

Institution: University of Exeter		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 21 Sociology		
Title of case study: Shaping guidance, training and transparency around police use of force in the UK and internationally		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2004 - 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Abi Dymond	Senior Lecturer in Criminology	2017 – present
Dr Katharine Boyd	Senior Lecturer in Sociology	2014 – present
Professor Brian Rappert	Professor of Science, Technology and Public Affairs	2003 – present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Police use of force (firearms, ‘less lethal’ weapons, such as Taser, and unarmed tactics) has far-reaching implications for human rights, as well as consequences for public and officer safety and police legitimacy more broadly. Research conducted at the University of Exeter directly contributed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An unprecedented and internationally acclaimed reporting system for the use of force in England and Wales; • Improved national practices on police use of force through new national guidance and training, and new monitoring methodologies for HMIC inspectors to use when assessing force. • Two new United Nations standards, one on police use of force, torture and ill-treatment, and a second on the human rights implications of less lethal weapons in law enforcement. <p>As a result, nationally the police have: improved monitoring and reporting processes; an enhanced understanding of how force is used in practice; improved training and guidance; and enhanced inspection and accountability post-incident mechanisms. Internationally, this research has helped develop new norms and standards associated with the use of force.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Rappert’s 2004 work on standards around less lethal weapons (3.1), and Dymond and Rappert’s 2014 study of the introduction of the electric-shock weapon the Taser (3.2), collectively made the case for systematically capturing and analysing a range of data whenever the police use any force and called for processes to allow key stakeholders to feed into the development of more explicitly evidence-based police policies and practices.</p> <p>Following the publication of this work, Dymond (then an ESRC-funded PhD student supervised by Rappert and Boyd) was appointed to the Board of the review of use of force reporting announced by the then Home Secretary, the Rt. Hon. Theresa May, in 2014. Her contributions while on the Board—a role that started in 2015 and continues to the present day—were informed by research with and by Rappert (3.1, 3.2), and by her work analysing</p>		

data around Taser use in England and Wales, its gaps and limitations (later to be published as **3.3** and **3.4**). This contributed directly to the establishment and maintenance of a new, unprecedented national reporting system on police use of force, introduced in 2017 and for which Dymond won the ESRC Impact Prize for Outstanding Early Career Impact in 2018.

Drawing on Dymond's prior experience analysing use of force data (**3.3**), Boyd's prior experience using multi-level modelling techniques (**3.5**), and their shared membership, with Rappert, of the Crime, Violence and Policing Research Cluster, ESRC funding allowed Boyd and Dymond to analyse the first year's worth of data gathered under this new reporting requirement. This analysis was undertaken with the College of Policing (**3.6**), between 2017 to the current date. This is believed to be one of the largest studies of use of force anywhere in the world and one of the first to use advanced statistical techniques—including multi-level modelling—which are often under-utilised in police research. For example, a recent systematic review of the use of force literature identified 52 studies, of which over 70% were based on less than 1,000 records. In contrast, Boyd and Dymond's study obtained over 260,000 records from 32 police forces and provided detailed analysis of a subset of this data involving over 45,000 use of force incidents from 16 police forces. (See Cojeana, S; Combalbert, N; Taillandier-Schmit, A (2020) 'Psychological and sociological factors influencing police officers' decisions to use force: A systematic literature review' *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* (70); 1 – 11)

This has enabled, for the first time in England and Wales, a detailed understanding of which force techniques were used, when, on whom, in what circumstances and with what outcomes and risks. For example, the research (**3.6**) found that socio-demographic characteristics—including mental health, ethnicity and the age of the person subjected to force—as well as incident characteristics (such as the degree of resistance posed, threats to officers or others and whether the officer was single crewed) were significant in predicting what kinds of force were used and the associated consequences, including injury, assaults and hospitalisation. It also found that, when compared to incidents where handcuffs were the only form of force used, police were more likely to draw different forms of weapons and equipment—including Taser—when the person was perceived to be Black or Black British, compared with people perceived to be white.

3. References to the research

3.1 Rappert, B (2004) 'A framework for the assessment of non-lethal weapons' *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*, 20:1, 35-54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13623690412331302284>

3.2 Dymond, A and Rappert, B (2014). 'Policing science: The lessons of Taser' *Oxford Journal of Policing* 8(4): 330–338. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/police/pau030>

3.3 Dymond, A (2018): 'Taser, Taser!' Exploring factors associated with police use of Taser in England and Wales, *Policing and Society*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2018.1551392>

3.4 Dymond, A (2019) 'Towards a socio-technical understanding of discretion: a case study of Taser and police use of force' *Policing and Society* advance access. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2019.1660338>

3.5 Adamczyk, A; Boyd, K. A; Hayes, B. E. (2016) 'Place matters: Contextualizing the roles of religion and race for understanding Americans' attitudes about homosexuality' *Social Science Research* 57; 1 – 16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.02.001>

3.6 Quinton, P; Dymond, A; Boyd, K and Teers, R (2020) *Police use of force: Tactics, assaults and safety*. College of Policing; London. Available online at https://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/Documents/Use_of_force_report.pdf

4. Details of the impact

The research has had impact nationally and internationally. At the *national level*, the impact has been four-fold:

i. Improved monitoring and reporting

Dymond's input (3.1 - 3.4) was 'central' to the creation and maintenance of the new national use of force reporting system for all forces in England and Wales (5.1) introduced in 2017. Previously, there was no requirement for standard reporting of why less lethal force was employed, the kinds of force used and resulting injuries. This meant it was difficult for the police to analyse and assess how force was used and its consequences, to introduce evidence based reforms where necessary, and for oversight bodies to monitor the force used.

According to the Chief Constable leading the Review and to officials from the Home Office and National Police Chief Council (NPCC), Dymond provided '*academic rigour and challenge (that) has been insightful... and constructively challenging*' and made an '*invaluable contribution*' to the new reporting system (5.1). For example, her arguments that data should be collected for 'lower' levels of force, such as handcuffs and the drawing of weapons and that data should be published to allow for independent analysis were taken up and directly shaped data collection, publication and the advice issued to officers (5.1). All officers are now required to complete their own incident report whenever they use any kind of force, and to record crucial details such as injuries to the officer or member of the public, and the gender, ethnicity and age of the individuals involved (5.1). Anonymised data is made publicly available by police forces and national statistics are published by the Home Office annually, thereby enabling public debate. The new reporting system was described by the then Minister of State for Fire and Policing, Brandon Lewis, as '*a significant factor in improving public trust and confidence in the police use of force*' (5.2). According to HMICFRS reports, at least 30 police forces in England & Wales have reviewed policies or practices, including officer safety training, issuing body armour and internal monitoring procedures, based on the new national system (5.3).

ii. Enhanced understanding of how force is used in practice

Boyd and Dymond's analysis of the new use of force data has allowed the NPCC to '*look in considerable detail, for the first time ever, at how police use of force is being used in practice*', with the NPCC Lead for Self-Defence, Arrest and Restraint and the Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police noting that this work '*has played an important role in helping demonstrate the value of use of force reporting*' (5.1). The NPCC Lead and Deputy Assistance Commissioner has also '*committed to examining further changes that need to be made to the national template for police use of force reporting based on this research*' and to examining '*the implications that this research has for national and Metropolitan Police Service policy and practice around use of force*' (5.1). For the College of Policing, Boyd and Dymond's work on use of force (3.5), and Dymond's research on Taser (3.3), was '*invaluable*' and '*cited extensively*' in the officer safety review, published in 2020 (5.4, 5.5). According to the College, the research '*informed a series of practical recommendations aimed at improving police training and equipment*' that were included in the Review (5.4, 5.5). Relevant recommendations included the need to review guidance on handcuffs and irritant spray and revise personal safety training. Findings on the patterning of use of force along ethnic, mental health and gender lines have been similarly '*influential*' (5.4). For example, citing findings published as (3.6), the College of Policing announced that '*research has been commissioned to address the current evidence gap... (around racial) disparity (in the police use of Taser) and to make recommendations to minimise it*', with such research supporting an 'independent review' on the topic (5.5).

iii. Improved training and guidance

Boyd and Dymond's findings have also directly impacted training and guidance. In terms of the former, in 2020 Dymond was invited to help the College of Policing develop a national curriculum on personal safety training, including the use of batons, irritant spray, handcuffs

and unarmed tactics. Currently, the content, length and delivery methods of personal safety training varies between forces, with some officers receiving as little as 4 hours training a year, and a third of officers expressing dissatisfaction with the training. The new work programme establishes a core training content, minimum contact time and recommended training methods, with a view to greater standardisation. Dymond and Boyd's analysis (3.7) is '*central to the development of this curriculum, providing an evidence base...considered alongside the advice of subject matter experts*' (5.4), including the provision of crucial information on what force techniques are used and factors associated with injury.

Further, Dymond played a '*highly valued role*' developing College of Policing national guidelines for the police on the safer resolution of conflict, via her appointment to the subject matter Committee (5.4) between 2016-2020. This guidance aims to ensure that officers are able to handle situations without recourse to use of force, when appropriate for them to do so, and thus to improve police and public safety. Drawing on her research (especially 3.3 and 3.4), Dymond highlighted concerns with current training, particularly the need for enhanced emphasis on de-escalation skills; dealing with vulnerable people; and scenario based training accompanied by detailed feedback. She highlighted the importance of supervisors and others analysing use of force data in order to pick up emerging patterns (5.4). These points were reflected in the final guidance (5.6) published in 2020 and applies to police forces in England and Wales. The College of Policing explicitly noted the importance of Dymond's contribution to the guidance (5.4).

iv. Enhanced inspection and accountability post-incident mechanisms

Dymond's research has impacted monitoring methods, practices and methodologies adopted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the Constabulary (HMIC). HMIC has a remit to inspect and report on the effectiveness of the police and is part of the UK's National Preventive Mechanism under the UN Optional Protocol Against Torture. The Inspectorate convenes a series of reference groups and, as a result of her research on Taser (3.3), Dymond was invited to sit on the External Reference Group advising the HMIC on their assessments of police legitimacy. She attended a series of meetings and was invited to comment on draft monitoring proposals, questions and checklists, recommending that HMIC assess forces on how well they understand, use and apply their use of force data and suggesting practical indicators for this. The draft indicators for 2020/2021 were amended to include an enhanced focus use of force reporting and, as part of the Reference Group, she helped to '*establish a sound methodology for inspections*' (5.7), thus helping to enhance oversight of police use of force. Due to coronavirus, there is expected to be a delay before the new inspection schedule is introduced.

At the *international level*, the impact has been to develop **new norms and standards**. Research by Dymond and Rappert helped to develop international norms and standards in two ways. Firstly, between 2016 – 2017, Dymond directly contributed to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture's 2017 Report to the UN General Assembly, which focused on the use of force by police officials and other state agents outside of places of detention, particularly their use of less lethal weapons and restraints. Drawing on (3.1), her input on advance drafts of the text—including recommendations for a duty to review less lethal weapons for use in law enforcement, and for this review to focus not just on physical consequences of use and injury but on psychological consequences, pain and suffering—were reflected in the final document, with her input described as '*invaluable*' (5.8).

Secondly, drawing on research insights (3.1-3.4, and 3.6), Dymond played a direct role in the drafting of the new *United Nations Human Rights Guidance on Less Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement* between 2017 - 2020, via her appointment to the Expert Group that drafted the text. The Convenor of the Expert Group, and member of the UN Human Rights Committee, Professor Christof Heyns, noted that '*Dymond's contribution to the sections on design and production, unlawful weapons and related equipment and accountability and reporting mechanisms... directly led to changes in the text*'. He further noted that '*the publication of this guidance is an important step forward in ensuring the proportionate, lawful*

and accountable use of less lethal weapons and restraints, and Dr Dymond has played an important role in its development (5.9). The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that they *'rely on the guidelines to determine whether law enforcement officers have used force and less-lethal weapons improperly'* (5.10), and they have been quoted by oversight and human rights bodies, States, members of the Judiciary and other actors worldwide, including in Chile, Georgia, Hong Kong, Iraq, Jamaica and South Africa (5.11).

This research has thus contributed to: clearer international standards and guidance governing police use of force nationally and internationally; enhanced training for officers on how to avoid using force, and how to use force appropriately where necessary; strengthened reporting by the police when force is used, which has generated better understanding of this important power; and enhanced monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanisms after its use (both by the police themselves and by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the Constabulary).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

5.1. Two letters from the Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police, and NPCC Lead on Use of Force Reporting Project in 2017 and 2020.

5.2. Brandon Lewis, The Minister of State for Fire and Policing Hansard Policing: Written statement - HCWS517. <https://bit.ly/3fmjo8y>

5.3. Figures calculated from HMICFRS PEEL Legitimacy Reports for individual police forces in 2017. <https://bit.ly/3lYePCP>

5.4. Letter from the Evidence and Evaluation Advisor at the College of Policing (2019) The letter notes Dymond's *'thoughtful contributions during committee meetings drawing on her own research, challeng(ing) the evidence for claims made by others... and providing detailed feedback on the draft guidelines and the pilot process'*

5.5. The full Officer Safety Review is available at, College of Policing and National Police Chiefs Council (2020) *Officer and Staff Safety Review* <https://bit.ly/3lPVQu2>. A summary of the review is available at College of Policing (2020) *NPCC and College of Policing pledge to improve officer and staff safety* <https://bit.ly/3spuU6S>

5.6 College of Policing (2020) *Conflict Management using de-escalation, communication and negotiation: Guidelines*. <https://bit.ly/3spkXpZ>

5.7. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the Constabulary HMIC's proposed 2017/18 inspection programme and framework: For consultation, see in particular p16. <https://bit.ly/3lSUfUd>

5.8. a. Letter from the Special Advisor to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture (2019); b. The Special Rapporteur's report on this topic has been described as *'strengthen[ing] the capacity of States to ensure effective prevention of, and accountability for, torture ...[and] contribut[ing] to the development of guidance on the entire spectrum of the use of force'*. (in Melzer, N (2017) Statement by Mr. Nils Melzer Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Seventy-second session of the General Assembly Item 73. https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/SRTorture/Statement_UNGA72_SR_Torture.pdf

5.9. Letter from the Convenor of the Expert Group, and member of the UN Human Rights Committee (2019)

5.10. Human Rights Officer, OHCHR Personal Communication to A. Dymond, used with permission.

5.11. References pertaining to use in individual states in Chile, Georgia, Hong Kong, Iraq, Jamaica and South Africa.