NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

RESEARCH PROGRAMME 2014/15 TO 2016/17

CONTENTS

1. Introduction

The Northern Ireland Policing Board (The Board) is an independent non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland. It was established in November 2001.

The Board is responsible for securing the maintenance of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), the effectiveness and efficiency of the PSNI and for holding the Chief Constable of the PSNI to account for the exercise of his functions and those of the PSNI.

This Research Programme identifies the key areas of strategically important research that the Board will seek to develop up to 2016/17. The research areas set out in this document have been selected specifically to support service delivery in areas of particular strategic importance to the Board.

The document begins by setting out the strategic purpose for the Board's work. Section 3 examines the importance of evidence based service delivery and establishes the key objectives of the Board's Research Programme. Section 4 looks back at the research work that the Board has already undertaken while Section 5 identifies the priority research areas for the period 2014/15 to 2016/17. Section 6 also sets out how the research effort will complement the Board's wider evidence base and will be outward looking, capturing key messages from relevant analysis conducted elsewhere. Section 8 provides details about how the Research Programme will be implemented.

The Board will continue to work and engage with relevant government Departments and other bodies in taking forward this Research Programme to maximise impact and identify opportunities for collaborative working.

2. Strategic Context

The Board's formal vision is set out in the Board's Corporate Plan 2014/17 and is:

'An innovative proactive organisation, holding the police to account, by working in partnership to deliver improvements in policing."

In pursuing its formal vision there is one over-arching theme for the Corporate Plan which is:

'*Promoting Public Confidence in Policing.'*

Linked to this theme are four objectives:

Objective 1   An effective and efficient Policing Board

Objective 2   An effective and efficient PSNI

Objective 3   Effective engagement and communication

Objective 4   Partnership working

In order for the Board to achieve its vision it is critical that the Board has access to robust research evidence in order to underpin all aspects of its service delivery. The Board's commitment to evidence and research has and continues to be central to driving successful service delivery. For example research helps the Board measure public confidence in the police. Importantly, effective research helps the Board learn the lessons from examples of best practice elsewhere and to benchmark its own performance.

The Board recognises that evidence is central to effective service delivery and it has a long record in taking forward strategically focused research (see Annex 1). This Research Programme seeks to move the evidence base forward by identifying the strategically important research areas that the Board will seek to develop over the period to 2016/17 (see Annex 4). It is also recognized that research requirements continue to evolve as the context within which the Board operates changes.

3. The Board's Research Programme 2014/15 – 2016/17: Objectives

The desire of the Board is to have evidence at the centre of its service delivery, and this has driven the Board to develop its research programme. This research programme builds upon the work of the Board's previous research strategy. Since the inception of the previous strategy the Board has accumulated a wealth of new knowledge and information through its wide ranging research activities. The prime objective of this Research Programme is *"to strengthen further the link that exists between research and service delivery"*. That continues to be the core objective of this Research Programme.

This Research Programme, which covers the period to 2016/17, will build upon the work that has flowed from the previous research strategy. It will assist the Board as it seeks to deliver on its vision and ensure that service delivery is rooted firmly in evidence and is responsive to the needs of the people of Northern Ireland. The objectives underpinning this Research Programme are:

- to strengthen further the link that exists between research and service delivery within the Board;
- to provide improved co-ordination between the Board's planned research, the strategic development and the business planning process; and
- to enhance interest within the research community in the areas of research relevant to the Board

4. The Expanding Evidence Base – A Review

The research evidence base developed by the Board continues to expand. Much of the output from that work is published on the Board's website.

Details of research projects either commissioned by the board or that are deemed relevant to the board are presented in **Annex 1**. More details on the findings from each project can be found from the associated web-link provided for each published report.

The Board is particularly keen to ensure that externally procured research provides value for money. Insofar as possible it will continue to draw extensively from existing relevant research and will seek to ensure that research work does not duplicate and is complementary to the wider research activities.

5. Board Plans for Research 2014/15 – 2016/17 – Looking Forward

The Board has undertaken a thorough review of its research needs and questions for the period up to 2016/17. This has identified a wide range of research areas which will be required to underpin service delivery. The research needs are set out in **Annexes 2,3 & 4**. In line with the guiding aims of the Research Programme, this approach seeks to ensure that the research undertaken by the Board, over the medium to long term, will strengthen further the link that exists between research and service delivery within the Board.

The Research Programme has been developed with a cross cutting emphasis on the desire to have increasingly robust national and international benchmarking across the Board's key themes. Consequently, where possible the benchmarking of performance with comparators both within and outside the region will be sought as part of relevant research projects.

6. An Outward Looking Research Approach

The Board is committed to ensuring that the research it commissions represents value for money and delivers the maximum positive impact on service delivery. As it meets this commitment the Board will seek to build on the relevant evidence base that has been developed both locally and internationally. This approach will help ensure that any research commissioned by the Board complements rather than duplicates existing or emerging work.

Having a clear understanding of research work undertaken elsewhere also maximises the opportunities for the services delivered by the Board to be framed by relevant lessons from elsewhere. Such an outward looking approach is in keeping with best practice advocated in the OFMDFM practical guide to policy making. Through this approach the Board can gain an insight into which actions work and which actions have been less successful. It helps identify best practice and performance benchmarks against which Northern Ireland can be compared.

Building further on its outward looking research approach, the Board will seek to build strong engagement with other public, academic and research institutions where it is relevant and cost effective to do so. This is in keeping with the aim of the Research Programme *'to enhance interest within the research community in the areas of research relevant to the Board.'* The Board already benefits significantly from such engagements and, in recent years, has developed strong relationships with a number of organisations which have helped it learn from national and international best practice. Organisations with which the Board has forged links include:

- OPONI
- DoJ
- CJINI
- HMIC
- Metropolitan Police Service

The Board also has formal links with various youth organisations (through the Youth Advisory Panel) and various Section 75 groups (through its Strategic Reference Group).

7. Complementing the Board's Wider Evidence Base

The Board recognises that it is essential that the quality, performance and purpose of the Board's wide ranging provision is clearly understood and is of a high standard. Consequently, the Board undertakes research to evaluate and maximise the impact of the programmes it delivers or sponsors. This work is designed to build on and complement the evidence produced through this research programme. The Board also examines a number of statistical releases and bulletins across a wide range of areas.

Taken together, this body of evidence supports the Board as it seeks to maintain and enhance the quality of the service it delivers.

8. The Delivery of the Board's Research Programme 2014/15 to 2016/17

This Research Programme includes identification of the research projects that will be conducted by the Board's own staff and those for which external support will be sought;

In order to ensure duplication of research conducted elsewhere in Northern Ireland is avoided, the Board will continue to engage with other Northern Ireland government departments and bodies as it undertakes the research identified in this document.

Resourcing
Resources available to the Board are limited both in relation to finance and personnel available to manage the delivery of research commissioned externally as well as to take forward our internal research activity. The management of the delivery of the Agenda, including the prioritisation of projects, will reside with the Board's Partnership Directorate.

The Board's statisticians within the Partnership's Directorate will have a key role in supporting the Board's Partnership Committee to take forward the Research Programme. They will assist with the specification of the research issues, the

selection of external researchers where required, taking forward internal research studies, steering research and quality controlling research outputs.

Procurement
Each research project which is to be commissioned externally under this Research Programme will be procured in line with the appropriate procurement requirements.

In addition, it is recognised that urgent and important research requirements may emerge in the immediate term which are not covered in this research stock take and could not be delayed until the next Board Research Programme is in place. Therefore allowance for new emerging policy issues has been built into the roll-out of this stock take to ensure that it can respond flexibly to unforeseen work as necessary.

Contract Management

A Steering Group will be appointed by the Board's Partnership Committee for each project to oversee the development of the research. The Partnership Committee may invite officials from other Government Departments or interested bodies to sit on Steering Groups when the research would be of a wider interest. The researchers will be required to present findings to that Steering Group and provide suitable progress reports throughout the duration of the research project.

Impact through Partnerships

The Board will seek to exploit opportunities for collaborative partnership by initiating new and/or develop existing relationships where beneficial.

The Board benefits greatly from its partnership arrangements and is committed to strengthening policy development on the basis of a robust evidence base that recognises national and international best practice. Going forward it will seek to continue to promote effective partnerships, be they formal or informal, with existing partners and with new ones where appropriate. The Board has close ties with a number of organisations including:

- PSNI
- OPONI
- CJINI
- HMIC

The Board also engages with other key Northern Ireland government departments, such as the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, the Department of Finance and Personnel and the Department of Justice in relation to taking forward relevant research.

The Board also aims to develop close ties with its UK equivalent organisations, when seeking contributions to research planning and monitoring their research outputs.

9. Management of the Research Programme

The management of this Research Programme, including the prioritisation of projects, will reside with the Board's Partnership Committee.

The professional statisticians within the Board's Partnership Directorate will have a key role in supporting the Partnership Committee to take forward the work identified in this Research Programme. They will work alongside policy professionals to assist with the specification of the research issues, the selection of external researchers where required, taking forward internal research studies, steering research and quality controlling research outputs.

10. Dissemination

The Board is committed to ensuring that the work emanating from this Research Programme will feed into the delivery of its services. Consequently, the relevant research findings will be presented to either the Board's Partnership Committee or other committees of the Board as appropriate. The Board is also committed to publishing and widely disseminating the research work it commissions. Currently summaries of research findings are published on the Board's website. Dissemination, where appropriate, also takes place through research seminars and conferences.

11. Monitoring and evaluation of the Research Programme 2014/15 to 2016/17

Each research project will be monitored by a Steering Group to ensure that it delivers according to the Terms of Reference and timescales agreed at the outset. Progress of the overall Research Programme will be monitored by the Board on an annual basis and an evaluation will be commissioned once the service delivery impacts from the individual pieces of research have had sufficient time to bed in.

12. Comments and Feedback

The Board would welcome views on this, its Research Programme for the period 2014/15 to 2016/17. If you would like to make any comments on the research areas identified within this document or on any other aspect of the Board's Research Programme, please e-mail information@nipolicingboard.org.uk or write to:

Statistics and Research Branch
Northern Ireland Policing Board
Waterside Tower
31 Clarendon Road
Clarendon Dock
BELFAST BT1 3BG

13. Next Steps

In order to implement the Board's research programme between 2014 and 2017, the Board's statisticians will continue to:

- provide statistical and research services to the Board, its committees, Members and officials on a regular and ad-hoc basis (see **Annex 2**)
- provide statistical and research support to PCSPs (see **Annex 3**)
- initiate statistical and research projects that have been identified by the Board as priorities (see **Annex 4**)

Annex 1 – Research Programme Stock Take

Research Title and Description	Publication Date	Web-link
The influence that politicians, community leaders and the media have on confidence in the police in NI - this research considers the issue of confidence in policing from the perspective of community leaders, politicians and the media – including the key influences and dynamics which underpin police confidence at a community level.	December 2014	web-link
What influences people's perceptions about whether the police are doing a good job in NI? – a report based on the views of a random selection of the NI population.	December 2014	web-link
The links between deprivation and confidence in the police in NI - a report based on the views of a random selection of the NI population.	December 2014	web-link
The key drivers of public confidence in police in NI - this research assesses confidence in policing from a cross section of society – including the key dynamics and drivers that underpin police confidence at a community level.	December 2014	web-link
How can the PSNI engage the community on the risks posed by cyber-crime without causing undue alarm and build confidence in their strategy for dealing with this crime that those most vulnerable are adequately protected? a report based on the views of a random selection of the NI population.	August 2014	web-link

Research on PSNI Officers' Perceptions of Young People in North Belfast – a report on the views of PSNI officers in North Belfast on how they engage with young people	November 2013	web-link
Evaluation of Neighbourhood Watch - evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes across Northern Ireland.	July 2012	web-link
Report on the Views and Experiences of people with Learning Disability in relation to policing arrangements in Northern Ireland - a report on the views and experiences of people with learning disabilities towards the Ombudsman, Northern Ireland Policing Board, PSNI, and DPPs.	May 2011	web-link
Independent Research into Crimes against Businesses in Northern Ireland - the aims of the research were to better understand the problem of business related crime in Northern Ireland and how business, business organisations and other relevant stakeholders believe it could be tackled or reduced.	June 2008	web-link
Research into the Views and Experiences of People Involved in Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in Northern Ireland - a report on the views and experiences of key partners and local stakeholders on the impact and effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch.	November 2007	web-link
Research into recent crime trends in Northern Ireland –research to examine whether the increase in recorded crime in 2005/06 is an accurate reflection of greater criminal activity and experiences of crime in Northern Ireland.	May 2007	web-link
Policing, Accountability and the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community in Northern Ireland – research on the attitudes and experiences of the new policing arrangements in Northern Ireland by individuals who describe themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual.	February 2006	web-link
Policing, Accountability and the Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland– research on the attitudes and experiences of the new policing arrangements in Northern Ireland by individuals from the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population.	February 2006	web-link

Annex 2   Other ongoing statistical and research activity within the Policing Board

Between 2014/15 and 2016/17, the Board's statisticians will continue to provide statistical and research services to the Board, its committees, Members and officials on a regular and ad-hoc basis. Such activities will include:

- Publication of the annual Omnibus Survey and follow-up secondary analysis

- Collecting and interpreting statistical information to monitor current and help determine future performance indicators and targets contained in the Annual Policing Plan.

- Providing routine and ad-hoc statistical and research advice, guidance and information to the Board's sub-committees, Board Members and officials to assist in the monitoring of key PSNI strategies and undertaking themed scrutiny reviews of aspects of police performance. The statisticians interpret relevant statistical, social research and survey information and publications for the above group.

- Identifying relevant research conducted throughout the UK, assessing the implications for policing in Northern Ireland and consider if similar research could be conducted locally.

- Conducting ad-hoc survey work, research and data collection which allows Board Members and officials to carry out their functions, including, but not limited to, assisting the Board in monitoring the effectiveness of PCSPs.

- Monitoring and reporting complaints against the PSNI (collected by OPONI), statistics on the Use of Force, PACE/JSA stops and searches and immigration detainees (collected by PSNI) and statistics on the operation of the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme (operated by the Board).

- Conducting research in support of the Board's obligations under the Equality Legislation.

- Providing professional analysis, advice and support on customer satisfaction, internal staff surveys and other surveys conducted by or within the Board.

- Contributing to post project evaluations, where appropriate.

Annex 3   Statistical and research support to PCSPs

PCSPs have a responsibility to conduct public consultation within their local area. The Board's statisticians offer all PCSPs guidance, support and advice on statistical and research issues, including but not limited to: -

(i)   The Board's statisticians formally review the PSNI's Area Commander Reports. These quarterly reports are the main way in how PCSPs monitor local police performance against Local Policing Plan and Northern Ireland wide Annual Policing Plan targets.

(ii)   The Board's statisticians assist PCSPs to design, conduct and analyse results from surveys. This has included conducting online surveys on behalf of PCSPs.

(iii)   The Board's statisticians provide statistical support to the PCSP Joint Committee eg Members' Expenses Survey & PCSP Effectiveness.

The Board's statisticians will continue to provide the necessary advice and guidance as requested and required. This is expected to include supporting PCSPs in undertaking community audits and ascertaining the general public's views on policing and PCSPs.

Annex 4   Statistical and research projects to be initiated between 2014/15 and 2016/17

Research Title and Description	Notes
Identification of robust methods of measuring confidence levels of young people – collaborative project with YAP, PSNI and other relevant organisations to establish the possibilities for measuring confidence levels in the PSNI	Scoping Paper to be developed by March 2015
Confidence research projects arising from 2014 NIPB Conference	Research projects to be developed
Custody Visitors Survey	To be completed by end of 2014
Developing research to support building confidence in policing with those in disadvantaged communities	Scoping Paper to be developed by March 2015
Developing research regarding attacks on young men, violence against women and children, and LGBTs	Scoping Paper to be developed by March 2015

Notes:

1. It is recognised that research requirements continue to evolve as the context within which the Board operates changes and that urgent and important research requirements may emerge in the immediate term which are not covered in this Research Programme which could not be delayed until the next Board Research Programme is in place. Therefore allowance for new emerging policy issues has been built into the roll-out of this research to ensure that it can respond flexibly to unforeseen work as necessary.