

## **Findings and Discussion – Supplement to *Virtues in Policing* Research Report**

The survey included six bespoke designed ethical dilemmas that were drawn from the experiences and knowledge of the expert panel. This supplementary section to the research report shall provide a brief analysis of the remaining four dilemmas.

### **Ethical Dilemma 2: A potential suicide**

The second ethical dilemma presented to respondents was set out as follows:

You and your colleague are on routine patrol when you receive a call asking you to attend a property because neighbours have reported there is a person with mental health issues threatening to kill herself. The call room have also informed you that the Mental Health Team are also on their way to the address.

When you arrive, the Mental Health Team are already there. They inform you that the person is known to them and that threats to kill herself are part of her pattern of behaviour. According to the Mental Health Team, she does it for attention, and has never actually hurt herself physically before. You enter the premises and engage with the 19-year-old female. Having spoken with her and seen her distress, you and your colleague believe that the minute you walk away the female will attempt to take her own life.

The Mental Health Team, on assessing the risk being posed by the woman, determine that remaining with her is encouraging her behaviour, decide to leave the premises and suggest that you do too. You radio into the Duty Sergeant to provide an update. The Sergeant informs you that you should leave as responsibility for further action lies with the Mental Health Team, and that you are putting your colleagues under pressure as they are dealing with other challenging cases and require your help. What would you do?

Respondents were then asked to select one of the following options:

1. Leave the female in order to go and support your colleagues, even though you believe she will attempt to take her own life.
2. Stay and support the female until she can be taken to a place of safety.

Depending on the option selected by respondents, they were presented with six reasons that might justify their selection for the chosen course of action, and were asked to rank their top

three reasons in order of appropriateness. These options are presented in Table 1 along with the code for moral reasoning (which, importantly, was not displayed in the survey and has only been utilized for analysis purposes).

**Table 1: Moral Reasoning Response Justifications for Ethical Dilemma 2: A Potential Suicide**

Response Justification	Option 1: You choose to leave the female to go and support your colleagues, even though you believe she will attempt to take her own life.	Option 2: You stay and support the female until she can be taken to a place of safety.	Ethical Key
1	You consider loyalty to your colleagues to be one of your character strengths, and it takes priority here.	The overriding duty of a police officer is to save lives, and you can potentially save one life at this moment in time.	Deontological
2	You consider trust to be an important virtue in policing, and you want to maintain the trust that has been built up through time between you and your superiors.	You need to act on your concerns about the woman's threat to kill herself, and in this case the need to care for her trumps any other concerns.	Virtue Ethical
3	You will be accepted as a team player and 'one of them' by your colleagues if you obey the command.	It will enhance your self-esteem to deal with this important issue rather than getting embroiled in other typical night-	Consequentialist Self-Serving

		time disorders with your colleagues.	
4	It is not your place to make decisions contrary to the Duty Sergeant's instructions.	You empathise with the woman, for if you had a friend or family member with mental health concerns, you would not want them to be abandoned in similar circumstances.	Virtue Ethical
5	Your priority must be to ensure the safety of the police officers you work alongside so that they are able to continue serving the needs of the public.	You think to the overall consequences. You may prevent one death by staying and it is unlikely that the other officers are in a life-threatening situation.	Consequentialist Utilitarian
6	According to codes of practice, Mental Health Teams should take ultimate responsibility for their patients.	As a police officer, you rely on the Code of Ethics, and your understanding is that the Code foregrounds your duty to members of the public first and foremost.	Deontological
Cohort 1 Response	22.7%	77.3%	
Cohort 2 Response	22.2%	77.8%	
Cohort 3 Response	27.5%	72.5%	
Overall Response	25.5%	74.5%	

**Table 2: Distribution of reasons - Dilemma 2<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Option 1</b>	<b>%</b>	
Virtue ethical	5,2	18.1
Virtue ethical	12,9	
Deontological	20,4	60.8
Deontological	40,4	
Consequentialist utilitarian	21	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Option 2</b>	<b>%</b>	
Virtue ethical	30,5	39.2
Virtue ethical	8,7	
Deontological	36,6	52.2
Deontological	15,6	
Consequentialist self-serving	0,2	8.5
Consequentialist utilitarian	8,3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 1 illustrates that the response option 1 was selected by 25.5% of respondents, and option 2 was selected by 74.5% of respondents. Cohorts 1 and 2 were slightly more inclined to select response option 2 than cohort 3. As Table 2 indicates, more than half of respondents prefer deontological reasoning for both response option 1 (60.8%) and 2 (52.2%). For response option 1, 21% of respondents selected utilitarian reasoning (note that there were zero preferences for the self-serving response option), and 18.1% of respondents selected virtue ethical reasoning.

### **Ethical Dilemma 3: Racism at work**

The third ethical dilemma presented to respondents was set out as follows:

You work in a police response unit. A new female student officer of South Asian heritage joins your team under the degree holder's entry programme. Whilst you are alone with a close and experienced white, male colleague, he refers to the new officer and comments, 'I bet her parents are disappointed she's a copper. A Paki with a degree; there's not many of them - she should have done Law and become a lawyer, or Finance and been an accountant'. You have never previously heard your colleague

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<sup>1</sup> Consequentialist self-serving reasoning for option 1 received zero preferences and therefore is not presented in Table 2.

express views like this and have worked alongside him for a number of years. What would you do?

Respondents were then asked to select one of the following options:

1. Have a private word and challenge what your colleague said, explaining that it is offensive and unacceptable.
2. Speak to your supervisor (Sergeant) and formally report your colleague's conduct.

Depending on the option selected by respondents, they were presented with six reasons that might justify their selection for the chosen course of action, and were asked to rank their top three reasons in order of appropriateness. These options are presented in Table 3 along with the code for moral reasoning.

**Table 3: Moral Reasoning Response Justifications for Ethical Dilemma 3: Racism at Work**

Response Justification	Option 1: Have a private word and challenge what your colleague said, explaining that it is offensive and unacceptable.	Option 2: Speak to your supervisor (Sergeant) and formally report your colleague's conduct.	Ethical Key
1	You believe in the moral rule that you should treat others (in this case your colleagues) like you would want them to treat you.	Bringing the matter to the attention of a supervisor is the right thing to do, so that the conduct can be addressed at a managerial level.	Deontological
2	Your colleague might take more notice with you speaking to him	You empathise with the new female officer. You wouldn't	Virtue Ethical

	privately and it's more considerate and empathetic than reporting the matter to your Sergeant.	want to be spoken about like that by a colleague.	
3	You choose to deal with the matter without reporting it to a supervisor because you fear the wider team might isolate you for whistleblowing on a colleague.	As someone who is prepared to report issues of misconduct, it will benefit your future career.	Consequentialist Self-Serving
4	Your own personal values dictate that you directly and immediately try to help your colleague improve his behaviour, regardless of any written Code of Ethics.	You think it is important for police officers to be able to trust each other and work closely together, particularly in dangerous or difficult circumstances. Your colleague's conduct erodes trust, which you consider an important virtue.	Virtue Ethical
5	You believe that what was said is 'out of character' and you consider it in everybody's best interest that you address a serious issue without damaging	You want to prevent potentially harmful consequences to local communities, where race relations between different groups can often be tense. If your colleague can speak about another officer	Consequentialist Utilitarian

	your colleague's career.	in this way, then how might he treat members of the public?	
6	You decide that the right thing to do would be to find out why your colleague spoke in such a way, before taking any further action, as you have a collegial duty towards him.	Under the Police Code of Ethics, police officers must challenge and report improper behaviour because they have a duty to treat everyone with dignity and respect, to act with fairness and impartiality, and not to discriminate unlawfully or unfairly. It's your duty to report matters to the Sergeant.	Deontological
Cohort 1 Response	60.9%	39.1%	
Cohort 2 Response	57.1%	42.9%	
Cohort 3 Response	62.7%	37.3%	
Overall Response	61.4%	38.6%	

**Table 4: Distribution of reasons – Dilemma 3<sup>2</sup>**

Option 1	%	
Virtue ethical	24,6	38,9
Virtue ethical	14,3	
Deontological	14,6	40,9
Deontological	26,3	
Consequentialist utilitarian	18,1	20,2

<sup>2</sup> Consequentialist self-serving reasoning for option 1 received zero preferences and therefore is not presented in Table 2.

Consequentialist self-serving	2,1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Option 2</b>	<b>%</b>	
Virtue ethical	6,5	19,8
Virtue ethical	13,3	
Deontological	39,9	61,9
Deontological	22,0	
Consequentialist utilitarian	18,3	18,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

As illustrated in Table 3, 61.4% of respondents overall selected response option 1, choosing rather to have a private word and challenge what their colleague said, with 38,6% choosing to speak with their supervisor and report it formally. The moral reasoning most frequently selected by respondents for both response options, as indicated by Table 4, was deontological. However, the deontological reasoning for Option 1 was closely followed by virtue ethical reasoning (40.9% and 38.9% respectively). Option 2 elicited a particularly high deontological justification from respondents, with 61.9% overall. The deontological justifications included (i) ‘Bringing the matter to the attention of a supervisor is the right thing to do, so that the conduct can be addressed at a managerial level’ (22%), and (ii) ‘Under the Police Code of Ethics, police officers must challenge and report improper behaviour because they have a duty to treat everyone with dignity and respect, to act with fairness and impartiality, and not to discriminate unlawfully or unfairly. It’s your duty to report matters to the Sergeant’ (39.9%). This is a reminder that deontological justifications do not need to refer to written laws only but can also build on moral rules or principles that individuals set themselves or which are derived from profession-specific ethical codes and norms.

#### **Ethical Dilemma 4: Work and personal life conflict**

The fourth ethical dilemma presented to respondents was set out as follows:

You are off duty and at home with your partner, preparing for your five-year-old child's birthday party later that day. You have been working long hours recently, which has created tension at home, and the birthday party represents much-needed family time. You receive a phone call from a senior officer at your police station, requesting that you attend immediately for duty. A public disorder is taking place, linked to a high profile football match and additional



officers are required to deal with the trouble. You know that you can be ordered to return to duty, although this is unusual on a rest day. If you decide to return to duty, you will miss the party, and further strain your family relationships. If you don't return to duty without good reason, it might compromise your career. What would you do?

Respondents were then asked to select one of the following options:

1. Agree to attend for duty and miss the party.
2. Refuse the request to return to duty and if pressed by your senior officer, be prepared to tell a 'white lie' that you are feeling unwell and would have to report sick.

Depending on the option selected by respondents, they were presented with six reasons that might justify their selection for the chosen course of action, and were asked to rank their top three reasons in order of appropriateness. These options are presented in Table 5 along with the code for moral reasoning (which, importantly, was not displayed in the survey and has only been utilized for analysis purposes).

**Table 5: Moral Reasoning Response Justifications for Ethical Dilemma 4: Work and Personal Life Conflict**

Response Justification	Option 1: You agree to attend for duty and miss the party.	Option 2: You choose to refuse the request to return to duty and, if pressed by your senior officer, you are prepared to tell a 'white lie' that you are feeling unwell and would have to report sick.	Ethical Key
1	Police officers have a duty to protect the public regardless of personal interests.	You do not think that telling a white lie about being poorly in order to attend the party violates the	Deontological

		current Code of Ethics.	
2	You expect effective teamworking between fellow officers to be everyone's priority.	You view this as a choice between your personal and professional virtues, and in this case you feel that the personal ones should have priority.	Virtue Ethical
3	Attending for duty will impress your senior officer and may enhance your career prospects.	It's better to be at the birthday party. Your child will remember if you miss it and might not forgive you.	Consequentialist Self-Serving
4	Whilst you feel personally conflicted, you are responsible for upholding the law. You knew this dilemma could arise when you chose to join the police force, and missing family events is, unfortunately, bound to happen.	Love and care of close ones are the values central to human life.	Virtue Ethical
5	Agreeing to return to duty means receiving overtime payments. You can always make it up to your family later by treating them, so it is best for	You don't think that just refusing the request is sufficient, so to lie about feeling unwell will give you an excuse not to attend. This is	Consequentialist Utilitarian

	everyone involved if you agree to go.	justifiable as there will be other officers willing to be re-called to duty, so you won't be missed, and the overall outcome will be positive.	
6	You believe in being loyal to the police force, so will make yourself available when called upon.	You think there should be a clause in the Police Code of Ethics about the duties of police officers towards their families; you are a great believer in rules, but they must be fair.	Deontological
Cohort 1 Response	86.4%	13.6%	
Cohort 2 Response	85.7%	14.3%	
Cohort 3 Response	80.6%	19.4%	
Overall Response	83.0%	17.0%	

**Table 6: Distribution of reasons – Dilemma 4**

<b>Option 1</b>	<b>%</b>	
Deontological	30,8	41.7
Deontological	10,9	
Virtue ethical	9,2	52.7
Virtue ethical	43,5	
Consequentialist self-serving	0,3	5.5
Consequentialist utilitarian	5,2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Option 2</b>	<b>%</b>	
Deontological	1,3	22
Deontological	20,7	
Virtue ethical	34,2	62.5

Virtue ethical	28,3	
Consequentialist self-serving	8,9	15.5
Consequentialist utilitarian	6,6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 5 illustrates that response option 1 was selected by 83.0% of respondents, and option 2 was selected by 17.0% of respondents, overall. Cohorts 1 and 2 were slightly more inclined to select response option 1 than cohort 3. This pattern of closely corresponding selections among cohort 1 and 2, and a slight difference with cohort 3, is a pattern observed with all six dilemmas. As Table 6 indicates, virtue ethical reasoning dominated in both response option 1 and 2, followed by deontological reasoning and then consequentialist reasoning. It is worth noting that, for response option 2, of those police officers who would refuse to attend for duty, over 60% of them would be driven by virtue ethical reasons to do so.

### **Ethical Dilemma 5: Community ‘Stop and Search’**

The fifth ethical dilemma presented to respondents was set out as follows:

You and a colleague are called to attend an area where residents have been complaining about groups of young people gathering, with allegations of anti-social behaviour and drug taking. Police intelligence indicates that this area is a hot spot for drug dealing activity.

There are several calls received each week by neighbours with these allegations, but in previous cases involving Stop and Search procedures no drugs have been found. Every Stop and Search that was undertaken has resulted in complaints from the young people and their parents, and attracted adverse attention from local media and the wider community. Several of your colleagues have been the subject of these complaints and you have witnessed the distress that investigation has had on them and their families. As a result, the morale within your police team is low. Your Sergeant has instructed that he does not want his team doing any more Stop and Searches until 'the heat is off him' from his bosses.

At the scene, you can clearly smell cannabis and you see other drug paraphernalia discarded nearby. One of the neighbours who made the complaint arrives on the scene, insisting you undertake Stop and Search interventions. Your colleague does not want to Stop and Search, while you wonder if it is the right thing to do in order to deal with the issue properly. What would you do?

Respondents were then asked to select one of the following options:

1. Undertake the Stop and Search.
2. Not undertake the Stop and Search and diffuse the situation by another means.

Depending on the option selected by respondents, they were presented with six reasons that might justify their selection for the chosen course of action, and were asked to rank their top three reasons in order of appropriateness. These options are presented in Table 7 along with the code for moral reasoning (which, importantly, was not displayed in the survey and has only been utilized for analysis purposes).

**Table 7: Moral Reasoning Response Justifications for Ethical Dilemma 5: Community Stop and Search**

Response Justification	Option 1: You choose to undertake the Stop and Search.	Option 2: You decide not to undertake the Stop and Search and diffuse the situation by another means.	Ethical Key
1	It is your fundamental duty as a police officer to prevent crime.	You are mindful of instructions from a recent training course you attended about how crucial it is to maintain good relations and not jeopardise future relations between young people and the police.	Deontological
2	You care strongly about this community, and the neighbours	You have a strong sense of loyalty to your colleagues not to	Virtue Ethical

	deserve a better quality of life.	create further distress to them by incurring more complaints from the public about Stop and Search.	
3	You want to maintain autonomy in your role and think that this will enhance your professional image and reputation as an independent decision maker.	You want to be well-liked by your Sergeant and colleagues and be seen as one of the team.	Consequentialist Self-Serving
4	You feel a lot of compassion for the young people involved and you want to prevent them harming themselves further from engaging in drug taking or dealing.	You have a strong sense of compassion towards the young people in this crime-ridden neighbourhood and do not want them to feel targeted.	Virtue Ethical
5	Conducting a Stop and Search may stop the young people gathering and engaging in drug taking, hence limiting future criminal activity.	The number of complaints about Stop and Search will be reduced, thus improving the morale of the police team and reducing tensions within the neighbourhood.	Consequentialist Utilitarian
6	According to your understanding of the Police Code of Ethics, conducting a Stop and	You consider it a breach of good police principles to target these young people, as	Deontological

	Search is the right thing to do in this situation.	previous Stop and Searches have not revealed drugs.	
Cohort 1 Response	69.1%	30.9%	
Cohort 2 Response	69.0%	31.0%	
Cohort 3 Response	84.2%	15.8%	
Overall Response	78.2%	21.8%	

**Table 8: Distribution of reasons – Dilemma 5**

Option 1	%	
Virtue ethical	15,9	25
Virtue ethical	9,1	
Deontological	34,5	57.5
Deontological	23	
Consequentialist utilitarian	15,3	17.4
Consequentialist self-serving	2,1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	
Option 2	%	
Virtue ethical	12,6	25.8
Virtue ethical	13,2	
Deontological	32,8	58.6
Deontological	25,8	
Consequentialist utilitarian	15,4	15.7
Consequentialist self-serving	0,3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 7 illustrates that the response option 1 was selected by 78.2% of respondents, and option 2 was selected by 21.8% of respondents, overall. Cohorts 1 and 2 were slightly more inclined to select response option 2 than cohort 3. The difference between the response options for cohort 1 and 2, and the response options for cohort 3, are most noticeable for this ethical dilemma. Sensitivities around ‘Stop and Search’, particularly along racial lines, may be a contributing factor to the difference in response options between the pre- and in-service police officers. Although this is only speculation, it is possible that pre-service officers (i.e. Cohort 1 and 2) are more sensitive and aware of this perception, or have been encouraged to reflect on

it in their education and training programmes. As Table 8 indicates, more than half of respondents selected deontological reasoning for both response option 1 (57.5%) and 2 (58.6%), followed by virtue ethical reasoning and then consequentialist reasoning.