authors argue that officers need to expand the way in which they conceptualise their own wellness to include efforts to maintain ethical decision-making. Specifically, officers will remain psychologically healthier when they take active steps to stay faithfully committed to their ethical principles. Likewise, officers who use a comprehensive wellness programme, including strategies to boost resilience, will be far less likely to experience lapses in ethical decision-making.	

Table B8. Community policing

Ref ID: 5	
Author(s): Bowen (2014) **Title:** The ethical development of police officers involved in law enforcement community programs	
Study type: Quantitative	**Study location:** USA
This PhD thesis compared the ethical and integrity perspectives of police officers who were, or who were not, involved in community policing programmes. It aimed to explore whether law	

enforcement community programmes had unintended outcomes on the ethical development of police officers who participate in those programmes.

The thesis was based on a survey of officers from south-eastern USA states who had taken part in a specific training academy event, of whom 39 were involved in community policing, while 52 were not. The survey used the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ) and measured police integrity using a scale developed by Carl Klockars, an academic.

The author theorised that community policing officers would have to alter their perspective and take members of the community into account, which might have an impact on their ethical development. However, the study found that an individual's concern for others (idealism), scepticism (relativism) and experience of community policing were not related to their style of policing. This finding led the researcher to conclude that idealism, relativism and participation in community programmes did not affect officers' ethical perspectives.

Table B9. Whistleblowing, peer reporting and active bystandership

Ref ID: 28	
Author(s): Nicholls and others (2021) **Title:** Snitches get stitches and end up in ditches: A systematic review of the factors associated with whistleblowing intentions	
Study type: Mixed methods	**Study location:** International
The aim of this systematic review was to identify the factors that were associated with the intentions of employees to 'blow the whistle' on wrongdoing in organisations across a range of sectors (including policing). Overall, 217 studies were included in the review, with a collective sample size of 289,458 study participants. Most studies were quantitative (89%), while the remainder were qualitative (6%) or used mixed methods (5%). The findings of the systematic review suggested that the factors associated with whistleblowing intentions were multidimensional. ▪ **Personal factors** were associated with whistleblowing intentions, with researchers emphasising an employee's morality (principles about right and wrong), honesty and self-efficacy (belief in one's own abilities). ▪ **Organisational factors** were also found to be linked to whistleblowing intentions, such as how the organisation was run, its moral code and what protections were offered to employees. ▪ **Contextual factors** also played a role in whistleblowing intentions, including the nature of the offence, outcome expectancies and cost-benefit appraisals. Based on these findings, the researchers suggested that organisations needed to empower, educate, protect, support and reward whistleblowers.	
Ref ID: 9	
Author(s): Donner and others (2018) **Title:** Self-control and the police code of silence: Examining the unwillingness to report fellow officers' misbehaviour among a multi-agency sample of police recruits	
Study type: Quantitative	**Study location:** USA
This study explored the relationship between self-control and officers' adherence to the 'code of silence'. The survey of 1,072 police recruits presented hypothetical scenarios of misconduct and asked participants to indicate the likelihood that they would report the misconduct of another officer. Recruits with high impulsivity or temper were found to be less likely to report misconduct to	

colleagues. The authors recommended that candidates with high self-control should be identified and 'screened in' during the recruitment process by looking for indicators such as being cautious, sensitive to the feelings of others, prudent, conscientious, diligent and reflective. They also suggested that officers should undergo training to practice self-control, as it could be strengthened over time.

The results also showed that high cynicism and low job satisfaction were linked to adherence to the 'code of silence'. The authors therefore proposed that police leaders should introduce organisational justice into their organisation's decision-making.

The results showed that risk-seeking and mental orientation were found not to be associated with peer reporting.

Ref ID: 34

Author(s): Porter and Prenzler (2016)

Title: The code of silence and ethical perceptions: Exploring police officer unwillingness to report misconduct

Study type: Quantitative **Study location:** Australia

The aim of this quantitative study was to explore officer perceptions of unethical conduct and their willingness, or unwillingness, to report violations. Surveys were completed by 845 officers. The researcher sought to understand the variation in the extent to which respondents understood hypothetical scenarios to violate policy, and their willingness to report such behaviour.

Of the survey scenarios that emerged as least likely to be reported, a substantial minority of officers stated that their decisions not to report were despite them knowing that the described behaviour would have violated policy. These 'non-reporters' were aware that they were less likely to report the behaviour than their colleagues, but still believed they held the same views as their peers in terms of how seriously they perceived the behaviours in the scenarios. However, this belief was found to have been false. The survey showed that the 'non-reporters' viewed the scenarios as significantly less serious than other respondents.

This perceptual bias – known as false consensus effect – involved people overestimating how similar they were to others. According to the author, the misconceptions of 'non-reporters' about the norms in their organisations might have fed their belief that their thinking was in line with the majority, which reinforced their decisions not to report violations.

Ref ID: 36

Author(s): Scowcroft (2014)

Title: Does the code of silence relate to whether federal employees file whistle-blower grievances?

Study type: Quantitative **Study location:** USA

This dissertation aimed to understand the relationship between the 'code of silence' and the filing of whistleblower grievances. The dissertation used a survey of 123 federal law enforcement employees in the United States.

The study found that the higher an employee's adherence to the code of silence (not wanting to break the code of silence), the less likely they were to say that they would file a whistleblower grievance if the need arose (for example, when personally affecting their lives). This finding led the researcher to conclude that the code of silence continues to prevail in law enforcement settings, despite a general awareness among officers as to what constitutes ethical or unethical behaviour. Gender, years of experience and position in the agency (officer or supervisor) were not associated with willingness to file a grievance.

Ref ID: 42

Author(s): Wieslander (2019)

Paper title: Learning the (hidden) silence policy within the police

Study type: Qualitative **Study location:** Sweden

The aim of this qualitative study was to explore why officers choose not to report wrongdoing but instead remain silent. The researcher conducted participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed many and widespread stories about colleagues being subjected to retaliation as a result of speaking out. These stories were typically told in 'safe spaces' (where senior leaders weren't present and were used as justification for silence). According to the researcher, it is these stories (rather than policies) that affect officer perceptions of cultural and institutional opportunities and barriers. Furthermore, the researcher suggested that the culture of policing, whereby officers need to 'have each other's backs', creates an environment that allows such storytelling to flourish.

Ref ID: 39

Author(s): Westmarland (2016)

Title: Governance of policing and cultural codes: Interpreting and responding to policy directives

Ref ID: 40

Author(s): Westmarland and Rowe (2018)

Title: Police ethics and integrity: Can a new code overturn the blue code?

Ref ID: 41

Author(s): Westmarland and Conway (2020)

Title: Police ethics and integrity: Keeping the 'blue code' of silence

Study types: Quantitative **Study locations:** UK

The aim of these three quantitative studies was to explore officer attitudes towards ethical behaviour through survey data (study one n=520, study two n=1,500, study three n=520). The findings of the studies revealed that officers are not clear on procedure when it comes to more minor rule-breaking (for example, accepting small gifts). Respondents generally said that they would have no problem working with a whistleblower, but that their decision regarding whether to treat the whistleblower with respect or caution would depend on the individual circumstances involved. Furthermore, many respondents did not trust their force's anonymous reporting system, which allowed people to report concerns without revealing their own identity.

The researchers also discussed the Police CoE within their findings. They questioned whether the Code could overcome the strength of 'loyalty' that is a long-established part of police culture. Additionally, the authors suggested that more needs to be done to reassure officers who feel unable to report colleagues' unethical behaviour due to the pervasive existence of the 'blue wall of silence'. Finally, the researchers urged for any regulations governing behaviour, such as the Code, to be strongly articulated and embedded into the routines of operational policing.

Ref ID: 16	
Author(s): Kargin (2011)	
Title: Peer reporting of unethical police behavior	
Study type: Quantitative	**Study location:** USA

This book aims to examine the factors that influence police officers' decisions to report peers' unethical behaviour. The researchers carried out secondary analysis of survey and administrative data of 499 police officers from the Philadelphia Police Department.

The officers were presented with scenarios of policy violations and asked to indicate the likelihood that they would report a fellow officer who engaged in the behaviour. The results show that officers were more likely to report peers if they had a low level of cynicism towards the police department and held more supportive attitudes towards a CoE. Officers also indicated a high intention to report if they felt that the behaviour was serious and would receive punishment, and if they believed that most other officers would agree with their assessments.

Socio-demographic factors (such as age, gender, race, marital status, years of service and rank) did not appear to explain peer reporting intentions.

The author proposes further training and informal discussion sessions focusing on ethical awareness and the seriousness of the consequences of minor and major violations of a CoE. The author also suggests:

- rewarding ethical behaviour
- explicitly stating that failure to report unethical behaviour would be punished
- clear communication of peer reporting channels

Table B10. Decision-making tools

Ref ID: 32	
Author(s): Paulsen (2019)	
Title: A values-based methodology in policing	
Study type: Theoretical	**Study location:** N/A

This theoretical article suggests that policing would benefit from the use of a values-based methodology. While acknowledging different approaches, the author advocates the following six-step model.

1. Identify the problem (for example, conflict between wanting to be lenient to a suspect and the requirement to treat people equally).
2. Identify the facts as if writing a crime report (for example, the location and time).
3. Identify all parties and their interests (for example, offenders and victims who want compassion).
4. Identify relevant values, principles and experiences from similar situations (for example, CoE).
5. Identify possible courses of action (for example, those involving compassion and a CoE).
6. Discuss and formulate an acceptable course of action (for example, choosing an action if it is consistent, kind, agreeable to the public, possible and legitimate, or rejecting or modifying an action if it is not).

The author concludes that values-based methodologies may be particularly:

- useful for 'after-action reflections', which would involve officers reflecting on events after they occurred

- challenging to apply to incidents that are ongoing

Ref ID: 20	
Author(s): MacVean and Neyroud (2012)	
Title: Ethical and moral considerations in the use of force	
Study type: Theoretical	**Study location:** UK

This chapter discusses ethical dilemmas around police use of force. According to the authors, officers are only provided with a framework of legislation on which to base their use of force decisions, and yet their accountability also rests on their ethical and moral considerations at the specific moment that force is deployed. The theory of consequentialism is cited by the authors as often used to legitimatise use of force decisions. However, this theory still leaves questions around how officers ensure that any consequences when using force will be for the greater good in terms of protecting society. Here, the authors reference Kleinig's five factors that are believed to be relevant to the ethical assessment of the use of force.

1. **Intention**: there should be no intent to apply additional force for malicious purposes.
2. **Seemliness**: the use of force must be in keeping with accepted standards.
3. **Proportionality**: the force deployed must be proportionate to the seriousness of the offence.
4. **Minimalisation**: the least amount of force must be used to achieve the desired outcome.
5. **Practicability**: the force must be capable of being deployed successfully to achieve the desired outcome).

The authors also reference Neyroud and Beckley (2001) who add an additional three issues for consideration.

1. **Method of force**: must be necessary and proportionate.
2. **Competence of the officer**: safety training skills must be appropriate and up-to-date.
3. **Legal and societal framework**: forces must operate within a clear legal framework and have a complaints system.

Table B11. Education and training

Ref ID: 8	
Author(s): De Schrijver and Maesschalck (2015)	
Title: The development of moral reasoning skills in police recruits	
Study type: Mixed methods	**Study location:** Belgium

The aim of this mixed-methods study was to understand the impact of socialisation on police recruits' knowledge of a CoE and their moral reasoning skills. The researchers used a longitudinal, mixed-methods design on 384 recruits during their academy training. The researchers observed integrity training sessions at five academies and asked the recruits to answer a survey at three points in time.

The results suggested that thoroughness of CoE training did not match with recruits' knowledge of the code. Instead, it was the amount of hands-on experience with the Code that seemed to matter most. The two academies with the highest-scoring recruits were those where instructors encouraged recruits to apply the Code consistently throughout training sessions.

When it came to moral reasoning, differences in teaching approaches across the academies did not reflect different developmental patterns of recruits' moral reasoning skills. All recruits maintained stable scores throughout their training. However, the researchers speculated whether this stability was due to recruits starting training with high levels of moral reasoning skills.

Questions remained about whether officers had internalised the right reasoning skills and were prone to misconduct because they wanted to conform to police culture.

Ref ID: 13

Author(s): Hoel and Christensen (2020)

Title: In-field training in the police: Learning in an ethical grey area?

Study type: Qualitative **Study location:** Norway

This study was based on a survey of 277 police students in Norway who had ended their one-year in-field training (IFT) and were completing their final year of on-campus training. The survey data was analysed using qualitative content analysis.

The paper focuses on potential issues related to learning a 'social profession' through IFT, and the importance of being able to reflect critically while in the workplace. Students needed first-hand experience and practice to develop their sensitivity to ethical situations and to become competent moral agents (or decision-makers).

Students were found to learn best when pushed beyond their comfort zones, including assignments where they felt stress, were activated or were mentally aroused. These types of assignment appeared to allow students to learn about themselves as police officers. The approach focused their thinking on their abilities to be police officers, rather than questions about the ethics of policing. The authors argue that this may reduce students' situational awareness and their ability to develop knowledge to make the best ethical decisions.

Students claimed to learn best from assignments covering 'ethical grey areas' (such as stop and search). The authors present these as ethical dilemmas for learning, as they involve the construction of situations involving intervention, not required by law, towards members of the public whose human rights are at play.

During IFT, experienced officers became role models, encouraging students to demonstrate their capabilities to become police officers, rather than learn how to become a police officer. Role models could, however, be sources of both ethical and unethical practices. For example, students were supportive of the legality of police work before the IFT, but their attitudes gave way to 'the ends justifying the means' after the IFT, highlighting the influence of peers.

They also struggled with their own expectations of being a police officer and experienced ambiguity in their role during IFT. Issues included not being able to find their place as both students and officers, coping with being scrutinised as students, and not feeling able to impress colleagues as they would have liked to have done.

Ref ID: 33

Author(s): Pollock and others (2020)

Title: Using ethical dilemmas in police training

Study type: Opinion piece **Study location:** US

The authors highlight that many ethical issues in policing stem wider than misconduct. There are many situations in which no decision an officer makes is clearly wrong, but the officer still experiences a dilemma. In these situations, training could help officers to work through the possible choices and determine the best solution to problems. The authors argue that training needs to be ongoing and tailored to roles and experience levels, as one course will not change values or behaviours. They suggest that the best way to prepare officers is where the teacher is a facilitator, guiding students through exercises that enhance their capability to function as self-directed learners.

The authors cite mounting evidence that a case study or scenario-based methodology for teaching police ethics is superior to an instructor-based approach presented in a lecture format. They suggest that participating in discussions about ethical dilemmas will better prepare officers to answer questions about decision-making when these arise. According to the authors, discussions regarding whether to issue a warrant or ticket, what to do in a domestic disturbance, and whether to leave early from an assignment are not as 'serious' as police brutality, yet if ethics courses are to work, they should cover these topics too. Finally, the authors recommend using officers' own dilemmas to guide discussions on ethics.

Ref ID: 22

Author(s): McComas (2019)

Title: Ethical leadership within law enforcement agencies: Pedagogical and cultural challenges

Study type: Qualitative **Study location:** Australia

This Master's dissertation used a mixed-methods case study approach to analyse data collected during a two-day ethical leadership workshop delivered to 13 supervisors from the Australian Border Force and the Australian Federal Police. The study aimed to assess, measure and better understand how frontline leaders in a law enforcement setting could learn and internalise ethical reasoning. Ethical reasoning capacity was assessed by using the six ethical domains identified by the American Association of College and Universities:

- ethical self-awareness
- understanding ethical perspectives and concepts
- ethical issue recognition
- applying ethical perspectives and concepts
- evaluating ethical perspectives and concepts

The research suggested that using a blend of problem-based learning and self-reflection in a social constructivist learning environment (when cognitive development is aided by social interaction) could contribute towards leaders' learning and internalising ethical reasoning. This was demonstrated through the measurement of ethical reasoning at the workshops held both before and after the learning experience. The greatest change observed among participants was in relation to understanding and applying ethical perspectives and concepts, as explored during the workshops using scenarios presenting ethical dilemmas.

The author concluded that there was a need to invest in learning for ethical leadership. As a potential way of enhancing ethical leadership skills, the author suggested face-to-face, problem-based learning delivered using high-level facilitation skills in a reflective learning environment, using a model that combines a trusting learning environment, tools (such as the seven ethical lenses used to explore ethically challenging situations) and tension (by using plausible dilemmas, creating tension).

Ref ID: 7

Author(s): DeRosia (2012)

Title: Ethics training and practice within the Central Valley Police Department

Study type: Mixed methods **Study location:** USA

This study aimed to explore the reasons for officers behaving poorly, despite receiving ethics training and discussed what ethics training might look like.

The researcher surveyed 38 police officers from the Central Valley Police Department (California). The officers were supportive of additional ethics training and suggested that there needed to be harsher consequences and improved relationship-building between colleagues.

The survey results were used to build a training programme (the Ethics Bridge Program), which focused on:

- self-reflection
- discussion of ethical and unethical situations
- considering the implications of officer choices when faced with ethical dilemmas

The programme sought to allow officers with different experience levels to share information and provide a safe space to test decision-making without negatively affecting the public's image of the police.

Ref ID: 3

Author(s): Blumberg and others (2020)

Title: Organizational solutions to the moral risks of policing

Study type: Opinion piece **Study location:** N/A

The paper aims to identify steps that agencies can take to recruit officers who are more likely to maintain their commitment to ethical principles. The paper draws on current innovative training practices that focus on strengthening recruits' ethical decision-making and emotional intelligence. In addition, it highlights the kind of law enforcement leaders who are best able to implement strategies designed to prevent negative outcomes associated with the moral risks of policing.

The authors argue that the strategies identified to address the moral risks of policing require academy training to focus on preparing recruits for the moral ambiguity that they will face on the job. They recommend a trauma-informed approach to academy training that recognises the emotional and spiritual distress that officers will experience and provides them with strategies to cope with such distress, so as prevent it from interfering with how they function. The approach also equips officers to think about victims with compassion. Another method for minimising officers' emotional and spiritual distress is the teaching of compassion satisfaction, meaning the sense of gratification that comes from helping others.

The authors recommend that recruit training should focus on certain key tenets to avoid moral disengagement, as well as any misconduct that results from this disengagement. Linked to this is the need to teach recruits how to deal with moral ambiguity and to instil the idea that it is normal to sometimes make mistakes. Another suggestion to lessen unethical decisions (misconduct in particular) is to implement emotional intelligence training, which has reportedly been shown to have a positive impact on misconduct. Dedicated wellness programmes are also recommended, with adequately resourced wellness officers and a focus on the moral risks of policing. Supervisors are to mitigate moral risks through their promotion of organisational cultures of wellness and ethics, as well as by using policies and procedures to detect early warning signs of problems. Finally, agencies are recommended to adopt a screening-in recruitment model to hire applicants with integrity.

The authors identify a number of steps that leaders and supervisors should take to prevent negative outcomes of the moral risks of policing. These are summarised as follows:

- minimising emotional and spiritual distress
- deterring misconduct
- taking a trauma-informed approach and making meaningful efforts to address wellbeing
- identifying emotional and spiritual distress, as well as (potential) misconduct, early and then intervening
- establishing and maintaining a culture of wellness and ethics

Ref ID: 2

Author(s): Blumberg and others (2016)

Title: Impact of police academy training on recruits' integrity

Study type: Quantitative **Study location:** USA

The study surveyed recruits from three law enforcement training academies in a large, metropolitan area in Southern California by using self-report questionnaires (309 participants prior to start of training and 257 participants after training).

The study sought to investigate the extent to which police academy training had an impact on recruits' self-reported integrity. In addition, the study investigated social desirability and whether baseline levels of emotional integrity moderated recruits' integrity. Three different training formats were observed.

Analysis indicated that participants started with a level of integrity that was significantly higher than average (compared to a sample of volunteer students) and that this did not change after completing training. The results were not affected by the length of training, pre-academy level of emotional intelligence, or a variety of demographic variables. The authors note that this finding is consistent with the idea that recruits tend to be highly principled and service-orientated at the beginning of their careers.

Although recruit training did not seem to have a negative impact on integrity, the authors recommend that methods intending to improve the ways in which integrity – and ethical decision-making in particular – are taught, modelled and practised during academy training should be reviewed. This should include attention to noble-cause corruption and associated moral dilemmas.

Ref ID: 43

Author(s): Williams (2021)

Title: How does internal, initial police officer training affect police officer ethical decision-making?

Study type: Qualitative **Study location:** UK

This PhD thesis explored the effectiveness of police training in shaping student officer decision-making. Longitudinal interviews were conducted with 19 student officers in an English police force. The participating officers were asked a series of identical interview questions during their first week of service, a week after completing their initial training and a year after starting service.

The findings suggested that ethics training became less relevant for the officers by the time of their third interview. Instead, the officers appeared to be guided by the decision-making of their more experienced colleagues. For the researcher, the waning importance that participants placed on the Police CoE by their third interview was cause for concern, as this suggested that the intended effect of their ethics training diminished over time. It also indicated that culture was more influential than training or personal values in guiding the participants' ethical decision-making.

The researcher concluded by urging senior officers to ensure that ethics form a part of everyday business, and by stating that adding ethics modules to police training is far from sufficient to achieve this.

Table B12. Multiple support mechanisms

Ref ID: 35	
Author(s): Reding and others (2014)	
Title: Handling ethical problems in counterterrorism: An inventory of methods to support ethical decision making	
Study type: Qualitative	**Study location:** Primarily Netherlands and UK

This study consisted of a literature review, plus 30 interviews with professionals and academics with expertise in applied ethics. The paper translates findings into methods that could help counter-terrorism professionals make decisions when faced with ethical problems, drawing on the experience of other public services (healthcare, social work, policing and intelligence).

The authors explain how professionals in this field often need to make decisions that require trade-offs between moral values such as privacy, liberty and security, and broader human rights considerations. However, they can often reconcile these values when options are carefully considered, and when an appropriate response is agreed.

Ethical problems were seen as defined in terms of the following factors:

- not being able to be thoroughly described before it arises
- unfolding simultaneously with decision-making process
- not having a single best solution
- having multiple alternative courses for action

The following tools were presented as supporting ethical decision-making.

- Mitigation methods aimed at reducing the likelihood of ethical problems or unethical decision-making (for example, ethics-focused recruitment, ethics-friendly technology, anti-corruption measures).
- Professional development methods aimed at cultivating the capacity of people to identify, reflect on and respond to ethical problems (for example, mentoring, moral case deliberation, training).
- Guidance methods aimed at providing people with easily accessible reminders of the laws, policies and organisational norms (for example, codes of conduct, checklists, mnemonics like PLAN for proportionality, legality, accountability and necessity).
- Leadership methods aimed at reinforcing ethical practices in organisations (for example, leadership by example, direction from senior leaders).
- Advice methods aimed at providing direction for ethical decision-making (for example, ethics committee, counsellors, legal advisors, peer support).
- Oversight methods aimed at ensuring independent checks on the ethicality of decisions (for example, whistleblowing processes).

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