Thinks Insight & Strategy

sciencewise

Home Office

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Artificial Intelligence in Policing

A public dialogue

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1. Executive summary

1.1 Foreword

As the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to rise in all facets of society, and trust in the police falls, the use of AI in policing is a necessary but potentially contentious issue for policy makers. There is appetite from the UK government to put AI to good use, using it to improve efficiency and productivity across police forces, and make it a better service for the public. However, hesitancy among the public about using AI in sensitive situations and variable levels of trust in the police across the population means that there must be careful consideration of how this is implemented. AI should be implemented in a way that builds trust from the public and stays true to the conditions of Policing by Consent. Therefore, this report describes the process of conducting a participatory dialogue to understand the public's perceptions of AI in policing and what advice they give to policy makers on how to implement it.

1.2 Background

Exploring the use of AI tools in policing is considered a priority for the current Policing Minister. AI more broadly is a key focus for the UK government, and to establish the appropriate legislation for organisations working on developing AI models.

The use of AI in policing can be a polarising topic. There is already a range of public opinions, both positive and negative, on AI, technology, and policing separately. While public attitudes towards AI are mostly positive, there is a shallow understanding of what it means and how it works, though a perceived inevitability of its implementation[1]. There is also hesitancy among the public for how AI is used in sensitive settings, such as school and healthcare. Finally, there are also data privacy concerns evoked by AI.

In terms of public perceptions on the police, heightened attention on police failings has led to a trend towards distrust from the UK public. And views on the police differ across demographics, including race and sex[2].

For AI in policing, there are tensions between the potential improvements it could make to policing and concerns regarding how its use could contribute to

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-attitudes-to-data-and-ai-tracker-survey-wave-4/public-attitudes-to-data-and-ai-tracker-survey-wave-4-report#:~:text=UK%20adults%20have%20mixed%20perceptions%20about%20AI's%20impact%20on%20society,for%20society%20and%20them%20personally.

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-perceptions-of-policing-a-review-of-research-and-literature/public-perceptions-of-policing-a-review-of-research-and-literature#findings

bias or unlawful discrimination. It is also a relatively new topic, one that currently lacks substantial evidence on public perceptions.

Understanding public perceptions of the topic should lead to better, more informed policymaking that is more likely to work in practice. This could inform operational decisions made by police forces – particularly crucial at a time when AI implementation is being prioritised, and recorded public perceptions of AI and policing are varied.

1.3 Key findings

These findings summarise participants' views, from their initial starting points at the outset of the dialogue, through their views on the use cases, to their advice to the Home Office on how AI in policing should work. Some of the key findings are in conflict to one another, reflecting the diversity of views among participants.

Participants' initial views

- **Starting points:** Participants had rarely considered AI in policing specifically, but their views of the separate topics of AI, technology, and policing were important in shaping their responses throughout the process.
- **Views on technology:** While technology was felt to improve communication and be convenient, concerns around disinformation, addiction, and declining social interaction were also prominent.
- **Views on AI:** Participants saw AI as having real potential, particularly in healthcare, but expressed apprehension over job displacement, data security, and insufficient regulation.
- **Views on policing:** Views on policing were shaped by personal experiences and media exposure, leading to varying levels of trust.
- **Views on AI in policing:** Initial attitudes toward AI in policing acknowledged its potential to enhance efficiency, but concerns persisted regarding bias, job losses, and lack of oversight.
- **Necessities for support:** From the outset of the process, participants emphasised the need for transparency, regulation, accountability and safeguards to ensure AI supports policing without undermining human judgment – these underpinned participants' advice to the Home Office and police forces at the end of the dialogue.

Use case: Summarising information

Basic use case:

- This was the use case participants said they were most comfortable with due to their familiarity with it in other contexts – this made the benefits for the police and public seem apparent to participants.
- This comfort came with caveats around the need for human oversight, clear guidelines, and evidence that AI summarises information accurately.

Complex use case:

- When the use case was made more complex by AI summarising sensitive information, participants had far more concern around AI's ability to understand human nuance in personal data.
- There was particular doubt about AI's ability to understand social media content, as participants saw this as nuanced and possibly humorous, which AI may struggle to detect. Alongside this, there were concerns about data privacy, particularly as analysing the information of people linked to a crime or criminal meant those not involved in crime might also have their data viewed by AI. Furthermore, since suspects will not necessarily be guilty, the use of AI in such contexts risks infringing on the privacy of innocent individuals.

Both summarising information use cases:

- Across both AI summarising information and AI summarising sensitive information, participants felt the time saving that occurs due to implementing these should be fed into improving front-line policing.
- They also emphasised the importance of accountability, oversight, transparent guidelines and evidence that it works. These would mitigate fears that the AI would not function as promised.

Use case: Call Handling

Basic use case:

- Participants generally supported AI handling 101 calls, recognising its potential to improve efficiency, reduce response times, and free up police resources for frontline duties.
- However, concerns were raised about transparency, accuracy, and the need for callers to have the option of speaking to a human. The main aspect that made participants more comfortable with this use case was that it was for non-emergency situations.

Complex use case:

- Conversely, AI involvement in 999 call transfers was met with significant scepticism due to the high-stakes nature of emergency situations. Participants feared AI misinterpretations, failures in detecting distress, and a lack of accountability in cases of error. While AI's potential to expedite emergency responses was acknowledged, trust in its effectiveness remained low.

Both call handling use cases:

- Across both call handling use cases, participants emphasised the importance of human oversight, rigorous testing before deployment, and comprehensive safeguarding to ensure that AI serves as a support tool rather than a replacement for human decision-making.

- There was a lack of trust in AI to effectively emulate a human call handler, particularly in situations that call for empathy.

Use case: Predictive Policing

Basic use case:

- Those who were optimistic about the potential public safety benefits of predicting crime hot spots emphasised that this was contingent on having rigorous oversight in place to mitigate potential risks.
- Participants were particularly concerned about the risk of further reinforcing existing bias ingrained within police datasets against some communities.

Complex use case:

- Some participants expressed strong concerns around the potentially oppressive implications of using AI to predict reoffending and questioned whether it removes the autonomy of offenders to rehabilitate.
- Overall, participants were the least supportive of this use case. Associations with authoritarianism resulted in discomfort – participants were generally uncomfortable with the idea of AI making decisions that could have severely negative impacts (i.e., longer prison time) on human lives. They saw this as oppressive and felt that the potential reduction in criminal activity did not justify the associated trade-offs.

1.4 Recommendations

Participants' advice to the Home Office and police forces

After learning about how AI might be used in policing and deliberating on the implications, participants produced advice for policy makers at the Home Office and for policing to consider. This advice focused on three key themes:

1. **Oversight and accountability**

- The public should be made aware of how oversight of AI in policing works, who is involved, and what happens when something goes wrong.
- AI should always be coupled with a human overseer to check AI inputs and be accountable for the outputs.
- AI's performance should be continually monitored.
- The police should maintain high levels of data security, and information being analysed by AI should be stored safely and securely.
- There should be limited political involvement in interpreting and acting on the output of AI uses.
- The police should ensure national consistency in accountability rather than each police force having their own approach.

- The police should consider a range of diverse perspectives to help guard against bias.

2. **Maximising accuracy and minimising bias**
    - Both data going into and out of AI systems should be audited, including training data.
    - The police should sense-check AI output against other information – for example, a police officer's personal experiences from engaging with offenders.
    - The same systems should be used in the same way across all police forces.
3. **Ensuring transparency in implementation**
    - AI should have a phased introduction to policing, with clear communication to the public about what it is being used for.
    - The resources saved by using AI should be applied to other aspects of policing – i.e. time freed up by AI use should be put towards greater community engagement and more frontline policing, rather than financial savings.
    - There should be consequences for failure, transparency when failures occur, and clear consequences for misuse.

1.5 Methodology

This project was commissioned by the Home Office to understand public perceptions around AI in policing to enable better policymaking. The work was supported by UK Research and Innovation's Sciencewise programme for high quality public dialogue and carried out by the independent research agency Thinks Insight and Strategy.

The key objectives were to:

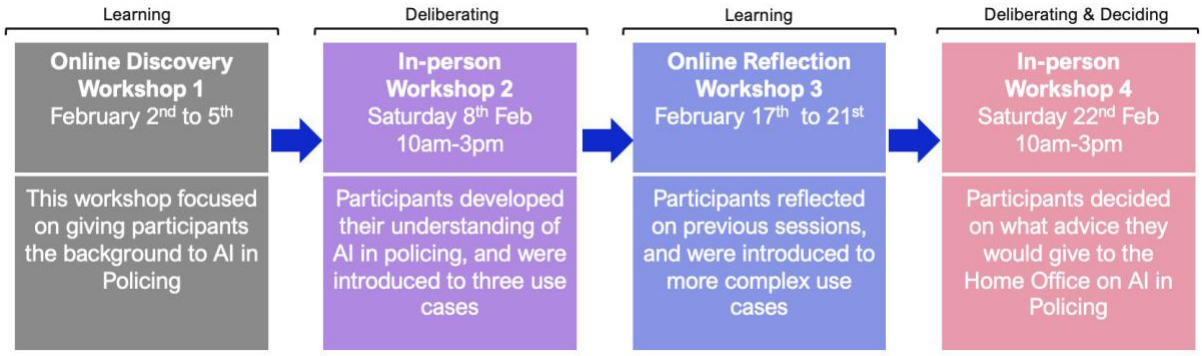
- Develop an understanding of the public's views and concerns regarding specific AI use cases in policing.
- Identify relevant opportunities and constraints for AI deployment in policing, including exploring the trade-offs in its use alongside potential risks.
- Capture public views on governance, monitoring, safety and accountability for the use of AI in policing.
- Inform policy development within UK government and support policing in decisions relating to deploying AI.
- Raise awareness of participatory methods within the Home Office and police forces.

A public dialogue was used to explore this policy area. This ensured participants could first be informed about relevant background issues and gave them sufficient time to engage in meaningful deliberation.

60 members of the public took part in a mix of online and in person workshops, working through a process of learning, deliberating and deciding.

The participants were selected to be broadly reflective of the populations of England and Wales with enhanced representation of some groups (e.g. those that would be more impacted by AI in policing).

An Oversight Group (OG) was also formed to provide a diverse range of perspectives, expertise, and experiences to inform the deliberation design.



The use cases

"Use cases" refers to examples of ways that the police could use AI. The use cases used in the deliberation were a shortlist from 10 used originally in an online survey, selected through discussions with an Oversight Group. The use cases were chosen to create a diverse spread of examples.

There were three uses cases:

- Summarising information.
- Call handling.
- Predictive policing.

Each of these three were split into "basic" and "complex" versions. The "basic" use cases were those that are considered less controversial, as they are either already in use or are currently being tested. The "complex" use cases are more controversial – for example, because these have been tried in other countries with mixed feedback or because they use sensitive data.

Basic use cases:

- Summarising information: AI summarising information, identifying key points and patterns in large information sets from multiple sources.
- Call handling: AI handling 101 calls, giving advice about non-emergencies and signposting to appropriate organisations.

- Predictive policing: Predictive policing models to create "heat maps" of when and where crime might happen, to inform police resource deployments.

Complex use cases:

- Summarising information: AI summarising sensitive data, including personal information of people involved in an investigation, social media, calls/messages, movements, and networks.
- Call handling: AI transferring 101 calls to 999 when its analysis of other elements (e.g., background noise) identifies an emergency.
- Predictive policing: Predicting reoffending, using personal data to predict someone's likelihood of reoffending.

2. Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Background

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a key focus of the current UK government, and exploring AI tools in policing in England and Wales is a priority for the policing minister. The use of AI in policing can be a polarising topic, with tensions between the potential for improvements of practice and outcomes weighed against concerns regarding the use of data, bias and unlawful discrimination.

This project was commissioned by the National Police Capabilities Unit (NPCU) and the Home Office Policy and Innovation Lab (CoLab). The aim was to understand public perceptions around AI in policing to enable better policymaking. The work was co-funded by the public dialogue engagement programme Sciencewise and carried out by the independent research agency Thinks Insight and Strategy.

The National Police Capabilities Unit (NPCU) is a Unit within the Public Safety Group of the Home Office which develops policy and delivers programmes to support police adoption of technology and services that help protect the public. Current areas of focus for the unit include AI, aviation and drones, police/public contact, forensics, IT and police innovation. It works closely with delivery partners across the policing ecosystem including the National Police Chiefs Council, the Office of the Police Chief Scientific Advisor, the College of Policing and with criminal justice system partners.

CoLab is a specialised team within the UK Home Office who bring innovative methods into policy making. They work collaboratively with individuals affected by Home Office policies and services, as well as front-line staff and subject matter experts, to apply problem-solving approaches to diverse policy and operational challenges.

Sciencewise is a UKRI funded public engagement programme that supports government departments and other public bodies to listen to and act on diverse voices, to shape policy and priorities. It helps policymakers engage with the public to ensure that public views and concerns are considered in decision-making on complex scientific and technological issues.

Thinks Insight & Strategy are an independent research agency and experts in conducting public dialogue.

2.2 Objectives

- To develop an understanding of the public's views and concerns regarding specific AI use cases in policing (excluding facial recognition). Ensuring the members of the public engaged are a diverse and inclusive group, including those most likely to be disproportionately impacted by the police. Facial recognition was excluded on the basis that it is an area that

has already had public perception research on it, and therefore this research can focus on other instances of AI use which do not.
- Identify relevant opportunities and constraints for AI deployment in policing, including exploring the trade-offs in its use, such as improvements in policing practice alongside potential risks.
- Capture public views on governance, monitoring, safety and accountability for the use of AI in policing.
- Inform policy development within government and support policing in decisions relating to deploying AI.
- Raise awareness of participatory methods within the Home Office and police forces.

2.3 Our approach

Independent evaluation

An independent evaluation was carried out throughout the process. The evaluator attended various points of the design process, including co-design meetings, oversight group meetings, and internal project meetings. The evaluator was also present in-locations at both in-person workshops. A full evaluation of this study will be published later this year.

Design survey

At the start of the process, we conducted a design survey, with 1,000 respondents, broadly reflective of the population of England and Wales. The purpose of the survey was to:

- Develop our understanding of public opinion on AI in policing.
- Inform design of materials based on existing literature.
- Help guide selection of relevant use cases.
- Inform sampling to reflect the opinions gathered in the survey.

The demographics are seen in the table below:

Demographic	Percentage of respondents
Men **Women**	48% 52%
Age	

18-24	10%
25-34	17%
35-44	16%
45-54	17%
55+	16%
65+	24%
Ethnicity	
Prefer not to say	2%
Mixed	3%
Black	4%
Asian	10%
White	81%
Location	
North East	5%
Wales	6%
East Midlands	8%
Yorkshire	9%
West Midlands	10%
South West	11%
East of England	12%
North West	14%
London	15%
South East	

We used the responses from this survey to ensure our sampling criteria reflected the broad range of opinions found in the survey. For example, ensuring there were participants from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, with different levels of positivity towards AI. We also ensured the sample for the dialogue reflected the mix of low and high trust towards the police we found in the design survey. When asked to rate statements relating to AI in policing, the survey found that respondents were open-minded to the potential benefit of freeing up police time to deal with complicated issues, but less sure about there being other benefits. This highlighted that the public are open to the arguments for AI in policing, but mainly unsure about its uses. This established a grounding for introducing the arguments and information during the dialogue sessions.

Design survey respondents were given a list of 10 potential use cases for AI in policing and asked to indicate their attitude towards these, as well as their levels of trust in the police to use them effectively and appropriately. The use cases presented were:

- Using AI to help police answering 999 and 101 calls by matching/linking references to people and places to information held on other police systems
- Using AI to automatically answer 101 (non-emergency) calls rather than require a human operator
- Using AI to automatically record and transcribe conversations with the public (e.g. a 999/101 call or a formal police interview)
- Using AI to automatically translate content that is in a foreign language into English (e.g. translating a conversation in real time with a member of the public who does not speak English)
- Using AI to scan online data sources such as open social media accounts or groups (e.g. extracting evidence for intelligence gathering and investigations)
- Using AI to automatically identify number plates and match them against police databases
- Using AI to connect up police datasets to better identify patterns in offender behaviour to help with investigations (such as characteristics of previous offences)
- Using AI to assess the risk of who may commit a crime or where it is more likely to happen
- Using AI to automatically summarise large amounts of information (e.g. to creating a case file summary from existing information)
- Using AI to scan and process information about people applying to be police officers, as part of background checks

We used these responses to inform which use cases were chosen for the deliberative public dialogue. We based our choices on findings around participants being generally accepting of administrative use cases (e.g. AI summarising information) and being more wary of use cases they felt replaced the "human touch" with AI (e.g. AI answering 101 calls).

Further details of this survey are available upon request.

Why a deliberative public dialogue?

This project chose to use a deliberative public dialogue as it's particularly useful for complex or contentious topics.

Deliberation is an approach to decision-making that allows participants to consider relevant information from multiple points of view. It enables participants to discuss the issues and develop their thinking together before coming to a view.

Deliberative approaches provide deeper insight into how and why people form or shift opinions when exposed to new information or perspectives. Unlike quantitative surveys, which capture static snapshots of views, or qualitative focus groups that explore surface-level attitudes, deliberative methods reveal the evolution of participants' thinking. Participants engage in structured dialogue, consider trade-offs, and grapple with complexity mirroring real-world decision-making. This approach uncovers more considered, informed views, helping to understand not just what people think, but how they arrive there.

Deliberative public engagement therefore offers decision-makers public views that are carefully considered and insight into the shifts in opinion that can occur through open discussion and debate. Dialogue is about understanding public judgement, not public opinion.

Locations

60 members of the public were engaged across four workshops in total: two online communities and two five-hour in-person sessions across three locations (Cardiff, Durham and London).

Why we chose our three locations:

- **Cardiff** offered a devolved context which would help us understand how perspectives differ across countries, furthermore it was selected to ensure that representation from Wales was included in the sample. Cardiff specifically was chosen as it has a mix of different types of locations (urban, rural, coastal etc.) within easy commuting distance.
- **Durham** ensured representation from the north of England and that we heard from those who live in rural areas where policing is conducted differently to in cities. Furthermore, there was local context for the use of AI in policing as Durham police had recently trialled a Harm Assessment Risk Tool which used AI.
- **London** offered a big city setting and a specific policing context as the Metropolitan Police Service, the largest force in the UK, have jurisdiction for London.

Rationale for sampling approach

The sampling approach was designed to deliver breadth and diversity within a group broadly reflective of, rather than strictly representative of, the general public in terms of demographics and attitudes.

In line with Sciencewise guiding principles[3] the sample sought to reflect relevant interests and sociodemographic characteristics. We did this by oversampling for groups identified by existing evidence and in discussion with the oversight group as potentially being differentially and disproportionately impacted by AI in

[3] https://sciencewise.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Guiding-Principles.pdf

policing. These were: people from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds, Black men, and people aged 18-24.

This approach aimed to ensure that within each of our three locations, and across the sample as a whole, we included people likely to have different experiences of, and perspectives on, both policing and AI.

In total, 60 members of the public were recruited, with 58 taking part in all 4 workshops due to dropouts on the days of the workshops.

Recruitment approach

Our recruitment partner was Plus Four, an independent market research company with expertise in participant recruitment and accreditation from the MRS Recruiter Accreditation Scheme[4]. We took a purposive approach to recruitment in order to efficiently reach the pre-determined sample criteria. To reach participants we:

- **Used mixed outreach approaches –** cold calling using commercial lists, targeted social media outreach, on-street intercepts, and door-knocking.
- **Stratified within demographic groupings as well as other relevant aspects –** e.g., opinions on AI and attitudes towards policing – before selecting candidates using random sampling where we had multiple candidates that met quotas.

To compensate participants for their time, they received 'thank you' payments of £200 for attending the workshops and £50 for taking part in the online community.

Questions used to recruit our sample

For demographic questions such as gender, age, sexuality, and ethnicity potential participants were asked to self-identify. The questions were worded as:

- How would you describe your gender?
- How old are you?
- How would you describe your sexual orientation? Please use language that you feel most comfortable with.
- How would you describe your ethnic background?

For sampling location and socio-economic grade, participants were asked:

- Which of the following best describes where you live?
    - Urban
    - Small town/Suburban
    - Village/Rural
- What is/was the occupation of the person in your household who earns/earned the highest salary? (If retired, occupation prior to retirement).

[4] https://www.mrs.org.uk/learningCPD/recruiter-accreditation-scheme

For sampling attitudes and opinions, participants were recruited using multiple-choice questions from validated surveys. The question determining levels of trust in police was adapted from an OECD survey on drivers of trust in public institutions (2023)[5]:

- 'This question is about your trust in various institutions in the UK. Even if you have had no contact with these institutions, please base your answer on your general impression of them. Please tell me on a score of 1-5 how much you personally trust the police. 1 means you have very little trust in the police, and 5 means you have complete trust.'

To determine their opinion on AI, we asked an adapted version of a question asked on the Pew Research Center's Views on AI Survey (2024)[6]:

- 'On a scale of 1-5, how positively do you feel about AI? 1 means you feel very negatively towards it, and 5 means you feel very positively towards it.'

Demographics table

The table on the next page shows the quotas and actual number of participants for each location. The demographics outlined are all the ones that had a quota to fulfil: gender, age, ethnicity, location, SEG, sexuality, trust in police, and opinion on AI.

The column on the right shows to the total actual numbers of participants across locations.

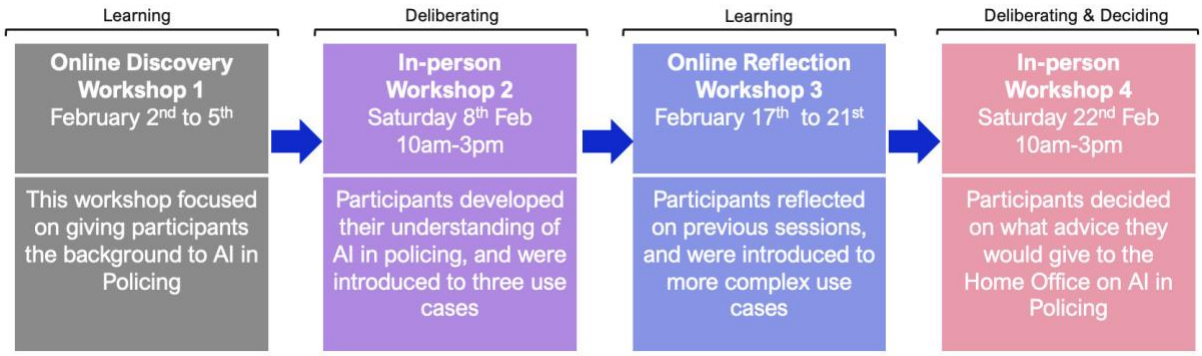
[5] https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-survey-on-drivers-of-trust-in-public-institutions-2024-results-country-notes_a8004759-en/united-kingdom_cec47bf8-en.html

[6] https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2025/03/pi_2025.04.03_us-public-and-ai-experts_questionnaire.pdf

	Cardiff		Durham		London		Totals
	Quota	Actual	Quota	Actual	Quota	Actual	Actual
Gender	*8 men* *8 women*	9 men 9 women	*8 men* *8 women*	9 men 9 women	*8 men* *8 women*	11 men 11 women	29 men 29 women
Age	*3 x 18-24* *3 x 25-34* *2 x 35-44* *2 x 45-54* *2 x 55+* *4 x 65+*	2 x 18-24 1 x 25-34 2 x 35-44 3 x 45-54 3 x 55+ 3 x 65+	*3 x 18-24* *2 x 25-34* *2 x 35-44* *3 x 45-54* *2 x 55+* *3 x 65+*	2 x 18-24 2 x 25-34 4 x 35-44 6 x 45-54 3 x 55+ 1 x 65+	*3 x 18-24* *3 x 25-34* *3 x 35-44* *3 x 45-54* *2 x 55+* *3 x 65+*	3 x 18-24 4 x 25-34 5 x 35-44 3 x 45-54 6 x 55+ 1 x 65+	7 x 18-24 7 x 25-34 11 x 35-44 12 x 45-54 12 x 55+ 5 x 65+
Ethnicity	*5 x ethnic minority participants Including 2 x black men*	11 x White 2 x Black 3 x Asian 1 x Mixed race	*3 x ethnic minority participants*	14 x White 2 x Black 2 x Asian	*10 x ethnic minority participants Including 3 x black men*	9 x White 5 x Black 5 x Asian 3 x Mixed race	34 x White 9 x Black 10 x Asian 4 x Mixed race
Location	*6 x rural* *6 x urban* *4 x suburban*	6 x rural 8 x urban 4 x suburban	*10 x rural* *4 x urban* *4 x suburban*	8 x rural 4 x urban 6 x suburban	*15 x urban* *4 x suburban*	16 x urban 6 x suburban	14 x rural 28 x urban 16 x suburban
SEG	*4 x AB* *7 x C1C2* *4 x DE*	4 x AB 9 x C1C2 5 x DE	*4 x AB* *7 x C1C2* *4 x DE*	4 x AB 10 x C1C2 4 x DE	*4 x AB* *7 x C1C2* *4 x DE*	5 x AB 13 x C1C2 4 x DE	13 x AB 32 x C1C2 13 x DE
Sexuality	*2 x LGBTQIA+*	1 x LGBTQIA+	*2 x LGBTQIA+*	2 x LGBTQIA+	*2 x LGBTQIA+*	4 x LGBTQIA+	7 x LGBTQIA+
Trust in police	*6 x Low trust* *6 x high trust*	4 x Low trust 8 x Neutral trust 6 x High trust	*6 x Low trust* *6 x high trust*	7 x Low trust 7 x Neutral trust 4 x High trust	*6 x Low trust* *6 x high trust*	10 x Low trust 3 x Neutral trust 9 x High trust	21 x Low trust 18 x Neutral trust 19 x High trust
Opinion on AI	*5 x Negative* *5 x Neutral* *5 x Positive*	3 x Negative 7 x Neutral 8 x Positive	*5 x Negative* *5 x Neutral* *5 x Positive*	1 x Negative 7 x Neutral 10 x Positive	*5 x Negative* *5 x Neutral* *5 x Positive*	5 x Negative 4 x Neutral 13 x Positive	9 x Negative 18 x Neutral 31 x Positive

Structure of the dialogue

Using a mix of online and in person workshops, participants worked through a process of learning, deliberating and deciding. During in-person workshops, the three locations were linked via Zoom so deliberations could be shared across locations.



Information giving

The first Online Discovery Workshop 1 acted as the primary information sharing session. Given the variety of different starting points, the main purpose of Workshop 1 was to set a consistent baseline level of understanding on policing in England and Wales, AI and AI in policing specifically.

The following provides a brief overview of the information provided to participants in **Workshop 1**. More detail can be requested via the Appendix list on page 65:

- **Policing in England and Wales:** Participants were shown some headlines on policing in the last year, some positive and some negative. They were then given summaries of three key aspects of policing – Police operational practices (9 principles of policing, policing by consent and neighbourhood policing), operational structure (a map of the 43 police constabularies and a summary of how police is structured in England and Wales) and an overview of police accountability and oversight.
- **AI more broadly:** Participants were given a short definition of AI, as well as some examples of how it is used day to day (creating summaries, spotting patterns and making predictions and responding to vocal instructions). They were also asked to watch a short two-minute video and given access to an optional, more in depth overview article.
- **AI in policing:** Finally, participants were shown a video from Paul Taylor, Police Chief Scientific Advisor on the role of AI in policing.

In **Workshop 2** participants were introduced to three basic use cases to ground their understanding of what AI in policing could look like.

In **Workshop 3** participants were introduced to more complex versions of the use cases to gauge how potentially raising the stakes of the use of AI in policing could impact participant views on acceptability.

Details of these use cases and their more complex counterparts will be explained in the following section and further details can be requested via the Appendix list on page 65.

Finally, in **Workshop 4** participants were shown two videos from members of the Oversight Group, Steve Barnabis from Project Zero and Ellen Lefley from Justice, on their thoughts on the broader impacts of AI in policing on the public. Steve spoke from a community centric perspective whilst Ellen spoke on potential issues with accuracy, bias, and police accountability.

The use cases

"Use cases" refer to different examples of how police could use AI. These were chosen with the intention of getting a diverse spread of examples. The selection included those that are being considered or tested currently and those that are not currently being considered but have been discussed, as well as a mix of innocuous to potentially more controversial uses.

There were three uses cases:

- Summarising information.
- Call handling.
- Predictive policing.

Each of these three use cases were split into "basic" and "complex" versions. The "basic" use cases were those that are considered more innocuous, as they're either already in use or are currently being tested. The "complex" use cases are more controversial – for example, because there are examples of these uses from other countries that have had mixed feedback.

Basic use cases:

- Summarising information: AI summarising information, identifying key points and patterns in large information sets from multiple sources.
- Call handling: AI handling 101 calls, giving advice about non-emergencies and signposting to appropriate organisations.
- Predictive policing: Predictive policing models to create "heat maps" of when and where crime might happen, to inform police resource deployments.

Complex use cases:

- Summarising information: AI summarising sensitive data, including personal information of people involved in an investigation, social media, calls/messages, movements, and networks.

- Call handling: AI transferring 101 calls to 999 when its analysis of other elements (e.g. background noise) identifies an emergency.
- Predictive policing: Predicting reoffending, using personal data to predict someone's likelihood of reoffending.

Exact details of what was shown to participants to inform them of the use cases can be requested via the Appendix list on page 65.

Generating advice

The process culminated in participants generating advice on what they consider acceptable uses of AI in policing, with their perceptions grounded in the use cases. This process was the focus of Workshop 4.

The findings presented in this report reflect a summary of what participants told us directly during the dialogue. It also includes thematic analysis of the recorded data to draw out common points of agreement and disagreement across locations. These headline findings have been shared with participants to allow them an opportunity to reflect and confirm that the advice aligns with their views.

2.4 Sciencewise

This project was co-funded and advised by Sciencewise, a UK Research and Innovation programme which supports government and other public bodies to carry out deliberative public dialogue. Throughout the project, Sciencewise provided guidance and feedback into the methodology, design and delivery, as well as the subsequence analysis and outputs.

The project was guided by Sciencewise quality standards, which were applied in the following ways:

Principle	Application
Context	• Oversight Group and design sprint to agree clear objectives. • Inclusion of marginalised and minoritised groups, including those disproportionately affected – for example Black or Asian groups.
Scope	• Design sprint, rapid evidence reviews, and interim survey to agree specific AI use cases to explore. • Clearly setting out the objectives with participants in the online space and at the start of the in-person deliberation.
Delivery	• Agreeing most appropriate expert speakers with the Oversight Group.

	• 10 hours in-person and parallel online space to allow time for participants to become informed.
Impact	• Multiple presentations to wide range of stakeholders. • Technical report for replication. • Documentary film to disseminate findings and methodology.

2.5 Oversight group

To ensure a diverse range of perspectives, expertise, and experiences were considered, an Oversight Group (OG) was formed to support Thinks with the design of content, providing key context and knowledge. The group comprised independent academics, subject matter experts, policing leads, and civil society groups.

Oversight Group Members

- Andrew Stafford (Research Lead, Office of the Police Chief Scientific Advisor)
- Dr Felicity O'Connell (Researcher, The Police Foundation)
- Lewis Lincoln-Gordon (Chief Staff Officer to Alex Murray, Coordinator of the NPCC AI Portfolio)
- William Noble (Policy Assistant Association of Police and Crime Commissioners)
- Scott Morgan (Senior Research Officer, College of Policing)
- Prof Lewis Griffin (Professor of Computer Science, UCL)
- Prof Shane Johnson (Director of the Dawes Centre for Future Crime, UCL)
- Steve Barnabis (Founder of Project Zero, Project Zero)
- Tim Davies (Research and Practice Director, Connected by Data)
- Zoe Amar (Director, Zoe Amar Digital)
- Ellen Lefley (Senior Lawyer, Justice)
- Louise King (Co-Lead, Just for Kids Law and Director, Children's Rights Alliances for England)

Chair

- Dr Natalie Byrom, Independent Researcher and Policy Advisor

There were four oversight group meetings in total, each with a focus on supporting with the design at crucial points in the project:

- **Methodology overview.** After introductions to the project, and agreeing terms of reference going forward, the OG were shown a methodology overview, which they were then invited to share their views on, regarding

proposed use cases, locations for dialogues and research outputs. The evaluation plan was also outlined here.

- **Sample profile and framing question.** OG members were shown the proposed locations and sociodemographic and attitudinal variables proposed for participant sampling quotas, and invited to feed back on their thoughts and anything they felt was missing.
- **Workshop plan and use cases.** Here we outlined the workshop structure for all four workshops and had a Q&A and feedback on this from the OG. Then, each use case was run through, with questions around whether the level up between basic and complex level felt appropriate, any key information needed to support discussion, and what they would find useful to understand from each use case. OG members also gave their opinions on information sources or speakers that could be used for the use cases.
- **Shaping the outputs.** Reviewing emerging findings and shaping the outputs to ensure they are actionable, relevant, and useful.

Members provided valuable information and insight throughout the process and played a vital role in tailoring the design materials to be the most impactful and relevant. For example, the OG suggested the use of real examples in the use cases to make these come to life for participants and feel more grounded in what is possible.

2.6 The structure of this report

The report starts by exploring where the participants started from – their knowledge of technology, AI, and policing, as well as their initial views on the potential impact of AI in policing.

It then provides an overview of the factors underpinning participants' feelings about the acceptability (or otherwise) of AI in policing, before turning to a deep dive on each of the use cases.

Finally, the report summarises the key themes from the participants' advice to the Home Office and police forces on how they think AI in policing should work.

3. Participants' initial views

Key findings

Participants had rarely considered AI in policing, but their views of each individual element (AI, technology and policing) were important in shaping their views on AI in policing. AI in policing was often seen a risk for making existing issues worse, or accelerating negative trends.

Views on technology: in general participants often held differing views. While technology could improve communication and be convenient, concerns around disinformation, addiction, and declining social interaction were also prominent. This concern about the loss of the social or human element carried over into discussions of AI in policing where participants were concerned about the lack of empathy in automated systems.

Views on AI: participants saw AI as having real potential, particularly in healthcare, but expressed apprehension over job displacement, data security, and insufficient regulation. Again, these went on to become key themes in their response to AI in policing.

Views on policing: these were shaped by personal experiences and media exposure, leading to varying levels of trust. Initial attitudes toward AI in policing acknowledged its potential to enhance efficiency, but concerns persisted regarding bias, job losses, and lack of oversight.

Views on AI in policing: from the outset of the process, participants emphasised the need for transparency, regulation, and safeguards to ensure AI supports policing without undermining human judgment – these underpinned participants' advice to the Home Office and police forces at the end of the dialogue.

Prior to the first in-person workshop participants took part in a weeklong online community (Workshop 1) which was used to share information and understand participants' starting positions. As we would expect from a sample of members of the public, there were mixed levels of existing knowledge and experience of AI and policing, but most people started without in-depth knowledge.

The headings in this section are based on the activities participants completed in Workshop 1 (the online community) and the order in which they completed them.

3.1 Initial views on technology

When asked to think about the role technology played in their lives, participants had a diverse range of answers for what fell under the umbrella of technology. When asked to give examples of technology that impacted them, some focussed on physical objects, ranging from printers to smartphones, to cars. Others

focused more on online services, referencing social media, GP check ins, and Amazon music.

When prompted to think about the impacts of technology, the key positive was convenience – how technology offers convenience in terms of social interaction and practical tasks. Commonly mentioned negatives included becoming over-reliant on technology and the prevalence of new types of scams, crimes, and disinformation.

Social interaction

The increased ease of communication was the most common positive given by participants about technology. They recognised the value of being able to reach any of their family or friends at any time in any part of the world, with social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and messaging services like WhatsApp. This has enabled them to maintain links with people that they otherwise would have lost touch with. This was where participants felt most positive towards technology.

> *"I live away from my parent and siblings, so technology helps to me be connected with them and talk to them on regular basis which helps my social life."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 1*

Conversely, communication and connection were also seen as one of the biggest negatives. While participants appreciated being able to contact their loved ones with ease, they felt exhausted by being "constantly on", and the expectation to always be in contact and available. They also felt that, while technology allowed more contact, it had also reduced in-person communications – for example, online meetings becoming the norm in the workplace. While technology meant connecting with people was logistically easier, the quality of the connections felt poorer.

> *"While technology helps me stay connected online, it has also reduced real-life, in-person interactions. Sometimes, people (including myself) spend more time on screens than engaging with those around them, which can weaken personal relationships."*
>
> *London, Workshop 1*

Overall, while participants often mentioned this as both a positive and a negative, the positive feelings around connection tended to be emphasised as more important than the negatives.

Convenience vs overreliance

Participants were positive about the convenience technology offered their lives – i.e. the ability to work from home thanks to online meetings, online storage systems, or general workplace applications. Participants also mentioned being able to easily find information on any topic. Examples included being able to

Google something they're not sure about or being able to use the internet to do research for university.

> *"Technology has given me the power to find out anything, anywhere, anytime I want which is magical when you think about it."*
>
> *London, Workshop 1*

At the same time, participants were concerned about how over-reliant they have become on technology. There was recognition that alongside technology making many facets of life easier, it was making life harder *without* technology. Participants, particularly older participants, saw that they had become reliant on using technology in recent years compared to when they were younger.

> *"I rely on technology for almost everything; navigation, remembering important dates, and even doing simple calculations. If my phone or laptop isn't working, I sometimes struggle with things I used to do without technology."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 1*

Disinformation and scams

Finally, there were participants who highlighted their concerns around the risks of disinformation and scams. Younger participants were wary of disinformation, raising concerns about fake photos, "fake news", and the ease with which these are spread through the internet.

> *"It's so easy these days to make up information or create images that aren't real, e.g. facetune."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 1*

Older participants often mentioned the risk of being scammed online. Some had personal experience with this, and the most commonly mentioned examples were scam calls, online shopping scams (e.g., not sure if items for sale are real or if they will just take your money) and phishing attacks through emails.

> *"Offering items for sale, being unsure if the site is safe or being scammed."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 1*

This awareness of the misuse of AI came up throughout the process, despite there being no explicit questions around this. Participants felt it was an important part of the context that even as police might be using AI, so would criminals.

3.2 Initial views on AI

Participants were given the following definition of AI:

> Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence. These tasks include problem-solving, learning from experience, recognizing patterns, understanding language, and making decisions. AI systems can be designed to operate autonomously or assist humans in various applications, from virtual assistants to self-driving cars.

In the first online workshop (Workshop 1), we provided participants with examples of how AI can be used day-to day which included explanations of creating summaries, making predictions, and responding to vocal instructions. Finally, we gave them a short video from The Royal Society which they were required to watch, and an optional longer read from IBM.

While they were excited about the potential of AI and surprised about the range of uses that it already has, there were also widespread concerns about how well-regulated AI is (or isn't) and the confusing nature of its rapid development.

Quality of life

Participants consistently highlighted what they felt was the seemingly boundless potential of AI to improve quality of life. The Royal Society video participants watched outlined some of the medical developments AI has been used for, for example AI calculating the shape and volume of tumours, and this stuck with participants as a huge positive for the potential of AI. Participants' focus on the potential for medical advancement was the strongest positive feeling that came out.

On a more personal level participants expanded on the theme of convenience they had touched on when asked about technology more broadly. They pointed to factors such as the potential for it to streamline workflows and plan out schedules. However, there was an underlying feeling of discomfort, despite the positives, given participants' lack of familiarity with AI, and the fear of overreliance they had noted in the previous section. Participants who began the process with more of an understanding and familiarity of AI didn't feel this discomfort as strongly as others.

"AI essentially acts as a helping hand for humanity."

London, Workshop 1

Over-reliance

Participants' discomfort with the potential over-reliance on technology continued with their perceptions of AI, and this came across strongly. The speed of AI's development made many participants feel uncertain about how they feel, despite the positive applications introduced to them (for example, to support medical

diagnosis). And there were repeated concerns that the speed and efficiency of AI could lead to an over-reliance on technology at the expense of valuable human insight or contact.

> *"In some cases, there is no substitute for the human brain and capability. Also, if we create smart technologies, that replace the role of let's say 100 workers, what do those people do for work? Will AI not increase unemployment?"*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 1*

Inevitability

There was an underlying feeling, which continued to be present throughout the workshops, that AI use is inevitable. There was a spontaneous sense that AI is already commonplace in several parts of life – often with what participants felt was sudden speed. While there were differences in participants' reactions to this, ranging from optimistic to apathetic to scared, there was a unanimous consensus of the inevitability of AI becoming further embedded in everyday life. The fact that participants were deliberating AI use in these sessions seemed to solidify the feeling of inevitability.

> *"They'll have to engage with AI and they won't have a choice… The decision has been made higher up and now it's just about how to make the public accept it with the least amount of fuss."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 1*

Job loss

Many participants were especially concerned about job losses, citing news stories about the threat of AI taking over human jobs. There was a widespread feeling that without clear and effective regulation AI could take over jobs without any planning about what happens to those whose jobs no longer exist. This was felt to be particularly concerning in the wider economic climate of rising costs.

> *"I feel negative about the possibility of redundancies as AI becomes more commonly used within businesses and organisations."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 1*

Disinformation

While the strongest negative feelings about AI focussed on the risks of over-reliance and potential for job losses, participants also raised concerns around the disinformation AI could spread. This was particularly strong for participants who started with very little knowledge of AI. They were worried about their ability to tell when AI was being used by bad agents to spread disinformation or fake photos. Examples such as the creation of deep fakes were often cited as justification for these feelings.

3.3 Initial views on the police in England and Wales

Participants perceptions of the police were heavily influenced by how they felt about the challenges facing the police, news stories about the police, and personal experience with the police.

Understanding of the challenges faced by the police

Those who held positive views tended to have a pre-existing trust combined with a recognition of the challenges facing modern policing. They felt the police were doing the best they could with the resources they had in an environment that had become quite hostile to their role.

> *"I think it does come down to the narrative that we've been told. We do need to remember what whilst they are police, they are humans. I don't think it's the case that we can put all the police in the same box."*
>
> *London, Workshop 2*

Personal experiences

Our analysis suggests personal experience heavily dictated whether a participant had positive or negative feelings towards the police. In instances where participants had positive interactions with the police, those often superseded any external stimulus on potential failings of the police.

> *"I have had dealings with police myself and they have been very kind and helpful to me they helped me sort issues that needed sorting with ease and kept me in the loop."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 1*

On the other hand, those with negative views on the police cited instances of wasted resources, perceived incompetence, and unsolved crimes.

> *"In Cardiff there was an older man missing and someone had given our address looking for him, they visited us six times asking about him. He had never lived in this property. It was disgusting that they wasted so much time and resources. If they are looking for public trust, they should have checked who was living at the property."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

Coverage of recent police failings

When the concept of policing by consent was introduced to participants there was a feeling that this principle had been eroded over time. For some participants it no longer existed at all – particularly in minority communities.

Crimes committed by serving officers (such as the murder of Sarah Everard), two tier policing, the use of excessive force, and racial profiling were all cited by participants as cause for suspicion.

"You see stories about police using excessive force in some scenarios, especially against BAME specifically in public."

London, Workshop 1

Police structure

Finally, the complex structure of policing in England and Wales took participants by surprise. While there was a recognition that it enabled a more flexible service that could cater to local requirements, there was concern that it could lead to an inconsistent standard of policing. The idea of consistency across police forces was regularly raised in regard to the use of AI in policing throughout the dialogue.

Our interpretation of these concerns was that participants were worried that a lack of consistency across police forces means a lack of equality, as the public are not getting the same type of police service everywhere. Interactions with the police need to be consistent, otherwise this felt unjust to our participants.

3.4 Initial views on the prospect of AI in policing

When it came to the use of AI in policing more specifically, initial participant feelings tended to reflect how they felt about AI more broadly. Those more positively inclined towards AI saw it as a way to improve the police. This effect was particularly clear when it came to bias: those with concerns about bias within the police felt that AI would only make this worse, others felt AI could help mitigate bias.

Improving the police

Participants were excited by the potential of AI to streamline administrative tasks and free up police resources which could, in turn, result in more police on the streets tackling crime. There was also hope that it could lead to better community outreach, better relationships between police and communities, and, subsequently, a reduction in the perceived bias (particularly racial bias) present in police forces. There was a lot of positivity around the prospect of AI supporting the police.

"AI allows police to get back to the human element of policing."

London, Workshop 1

The introduction of AI gave them hope that the police could be doing more for the public, with AI taking on other tasks. This hopefulness tended to come from participants who either already had positive views on the police, or those that felt negative but were sympathetic to the significant resource challenge they perceived police to have.

Exacerbating existing problems

On the other hand, participants who saw the police as biased had concerns about the prospect of AI replacing aspects of the police force without fixing any

of these existing problems. They felt that without time and effort put into training the AI and police officers understanding the best ways to use it, it would simply make the police faster but not better. There was recognition of the advantage of making tasks automated and quicker. But there were those who feared that this wouldn't tackle the problems with data police already use (i.e. the perception that this data has bias) and, therefore, might not be worth the trade-off unless used correctly.

> *"AI needs to be used in the correct manner, as a tool to help improve policing rather than replacing anything that currently exists."*
>
> *London, Workshop 1*

Consistency across England and Wales

Participants questioned how AI would be rolled out across the 43 police constabularies. They were particularly concerned about whether there would be consistent oversight and accountability mechanisms across all of them and if AI would be integrated into police systems in the same way everywhere.

As noted above, participants were largely unaware of the structure of policing in England and Wales prior to reading the information in Workshop 1. They were surprised at the sheer number of police forces and oversight groups. When adding AI into the mix, participants struggled to imagine how this could be consistently integrated into such a large system.

> *"Each force has different priorities meaning you can't guarantee the same treatment for all or the same way of using things."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 1*

Risks of AI

Participants who flagged concerns about AI felt these concerns applied equally to the use of AI in policing.

Participants feared there were risks of job losses without an overall improvement in the areas of policing that matter to them. It was vital to many that the use of AI was not just a cost saving exercise, but rather that the cost saving would lead to higher quality of policing, i.e. less police time spent in the back office, more police time on the streets.

Participants were concerned that, either due to complacency or overdependence, AI could become the final decision maker in distributing justice (e.g. being used to determine guilt). Participants made it clear that in its current form, AI would only be acceptable as a tool to assist human decision making rather than becoming decision maker itself.

Participants' journey into the next workshops

The responses from the first workshop provided a useful baseline for participants' perceptions of AI in policing at the beginning of Workshop 2.

In subsequent workshops, participants were introduced to three example use cases, which illustrated how the police could potentially use AI. These provided further grounding for participants understanding and acted as jumping off points to explore with each other through the dialogue.

The next chapter provides an overview of how participants viewed the use cases and what made these seem more or less acceptable. Subsequent chapters conduct a deep dive into the specific use cases, before summarising the advice participants developed for the Home Office and police forces.

4. What makes AI in policing more or less acceptable

Participants explored three use cases, which were developed with the project oversight group to represent realistic future uses of AI by the police. This gave participants the information to ground their opinions in the reality of what AI in policing could look like. The use cases were

- Call handling
- Summarising information
- Predictive policing

Each of these had two versions, one more straightforward and another more complex or potentially controversial, making six use case examples in total.

We start with a summary of participants' perceptions of what they deemed acceptable and unacceptable in AI in policing following their deliberations of the use cases, as well as questions they felt were unanswered. These summarise some of the strongest opinions and feelings that came out in the workshops. However, these were not unanimous and there is further detail documenting some of the alternative views in the next chapters. The next chapters explore participants' reactions to the use cases specifically.

4.1 Acceptability of AI in policing

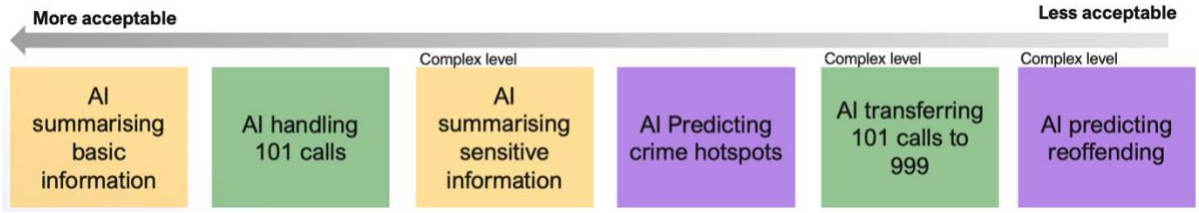
While there were differences in how participants responded to each of the three use cases (and to the two examples within each use case), there were also some common themes which were observed in participant discussions. These factors, described in the table below, were often used by participants to describe why a use case was, or was not, desirable.

Things that make AI more acceptable	**Belief in AI's potential** to aid in better crime fighting and more time and resources for community outreach. Participants felt the (potential) benefits meant it was inevitable the police would be using AI more in the future. **Improved efficiency** and accomplishing tasks that would take humans hours, days, or even longer. **Reduction in human error.** Participants acknowledged that human error is inevitable in any job, including policing, and using AI could help to reduce this, particularly in the case of summarising large datasets. **Enabling policing to be more preventative and less reactive.** AI could be a powerful tool in helping police to act early to reduce the likelihood of crimes happening in the first place.

Things that make AI less acceptable	**Lack of oversight**. There was discomfort with AI making decisions without direct human oversight. This was compounded by feelings of inevitability – this made participants concerned AI would be used with or without the appropriate precautionary measures. **Loss of human interaction and nuance**. Participants were doubtful of AI's ability to mimic nuanced human skills – especially predicting reoffending or dealing with emergencies where they felt empathy was necessary. **Data security risks**. AI use opens the door to data breaches and the risk of hacking, especially with private contractors being a necessary part of the AI infrastructure. **Errors seem inevitable**. Participants felt that, if rolled out too quickly and without proper testing, AI could increase the likelihood of errors in policing.
Questions that need to be answered	**What does ethical look like?** Participants were unclear on whether AI would counter or exacerbate human bias and bias ingrained within police datasets. **What's the evidence base?** There was fear that there was not enough evidence to confidently involve AI in a high-risk area like policing. **What about job losses?** Participants didn't want AI to be introduced to policing at the cost of humans losing their jobs. **Is this too much, too fast?** They felt that AI is happening whether the public likes it or not (i.e. as we have seen, that it might be inevitable), in a variety of ways, and with or without their involvement.

4.2 How participants ranked the use cases

At the end of Workshop 3, after participants had been introduced to the final three (complex) use cases, we asked participants to rank all six use case examples in order of acceptability.



The use cases participants ranked as most acceptable tended to be the ones where they saw a low likelihood of AI impacting individuals negatively, and where AI didn't appear to have direct decision-making power. Participants felt

that AI summarising information had the potential to save large amounts of time for police officers and carried a very low risk to the public. Similarly, AI handling 101 calls was generally seen as acceptable, as it was felt the positives of time saving for the service users outweighed the risks of it not working as intended.

> *"It seems to cut down on man hours and leaves police available to help the community."*
>
> *London, Workshop 3*

Conversely, the use cases participants ranked least acceptable were those they perceived as having a higher risk of negatively impacting individuals, and those where AI appeared to have decision-making power. AI predicting reoffending was the least acceptable to participants. The risk of bias, and the idea of AI making decisions that could negatively impact lives made participants uncomfortable. Alongside this, AI transferring 101 calls to 999 was not popular. Again, participants felt uncomfortable with AI making big decisions and they did not have faith in AI's ability to consistently make the right decisions in an emergency.

> *"There is too much risk for bias and profiling… It's giving AI the power to make decision that severely impact human lives."*
>
> *London, Workshop 3*

There was nuance within the ranking as well. There were some participants who felt strongly that summarising sensitive information was less acceptable due to concerns over privacy and the risk of AI not understanding human nuance – these participants tended to be more cautious generally of the police. Similarly, there were participants – typically those more trusting in both the police and in the potential for AI to function as promised – who were more accepting of AI being used in a predictive capacity.

The next section of the report will explore these use cases in more detail and discusses how participants felt about each one.

5. Use case: Summarising information

Key findings

The basic use case (AI summarising information) was defined as AI being used to identify key points/patterns in large information sets from multiple sources and summarising them. The complex use case (AI summarising sensitive information) was defined as AI summarising the personal information of people involved in an investigation, including their social media, calls/messages, movements, and networks.

Basic use case:

- *AI summarising information was the basic use case participants were most comfortable with due to their familiarity with it in other contexts – its benefits for the police and public therefore seemed apparent.*
- *This comfort came with caveats around the need for human oversight, clear guidelines, and evidence that it works. Concerns mainly focussed on the quality of data that would be used to train the AI.*

Complex use case:

- *When the use case was made more complex by including AI summarising sensitive information, participants had far more concern around AI's ability to understand human nuance in personal data. There was particular doubt about AI's ability to understand social media content.*
- *Alongside this, there were concerns about data privacy, particularly as analysing the information of people linked to suspects meant those not involved in crime would also have their data viewed by an AI.*

Both use cases:

- *Across both AI summarising information and AI summarising sensitive information, participants felt the time saving that occurs due to implementing these should be fed into improving front-line policing.*
- *They also emphasised the importance of accountability, oversight, transparent guidelines and evidence that it works. These would mitigate fears that the AI would not function as promised.*

Participants were introduced to AI summarising information as an initial use case in Workshop 2, and were then introduced to the more complex version, AI summarising sensitive information, in Workshop 3.

5.1 AI summarising information

This use case was defined as AI being used to identify key points or patterns in large information sets from multiple sources and summarising them. We gave participants the example of the police potentially using AI to digitise their

records by using it to identify POLE information. This refers to: People, Object, Location, Event – and then categorising the files by that information, meaning police can then search files for information in each of these categories.

Trust in familiarity

This was the use case most familiar to participants in other contexts, and therefore the most initially trusted. For example, student participants mentioned having used the ChatGPT AI system to help summarise the key points of a reading for university work. Participants who had used AI in this way tended to reassure those at their table with less AI experience that this was a common, and therefore more trusted use of AI.

> *"I think this is positive. This is commonly used outside of policing. It's just summarising and picking from the data."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

Participants' familiarity also meant they thought it was inevitable that the police would use AI in this way. As this was already seen as a "normal" use of AI, utilised by the general public, as well as having variety of professional uses, they assumed this would inevitably be used by police forces.

Efficiency for both police and the public

Participants recognised the potential time-saving benefits for the police using AI for this. They particularly saw this as a benefit when considering that this could (and should) allow for police resource to be applied to the more important parts of police work. This included things like spending more time building community connections, understanding the public's needs, and being a visible presence in local areas.

> *"Less time spent at the desk and more time doing. Job satisfaction. Doing the job they were trained to do."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

They also recognised that it could help solve crime quicker, making the police's job easier and ensuring victims get justice as swiftly as possible.

> *"As someone who might be a victim of a crime, knowing it could save time I'm all for it."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 2*

Quality of data and 'hallucinations'

While participants were generally optimistic about this use case, they still had concerns, particularly around risks relating to the quality of data that the AI is trained on. The term "garbage in/garbage out" was often used by participants to suggest that AI summaries of information would not be useful if the data training the AI was incomplete, flawed, or biased. This was often raised by participants who already had prior knowledge of AI and how it worked.

Related to this, there were concerns about data "hallucinations". Some participants were already familiar with this term and had concerns, while most learned about it in the information we provided in the session. There were fears that if AI produced "hallucinations" when summarising information this could negatively impact the outcomes of an investigation.

> *"Risks like misclassification, bias and hallucinations could impact investigations."*
>
> *London, Workshop 3*

Accountability

In conjunction with concerns about "hallucinations", participants also raised questions around who would be accountable should these, or other AI mistakes, happen. There was widespread concern that there wouldn't be anyone to take responsibility if an AI system replaces human officers. They felt there was a risk that the police may use "the AI said X" as an excuse to deflect blame. Therefore, these participants also felt there should be some sort of accountability measure that requires police to take responsibility for sense checking AI outputs.

> *"You need to think about accountability. The police officers need to be held accountable for putting the information in correctly and checking it when it is processed. You can see that if something did go wrong and it went to court, could they just turn around and blame it on the AI?"*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

5.2 AI summarising sensitive information

This use case was defined as AI summarising the personal information of people involved in an investigation, including their social media, calls/messages, movements, and networks (i.e., their connections with other people). It would also be able to go through any potentially sensitive evidence held by suspects, for example child sexual exploitation images. We gave participants the example of Söze, an AI system developed by Australian organisation Akkodis, which is currently being tested in the UK. It works by reconstructing the digital footprint of all suspects in a police investigation by summarising information from various sources including video footage, financial transactions, social media, emails, images, mobile phones, and computer hard drives.

This was considered a more complex version of AI summarising information case. It drew upon personal data such as social media, or data from suspects in a live case, rather than existing police data such as old case details. As a result, it was considered more likely to impact the general public than the basic version of this case study.

Police officer wellbeing

Participants were particularly excited about the potential positive impact on officer wellbeing, with many participants flagging this. Information we shared with participants (including a benefits/risks table) outlined that AI summarising sensitive information could mean that police officers no longer have to view upsetting materials for investigations (e.g., child sexual exploitation images), as AI could do this instead.

> *"Good way to use AI as it stops officers having to see troubling images which could have a negative effect on their mental health."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 3*

Alongside this, another key positive for participants was that it could benefit police wellbeing by allowing them to spend more time doing "the job they signed up for". They suggested that police officers should spend more time interacting with the community, solving investigations, and patrolling the streets. There was a sense throughout the workshops that this is what officers would want most from their role, compared to spending most of their time trawling through data. This would also benefit the public as police could use their time to focus on positive public engagement.

> *"I should imagine working in the police force can be very annoying if most of the time is spent writing up documents rather than being out resolving problems."*
>
> *London, Workshop 3*

Privacy concerns

Participants saw this use case (AI summarising *sensitive* information) as much riskier than the basic use case, with uncertainty as to whether the positives would outweigh the risks.

There was widespread concern among participants that there were great risks to privacy. Participants worried that this would jeopardise the privacy of those who have not committed a crime but have links to an investigation. This was a more relatable circumstance for participants (as opposed to being suspected of a crime, which were not experiences any participants shared during the deliberations). Therefore, the worries around data security and privacy were heightened.

> *"I appreciate the time saving benefits and the opportunity to find information which is relevant to a case, build up a profile, evidence etc. But I have some significant concerns over the abuse of power and the invasion of privacy."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 3*

Lack of human nuance

The other concern participants flagged for this use case was their lack of trust in AI to accurately interpret personal data. Participants felt there were human nuances that AI could easily miss, they had an instinctive distrust that AI would function as intended. This was particularly pronounced with the idea of AI having access to social media, which our description of this complex use case included. Younger participants suggested that AI would struggle to understand humour or sarcasm, for example.

> *"I don't think AI is capable of understanding human emotions so that's a concern, and so are privacy issues."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 4*

This concern with the AI lacking human nuance was particularly pronounced from those who had been negative about technology's impact on social connections in the Workshop 1.

5.3 What do participants want for these use cases?

Participants were generally supportive of these use cases. But as noted above, there were some concerns around the risks of implementing them. Their support was contingent on certain conditions being met.

The most important condition participants specified was that the time saved by AI summarising information should be used to improve frontline policing. If AI is used to save time on back-office administrative tasks, this time should be repurposed specifically on what participants perceived as important police work, including having police be a more visible presence on the streets.

> *"AI can process information much faster, meaning officers can spend less time at a desk and more time on the streets."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 2*

Another condition was that there would need to be clear accountability and human oversight. They insisted that AI must always be used in conjunction with human oversight.

> *"It's not going to be working on its own. Humans will input it and there will be a group that is monitoring it and to me I can't see it being anything other than positive. There's an assumption that humans are always going to check it."*
>
> *London, Workshop 2*

Participants felt it was important for there to be guidelines on how the police use AI, and that these guidelines are made public and transparent. This means that the guidelines are written accessibly and available for the public to view as and when they want to.

> *"There needs to be a set of guidelines that ensure quality service… Making sure the system is accessible, accurate, accountable and auditable."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 4*

Finally, they wanted evidence that it works. As noted in the risks, participants were concerned that AI would not function in the way it was promised to – in particular, that it would miss human nuance. To mitigate this, participants felt that AI should be rigorously trialled as well as be trained on high quality data. They also wanted human oversight to ensure its summaries meet the expected standard and accuracy.

> *"Exactly. AI is a tool, not a solution on its own. It needs careful implementation, clear oversight, and constant evaluation."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 2*

6. Use case: Call Handling

Key findings

The basic used case (101 calls) was defined as AI being used to answer 101 calls, with ability to give advice in non-emergencies and signpost to appropriate organisations. The complex use case (transferring 101 to 999) was defined as AI being used to determine when there is an emergency and transfer the 101 calls to 999.

Basic use case:

- *Participants generally supported the basic use case of AI handling 101 calls, recognising its potential to improve efficiency, reduce response times, and free up police resources for frontline duties.*
- *However, concerns were raised about transparency, accuracy, and the need for callers to have the option of speaking to a human. The main aspect that made participants more comfortable with this use case was that it was for non-emergency situations.*

Complex use case:

- *Conversely, AI involvement in transferring 101 calls to 999 was met with significant scepticism due to the high-stakes nature of emergency situations. Participants feared AI misinterpretations, failures in detecting distress, and a lack of accountability in cases of error.*
- *While AI's potential to expedite emergency responses was acknowledged, trust in its effectiveness remained low.*

Both use cases:

- *Across both call handling use cases, participants emphasised the importance of human oversight, rigorous testing, and comprehensive safeguarding to ensure that AI serves as a support tool rather than a replacement for human decision-making. There was a lack of trust in the AI to effectively emulate a human call handler, particularly in situations that call for empathy.*

Participants were introduced to AI Call Handling as an initial use case in Workshop 2. They were then introduced to a more complex version, AI Handling 999 Calls, in Workshop 3 before discussing it further in Workshop 4.

6.1 AI Call Handling: 101

This use case at the basic level was defined as AI being used to answer 101 calls, with the ability to give advice about non-emergencies and signpost or fast track callers to appropriate organisations. We gave participants the example of the West Midlands Police who already use AI to handle 101 calls, which gives advice about lost and found property, and signposts callers to organisations

responsible for things like abandoned cars or noise nuisance. The AI voice is designed to sound human and doesn't identify itself as an AI.

A solution to resourcing

Participants, particularly those with a positive view of the police, recognised the challenges that the police face with under resourcing. The negative impacts of a lack of police resources (e.g., more crime, low quality service) was frequently given as the biggest fear that participants had for policing in the next 5 years when asked in Workshop 1.

Participants recognised the potential for AI to cut out calls that wasted police time and give police more time and resources to be present in the community. Some participants had their own experiences with time wasting callers in their lines of work, and could see the benefits to saving police time not having to deal with these.

> *"I work in construction, and there is a woman who constantly rings the police for non-police needs. She is wasting a service that needs it more urgently. So, I like the fact that it redirects you."*
>
> *London, Workshop 2*

Fears over job loss were seen as a big drawback. Some participants were sceptical that savings made from this use case would actually result in reallocation of resources to frontline policing. They feared it would simply mean job loss for the officers who would usually handle calls. There was a strong desire for assurances and guarantees that if this technology was implemented in this way there would be no consequent loss of jobs. Participants with more initial knowledge of AI also questioned whether the high cost of implementation could actually be off set by the potential savings.

> *"But what happens to police funding? If AI makes policing "more efficient," does that mean fewer resources for actual officers? Could this be an excuse to cut funding?"*
>
> *London, Workshop 2*

High-speed, low risk

When it comes to AI answering 101 calls, participants felt that this would be a relatively low risk way of saving on police resources. As 101 calls are for non-emergencies, service users often wait a long time for their calls to get answered. Participants were particularly influenced after seeing that in the West Midlands Police example 101 calls were answered within 8 seconds. This quantifiable impact made them feel more confident in the capabilities of the AI.

> *"Yes, I think the benefits outweigh the drawbacks, cheaper and possibly more effective."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 3*

Languages and accents

Some participants suggested there was potential for the AI to provide translation for those who do not speak English. They envisioned that service users who didn't speak English could call up and be automatically translated.

> *"I actually think that for foreign languages it would be helpful as it would redirect them to proper foreign language support."*
>
> *London, Workshop 2*

However, while there were participants who felt that it could increase accessibility through translation services, there was a more pronounced fear that AI would not be able to understand certain accents. This was flagged most often in Cardiff and Durham, as areas of the country with accents that are regularly misunderstood.

> *"People who envisage it don't think of regional differences or accents. Like a Geordie accent. Alexa can't understand my Welsh accent. There's so many things to think about."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

Transparency

Participants caveated their initial acceptance with the need for service users to be made aware from the start that they are talking to AI. They also wanted to have the option to talk to a human if they prefer, because they did not believe the service would always work as intended. While there were those who felt the AI could do a "good enough" job of handling the phone calls, there was a fundamental belief that a human would always do it better.

> *"The only negative I can think is this AI thing trying to trick me into thinking I have spoken to an actual human being."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

However, there was a concern that this transparency could disincentivise service users from calling in the first place. Callers could be intimidated by the prospect of talking to an AI or simply have had a poor experience in the past, such as with call bots at GP surgeries. This placed extra weight on the importance of the service working effectively and always having the option of talking to a human. Yet some participants acknowledged that, while transparency was important, it could put some people off. There was the possibility that transparency would lead callers to immediately select the "talk to a human" option, which would mitigate the efficiency using AI. We interpreted this to mean that participants may feel more comfortable with the lack of transparency if this efficiency reasoning is clearly outlined.

> *"I would fear that it deters people from making calls."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

Non-emergency

The fact that 101 calls are for non-emergencies also helped participants feel more at ease with the acceptability of this particular use case. In this instance potential confusion or mistakes while the AI was still being developed were seen as less consequential.

However, some contradictions to this were raised when participants considered their personal experiences with call bots. They had many frustrations with the mistakes made on phone calls like these.

> *"That's not my experience. The calls can go on and on. If you don't say the right things that AI can understand you end up going in a circle."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

Functionality

The positivity associated with this particular use case was predicated on the need for assurance that the technology would work reliably. This was the most typical concern given regarding this use case – participant comfort was heavily linked to their faith in the accuracy of AI and technology more broadly. Hence, having the failsafe of being able to talk to a human if needed was non-negotiable.

Participants who had poor prior experience with automated customer service were more likely to be sceptical of the use of AI in this context. They felt that failure of the technology to understand what was being said would only frustrate an already distressed service user and erode faith in the police to do a good job. Similarly, participants felt that some callers would look for comfort from the call handler. Not being able to speak to a human may only make things worse. There was a general feeling that AI simply could not do these tasks as well as a human.

> *"Just another computer. By the time you speak to anyone it's 6-7 mins down the line."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

6.2 AI Call Handling: 999

This use case was defined as AI being used to determine which 101 calls are emergencies and should therefore be transferred to 999. The AI could determine this by taking in environmental cues such as distressed voices or loud noises. It could be used in cases such as when callers are around harm without realising (e.g. at risk of domestic abuse from a partner). Participants were also shown a transcript illustrating what a potential 999 transfer by AI could look like in practice.

This was seen as a complex version from the previous use example as it would involve AI handling high-stakes, emergency scenarios and making judgement calls based on environmental stimuli.

Efficiency

There was a sense that the potential increase in the speed of resolution was a major strength given the urgent nature of the calls. Participants who were more familiar with AI and put more trust in it had more faith in the functionality.

> *"The thing about 999 calls, that's basically happening at first point of contact. So, for me that should be most acceptable because the quicker it gets you to a place you want to go... "*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 4*

Functionality in emergency situations

Initial views on using AI to transfer 101 calls to 999 were far more negative than AI being used solely for 101 calls. Participants still held similar optimism for the potential for greater efficiency within the police and for faster response rates for service users. However, the fact that calls being answered in this instance are emergencies meant that participants put even more weight on the need for it to function perfectly.

> *"[There needs to be] a good system in place in the first place to identify an emergency."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 3*

Participants felt that there was more potential for things to go very wrong given the high pressure, high stakes nature of 999 emergencies.

> *"The scary bit for me is if AI misunderstands it and transfers you to someone else. Could be a waste of time but seems that it is saving time. I think we would just have to try it, but I'm not sure how to do this without putting someone at risk."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 4*

Lack of human nuance

There was scepticism among participants about whether AI would be able to understand subtlety and nuance in the same way that a human handler should be able to. Participants who worried about this pointed out that callers under duress may opt to talk in code or have a more agitated tone of voice – they lacked faith in AI being able to pick this up.

> *"It lacks the ability to fully understand human distress, urgency, or lack of."*
>
> *London, Workshop 3*

Furthermore, participants thought background noises such as gunshots and other commotion would be easily picked up by a human, but had little faith that AI would be able to do the same thing. They feared the AI could make a mistake or even "hallucinate" risks that aren't there. Given the high-stakes nature of the calls, risks like these were considered unacceptable.

> *"If I was ringing 999 and my brother was playing on GTA or something, how would AI know this? A computer game is realistic sounding."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 4*

Accountability

Participants raised lots of questions around accountability around this use case, as they did with the others. As noted in the examples above, there was a general perception among participants that this service would not operate perfectly all the time. Therefore, they wanted to know who would be held responsible if mistakes are made – for example, the police or the company providing the service. It was important that this should be made clear if this service was introduced.

> *"I am less comfortable with the call handling of 111 calls because it just takes one call to go wrong if they were too slow forwarding them to 999. Also, if time was wasted or if AI had difficulty picking up on the voice, then who would be held responsible if something goes wrong."*
>
> *London, Workshop 4*

6.3 What do participants want for these use cases?

Participants were broadly supportive of the use of AI to answer 101 calls, particularly having heard about the positive impacts it had for West Midlands Police. However, they were far less comfortable about AI being trusted to transfer 101 calls to 999. In both instances, several caveats were provided that would make both use cases more acceptable.

Participants felt uncomfortable with the idea of AI making a decision (for instance, whether the call was an emergency or not) without human oversight. There was broad agreement that if this service was to be implemented there would have to be consistent consultations of service user experiences and checks done on the accuracy of the AI.

> *"It is important that AI is a tool used to support officers, not make the decisions for them. It should be an aid to help these people who are making these difficult decisions, it shouldn't just take over these decisions."*
>
> *London, Workshop 4*

As mentioned previously, it was vitally important to participants that service users should always have the option to talk to a human call handler if they chose

to do so. This would solve issues around difficulties understanding accents, those who are less 'tech savvy', and instances where callers needed the comfort of real human interactions.

> *"I don't think I am comfortable with using AI for the 101 calls because when you are needing help you should speak to a person."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 4*

Especially in the instance of AI being used to transfer 101 calls to 999, a lot of weight was placed on the need for the service to work perfectly. Therefore, participants argued that any attempt to implement this service should require a trial period where the technology would be closely overseen by humans and that the standards for it to pass the trial should be very high. Participants felt that this technology was still its infancy and, while it may be improving quickly, there was a worry that details would slip through the cracks and lead to costly errors.

> *"Like they're doing it with 101s in my county. And I'm sure they wouldn't roll. In any case they would roll it very slowly. It would be chaos. It would have problems."*
>
> *London, Workshop 4*

Finally, a consistent theme running through this use case, as with the others, is that people should not lose their jobs because of this technology. Saved resources should be reinvested into upskilling or making jobs easier elsewhere. It should not be an excuse to cut funding from the police service more broadly.

> *"Even when it's up and running, it's there to enhance police work and it's not there to replace it. It will never replace it, it will work in conjunction with humans. It will take a lot of the pressure off if it's used correctly"*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 4*

7. Use case: Predictive Policing

Key findings

The basic use case (predicting crime hot spots) was defined as using AI to create "heat maps" which predict when and where crime might happen. The complex use case (predicting reoffending) was defined as AI being used to predict the likelihood of someone reoffending.

Basic use case:

- *Optimism around the suggested public safety benefits of predicting hot spots was predicated on the need for rigorous oversight to mitigate against risks.*
- *Participants were particularly concerned about the potential for further reinforcing perceived existing police bias against some communities.*

Complex use case:

- *There were also pronounced concerns around the perceived authoritarian implications of this use, embodied in participants' questions around whether predicting reoffending removes the autonomy of offenders to be rehabilitated.*

Both use cases:

- *Overall, participants were the least supportive of the use case. Associations with authoritarianism resulted in discomfort – participants were particularly uncomfortable with the idea of AI making decisions that could have severely negative impacts (i.e. longer prison time) on human lives. This was seen as not worth the positive trade-offs of potentially lower criminal activity.*

Participants were introduced to predictive policing, with predicting crime hot spots as an initial basic use case in Workshop 2, and predicting reoffending as the complex version, in Workshop 3.

7.1 Predicting policing: Predicting crime hot spots

This basic use case was defined as using AI to gather information and previous crime hot spots to develop patterns to create "heat maps" which predict when and where crime might happen. Participants were given an example of an AI programme used in the U.S called Geolitica (previously PredPol), which used heat maps to track where crime was likely to be and published this on social media to keep the public updated. It works by gathering historic data, such as old crime reports, alongside live data such as social media posts, weather information, 911 calls and traffic reports, to produce a map that shows areas where crime is predicted to occur throughout the day.

Impact on communities

In their initial reactions participants felt that, if used properly, this could lead to more effective policing and, therefore, safer communities. They saw the benefits in terms of better allocation of police resources, which they felt could lead to a multitude of positive outcomes, such as more convictions for criminals. They felt that the supporting information explaining predictive policing gave them a good indication of the right way to use it, and how it could solve resourcing issues.

> *"I think as a whole picture, it's great and is going to lead to greater convictions."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

In further discussions with one another, participants also delved into how it could assuage some of the current concerns around an under-resourced police force. They felt it could improve community outreach if used in the right way. This meant ensuring this measure doesn't lead to over-policing, but rather just puts the police where they're needed most in the community.

> *"Police patrolling areas proactively… Good relationship with the community."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 2*

Finally, they also felt that this combination of more convictions and better community outreach would ultimately lead to the public feeling safer. They felt more visible police presence could have a positive effect. Participants who felt negatively about the police in terms of their lack of presence, tended to feel positively about this use case, as they felt it could improve the police resourcing and counter their concerns about the lack of police on the streets.

> *"It's [got to] make locals feel safe... I would prefer (more of) a police presence."*
>
> *London, Workshop 2*

Stigmatisation

Participants were very concerned about the potential for predictive policing to lead to the stigmatisation of communities by branding them as crime "hot spots". This came up spontaneously but was also was emphasised when participants were prompted with the risk of over-policing. They suggested that in communities which already have strained relationships with the police, being branded a crime hot spot and sending more police forces there would only worsen these relationships.

> *"Bad relationship with the community, thinking of the biases and targeting the minority communities. It's over-policing in certain areas."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 2*

Most participants who raised the issue made reference to sharing characteristics or backgrounds with those at risk of over-policing. For example, being a person of colour and having concerns about over-policing in Black communities. As they raised these points during deliberations, other participants often agreed and added this to their list of negatives for this use case. Though there was some pushback from participants who were more optimistic about the way this use case might operate. They tried to reassure others that the data would be based on fact and therefore would not ingrain bias.

> *"As a woman of colour it worries me. You need to make sure that they aren't targeting minority areas, or training AI on biased data. For example, the black community could be targeted because of pre-existing stereotypes."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

This discussion raised concerns among participants about what data AI is trained on. Those most concerned about this worried that police data may carry a racial bias, particularly in the case of stop-and-search data. Therefore, they questioned whether using AI would simply ingrain this bias further, rather than negating human bias. This was used as a counterpoint to those who noted that this use case would be free of bias due to being based on factual data. This was raised most strongly in London.

> *"Feeling discriminated against. If I see the police in my area, I'm more likely to feel shocked, what's going on?"*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

Impact on local area

Participants also raised concerns around the other ways the stigmatisation of certain areas could impact the community. There was concern regarding the impact it could have on housing prices, tourism, and the general reputation of the area. This was often brought up by participants who lived in an area they thought might be deemed a hot spot, particularly in Cardiff.

> *"It could distort people's view on an area. What if you were looking to buy a house?"*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

Type of crime

There were some concerns among participants that this use of AI only targets certain types of crime and ignores white collar or financial crimes. It was assumed this method of crime measurement only focussed on crimes like theft, drugs, or violence. There was concern that this would further ingrain class divides, as predictive policing would potentially end up targeting poorer areas.

> *"Would that work with all types of crime as well? Like does that become a class issue, like what happens with things like white collar crime?"*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 2*

Less visibility in non-hot spots

Finally, there were also concerns in the opposite direction to over-policing – that focusing on hot spots could lead to under-policing in some places. Participants from more rural areas were concerned that if police were focussed on high crime areas only, then in more rural areas there would be less visible police presence. This was also compounded with fears that criminals could "game the system" and go to areas where they knew the police were less likely to be.

> *"Will criminals use this to pick their times and read into patterns to conduct crime?"*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

This conversation was brought up more in Cardiff and Durham, where there were more participants from rural areas than there were in London.

7.2 Predictive policing: Predicting reoffending

This complex use case was defined as AI being used to predict the likelihood of someone reoffending, which could then be used to influence decisions around what happens to that person. For example, whether they go to prison, the severity of their punishment, the type of rehabilitation, or what their probation looks like. The AI would use the person's data, such as age, sex, gender, marital status, substance abuse history and criminal record, to predict the chances of them being involved in future criminal activity. Participants were given the example of Correctional Offender Management Profile for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS) in Workshop 3 and 4, an algorithmic tool use in the U.S criminal justice system to assess the risk of reoffending by generating a "risk score".

This was considered a complex version to the predicting crime hot spots use case as this one had AI play a key role in making decisions which would directly impact individuals' lives.

Crime prevention

Those most supportive of this application felt that, if used correctly, it could ensure that the most dangerous criminals are kept off the streets, and those with more capacity for rehabilitation are given an appropriate punishment.

> *"Yes, to enable the sentence or outcome to match the person that commits the crime."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 3*

Support for this use case often came most strongly from participants who felt crime had gotten out of control in some parts of the country. For example, in

Cardiff, there was a sense that children and young people were often committing crime without consequence. These participants felt the police needed to be doing more in terms of stricter rules and consequences for criminals.

> *"At first, I had some sympathy in relation to bias and prejudice, but my own experiences, e.g., Jury service, have taught me that the risk of repeat offences are particularly high."*
>
> *London, Workshop 3*

Therefore, those who found this use case acceptable believed it could work well as a preventative measure, giving offenders the consequence that would likely lead to them committing less crime in the future.

Limiting rehabilitation

Despite the potential for crime prevention, this was, overall, the least acceptable use case to participants, and the one that made them most uncomfortable. Participants widely perceived this use as potentially authoritarian. Some felt it encroached on "dystopian" territory, by taking away people's opportunity to change and rehabilitate, and by reducing behaviour to a number (when thinking about the COMPAS example).

> *"Just because someone committed a crime once… Doesn't mean they'll necessarily do it again."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 4*

AI making decisions and accountability

Participants were particularly uncomfortable with AI making such an important decision that would impact individual lives. They felt this kind of power in decision making was something only a human should be able to have, and using AI in this way risks an over-reliance on it. Alongside this, they also questioned who would be accountable for the decisions made by AI, and what would happen if AI made the wrong decision.

> *"I would have massive worries about accountability if AI was suggesting this, who is going to take ownership if this is not the correct data?"*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 3*

Participants who had questioned the functionality of AI to understand human nuance and empathy in the other use cases, also questioned it in this one. They felt AI didn't have enough human understanding to truly make an informed decision on someone's likelihood to reoffend.

> *"It's potentially the most intrusive, a computer deciding your future... Not all offenders reoffend."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 4*

Bias and racism

Finally, participants felt there were risks in terms of potential bias and racism. Particularly looking at the COMPAS example, where the mistakes made by the AI system seemed to be racially biased (e.g., assuming Black people would reoffend and finding they didn't, assuming White people wouldn't reoffend and finding they did). Those participants most uncomfortable with this use case felt that using AI for predicting reoffending could further perpetuate racial bias that they already perceived to be happening within the police. It linked to the "garbage in/garbage out" arguments, suggesting that racially biased data would be fed in and create a racially biased AI algorithm.

> *"How can it make a judgement on 'scores'? Only the person knows if they are going to reoffend."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 3*

7.3 What do participants want for these use cases?

While there were supporters for both of these predictive use cases, it is important to note that these generated the strongest outright opposition. There were participants who felt that predictive policing shouldn't be used at all, particularly for predicting reoffending. These participants tended to feel negatively about the use case in their initial response and were not swayed throughout the dialogue by the arguments of others.

For those who felt they could support these use cases, there were a few caveats that would make them feel more comfortable with supporting them. The main one was the need for human oversight. Much like the previous use cases, participants were keen to keep a "human in the chain" for utilising AI, to check that AI is functioning as it should. This was particularly important for those who doubted AI's ability to empathise or understand the human nuance participants felt was necessary for making such important decisions. This would help to mitigate fears over an overreliance on AI to make decisions.

> *"I think the human element is really important."*
>
> *Durham, Workshop 4*

To mitigate the risks of over-policing, participants wanted police to be conscious of the risks and ensure that when using AI for predicting hot spots, there would be a proportional response. Participants were wary of police flocking to one spot because the AI told them to, both in terms of worsening relations with overpoliced communities, and in terms of leaving other communities that are deemed "not at risk" vulnerable.

> *"It's a Catch 22 situation, it can predict hot spots but it stigmatises certain areas."*
>
> *Cardiff, Workshop 2*

Finally, to mitigate fears of the AI perpetuating bias and racism, participants felt there needed to be guidelines that outline what data is being used to train AI and how it's being used. These also needed to be transparent and publicly available. They felt that this would ensure the data being put in is high quality, as the police would be held accountable for what data the AI is trained on.

"There needs to be guidelines to ensure quality service."

Durham, Workshop 4

8. Participants' advice to the Home Office and police forces

Key findings

After learning about how AI might be used in policing and deliberating on the implications, participants generated advice for Home Office policy makers and police forces to consider. This advice focused on three key themes:

1. ***Oversight and accountability***
   - *The public should be made aware of how oversight of AI in policing works, who is involved, and what happens when something goes wrong.*
   - *AI should always be coupled with a human overseer.*
   - *AI's performance should be continually monitored.*
   - *The police should maintain high levels of data security – information analysed by AI should be stored safely and securely.*
   - *Use of AI should never have overt political involvement. Nor should accountability be left up to individual police forces, it should be consistent across all forces.*
   - *The police should take into account a range of diverse perspectives and guard against bias.*
2. ***Maximising accuracy and minimising bias***
   - *Both data going in and data coming out should be audited, including training data and outputs.*
   - *The police should sense-check AI against other information – for example, a police officer's personal experiences from engaging with offenders.*
   - *The same systems should be used in the same way across all police forces.*
3. ***Ensuring transparency in implementation***
   - *AI should have a phased introduction to policing, with clear communications to the public about its use.*
   - *The resources saved from using AI should be applied to other aspects of policing – i.e. greater community engagement and more frontline policing.*
   - *There should be consequences for failure, transparency when failures occur, and clear consequences for misuse.*

Over the course of Workshop 4, participants worked to answer the key question: What advice would they give to the Home Office for them to support the use of AI in policing?

In each location, participants generated advice. This was then shared across locations, combined where necessary and prioritised by participants based on their importance. This chapter of the report explores the advice generated. It

focuses on what participants wanted, why it mattered to them, and what impact it might have for AI in policing.

The advice participants shared centred on maximising the strengths and minimising the weaknesses identified in the use case discussions. We identified three key themes that came out of this:

- **Oversight and accountability.** Checking AI is being used appropriately, effectively, and safely.
- **Maximising accuracy and minimising bias.** Ensuring quality data in and out, and delivering consistency across police forces.
- **Ensuring transparency in implementation.** Being open about how AI is being used – both successes and failures.

Participants also raised questions relating to internal police operations, public facing interactions, and issues that straddle both.

This chapter explores each of these in turn.

8.1 Oversight and accountability

There was a guardedness to participants' accepting of AI in policing. They were keen to stress that, despite the promise AI holds, clear oversight and strict accountability are essential to safe and trustworthy use of AI in policing. Participants had unanimous feeling that AI use was inevitable in many aspects of life, and were keen to ensure it was introduced with as much caution as possible. There were four key aspects to oversight that participants emphasised when asked for their advice on the implementation of AI in policing.

- **Openness.** It was widely stressed that the public should be made aware of how oversight of AI in policing works, who is involved, and what happens when something goes wrong. Any perceived lack of openness would undermine trust and create suspicion about why some things are being kept hidden.
- **Human-in-the-chain.** AI should always be coupled with a human supervisor – ideally on a use-by-use basis but, if not, then with someone overseeing specific applications. This role would ensure, they hoped, that AI is used only as a tool to inform human decision making rather than making key decisions itself. This role could also be done by a specified team, rather than one person, but the main stipulation was that this responsibility must be named and made clear.
- **Monitoring.** Continual monitoring of the effectiveness and utility of AI use was also important to ensure that AI continues to deliver on its stated aims.
- **High levels of data security.** Highlighted through the summarising information use case, information being analysed by AI needs to be stored safely and securely. There is a danger that sensitive information could otherwise be used to cause harm to individuals in the event of a leak or

breach. Establishing and enforcing a strict data security regime should sit within an oversight function.

"This will help the public really feel like this has been thought through. Visibility is so important. I want to know what is going on and if the crime rates are actually reduced."

London, Workshop 4

Clearly linked to the need for oversight was participants' emphasis on accountability. Participants felt this was an absolute necessity for the public to accept AI use in policing. There were several important ways that they felt accountability should be delivered. It was important that there is diversity of relevant expertise and experience (including citizen representation) in the body that delivers oversight and accountability. This was vital for ensuring that the oversight body remained independent from any external actors with a vested interest in influencing outcomes and decisions (e.g. private companies or lobby groups).

Participants wanted the body to be both independent and responsible, which is a conflict that will need resolving as policy is developed. Our interpretation of their needs was that they wanted effective oversight, in terms of a body that oversees and holds people to account, and accountability, in terms of who are the named accountable people involved, were crucial to participants. These mean there must be a comprehensive set of checks and balances that ensure AI continues to deliver in the best interests of the public.

- **Named responsibility:** Responsibility should be made manifest in named people and/or organisations being responsible for managing oversight, enforcing rules. It should also be about ensuring accountable people take ownership of mistakes or errors.
- **Political involvement:** Participants were very clear that they did not want overt political involvement – in particular, they did not want politicians being directly involved in accountability and oversight.
- **Police involvement:** When asked about accountability being left up to individual police forces, participants were not supportive of the idea – this would conflict with participants' demand for consistency. If it's run by the police, participants worried that there were risks of bias or even corruption.
- **Expert involvement:** As well as thinking about political and police involvement, participants also wanted to ensure that oversight took into account a range of diverse perspectives and guard against bias. This included experts in AI, but also from a wide range of other fields.
- **Community involvement:** They were also keen to ensure public involvement, especially from communities most impacted by policing. These included group such as Black men, young people, or those living in crime hot spots.

"We need everyone's input, from all walks of life. From normal walks of life. I made the point that a charity board of trustees have experts in finance, marketing, and some lay members."

Durham, Workshop 4

8.2 Maximising accuracy and minimising bias

Fears around AI lacking accuracy due to the data that is inputted into it were consistent throughout the dialogue. There were concerns that the data could be incomplete, low quality, or could inherit bias ingrained within police datasets. Ensuring that AI supports accurate and unbiased decisions underpinned support for its use in policing. Participants wouldn't support AI if it couldn't prove its promised functionality.

"The data we input is so crucial because if you put in incorrect information then AI will predict incorrectly."

London, Workshop 4

They suggested three key ways of delivering accuracy.

- **Auditing data in and out**: All data being used by AI – including the data it has been trained on – should be audited for quality. As should all outputs. This will, participants felt, minimise the risk of "hallucinations" and bias. Ensuring adequate processes are in place for this sort of auditing was a key factor in participants' enthusiasm for trialling all uses before committing to them.
- **Minimising bias:** Participants suggested that bias can be mitigated by AI-generated actions being sense-checked against other information – for example, a police officer's personal experiences from engaging with offenders and communities. There was a sense that AI outputs based purely on past data of criminal convictions may not be sophisticated or nuanced enough to identify changes to an offender's behaviour. Therefore, actively interrogating AI outputs for potential bias, supported by officers who have more time to engage with and understand the communities they serve, could minimise the risk of bias.
- **Consistency:** It was clear throughout the dialogue that participants were concerned about the risk of inconsistent use of AI across police forces. This, participants felt, introduced unfairness to the system though different actions being taken in ostensibly similar situations depending on geography. It would make some forces less effective and less efficient than others. So there was a strong belief that the same systems should be used in the same way across all police forces – further emphasising the importance of clear and coherent oversight.

"Everyone has to be on the same system because they really need to make sure that AI is being summarised the same for all police forces. You can't have some places not bothering using AI for some crime reports for example."

London, Workshop 4

8.3 Ensuring transparency in implementation

Participants wanted AI to be implemented as transparently as possible. They felt it was important that the public are kept in the know about how AI is being trialled, what works, what doesn't work, and ultimately how it is then being used by police. This was felt particularly strongly by participants who felt uninformed about AI and the police, and felt there was little public trust in the police. The concept of policing by consent was brought up often when discussing transparency.

"I would say that the whole purpose of this is to improve things, and the resource saved is applied elsewhere – The net of this is that you have an approved policing system overall."

Durham, Workshop 4

There were three broad aspects to the transparency participants wanted:

- **Phased introduction with clear communications.** AI should not be introduced without being trialled to ensure it works as intended and improves policing. The public should be consulted in its introduction. and be part of any ongoing oversight infrastructure.
- **Applying saved resources to other aspects of policing.** Participants were adamant that any efficiency savings generated should allow resources to meet other perceived needs – in particular, greater community engagement and more frontline policing. Similarly, in the context of the rising cost of living, where stable employment is vital Furthermore, if resources are being reallocated, participants wanted this information to be shared with the public for scrutiny.
- **Consequences for failure:** Given the perceived high-risk nature of some uses of AI – in particular, though not exclusively, predicting reoffending – participants wanted there to be transparency when failures occur and clear consequences for misuse. This again demonstrates the clear advice from our participants that the public should be made aware of what AI is being used for, who is using it, and what the outcomes are.

  "I think we should start small too because once we invest too much into it then police will be hesitant to go back to not using AI. But if we start small, we can assess how useful AI actually is."

  London, Workshop 4

8.4 Other issues to address in order for AI use to be acceptable

As noted above, alongside the key three themes of advice participants gave the Home Office and police forces (oversight/accountability, accuracy/bias, transparency), there were also some further considerations participants brought up in their advice. These don't fit into the three key themes. But they were emphasised by participants and are therefore outlined here as other considerations the Home Office should have when developing policy for AI in policing.

Internal police operations

- **Buy-in.** Participants asked whether police buy-in had been obtained for the use of AI in their day-to-day work. There was a recognition of the value of this type of engagement with the public and there was a feeling that a similar exercise should be conducted with the police as their consent should not be assumed. From an institutional perspective, participants asked whether savings made from the implementation of AI would result in the police budget being cut further as operating costs shrink. Participants wanted to know what motivation the police had to act in good faith and cooperate in AI's implementation.
- **No job losses.** If jobs are to be lost due to the implementation of AI, participants wanted to know if workforce would be entitled to compensation. There was a strong sense that no one should lose out due to AI being implemented.
- **Over-dependence.** Building on concerns over trust, there were fears that police would become over-dependent on AI. The prospect of further budgetary squeezes led participants to raise the possibility that police could become dependent out of necessity.

  "It's a concern that maybe some police forces might try to drag their feet for all sorts of reasons, inherent hostility that needs change or logic constraints."

  London, Workshop 4

Public-facing interactions

- **Clear explanation and comms.** Participants felt that there should be some reframing of the communications around AI to reduce confusion or undue negative connotations. There should be more specificity when referring to different types of AI in policing, as the perceived differences between the gravity of predictive policing and AI summaries, for example, could result in misplaced outrage from the public if misinterpreted.
- **Data ownership and consent.** Questions were raised about ownership of data and what consent looks like in this context: Would police have to get consent from individuals and/or communities to use and access data?

Can the public opt out of their data being used? Participants felt this was important in the context of policing by consent.

- **Platform provider responsibility.** Participants felt that responsibility in instances of failure should not automatically lie with the public sector. There was a recognition that the private sector would have to be brought in to facilitate implementation, but they felt that this should come with a level of shared responsibility as well.
- **AI open to challenge.** Finally, there was a strong sense, particularly among those with low trust in police, that those accused of crimes in which AI is part of the investigation should be able to challenge the findings of AI via a formal process. Furthermore, warnings were raised that if there was not a robust system of accountability and if the implementation of this technology resulted in the erosion of rights, there is a risk of violent protest from the public.

"The word AI just covers so many different things, it covers robotic… But here it's data input."

Cardiff, Workshop 4

Broader questions

- **Environmental impact.** The environment was an issue that was not front of mind for many participants initially. But when others brought it up, there was a general recognition that the energy-intensive nature of AI use should be considered. Participants wanted to know what action would be taken to minimise the impact of increased energy use due to AI.
- **Where AI is based.** In terms of data storage, participants felt that there were no obvious UK-based options for companies that could facilitate the implementation of this service for the police. However, participants did not feel comfortable with their data being processed and stored by foreign companies based in the US and China (for example).
- **Institutional responsibility.** Related to the key theme of oversight and accountability, some participants didn't feel convinced that there would be true accountability for "higher ups" in instances of failure. Instead, there was a pessimistic view that there would instead be a token 'fall guy' that would get the blame. This illustrates an underlying lack of faith in institutional accountability. Participants holding these views were most strongly convinced of the need for external, independent oversight.

"We all know it's just going to be some fall guy. It's never going to be someone high up or they'll take him from one job and put them in a higher job."

Cardiff, Workshop 4

9. Conclusions

From our analysis of the four workshops, we drew five key conclusions about how participants felt about AI and policing:

- **Inevitability**: People are aware that AI is happening in a variety of ways across society. They feel its use in most sectors is an inevitability. It seems obvious to people that it will be used – in some form – by the police.
- **Potential**: They are optimistic about AI's potential. While they have concerns, there is little firm opposition at this stage provided caveats are taken into consideration.
- **Efficiency and resource allocation**: Participants are impressed at the speed at which AI could accomplish tasks and the time it could free up to put more police on the street. They're hopeful about how AI could solve current resourcing problems within the police.
- **Reducing human error**: Participants acknowledged that human error is inevitable in any job, and effective use of AI in policing could minimise this. It could also minimise deliberate human error (e.g. corruption).
- **Prevention rather than reaction**: AI use was seen as a potentially powerful preventative measure. It could ensure police are addressing the causes of crime through predicting reoffending or through quicker crime solving. Participants were hopeful this would improve safety.

There are important contingencies

However, any support for AI in policing is guarded – it's contingent on several factors raised by the participants which underpin acceptability:

- **Proving that it works:** AI needs to demonstrate that it lives up to the claims made and can stand up to more complex uses. This is particularly true for what are perceived as "human" skills, such as empathy. Performance and impact should be continually monitored.
- **Human oversight is key:** Human involvement through oversight and safeguarding is essential to public trust. This means human-in-the-chain, data auditing, and clear accountability – including owning up to mistakes when they happen.
- **It can't just be about cost-saving:** Time and resources saved by AI use must be applied elsewhere, i.e. enabling police to do community outreach. Job losses and cuts are unacceptable and will reduce support for AI use.
- **Avoiding over-reliance:** There were persistent worries about creating an over-reliance on AI – participants were concerned with the possibility of a lack of human-in-the-chain or human oversight.
- **Be alert to wider impacts:** The wider effects of AI (e.g., predictive policing on housing prices) need to be assessed and monitored as they have the potential to undermine public trust in AI and in the police more broadly.

Necessities for implementation

Based on analysis, we found participants consistently raised three things they felt would be crucial for the public to support the implementation of AI in policing:

- **Clear and effective oversight:** This means checking that AI is being used appropriately, effectively, and safely. There should be clear sanctions for when things go wrong, such as when people misuse the AI or make mistakes.
- **Maximise accuracy and minimise bias:** The public need assurances about the quality of data going into and coming out of AI, including training data. This needs to be monitored and evaluated. It also means delivering consistency across police forces.
- **Ensure meaningful transparency:** Being open about how AI is being used – both successes and failures – is essential to public trust. This means being clear on where AI is based and who providers are. It also means that the public need to know when and how AI is being used in policing.

10. Appendix list

10.1 Headline survey results

Headline results from the 1000-person survey which informed the deliberation design

10.2 Use case materials

The use cases:

- Ai handling 101 calls
- AI transferring 101 calls to 999
- Predictive policing: hot spots
- Predictive policing: predicting reoffending
- AI summarising information
- AI summarising sensitive information

For each use case:

- Description
- Potential benefits and risks
- Example of use

10.3 Video content

Videos used during the deliberation to share information with participants

- Jack Shea – Call handling
- Christophe Prince – Predictive policing
- Justin Norris – Summarising data
- Steve Barnabis – Young people and AI in policing
- Ellen Lefley – Accuracy, bias and police accountability

Further details and materials from this project are available upon request to the Home Office. Please contact the Policy & Innovation Lab (CoLab), at colab@digital.homeoffice.gov.uk.