



Identifying wellbeing challenges and solutions in the police service using the World Café method

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Abstract:	<p>Police work presents risks to mental and physical health for officers and civilian staff. We report a project that involved police employees in identifying wellbeing challenges and potential solutions. We facilitated 'World Café' events in which approximately 180 officers and civilian staff participated. Qualitative data were collected and thematically analysed drawing upon the Job Demands-Resources model. We identified themes relating to workload, management practices, occupational health processes, and continuing mental health stigma. Our analyses suggest an environment in which resources are insufficient to meet demands. The resulting pressures may contribute to management behaviours that can impair subordinate wellbeing.</p>

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Café method

Police work presents risks to mental and physical health for officers and civilian staff. We report a project that involved police employees in identifying wellbeing challenges and potential solutions. We facilitated 'World Café' events in which approximately 180 officers and civilian staff participated. Qualitative data were collected and thematically analysed drawing upon the Job Demands-Resources model. We identified themes relating to workload, management practices, occupational health processes, and continuing mental health stigma. Our analyses suggest an environment in which resources are insufficient to meet demands. The resulting pressures may contribute to management behaviours that can impair subordinate wellbeing.

Introduction

There is evidence that police officers are at high risk of mental and physical strain (Gill et al., 2018; Houdmont and Elliott-Davies, 2016; Maran et al., 2018; Shane, 2010; Violanti et al., 2017). Common health problems include cardiovascular disease (Magnavita et al., 2018), musculoskeletal symptoms (Berg et al., 2006) and poor sleep quality (Ma et al., 2018) as well as mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, burnout and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Foley and Massey, 2019; Klimley et al., 2018; Violanti et al., 2016). Furthermore, first responders such as police officers are at greater risk of suicidal ideation (Stanley et al., 2016) and the actual suicide rate in the profession is particularly high (Violanti, Owens, et al., 2018; Violanti and Robinson, 2013).

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3 Police officers encounter a range of operational stressors, such as negative interactions with
4 colleagues and members of the public (Adams and Buck, 2010), conflict with communities
5 (Can et al., 2018), court visits (Violanti et al., 2016), exposure to threats (Andersson et al.,
6 2017), and violence (Lennings, 1997; Wilson, 2015) – including the risk of killing or injuring
7 others (Komarovskaya et al., 2011). Police also experience organisational stressors, such
8 as insufficient resources to meet role demands (Shane, 2010), which are exacerbated by
9 austerity measures and enhanced public scrutiny (Duran, 2018; Lumsden and Black, 2018)
10 and a perceived lack of career advancement opportunities (Juniper et al., 2010). Other
11 studies have found that work-life conflict is particularly high among police resulting from
12 unsocial hours, unpredictable working patterns (McDowall and Lindsay, 2014; Scholarios et
13 al., 2017) and pressure to volunteer free time (McCreary & Thompson, 2006).

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30 Organisational stressors may have a greater impact on the wellbeing of police than
31 operational stressors because they occur more frequently (Violanti, Ma, et al., 2018).
32 However, some organisational stressors may increase the risk of operational hazards; for
33 example deploying unaccompanied officers due to understaffing heightens the risk of verbal
34 and physical attack (Houdmont et al., 2018). A survey of 16,842 police officers across
35 England and Wales (Houdmont and Elliott-Davies, 2016) found high workload and short-
36 staffing were both perceived as barriers to proactive police work. Sixty-five percent of
37 participants reported experiencing mental health problems and 90% continued to work
38 during physical illness. Additionally, more than a third of respondents reported working
39 during their annual leave to keep up with their workload. Stress in the police has been
40 associated with poor health (Garbarino and Magnavita, 2015) and sickness absenteeism
41 (Svedberg and Alexanderson, 2012) as well as turnover intentions (Brunetto et al., 2012,
42 2017; Sui et al., 2015). There is also evidence that specific organisational stressors
43 experienced by police officers, such as job demands and poor working relationships, are
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3 particularly likely to increase stress, that in turn encourages leaving intentions (Allisey et al.,
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5 2014).
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10 Although useful insight has been gained into the challenges faced by the police, most
11 existing studies use quantitative designs. Qualitative methods can provide greater
12 understanding of the social context of wellbeing challenges and identify potential
13 interventions in organisations (Abildgaard, Saksvik, & Nielsen, 2016). They can also help
14 engage employers in recognising problems and shaping change initiatives (Pescud et al.,
15 2015). Our research reports the findings of a study using qualitative methodology to explore
16 wellbeing challenges among police workers. Much qualitative research on wellbeing uses
17 semi-structured interviews (Abildgaard et al., 2016), so our use of the World Café method is
18 novel. We adopted this method as its strong participatory focus can increase the potential
19 for success in wellbeing interventions by drawing upon employees' insights and increasing
20 employee ownership of, and compliance with, interventions (Abildgaard et al., 2018; Nielsen
21 & Randall, 2012; Tafvelin, Schwarz, Nielsen, & Hasson, 2019).
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40 While police organisations have attracted considerable attention by researchers, studies
41 have typically focused on officers rather than civilian staff (Dick and Metcalfe, 2001;
42 Lumsden and Black, 2018). Some research has suggested civilian staff have lower status in
43 police organisations leading to tensions with officers, or managerial neglect (McCarty and
44 Skogan, 2013). Depending on their role, civilian staff may also encounter distressing
45 situations, as in the case of call handlers (Lumsden and Black, 2018). While the majority of
46 the UK police service comprises police officers, as of March 31st 2018, over 60,000 civilian
47 staff were employed in England and Wales (Allen and Zayed, 2018), compared to
48 approximately 125,000 officers. The present study included civilian staff as well as officers
49 to provide a more complete perspective of the organisational challenges that forces face.
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6 This paper reports the findings of a project undertaken with two police organisations in the
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8 South East of the United Kingdom (UK), both of which had reported concerns with sickness
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10 absence and staff turnover. The first organisation was a collaborated team comprising
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12 specialist units across multiple counties, hereafter referred to as CT (Collaborated Team).
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14 The second organisation was a county police force, hereafter referred to as CPF (County
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16 Police Force). Contacts representing the CT and CPF wished to identify priorities for
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18 improving wellbeing in their organisations. Previous organisational surveys that had
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20 attempted to gain insight into the wellbeing challenges faced by staff had achieved poor
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22 response rates, so we were asked to use an alternative method for data collection. We
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24 adopted the World Café methodology (see method section). The choice of method therefore
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26 was both purposeful and pragmatic: survey fatigue and the need to obtain richer data using
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28 collaborative methods.
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35 Our theoretical approach was broadly grounded in the Jobs Demands-Resources (JDR)
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37 model (Demerouti et al., 2001). This takes a flexible approach to categorising aspects of
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39 work as either demands, requiring some kind of response, and resources, that enable
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41 people to perform their job and facilitate wellbeing and growth. Resources can be physical,
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43 psychological, social, or organisational aspects of the job. There is extensive evidence that
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45 job demands are key predictors of poor wellbeing (including burnout) whereas job resources
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47 are strongly linked with job engagement (Hakanen et al., 2008; Hu et al., 2011). There is
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49 also some evidence for gain spirals, where engaged employees tend to acquire further job
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51 resources that can help reduce job demands over time (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). Our
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53 research question was therefore “what demands do police employees face and what are the
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55 resources and strategies that might help address them?”
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Method

The World Café methodology

The World Café is an approach to generating ideas and strategies based on the assumption that diverse groups of stakeholders can generate collective wisdom when discussing questions that matter to them (Brown & Isaacs, 2005). The World Café method can be used as a dialogic approach to organisational development, similar to appreciative inquiry and action learning (Bushe and Marshak, 2009; Bushe and Paranjpey, 2015). It aims to produce democratic and participatory discussions (Jorgenson and Steier, 2013) and has previously been used to engage entrepreneurs in strategic planning (Chang and Chen, 2015), develop learning cultures (Tan and Brown, 2005) and involve staff (Burke, 2010) and service users in service development (Terry et al., 2015). However, we are unaware of any published research that has used World Café methodology to address the wellbeing needs of policing or similar occupational groups.

World Café events are arranged much like a café, with participants discussing key topics in small groups sitting around tables in a comfortable and welcoming setting (Tan and Brown, 2005). Several tables are used to accommodate large numbers of participants while still facilitating conversations in small groups. World Cafés take place over a series of rounds, each lasting a specified period of time where participants engage in conversations in response to a question and record their ideas using materials provided. At the end of each round, participants move separately to new tables to enable conversations to be shared across the wider group (Brown and Isaacs, 2005). In the World Café, questions may be divided between tables, so that participants discuss new issues as they move around, or between rounds, so that all participants discuss the same question simultaneously; we adopted the latter approach. A common feature of World Cafés are table hosts (Brown &

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3 Isaacs, 2005) who encourage participation from others, summarise discussions at the
4 beginning of each round, and can help record the products of conversation.
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10 Participants

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13 We invited officers and civilian staff to participate in a series of World Café events to discuss
14 wellbeing challenges in their organisation. Three events were arranged for the CT; these
15 were embedded in leadership training days, so participants were typically of sergeant rank or
16 above or had expressed interest in being promoted to ranks with supervisory responsibility.
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18 By contrast, a single event was conducted for the CPF that was not embedded within a
19 wider training context.
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30 Approximately 150 individuals took part in the CT events, and 36 in the CPF event. Our
31 contacts identified individuals willing to volunteer for the table host role at each event. We
32 did not keep a record of hosts at any CT event, so the number of CT participants is
33 approximate. Demographic information for participants was not collected because data were
34 collected at a group rather than an individual level and also to avoid concerns about
35 confidentiality and encourage open and honest discussion.
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46 Procedure

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48 We developed a guidance document for table hosts based on principles set out by Brown
49 and Isaacs (2005) and briefed them before each event. At the beginning of each event, we
50 told participants that the aim was to identify ways to improve wellbeing in the police service,
51 and that we were performing this work on behalf of the CT and CPF. In the spirit of the
52 World Café participatory approach, the potential to gain important insights into both the
53 challenges they faced and potential solutions was highlighted. explained. They were
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3 informed that we (the researchers) were acting as facilitators only and would not be directly
4 observing conversations. Participants were asked to record the content of their discussions
5 on A4 card (CT events) or on paper table cloths (CPF event), both are commonly used to
6 record data in World Café events (Brown and Isaacs, 2005). Participants were provided
7 coloured pens to record their ideas in written or visual form (most chose a written format).
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17 Café events typically lasted approximately two hours, with individual rounds taking between
18 10 and 15 minutes. The first event that we conducted with the CT consisted of four rounds
19 of questions. However, following feedback from participants requesting more specific
20 questions, we increased this to six rounds in subsequent events. Questions were designed
21 to identify wellbeing challenges and potential solutions, but their nature and order were
22 flexible. A representative set of questions that we used were:
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- 33 • What does wellbeing at work mean to you?
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- 35 • What are the wellbeing problems we need to address?
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- 38 • What is already working well (to support wellbeing at work)?
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- 41 • What could the organisation do to improve your wellbeing at work, within the next 12
- 42 months?
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- 45 • What could you do to improve wellbeing at work?
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- 48 • We also asked 'What questions should we have asked today?' We posed this final
- 49 question following advice by Brown and Isaacs (2005) to identify important themes
- 50 that might not have been captured through set questions. Insights gained from this
- 51 process were also used to inform revision of questions between events.
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Ethics

Ethical approval for this research project was gained from the local university psychology ethics committee as well as from senior management in both the CT and CPF. Before each event, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and provide written informed consent. Participants were informed that they had the right to participate in the World Café event without contributing data to the research project by marking any notes that should be excluded. No participant exercised this right. We emphasised that data would be strictly anonymous, because ideas were to be recorded by the group rather than individuals. We did not record participant identities, and therefore could not identify specific groups of individuals as having made particular comments.

Data analysis

Data were analysed using thematic analysis, using guidelines by Braun and Clarke (2006). Following a process of familiarisation with the data, we coded the data set and progressed through iterative cycles of refining the codes, before settling upon our final themes. Themes were checked by two members of the research team. Our findings were summarised and reported to the CT and CPF organisations, where they have since been used to inform the development of wellbeing action plans (see discussion).

Results

We identified four key themes: workload, occupational health, management, and mental health stigma.

Workload

Participants' feedback was often achievement focused when discussing what 'good work' looked like. For example, achieving targets, providing "victim" or "customer" satisfaction, and "locking up criminals." Performance could be seen altruistically, in that participants discussed the important of being able to help others. A further social dimension to performance was demonstrated by participants who described their colleagues as competent, which could reflect an awareness of the interconnectedness of achievements. Nonetheless, while participants wanted to achieve targets, they often reported that many targets imposed on them were unrealistic in terms of quantity and deadlines. Indeed, when recommending changes to improve wellbeing, participants frequently highlighted the importance of "realistic expectations" and "reduced targets" from senior leaders. Participants frequently attributed their high workload to a combination of high expectations from their managers and the impact of short-staffing. Given this situation, it was unsurprising that a strong sense of "fire-fighting" emerged from the data, i.e. an emphasis on reactive rather than proactive problem-solving. A number of participants argued that an investment in more front-line police officers was required to meet the high level of job demands, while others questioned whether this was a realistic expectation under current budgetary conditions. Participants therefore sometimes argued for greater use of prioritisation to manage workload, which was often seen as lacking in the current situation. As well as being given unrealistic targets to achieve noted above, some participants also highlighted unrealistic deadlines, resulting from last minute requests for information that did not take into account rest days; as one table commented "nothing can wait."

Email

Email practices were commonly discussed. In both CT and CPF events, participants referred to expectations that they would read and send emails while off-duty. There were

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3 indications that participants experienced, as one described, “death by email,” i.e. email
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5 overload. Some participants perceived that the quantity of emails was the result of efforts to
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7 create an audit trail, referred to by some as “arse covering.” The need for some changes in
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9 cultural practices regarding email management was widely recognised as a way to improve
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11 wellbeing. Suggestions included, encouraging officers and staff to disengage from email on
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13 rest days, minimise use of “reply all” functions, and consider whether face-to-face
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15 discussions might be more appropriate.
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21 *Impacts on wellbeing*

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24 Participants often appeared to be overwhelmed by the demands placed upon them. They
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26 reported that their job impacted on their wellbeing in a number of ways, such as a lack of
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28 opportunity to recover from work due to pressure to work through meal breaks and working
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30 during rest days, e.g. answering emails and managing requests, as discussed above.
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32 Indeed, some reported feeling “guilty” if they did not work on their rest days and that they
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34 worried about work while off-duty. Participants indicated that short-staffing presented
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36 difficulties for work-life balance, due to the need to cover shifts, resulting in requests for
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38 annual leave frequently being denied due to short-staffing.
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44 Occupational health

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47 Another common issue was the negative impact on employee wellbeing of reduced support
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49 services. For example, participants in the CT, noted that resources for the Occupational
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51 Health Unit (OHU) and Human Resources reduced when the collaborated service was
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53 formed, with one person estimating that the size of these teams had halved. One of the
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55 consequences of this reduced service was that wellbeing support, previously available
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57 across a number of sites, was now considered less convenient to access. Similarly, a small
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59 number of participants in the CPF commented that contact with support services was
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3 primarily by telephone, which was considered inappropriate for some problems. When
4 contact with the OHU was made, participants across both CT and CPF events indicated that
5 referrals took a long time to be processed, so health often deteriorated further. Some CPF
6 participants stated, however, that the speed of referrals had improved, but this view was not
7 unanimous. Some also commented that the OHU service tended to be reactive rather than
8 proactive, which also led to their problems escalating. Participants highlighted the need for
9 better support of health promotion, such as the provision of a gym and time to use it, in order
10 to facilitate physical health as well as support for healthy eating at work.
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23 Participants were also critical of OHU processes and procedures. Those in the CT wished
24 for more uniformity, as the type and availability of support differed across the Forces that
25 were represented in the CT. On the other hand, participants in both the CT and CPF desired
26 greater flexibility in the sickness absence trigger system. For example, some CT
27 participants with line manager responsibility expressed a wish for the freedom to “manage”
28 people as individuals rather than being forced to follow a uniform process for supporting a
29 subordinate. The use of triggers was also considered stressful for staff who had been
30 absent; some CPF participants noted that sickness could result in a “firmly worded” letter
31 warning about further steps that would be taken in the event of future sickness. This could
32 be worrying, especially if they were at home recovering from serious illness or surgery. In
33 general, therefore, participants expressed a wish for OHU processes to shift from reactive
34 triggers to more proactive support.
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52 Management

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55 Participants identified management as playing an important role in supporting wellbeing at
56 work. There were some perceptions, however, that wellbeing received “lip service” from
57 some senior leaders and genuine investment or action was often lacking. The senior
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3 management team (SMT) were generally seen as more focused on staff performance than
4 on their wellbeing, and participants from the CT often described their senior managers as
5 distant, lacking care and compassion, and seemingly unaware of the role that they play in
6 impacting the wellbeing of officers and staff (e.g. in relation to frequent requests for urgent
7 action with little notice). Negative perceptions of the SMT were sometimes communicated
8 via scepticism that any action would be taken to address the findings of the World Cafés.
9
10 The perception of SMT as distant appeared to relate to their lack of visibility, with one
11 participant describing them as “visitors” who should be “part of the team.” Visibility was also
12 widely thought to engender a sense of appreciation among staff that could improve
13 wellbeing, with one participant remarking that “you can’t be appreciated for things that
14 people don’t know you do.”
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30 The hierarchical nature of the police was considered to create distance between SMT and
31 frontline employees, which seemed to be partly due to a lack of communication as well as a
32 more physical absence. Participants commonly expressed the view that communication by
33 officers and staff should be two-way, and the importance of managers listening to staff was
34 emphasised. In CT events, calls were made for more consultative approaches to decision-
35 making, with a preference for employees at all levels to be involved. However, some
36 participants expressed the belief that speaking out could be viewed negatively by
37 management. Therefore, as well as increasing opportunities to speak, participants tended to
38 see the need for management to create a culture of psychological safety to encourage open
39 and honest discussion about wellbeing.
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54 The desire for a more caring and compassionate management appeared to be linked with
55 the wish for better communication by some participants. Some participants reported that
56 one-to-one meetings with their managers had made them feel more valued, which can be
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3 contrasted with the lack of care that participants more frequently associated with the SMT. A
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5 number of participants also suggested that wellbeing checks could be integrated into one-to-
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7 one meetings that currently focused exclusively on performance targets. Participants also
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9 proposed that wellbeing could be made a routine part of team meetings, as well as a
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11 discussion of performance.
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17 Mental health stigma

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20 Participants raised some concerns about organisational culture. As has been noted
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22 previously, there was a sense that high workload had resulted in working through breaks and
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24 during personal time becoming the norm. Broader concerns about the culture as it related to
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26 mental health were also identified. A number of participants across events highlighted a
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28 powerful stigma associated with disclosing mental health issues, which one group noted
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30 could inhibit “speaking truth to power.” In other words, they expressed concern about being
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32 able to openly discuss the impact of working practices on wellbeing. Psychological safety
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34 was thought to be a key aim, with a number of participants arguing that management should
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36 be encouraging staff to openly discuss health and wellbeing rather than see it as a
37
38 weakness. Indeed, some participants with supervisory responsibility also felt that they
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40 should be engaging in more open discussions to help change the organisational culture.
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47 When asked how they could contribute to positive changes in wellbeing, many participants
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49 suggested that they could themselves speak more openly about the subject. Some also
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51 called for more honest conversations about challenges facing the organisation, including
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53 wellbeing problems, but opinions were conflicted about how this could be accomplished. At
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55 two events, participants considered “moaning” to be “boring” or “unhelpful.” They contrasted
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57 complaints about negative aspects of work with constructive criticism, or as one group put it,
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59 “solution-based moaning.” However, at one event this was the subject of an extended
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3 discussion among participants; some noted that “venting” was an essential and healthy way
4 of coping with difficult work that could not be discussed at home, whether due to security
5 requirements (e.g. during major crime investigations), or because family would be ill-
6 equipped to cope with aspects of police work. It was also mentioned by one participant that
7 the admonishment to avoid complaining could itself reinforce mental health stigma by
8 encouraging an unrealistically positive view of the job and, in turn, overlooking the need to
9 take action to improve wellbeing. Participants agreed that balance might be needed
10 between the ability to complain when required and the benefits of not dwelling exclusively on
11 negative aspects of work.
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26 **Discussion**

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28 In this paper we set out to apply the World Café methodology to identifying wellbeing
29 challenges and solutions within the police service. Our findings have informed the
30 development of an action plan that includes demonstrating greater care for subordinates,
31 changing cultural practices relating to email use, making better use of prioritisation, and
32 addressing personnel needs. Although previous research has focused on operational
33 hazards of police work such as encounters with crime, violence, and legal processes
34 (Andersson et al., 2017; Violanti et al., 2016; Wilson, 2015), reflecting the findings of
35 research conducted by Houdmont and Elliott-Davies (2016), our participants predominantly
36 focused on stressors that were organisational in nature. This may be because police officers
37 tend to see operational hazards as “just part of the job”, whereas organisational challenges
38 may be experienced as hindrances to fulfilling their job role. Including the views of civilian as
39 well as operational staff may also have made organisational challenges to wellbeing more
40 salient. Applying JDR theory (Demerouti et al., 2001) to our data, we saw signs of high job
41 demands and job resources that might either be considered insufficient, or poorly aligned
42 with organisational needs. Given the link previously identified between high demands and
43 work-related stress, health problems and burnout (Hakanen et al., 2008; Hu et al., 2011),
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3 this may help to explain the challenges of absenteeism and turnover reported by the CT and
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5 CPF.
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11 To some extent, the challenges identified by participants were interrelated. The high
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13 workload reported by participants was often linked with concerns about low staffing levels.
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15 Further, perceptions of demanding and unsupportive management behaviours were likely
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17 driven by the same environment of high demands and low resources experienced by our
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19 participants. The impact felt by participants was consistent with previous research showing
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21 a link between police understaffing and work-role overload (Duxbury et al., 2015). Since
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23 2008, the number of police officers leaving the service in England and Wales has largely
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25 exceeded the numbers joining each year, with a reduction of 20,000 officers during this
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27 period (Allen and Zayed, 2018). Our participants recognised the need for increased
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29 investment in staffing, or an approach to workload based on prioritising some tasks over
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31 others. There is evidence that to be effective in protecting wellbeing, job resources need to
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33 be closely matched to the nature of the demand (Häusser et al., 2010). For example,
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35 employees experiencing high workload demands require additional staff or other resources
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37 for managing workload, while employees managing emotional demands will require
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39 emotional forms of support.
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46 Participants acknowledged that increasing staffing levels in the current political climate may
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48 be challenging. Attempts to prioritise some aspects of policing over others might also
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50 receive a negative reaction from the public. Concerns have already been raised about
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52 attempts to reduce the cost of policing by reclassifying certain types of crime, such as
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54 shoplifting, car crime and criminal damage, in response to austerity (Lumsden and Black,
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56 2018). Research conducted in the United States suggests that increasing staffing may not
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58 necessarily result in reduced crime rates and improved police strategy will also be required.
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3 However, we are unaware of research that has examined the impact of police staffing levels
4 on crime patterns in the UK and this could help inform the development of an evidence-
5 based staffing strategy. In addition, the reductions to police staffing levels due to austerity
6 may pose long-term challenges to managing personnel. Research from the United States
7 has highlighted the impact of hiring freezes and relative proportions of junior and senior staff
8 on skill structure in the police workforce (Wilson and Heinonen, 2012). Police services in the
9 UK are likely to experience similar challenges and therefore a long-term strategic
10 perspective is required. The combined pressures may force a change to how policing is
11 delivered in the UK and we call for further debate on how this might be accomplished.
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26 Our participants proposed a number of solutions to the challenges that they identified. In
27 order to consider how these might be implemented, it is helpful to first consider the level at
28 which interventions are targeted. Interventions can be at primary, secondary, and tertiary
29 levels (Halperin, 1996). Primary interventions aim to prevent exposure to stressors by
30 addressing them at source (Montano et al., 2014), secondary initiatives seek to improve
31 individuals' ability to cope, and tertiary interventions mitigate the impact of stressors already
32 encountered by individuals (Lamontagne et al., 2007). Research has supported the use of
33 multi-level interventions where organisational and individual initiatives (i.e. secondary and
34 tertiary) are combined (Lamontagne et al., 2007). For example, one study found that
35 workers who had engaged in an intervention to enhance their ability to adapt to changing
36 demands at an individual level tended to benefit more from an organisational intervention
37 aimed at improving job control (Bond et al., 2008).
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54 In addition to staffing discussed above, our research findings indicate that management
55 behaviours should be targeted for change in order to enhance wellbeing and address
56 concerns about psychological safety. Although work-related stress is the second most
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2
3 common occupational health problem in the UK and is particularly prevalent in the 'helping'
4 and uniformed services (Health and Safety Executive, 2018), it continues to be heavily
5 stigmatised (Moffitt et al., 2014; White et al., 2015). Mental health stigma is thought to be a
6 particular problem in the police (Stuart, 2017) and this was confirmed by the findings of the
7 present study. The stigmatisation of mental health problems was identified by participants as
8 a cause for concern, although some thought the culture was slowly improving. The findings
9 of a systematic review suggest that barriers to seeking support for mental health problems
10 often stem from fears that disclosure will not be treated with confidentiality, and that seeking
11 help might have negative repercussions for one's career (Haugen et al., 2017). The findings
12 of a study of Canadian police officers (Stuart, 2017) indicated that 85% of participants would
13 avoid disclosing mental illness to a supervisor/manager or colleague and more than half
14 (62%) would expect to face discrimination at work. As yet, however, research into mental
15 health stigma in the police has generally focused on how attitudes might influence
16 encounters with members of the public who have mental health problems. There is some
17 evidence that training can improve police attitudes towards mental health in general
18 (Hansson and Markström, 2014), but to the best of our knowledge the impact of such
19 training on attitudes towards mental health amongst peers in the police has not been
20 examined. Such research should be prioritised in order to identify strategies to reduce
21 stigma that are congruent with policing cultures that, in turn, will encourage engagement with
22 mental health services.

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49 Leadership training might serve as a useful primary-level intervention to enhance wellbeing
50 and to make conversations about wellbeing feel safer. The UK Health and Safety Executive
51 has developed tools to help managers assess whether they have the behaviours identified
52 as effective for preventing and reducing workplace stress. A self-assessment tool is
53 available, together with tools that require input from the manager's staff, senior managers
54 and peers, and guidance on strategies to improve stress management competencies

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3 (Donaldson-Fielder et al., 2011; Health and Safety Executive, n.d.). These tools can inform
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5 selection and training strategies for staff and help foster an organisational culture that
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7 prioritises wellbeing.
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13 Research also suggests that people-oriented approaches to management, such as
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15 transformational leadership and high quality leader-member exchange (LMX) - leader-
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17 subordinate relationships incorporating care for wellbeing and attention to personal
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19 development, can improve employee wellbeing (Arnold, 2017; Gregersen, 2016). A study of
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21 Dutch police officers found that high-LMX relationships can foster more resourceful working
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23 environments that, in turn, can enhance engagement and job performance (Breevaart et al.,
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25 2015). Further, there is evidence that transformational leadership behaviours can be
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27 developed (Brown & May, 2012) suggesting that this should be prioritised. At the same time
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29 it is important to consider the wellbeing of leaders themselves, which is likely to be
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31 dynamically linked with the wellbeing of their subordinates (Skakon et al., 2010), e.g. as a
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33 result of leader behaviours. As noted above, we suspect that the SMT were themselves
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35 experiencing high levels of stress, so future research should examine the kind of stressors
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37 faced by police SMT and how they impact on their management style over time, and the
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39 subsequent effect on subordinate wellbeing and performance. The findings could advance
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41 our understanding of how to develop more precisely-targeted interventions to improve
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43 wellbeing in the police.
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51 Changes to the way work is organised could be paired with secondary interventions aimed at
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53 enhancing individual wellbeing. For example, previous research has supported the use of
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55 mindfulness training (Fisher et al., 2019; Kaplan et al., 2018) and resilience training (Hesketh
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57 et al., 2019) in supporting wellbeing within the police. However, the findings of this study
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59 suggest that initiatives that seek to enhance organisational resources are required. An
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3 intervention that has been often investigated in the context of JDR theory is job crafting; a
4 process whereby individuals adapt their work, e.g. what kind of tasks they perform and how
5 they perform them (Bipp and Demerouti, 2015; van Wingerden et al., 2017). There is
6 evidence that the job crafting behaviours that individuals perform influence different
7 wellbeing outcomes; while enhancing job resources is associated with greater wellbeing
8 (Harju et al., 2016; van Wingerden et al., 2017), reducing hindrances (a form of job demand
9 that represents barriers to meeting goals) can decrease turnover intentions (Rudolph et al.,
10 2017). Guidance should be offered to individuals to help them engage in job crafting to
11 ensure that wellbeing is promoted rather than disengagement. Because police work is
12 highly inter-dependent, it would be appropriate for job crafting to be explored at a team level
13 to ensure that changes to the work of one employee does not negatively impact others.
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30 A common tertiary intervention is the provision of an employee assistance programme
31 (EAP). EAPs have become widespread as a result of validation of the concept of work
32 stress (Kirk and Brown, 2003). Systematic reviews have suggested wellbeing benefits for
33 workplace counselling (Mcleod, 2010), and limited evidence that cognitive behavioural
34 therapy reduces sickness absence (Odeen et al., 2013). However, participants in our study
35 perceived the occupational health function as having become less accessible, both in terms
36 of physical distance and in terms of lengthy referral processes. One approach that has been
37 recommended for use in law enforcement is the use of a hybrid model in which an external
38 EAP is combined with the use of internal peer support (Goldstein, 2006).
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52 Limitations

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54 We argue that the use of the World Café methodology enabled the identification of police
55 employee priorities for wellbeing, as well as identifying directions for potential solutions.
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57 However, there are a number of limitations to our chosen method. The World Café method
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3 has also been criticised for reasons such as a potentially misleading view of communities as
4 harmonious and failing to acknowledge conflict, the potential to suppress dissenting voices,
5 and because it may empower participants primarily to take responsibility and behave in ways
6 meeting the agenda of powerful stakeholders (Aldred, 2011). It has also been argued that
7 the traditional World Café approach lacks mechanism to encourage participant reflexivity,
8 and fails to consider power imbalances between facilitators and participants, nor structural
9 inequality within the Café (Lorenzetti et al., 2016). Lorenzetti et al. (2016) note that there is
10 a lack of consideration for how the external world (e.g. pre-existing hierarchies) may
11 influence discussion within the World Café. While members of the SMT did not participate in
12 discussions at Café events, there was otherwise a mixture of hierarchy in the events that we
13 facilitated. Data were collected at group level, and in such a way that it was not possible to
14 determine group composition for a given round. This limits our ability to critically consider
15 how power relations effected the data that we gathered or indeed whether there were
16 differences between civilian staff and police officers.
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36 The characteristics of our events should also be considered. The majority of data were
37 collected from events embedded within leadership training, compared to the single CPF
38 event, and therefore this may have influenced the priorities that were identified. Further
39 work incorporating a more representative span of the policing hierarchy is recommended in
40 order to minimise the impact of roles and status.
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50 Conclusion

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52 Our research drew upon the collective wisdom of CT and CPF employees. Key challenges
53 facing the police organisations include understaffing couple with high work demands, which
54 may contribute to managerial behaviours experienced as unhelpful. In combination with this,
55 mental health stigma and under-resourced occupational health units may present barriers to
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3 supporting the wellbeing of police employees. We argue that interventions are needed to
4 help enhance police resources for coping with demands. While improved resourcing should
5 be considered as part of this strategy, addressing management behaviours and offering
6 individuals opportunities to adapt their work strategies may also contribute to enhanced
7 wellbeing. In the long-term, however, we believe that there is a need for debates regarding
8 how policing is transformed, whether as a result of economic policies or through more
9 deliberate strategic decisions, and how this will support the sustainability of the police
10 service mission.
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For Peer Review

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