



An evidence-informed synthesis of continuing professional development needs and practices in relation to wellbeing, resilience, and retention within Police Scotland

SIPR | Scottish Institute
for Policing Research

Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Authors

Prof. Kirsteen Grant is Professor of Human Resource Management (HRM) at Edinburgh Napier University. She is also an Associate Director of the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR).

Dr. Britta Philp (nee Heidl) is Lecturer in Leadership Practice at Edinburgh Napier University.

Prof. David McGuire is Professor of Human Resource Development and Head of the HRM Subject Group at Edinburgh Napier University.

Dr. W. Bradley Cotton is Lecturer in Organisational Studies, University of Edinburgh. He is a former Police Sergeant with nearly three decades of frontline policing experience.

Esme O'Donnell is a Research Assistant and PhD candidate at Edinburgh Napier University. She is currently the postgraduate student representative for SIPR.

Acknowledgements

The research team is grateful to the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) for funding the Research Assistant on this project.

The research team would also like to thank **Dr Andrew Tatnell**, researcher at Edinburgh Napier University and former Police Superintendent, for his valuable insight and comments on a draft of this report.

January 2026

Contents

Executive summary	4	5. Recommendations	17
1. Introduction	5	Learning needs analysis and evaluation of learning	17
2. Background and Context	6	Leadership and management development with role or level specific pathways	18
3. Methodology	7	Flexible, blended and workplace learning	19
Scope of review and research question	7	6. Conclusion	20
Eligibility criteria and search parameters	7	7. References	21
Search strategy	8	Appendix: Overview of Peer-reviewed Studies Included in the Systematic Review	25
Study selection	9		
Data synthesis	9		
4. Findings	10		
The importance and purpose of continuing professional development in policing	10		
Continuing professional development and workforce wellbeing	10		
Continuing professional development and retention	13		
Enablers of and barriers to effective continuing professional development	14		

Executive summary

Forming part of an internal 'CPD Learning Needs Analysis Short Life Working Group', this evidence-informed synthesis has been conducted to support Police Scotland's efforts to modernise its approach to continuing professional development (CPD) amidst rising operational pressures and budgetary constraints. Through conducting a rapid review of academic, policy and grey literatures, the authors identify the range of factors affecting the design and delivery of effective CPD provision in policing and other comparable public and emergency service contexts. The review highlights the importance of CPD as a vital tool for fostering workforce wellbeing, resilience, and retention. The report identifies critical enablers and barriers – such as leadership capacity and capability, organisational culture, workload constraints, accessibility, and strategic integration – that determine whether training and learning successfully translate into a more agile and supported workforce. Ultimately, the report offers some practical insights and recommendations in support of Police Scotland's Vision 2030 to build a skilled, agile, and resilient workforce capable of thriving within an increasingly complex and highly demanding environment.

1. Introduction

Police Scotland commissioned this rapid review as part of a current '*CPD Learning Needs Analysis Short Life Working Group*' to assist in building an evidence-informed understanding of what effective continuing professional development (CPD) should and could resemble within a national policing organisation of significant scale and operational complexity. Police Scotland is the second largest police service in the United Kingdom (UK) employing around 22,500 officers and police staff with approximately 16,441 (full time equivalent) of these being police officers (Police Scotland, 2025). The organisation operates within a complex, evolving and demanding public service environment, characterised by heightened public expectations, increasing operational pressures, expanding role requirements, and greater internal and external scrutiny of performance, culture and accountability (e.g., College of Policing, 2015; Elliott et al., 2020; Smith, 2024).

Police Scotland's 2030 vision for policing is of 'an organisation focused on safer communities, less crime, supported victims, and a thriving workforce' (Police Scotland, 2024). Within this context, the ability to develop and sustain a skilled, resilient, and motivated workforce is central to the achievement of *Vision 2030* and the organisation's long-term strategic priorities (Scottish Police Authority, 2024).

The commissioning team was particularly interested in understanding how CPD can meaningfully support workforce wellbeing, resilience, and retention, and how contemporary research and practice can be translated into actionable organisational recommendations and practice. Therefore, this review seeks to integrate academic research, policy evidence, and organisational insights to develop a robust understanding of CPD needs and effective practice. By identifying key emergent themes, barriers, and success factors, the review seeks to generate meaningful and practical recommendations for enhancing CPD provision while strengthening wellbeing, resilience and retention outcomes. The findings are intended to inform evidence-based decision-making around CPD strategy design and development, investment priorities, delivery mechanisms, leadership capability, and the continuing growth and development of a learning culture. Ultimately, and in support of *Vision 2030*, this work is intended to support Police Scotland's ambition to build a skilled, agile and resilient workforce capable of thriving within a complex and highly demanding environment (Police Scotland, 2024; Scottish Police Authority, 2024).

2. Background and Context

Policing organisations are experiencing sustained pressure relating to workforce wellbeing, psychological safety, job satisfaction, and retention (Charman and Bennett, 2022; Craven et al., 2022; Lewis et al., 2019; Purba and Demou, 2019). Despite the drive towards 'professionalisation' of policing in England and Wales (Fernie et al., 2019; Smith, 2024; Westera et al., 2016; Williams and Sondhi, 2022), lack of voice, poor recognition of skills and experience, and barriers to career development and progression continue to fuel early career attrition and declining commitment throughout the UK (Grant et al., 2024; Tyson and Charman, 2025).

This evolving context presents strategic challenges as workforce instability and wellbeing impairment pose risks to operational effectiveness, public confidence, and quality of service delivery. Understanding the ways in which CPD can strengthen resilience, foster meaningful career progression, increase perceptions of support, and improve retention is critical for future-proofing a sustainable policing workforce.

The landscape in which Police Scotland operates is strongly shaped by national policy objectives, legislative frameworks, and external regulatory expectations. For example, public service reform agendas in the UK emphasise the need for improved workforce sustainability, continuous improvement, and demonstrable value and accountability (Banks and May, 2025; College of Policing, 2015; Farr-Wharton et al., 2023). Scottish Government priorities, including increasing public confidence, equity, safety, and wellbeing, directly influence expectations around workforce experience and the organisational capacity to meet diverse and complex community needs (Scottish Government, 2023a, 2023b). Additionally, the Scottish public sector commitment to 'Fair Work', equality standards and organisational

transparency places greater emphasis on high-quality leadership, supportive work environments, and strengthening of the employee voice (Scottish Government, 2025).

External scrutiny from bodies such as His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) and Audit Scotland increasingly evaluates organisational performance not only by response quality and efficiency, but also through indicators of organisational culture and wellbeing (HMICS, 2023, 2024; HMICS and Audit Scotland, 2026). Concurrently, public expectations around professionalism, ethical conduct, and specialist knowledge continue to rise, meaning that evolving expectations require police organisations to continually adapt through targeted training, innovation, and flexible access to CPD opportunities across all career stages. Moreover, increasing operational demand and resource pressures often constrain capacity for structured learning and reflection (Engelmann, 2023).

In this review, the scope of CPD includes formal and informal training or learning aimed at improving, developing or refreshing skills and knowledge relating to either professional or personal growth and development. Mirroring Ordon et al. (2019), this also includes the broader contextual environment and culture within which training and learning take place. The challenge for Police Scotland lies in harnessing the 'complex and often incoherent patchwork of continuing professional development' (Smith, 2024, p.102) and reconciling the urgency of frontline delivery with the need for sustained investment in professional learning. The ability to integrate CPD into a broader framework of workforce planning, with a focus on building leadership capacity as well as capability, and long-term organisational strategy is essential for meeting contemporary demands (Herrington and Schafer, 2019).

3. Methodology

This study comprises a rapid (systematic) review, which broadly followed the five-step methodological framework proposed by Dobbins (2017), namely: define a practice question; search for research evidence; critically appraise the sources; synthesise the evidence; and identify applicability and transferability issues for further consideration (framework of recommendations). Systematic review methodology is a rigorous and replicable approach to identifying, evaluating and synthesising existing secondary research (Randles and Finnegan, 2023). As such, the review followed the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) 2020 guidelines, incorporating structured and documented processes for search strategy development, screening, appraisal and reporting (Page et al., 2021). The review synthesised publicly available literature and organisational documents, hence no prior ethical approval was required.

SCOPE OF REVIEW AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The review was contextualised to comparable complex public and emergency services and provides a high-level focus on contemporary issues in CPD, with emphasis on supporting employee and organisational outcomes pertaining to wellbeing, resilience, and retention. The review sought to address the guiding research question: *What does existing evidence reveal about contemporary CPD needs and practices in large, complex public or emergency service organisations, particularly in relation to wellbeing, resilience, and retention?*

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND SEARCH PARAMETERS

Eligibility criteria were established using an expanded version of the 'PICO' (Population, Interest, Context) framework and refined through initial scoping searches (Table 1).

Table 1. Eligibility Criteria

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Population	Police, emergency services, large public-sector organisations; large private sector-only studies (>249 people)	Small private sector-only studies (<250 people); military-only studies
Interest	CPD, professional learning and development, training practices, workforce development, leadership learning	Academic initial training programmes not related to CPD
Context	High-demand, complex public service environments, police, emergency services	Private sector unless highly influential and <250 employees
Workforce outcomes	Wellbeing, resilience, burnout, employee experience, engagement, retention, trauma, PTSD	Studies with no workforce or organisational outcome measures
Study/ evidence type	Peer-reviewed academic research; systematic reviews; grey literature; policy and organisational reports	Opinion pieces without evidence
Geographic relevance	International, with priority to UK and comparable systems (AUS/NZ, Canada, Ireland, Nordic states)	Non-comparable geographical contexts
Date range	2014-2025	Research pre-2014 unless highly influential
Language	English	Non-English publications

SEARCH STRATEGY

A structured search strategy was developed around three core categories: (1) CPD (learning and development); (2) context (policing, public, and emergency services); and (3) workforce outcomes (wellbeing, resilience, and retention). As detailed in **Table 2**, Boolean operators and truncation were utilised to maximise specificity and search strings were adapted for each database. Searches were conducted throughout December 2025 using ProQuest; Sage; Scopus; Web of Science; and Google Scholar (supplementary search of first 200 results). In addition, hand searches were conducted in January 2026 to identify additional relevant studies, which included grey literature, trade/practitioner journals, and organisational documents. Grey literature searches comprised: College of Policing (England and Wales); Scottish Police College; Police Federation; HMICS; Scottish Government; Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR); and Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reports.

Table 2. Search Terms

Category 1: CPD	Category 2: Context	Category 3: Outcomes
Continuous professional development	Police*	Wellbeing
Continuing professional development	Public sector	Well-being
CPD	Public service*	Wellness
Professional learning	Emergency services	Retention
Professional development	Fire and rescue	Attrition
Learning and development	Ambulance	Turnover
Work-based learning	Paramedic	Resilience
Skills development		Burnout
Career development		Stress
Training needs analysis		Trauma
Lifelong learning		PTSD
Competency development		Employee engagement
		Organisational support
		Supportive leadership
		Workforce development
		Workforce sustainability

STUDY SELECTION

The screening and selection process followed PRISMA 2020 standards (Page et al., 2021). All search results were saved to a file and duplicates removed. A two-stage screening process was used: (1) title and abstract screening; and (2) full-text review. Two authors (EO and KG) independently screened titles/abstracts and full text screening was carried out by three authors (EO, KG and BP) with uncertainties resolved through discussion. A PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 1) was used to record the number of records identified, screened, excluded and included.

A structured data extraction template was created in Microsoft Excel to systematically capture key characteristics and findings from included studies. All retrieved documents were also collated in Rayyan (software package for managing systematic reviews). Extracted variables included citation, organisation context and setting, geographic location, CPD focus, methodology, workforce outcomes, key implications, and relevance to Scottish/UK policing. Data were recorded in a shared spreadsheet and continuously cross-checked between the authors for accuracy.

DATA SYNTHESIS

Given the breadth of literature and methodological diversity, a narrative and thematic synthesis approach was adopted. The approach involved a four-step process: (1) familiarisation with extracted data; (2) development of thematic categories; (3) iterative coding and theme refinement; and (4) identification of enablers and barriers, and organisational implications and evidence gaps. Themes were then mapped against the grey literature and Police Scotland's organisational data sources, as well as additional documents retrieved through hand searches, as advocated by Arksey and O'Malley (2005).

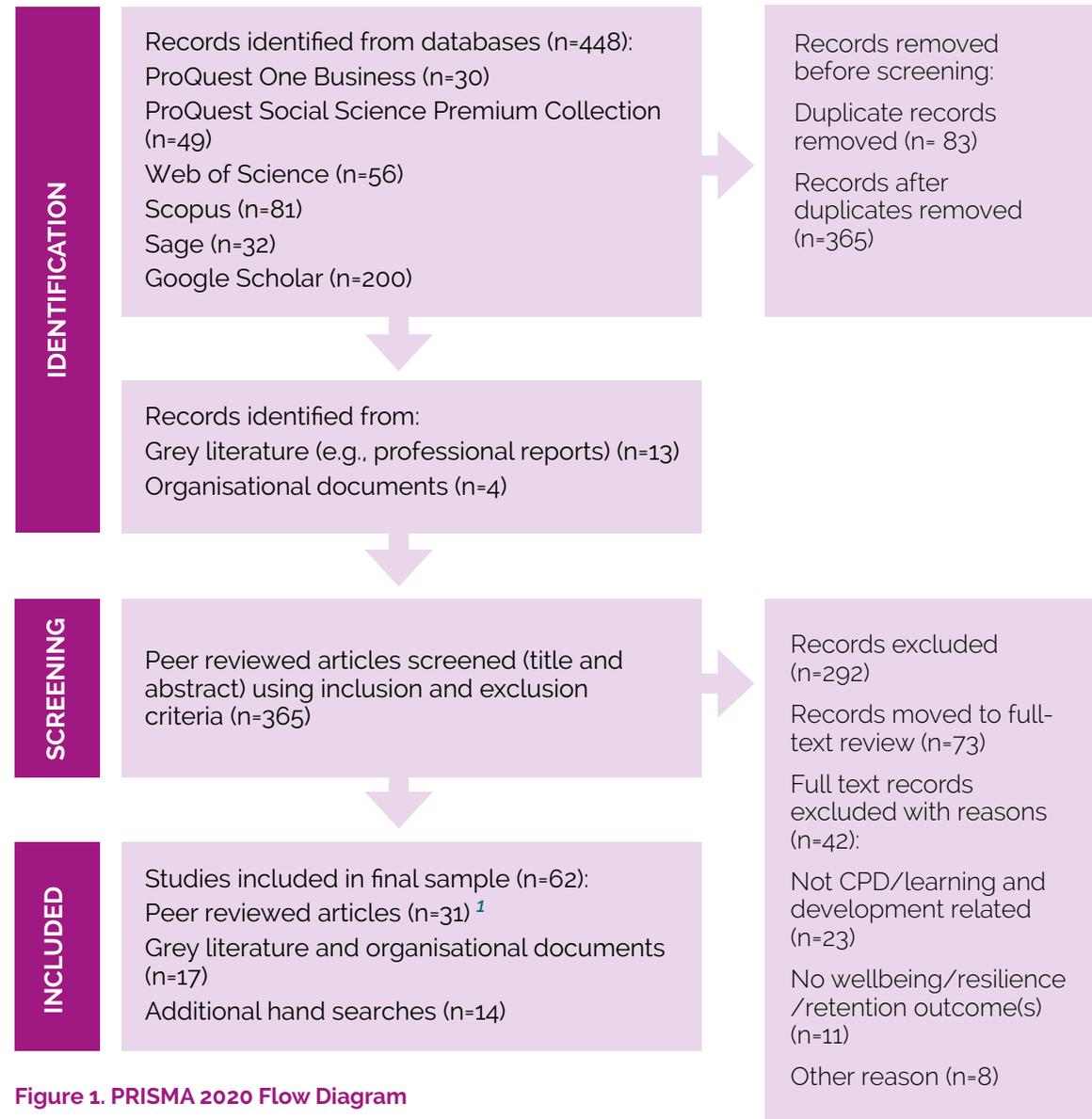


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram

1. An overview of the 31 included peer-reviewed articles is provided in the Appendix.

4. Findings

The review findings are synthesised and summarised below within key thematic areas. This is followed by a practical set of recommendations for CPD strategy, design and delivery.

THE IMPORTANCE AND PURPOSE OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN POLICING

Learning and development are widely regarded as enablers of high-performing, adaptable and resilient organisations. CPD is crucial for increasing competence and confidence, especially when added responsibilities extend beyond traditional roles (Gawthorne et al., 2025). Rawdin (2023) notes that 'best practice' training is developmental, iterative and ongoing, often represented metaphorically as a 'journey' (p.9). At the most basic level, effective CPD supports skill maintenance, role competence and specialist capability, ensuring that officers and staff are equipped to address increasingly complex and rapidly changing operational and organisational needs (Westera et al., 2016).

However, research also emphasises that CPD extends beyond technical skill enhancement and can also be a powerful driver of job satisfaction (Fallon and Rice, 2015), professional identity (Charman and Tyson, 2023), and workforce retention (Tyson and Charman, 2025). Opportunities for career progression, meaningful learning, leadership development and personal growth are strongly associated with improved engagement, and enhanced perceptions of organisational support (Herrington and Schafer, 2019; Hobbs et al., 2021). In contrast, inequitable, poorly targeted or inaccessible CPD can generate frustration, reduce trust and disengagement, and often reinforce retention challenges (Charman and Bennett, 2022). It is therefore vital that CPD is designed and delivered in strategic and connected ways that recognise and reinforce individual needs, national and local contexts, diverse roles, and the organisational priorities reflected in *Vision 2030* (Scottish Police Authority, 2024) and its corresponding *People Strategy 2024-27*, and beyond.

For Police Scotland, the development of a coherent, evidence-informed approach to CPD represents a timely opportunity to strengthen organisational capability and support workforce sustainability. CPD has the potential to enhance leadership capacity while improving operational and ethical decision-making, strengthening resilience, and contributing to workforce wellbeing through perceived investment, support and fairness. Alignment of professional development with strategic workforce priorities provides for a more structured pathway for reducing attrition risk and improving career development and succession planning, as well as enhancing a more supportive and inclusive organisational culture (Adhikari et al., 2023; Manley et al., 2016). In this vein, Demou et al. (2020, p.703) highlight that 'the workplace is one of the most important settings for mental health promotion and behaviour change'. The next section focuses on CPD as a vehicle for enhancing workforce wellbeing.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE WELLBEING

Morton et al. (2025, p.187) explain supporting wellbeing as 'promoting people's ability to thrive', and a strong and recurring theme within the literature is the central role of CPD in shaping workforce wellbeing within high-demand public service contexts (Ordon et al., 2019). Phythian et al. (2023) usefully distinguish between organisational and individual wellbeing highlighting the need for both to better align. The literature suggests that the relationship between learning and development and wellbeing is highly important yet often neglected (Cooper et al., 2025; Rawdin, 2023). For example, Phythian et al. (2023) found that while organisational processes, (e.g., absence management) typically appear well-developed, individual-based wellbeing (e.g., personal resilience) correspondingly appears under-developed, which signals a need for greater organisational learning in terms of how resilience (at the individual level) can be better supported and developed.

Smith and Burkle (2018) posit that wellness comprises two components: physical and psychosocial, both of which are important. Research consistently highlights that workforce wellbeing is not merely an individual concern but a critical organisational resource that underpins service quality, operational effectiveness and long-term workforce sustainability (e.g., HMICS, 2024; Lewis et al., 2019). Of note, HMICS and Audit Scotland (2026), in their recent joint audit of best value in policing in Scotland, found that strategic workforce planning activity to support people and build a thriving workforce (one of the pillars of the 2030 vision) remains underdeveloped with progress being slow. Against this backdrop and together with Police Scotland's evolving operational environment, characterised by increasing public expectations and expanding role complexity (e.g., Banks and May, 2025; Elliott et al., 2020; Farr-Wharton et al., 2023), effective CPD emerges as an essential vehicle for supporting the psychological, emotional, and professional needs of officers and staff. In this context, CPD is positioned not only as a route to skill acquisition, but as a foundational component of a resilient, supported, and engaged policing workforce aligned with the ambitions of *Vision 2030* and beyond.

The evidence indicates that policing organisations experience significant and sustained pressures – or organisational stressors – relating to mental health, job satisfaction, psychological safety, and retention (Charman and Bennett, 2022; Demou et al., 2020; Phythian et al., 2023; Purba and Demou, 2019; Rawdin, 2023). The increased risk of health impairment may also be compounded by operational factors including lack of autonomy and control, poor workplace culture, and work overload (Lewis et al., 2019). Smith and Burkle (2018), in their study of paramedics, also highlight the cumulative effect of shift work, fatigue, and burnout. Indeed, research points to rising levels of stress and burnout and, oftentimes, trauma-related symptoms arising from cumulative exposure to distressing incidents, organisational strain and resource constraints (e.g., Cooper et al., 2025; Foley et al., 2022; Ordon et al., 2019; Rawdin, 2023).

These trends are connected to heightened absence levels and attrition and present clear operational risks for Police Scotland, where maintaining a healthy and stable workforce is essential for delivering high-quality public services and sustaining community confidence. Within this landscape, and when combined effectively with other people-centric practices aimed at cultural transformation, CPD offers a meaningful lever for improving wellbeing outcomes and for mitigating risks associated with high-pressure working environments.

Blake et al. (2020, p.3) report that research with healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic identified five requests: 'hear me; protect me; prepare me; support me; and care for me'. The authors suggest that for workers to perform to their full potential over an extended period, there is a need for psychosocial support that addresses these needs and focuses on creation of a psychologically safe environment (culture), strong leadership, clear organisational wellbeing strategies, consistent communication, and significant team and collegial support (Ericsson et al., 2022). Regular exposure to crises, trauma and emotionally distressing events is a core feature of policing work (Cooper et al., 2025; Foley et al., 2022; Rawdin, 2023) and while Blake et al.'s (2020) findings capture the need for CPD to be located within a broader framework of wellbeing support, the evidence also suggests that specific and targeted psychological safety, resilience-focused, and trauma-informed CPD can substantially mitigate associated wellbeing risks (Blake et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2025).

Psychological safety and trauma-informed training typically include understanding trauma responses, recognising early signs of secondary trauma, managing emotional load, and developing strategies for self-care and peer support (Ericsson et al., 2022; Guo et al. 2025). Through supportive leadership and leading by example, it may be necessary to actively reverse any perceived cultural stigma associated with help-seeking behaviours or

participating in wellbeing-oriented CPD (Foley et al., 2022; Rawdin, 2023). To develop and support what Coyte et al. (2024, p.17) refer to as 'posttraumatic growth', the authors recommend tailored CPD programmes that target identified coping strategies, including active coping, planning, focus on and venting emotions, suppression of competing activities, seeking social support, use of emotional support, and behavioural disengagement. They also posit that dysfunctional coping strategies (e.g., socially isolating) should be actively targeted for behavioural change.

Resilience, similarly, is increasingly conceptualised not as an innate personal trait but as a dynamic capacity that can be strengthened through effective leadership, supportive organisational environments, and targeted learning opportunities (Hesketh et al., 2019). For example, Hesketh et al. (2019) found that specific resilience training led to improvements in five areas of police work, namely: resources and communication; control; work relationships; balanced workload; and job conditions. Craven et al. (2022) also highlight the importance of 'coping' and the development of coping behaviours in high emotional labour jobs. The authors point to the benefits of several positive coping behaviours, including self-efficacy, internal locus of control (agency), trust, mastery, optimism, resilience and self-esteem, which are repeatedly associated with lower levels of emotional exhaustion and absence. Ericsson et al. (2022) similarly found that pressure management strategies were expressed as positive coping mechanisms among paramedics. The potential benefits of mindfulness are also recognised in the literature (e.g., Craven et al., 2022; Fitzhugh et al., 2019; Ordon et al., 2019). When packaged effectively, these types of training contribute not only to personal wellbeing but also to service quality, as officers are better able to engage sensitively with victims, vulnerable individuals, and challenging operational incidents. This dual benefit reinforces the strategic value of embedding resilience and trauma-informed practice within organisational learning pathways as part of Police Scotland's

broader commitment to its workforce and the communities they serve.

Of note, Ericsson et al. (2022), in their study of paramedics, point to the presumption that strong mental resources (resilience) are a given for first responders, but caution that having such behaviours from the outset is simply not feasible. These behaviours take time to develop, and Rawdin (2023) stresses the importance of not rushing or over-accelerating training, particularly in relation to early career officers. According to Ericsson et al. (2022), while functional coping mechanisms at the early stages of one's career are advantageous, training on identifying and forming such building blocks is important. The authors report detrimental perceptions of a macho organisational culture of hardiness, toughness and blame, constituting an unsupportive organisational climate and poor leadership. In response to some of these challenges, they highlight the value of strong and resilient communities of practice and collegial support, leading to an enhanced sense of belonging – what policing organisations often refer to as the 'police family' (Charman, 2017, p.116). Wilson et al. (2022, 2024) also highlight the benefits of developing a culture that encourages feedback-seeking behaviours and regular feedback on outcomes and performance from multiple sources, including appraisal. Specifically, in their study of Emergency Medical Services professionals, the authors found that receiving feedback was beneficial to personal wellbeing (closure, confidence, and job satisfaction), and professional development (workplace practice and knowledge).

Overall, CPD that focuses on the ongoing development of adaptive skills such as managing complexity, resilience and regulating emotional responses, and maintaining professional boundaries, appears especially valuable in supporting wellbeing outcomes (Hesketh et al., 2019). Importantly, the evidence signals that the protective effect of CPD is amplified when learning is accessible, relevant to role demands, and supported by strong local leadership and positive line management (Eaton et al., 2021; Farr-Wharton

et al., 2023; King et al., 2021; Ordon et al., 2019). Moreover, when CPD is embedded within routine day-to-day practice, for example, through micro-learning, mentoring, reflective practice, and structured debriefs with senior officers, it is more likely to deliver sustained wellbeing outcomes (Ordon et al., 2019). This point is exemplified by Smith (2024, p.113), who notes that in relation to mentoring, the police service's greatest strength is perhaps 'the credibility that comes from having walked in the shoes of those whom senior officers are charged with leading'. The benefits of embedding wellbeing and workforce resilience strategies to improve retention have also been noted (Lonne et al., 2020), and Rankine et al. (2025) provide a reminder that organisations need to actively nurture staff to ensure retention, which is discussed next.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION

Across the literature, retention emerges as a critical and increasingly complex challenge for policing organisations (Charman and Tyson, 2023; Tyson and Charman, 2025), with growing evidence of early career attrition, elevated turnover intentions, and declining morale often linked to operational pressures, constrained resources, and limited development opportunities (Charman and Bennett, 2022). It is noteworthy that retention challenges are not limited to policing, although the drivers of high attrition and intention to leave are consistent across public sector and comparable organisations.

A central theme across the evidence base is the significant influence of CPD opportunities in shaping employees' self-efficacy, organisational commitment, understanding of and confidence in career pathways, and longer-term intention to stay, particularly among the early career officers and staff. Moreover, the literature indicates that CPD can help to reinforce a sense of purpose, belonging, and career identity, providing employees with the developmental professional challenge necessary to sustain motivation in demanding and unpredictable working conditions (Charman, 2017). Elliott

et al. (2025), in their study of retention patterns among health professionals, highlight the importance of actively targeting the early career workforce to avoid high attrition in the early career stage. While acknowledging the impact of internal cultural factors and the need for 'cultural fit' within policing (Cotton, 2024), Williams and Sondhi (2022) also suggest that to prevent younger officers having to adapt into the existing culture to 'get on', the established workforce needs to better understand the skills that new officers might bring. The authors note the need to embrace and harness these skills to manage professional expectations and mitigate retention challenges (Grant et al., 2024).

Perceptions of equity and fairness in career progression and promotion pathways and processes are also integral to job satisfaction and retention (Grant et al., 2024; Gray et al., 2018; Ordon et al., 2019). The literature affirms that visible, structured and well-defined career pathways, supported by accessible CPD, transparent role requirements, and leadership endorsement, are associated with improved retention (Feerick et al., 2025). For Police Scotland, this represents a strategic lever for articulating and enacting clear career development and progression pathways and criteria across operational, specialist, leadership, and professional service and support roles, which are essential for addressing attrition, particularly among those seeking lateral or upward mobility within the service.

Cosgrove et al. (2018), in their study of turnover intentions among early career healthcare professionals, point to the importance of meeting both professional (job and career) and personal (life stage) expectations (cf. Grant et al., 2024 for a similar overview within policing). Cosgrove and colleagues found that early career turnover intention was most strongly influenced by professional experiences, particularly those relating to the job role, workplace relationships, and the level of access to CPD. Similarly, Williams and Sondhi (2022, p.656) note the need for ongoing development of 'life skills', or personal qualities, among younger officers to manage the complexities of modern policing.

For instance, they suggest that developing collaborative skills and exposure to bodies outside of traditional policing is critical as policing becomes less insular and further aligned with public health approaches such as those relating to societal vulnerability, mental health, and social problems (Scottish Government, 2023a, 2023b).

Overall, the evidence signals that CPD is most effective in supporting retention when delivered through highly visible and easily navigable, flexible, accessible and modernised learning models (e.g., Ordon et al., 2019), which are clearly linked to career development and progression pathways (Feerick et al., 2025). A broader framework of practical enablers and barriers to CPD is considered next.

ENABLERS OF AND BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The literature identifies a range of structural, cultural, and operational factors that shape the effectiveness of CPD within policing and comparable high-demand public service environments. Taken together, the evidence indicates that CPD is most impactful when it is strategically aligned, adequately resourced, and embedded within a supportive organisational system and culture (Manley et al., 2016). Conversely, inconsistent access, operational constraints, and cultural barriers can significantly limit its value, potentially leading to reduced job satisfaction and increased turnover. For Police Scotland, affording attention to these enablers and barriers is essential for designing and enhancing a coherent and sustainable CPD system capable of supporting the organisation's long-term workforce, wellbeing and service delivery ambitions under Vision 2030 and the corresponding People Strategy 2024-27.

Leadership emerges as one of the strongest determinants of CPD effectiveness, particularly in relation to knowledge transfer and wellbeing support (King et al., 2021). However, Herrington and Schafer (2019) caution that policing organisations need to move away from the generic and develop a clearer understanding of what is required from police leaders both now and in the future, and how leadership and leadership development can be better integrated with the wider organisational architecture. Across the reviewed studies, building both leadership (organisational) capacity and (individual) capability emerge as central aspects of organisational and operational effectiveness (College of Policing, 2015; Farr-Wharton et al., 2021; Herrington and Schafer, 2019). Moreover, supportive and development-oriented leadership is consistently associated with higher engagement in learning, stronger motivation to pursue professional development, and better transfer of learning into practice (Herrington and Schafer, 2019). Likewise, Overton (2023), in a CIPD report, confirms that leaders have an important role to play in evolving and professionalising practice by supporting opportunities for learning and leading by example.

Leaders who encourage CPD, provide developmental feedback and debriefs, facilitate protected time, and actively role-model learning behaviours contribute to a culture in which CPD is viewed as integral to professional practice and organisational learning, rather than discretionary or burdensome activities (Cooper et al., 2025; Morton et al., 2025). In policing, supervisors at sergeant and inspector levels play a particularly influential role in enabling or constraining learning, given their proximity to frontline teams and control over shift patterns, workload and operational priorities. Yet, Engelmann (2023), in a review of police learning in Scotland, identifies a current critical gap in people management skills development at middle-management levels. Where leadership is inconsistent, CPD often becomes deprioritised, unevenly

accessed or applied in an ad hoc manner, undermining its strategic impact (Herrington and Schafer, 2019). This underscores the need for Police Scotland to continually strengthen leadership capability (at all levels) as a core enabler of effective CPD.

Closely connected to leadership is the influence of **organisational culture**, which significantly shapes perceptions of learning and willingness to engage in professional development (Smith, 2024). Transformational cultures that willingly embrace change are more likely to be receptive to the benefits of CPD, for example, through valuing knowledge sharing, innovation, reflective practice, and engaging in ongoing (lifelong) learning (Cooper et al., 2025; Ordon et al., 2019; Rawdin, 2023; Smith, 2024). In contrast, cultures that emphasise operational immediacy, risk aversion or rigid hierarchy can inhibit engagement by framing CPD as an additional burden on already stretched teams (Cooper et al., 2025). Evidence also indicates that macho cultures (Ericsson et al., 2022) and cultural stigma around help-seeking, admitting developmental needs, or participating in wellbeing-oriented CPD can prevent officers from accessing valuable learning (Foley et al., 2022; Radwin, 2023). For Police Scotland, the enhancement of a learning-oriented culture that normalises professional development and open dialogue at all career stages will be central to achieving consistent, high-quality CPD outcomes.

Workload and resource constraints constitute some of the most pervasive and persistent barriers to CPD across public sector and policing organisations (King et al., 2021; Rawdin, 2023). High operational demands, reactive deployment, and staffing shortages limit the time available for structured learning and reflective practice. For instance, Cooper et al. (2025, p.189) found that time for learning and development and wellbeing was regarded as an abstraction from duty and a 'luxury' rather than investment in employees. In policing environments, the unpredictability of operational demand can make it difficult to release staff for training without compromising service delivery. These pressures are intensified by financial constraints that restrict investment in training infrastructure, digital platforms, specialist programmes, and protected learning time. The evidence suggests that unless workload is actively considered within CPD planning and workforce design, for example, building leadership capacity as well as capability (Herrington and Schafer,

2019), access will remain uneven, and benefits limited. These trends are confirmed by a CIPD report (Overton, 2023) demonstrating lack of learner time as a key barrier to learning and development. Moreover, the report shows that reduced funding for public services is redirecting the attention of learning and development specialists towards addressing skills gaps and shortages and improving levels of workforce retention. This is leading to a misalignment of organisational learning and development strategies with key people priorities and preparing for the future. Put simply, a focus on staff retention and addressing skill shortages is lessening the emphasis placed on learning and individual development across the public sector generally. For Police Scotland, being cognisant of these capacity challenges and designing CPD opportunities that integrate protected learning time (Morton et al., 2025) and flexible models of delivery that minimise disruption to frontline operations will be critical to the uptake and value of CPD opportunities.

Accessibility and **equity of access** also strongly influence perceptions and the effectiveness of CPD. For instance, the evidence suggests that traditional CPD models can exclude those on night shifts, rotating schedules, or based far from training centres (Hobbs et al., 2021). Specialist units may struggle to attend training due to the continuity requirements of niche operational roles, while rural and remote teams often face travel constraints and reduced visibility of opportunities. Elliott et al. (2025), in their study of retention patterns of health professionals, note the need for more comprehensive CPD programmes for those working in rural and remote areas where CPD and career progression opportunities might be more limited. Perceived inequity in CPD access not only limits learning outcomes but also damages morale and contributes to perceptions of organisational injustice, which have negative implications for wellbeing and retention (Tyson and Charman, 2025). For Police Scotland, ensuring equity requires designing CPD systems that are flexible across geography, work patterns and functional areas, improving communication of available opportunities, and investing in decentralised, localised or contemporary digital delivery models and tools.

Closely linked to equity of access is the role of **technology and blended learning models** as a 'best practice' approach (Rawdin, 2023, p.7) to enabling effective development. Digital learning platforms (e.g., Moodle),

micro-learning tools, virtual classrooms, and hybrid training models offer significant potential to overcome barriers related to geography, shift work and operational unpredictability, and are, arguably, likely to appeal to younger employees (Williams and Sondhi, 2022). However, the literature also identifies barriers related to digital capability, inconsistent access to technology across locations, and insufficient time allocated for online learning (Hobbs et al., 2021). It is important that online platforms are not viewed as a panacea to replace other forms of training where these may be more appropriate (Grant et al., 2024). Rather, the evidence suggests that real-life approaches such as simulation-based training (Jee et al., 2023) and experiential blended learning approaches (Herrington and Schafer, 2023), which are closely integrated into everyday operational practice (Ordon et al., 2019), and which combine online modules, practical exercises, reflective activities, and in-person components can enhance flexibility, increase participation rates, and support continuous learning within time-pressured environments (Rawdin, 2023). A notable CPD trend is the increasing uptake and use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools within UK organisations. Recent CIPD reports (Brinkley, 2024; Cockett, 2025) show that almost half of public sector organisations are using enterprise versions of AI tools, yet few employers are offering training specifically on AI or virtual reality (VR) tools, despite their growing application in the workplace. The CIPD suggests a need for a clear AI policy within organisations to ensure responsible AI use and discourage shadow AI, with investment in place to reskill employees to adapt to AI technologies.

Finally, the evidence suggests that effective CPD depends on its **strategic alignment and integration** with the wider organisational system – or

architecture. For example, Manley et al. (2016) promote the importance of integrated competency frameworks, which enable a 'whole systems' approach to the workforce journey and associated pathways (Rawdin, 2023). King et al. (2021) suggest that in addition to transformation of individual knowledge and practice, transformation of the workplace culture is essential to achieving maximum impact from CPD, knowledge transfer, and associated learning (cf. Engelmann, 2023). Hence, CPD is most impactful when it is strategically aligned with organisational priorities, talent and career pathways, competency frameworks, and leadership expectations (Herrington and Schafer, 2019; Ordon et al., 2019). Fragmented or reactive approaches to CPD, particularly where learning is provided in isolation from career planning, operational requirements or organisational strategy, tend to produce inconsistent outcomes and are less likely to deliver sustained performance or wellbeing benefits. For a national organisation such as Police Scotland, system coherence, transparent governance, and a clear articulation of learning, career and talent pathways are therefore essential enablers (Grant et al., 2024).

Overall, the review of enablers and barriers demonstrates that the effectiveness of CPD in policing is shaped by a combination of leadership capacity and capability, cultural norms, resource and workload pressures, accessibility, and the strategic integration and flexibility of learning provision and delivery. Cognisance of these enablers and barriers will be critical to ensuring that CPD continues to be a strategic asset for Police Scotland, contributing not only to skill development but also to workforce wellbeing, retention, and long-term organisational sustainability.

5. Recommendations

The purpose of this rapid review is to add to Police Scotland's evidence base in relation to CPD needs. Therefore, the recommendations in this report are best considered in conjunction with other recent relevant sources of evidence, notably HMICS's thematic inspection of organisational culture in Police Scotland (2023); and frontline focus on wellbeing (2024); Engelmann's (2023) doctoral thesis on police learning in Scotland; and Grant et al.'s (2024) comparison of early career workplace and career expectations with perceived workplace realities.

LEARNING NEEDS ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF LEARNING

The review emphasised the need for strategic alignment and integration of CPD. To that end, Lonne et al. (2020) highlight the importance of undertaking comprehensive workforce and learning needs analyses (LNA) in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, together with alignment of the knowledge, skills and values needed to deliver an exemplary service. Similarly, the importance of learning capture and evaluation are highlighted (e.g., Rawdin, 2023), particularly at the higher levels (see, Reio et al., 2017) of knowledge transfer and organisational learning (Engelmann, 2023). The iterative and cyclical processes of undertaking LNA and evaluation were out-with the scope of this review, however the essential need to ensure that CPD needs are systematically identified and evaluated (and thereby justified in financial and non-financial terms) are noted as areas of importance. It would be helpful for Police Scotland to consider LNA in terms of essential and desirable development (i.e., CPD 'needs' and 'wants'). These could be further categorised and prioritised by level of importance, i.e., with mandatory and risk critical inputs taking prominence. This would enable (more) comprehensive alignment of development needs and priorities with the wider organisational architecture and strategic needs as well as individual aspirations.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT WITH ROLE OR LEVEL SPECIFIC PATHWAYS

The review highlighted a need to focus on developing both leadership capacity (at the organisational level) and leadership capability (at the individual level). It is noteworthy that Herrington and Schafer (2019) acknowledge the need for policing organisations to be clear(er) about what is required from police leaders both now and in the future as well as to recognise the leadership and management similarities (and thereby collaborative learning potential) between policing and other comparable organisations, rather than focusing inwardly on how policing is different (Fernie et al., 2019; Lewis et al., 2019). For instance, in the context of retention, younger workers generally expect more participatory leadership styles that prioritise transparency (Williams and Sondhi, 2022), and authenticity (Farr-Wharton et al., 2023), which are potentially at odds with existing police hierarchy and culture. The development and promotion of ethical, adaptive and situational leadership styles are therefore important.

Additionally, consideration of 'management' skills within the broader framework of leadership is advisable, for example, encompassing expectations around day-to-day people management skills and practices (Farr-Wharton et al., 2023). Hence, Police Scotland's Competency and Values Framework (Police Scotland, n.d.) should be reviewed and potentially updated with a future focus in mind. Leadership and management expectations should be (re)mapped against the competency framework for assurance that associated development provision is aligned with cultural transformation and the needs of contemporary policing reflected in *Vision 2030*. Leadership and learning pathways are a core part of the wider organisational architecture, meaning there is a need for these pathways to be aligned with the People Strategy and integrated approach to managing talent. This also calls for leadership and management development pathways and frameworks to be clearly aligned with career progression and promotion criteria.

There is a particular need to incorporate an element of structure within a learning or CPD framework – what Herrington and Schafer (2019, p.253) describe as '*a spine of developmental intent*'. This calls for leadership development pathways – or mapped journeys – that are aligned to role and/

or level specific needs and expectations, for example, a whole career pathway that spans supervisory ('leading self and others'); middle ('leading teams'); and strategic ('leading strategy') levels, and which is applicable to both police officers and staff. Such pathways provide the 'spine', to borrow Herrington and Scafer's (2019, p.253) term, of a wider CPD framework. Elements of this framework can then be categorised into mandatory training and development, other aspects will be role-specific, and the remainder will consist of flexible development options.

The review identified a specific need to focus on early career employees, who may be at risk of higher attrition and are likely to require more time and structured guidance in relation to CPD expectations and opportunities than established or more senior colleagues (Rawdin, 2023). There is also a greater need to identify and recognise latent talent and leadership experience that already exists within the organisation (Herrington and Schafer, 2019). Indeed, Tyson and Charman (2025) highlight that lack of recognition of skills and experience, and barriers to career development and progression often lead to early career attrition, declining commitment, and reduced intention to remain in the service. Of note, Grant et al's (2024) study analysed career expectations of several newly appointed probationers who had joined Police Scotland as a second or third career and who expressed expectations of bringing transferable leadership skills that would be recognised and valued by Police Scotland, and which may lead to accelerated career development. Yet, interviews with established officers revealed a culture that continues to value 'time served' as an indicator of leadership (cred)ability. Engelmann (2023) also identified a current gap at middle management (sergeant and inspector) levels in terms of people management skills development and a dearth of CPD opportunities for middle managers, issues which were also present in People Scotland's most recent internal *Your Voice Matters* staff survey.

Overall, while identification of the component parts of a leadership framework is out with the scope of this review, the review findings are consistent with the six broad areas of leadership identified by the College of Policing (2015) in England Wales where there is a need to promote positive practices and overcome specific obstacles, namely: improving culture; addressing unintended consequences of hierarchy; increasing diversity and valuing

difference: giving attention to both management and leadership development; recognising lateral development; and achieving greater consistency of practice. In particular, the review spotlighted wellbeing as being a core responsibility of leaders and managers in the need to both recognise and look after their own wellbeing and to support the wellbeing of others. Within the context of Police Scotland where there is regular exposure to stressful and traumatic situations, it is recommended that specific 'coping' and resilience training, including aspects of self-efficacy, and emotion regulation and management, be incorporated into leadership development activities (Craven et al., 2022; Hesketh et al., 2019; Ordon et al., 2019). The potential benefits of mindfulness training are also recognised in the literature (e.g., Craven et al., 2022; Fitzhugh et al., 2019; Ordon et al., 2019). An example of a free digital resource to support the psychological wellbeing of healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic was developed by Blake et al. (2020). The authors highlight the importance of normalisation of psychological responses during a crisis, and encouragement of self-care and help-seeking behaviour. Arguably, similar resource(s) could easily be adapted for policing professionals.

FLEXIBLE, BLENDED AND WORKPLACE LEARNING

The evidence base points to the need to implement a range of longer-term formal and informal developmental opportunities, which are explicitly connected to the 'central spine' of the framework, as noted earlier, which are compatible with the organisation's existing architecture, but which can also drive and support organisational change and culture transformation. When developing a learning 'framework', Rawdin (2023, p.8) highlights the need to achieve an effective balance between training ('know how') and education ('know why'). Herrington and Schafer (2019) also reflect perceptions that leadership development should blend education, experience and mentorship, while utilising reflection, action learning and learning from peers. For this reason, and where applicable, Gray et al. (2018) point to the need for commissioning managers to work (more) closely with external education providers to ensure appropriate professional development, which is effectively aligned with workplace context, challenges, and practice (Eaton et al., 2021; Manley et al., 2016).

Fernie et al. (2019) also refer to the benefits to be derived from learning from the experiences of other professions such as nursing and paramedicine. Indeed, when considering the success factors for implementing a strategic CPD framework, and aligning with the findings of this review, King et al. (2021), in their rapid review of CPD in nursing, identified six mutually reinforcing factors to optimising the impact of CPD: self-motivation (critical reflection, and ownership of learning); relevance to practice (role and context-specific); preference for workplace learning (knowledge translation); strong enabling leadership (organisational endorsement and support); and a positive workplace culture (valuing learning and knowledge transfer, and provision of adequate resources, e.g., time and finance). Ultimately, the success of many of these factors hinges on developing a workplace culture where learning dialogue, reflective practice, and feedback are embedded as routine day-to-day activities (Ordon et al., 2019; Wilson et al., 2022, 2024). For instance, the ways in which clinical supervision (a form of mentorship) and reflective practice are established within healthcare professions are noteworthy exemplars of where there may be potential for cross-profession learning.

As such, the value and success of Police Scotland's CPD framework may be enhanced considerably by embedding more dialogue-based forms of learning and learning transfer, such as more widespread mentorship and reflective debriefing. Developing a culture of continuous feedback will be reinforced through encouraging help-seeking behaviours and discouraging masculine or macho cultural perceptions (Ericsson et al., 2022; Rawdin, 2023) and cultural stigma associated with help-seeking, admitting developmental needs or participating in wellbeing-oriented CPD (Foley et al., 2022; Rawdin, 2023). To recap Smith's (2024) contention, and in pursuit of maximising knowledge transfer, the police service's greatest strength perhaps lies in 'the credibility that comes from having walked in the shoes of those whom senior officers are charged with leading' (p.113).

6. Conclusion

Police Scotland commissioned this rapid review as part of a current 'CPD Learning Needs Analysis Short Life Working Group' to assist in building an evidence-informed understanding of what effective CPD should and could resemble within a national policing organisation of significant scale and operational complexity.

The commissioning team was particularly interested in understanding how CPD can meaningfully support workforce wellbeing, resilience, and retention, and how contemporary research and practice can be translated into actionable organisational recommendations and practice. This rapid review therefore sought to address the guiding research question: *What does existing evidence reveal about contemporary CPD needs and practices in large, complex public or emergency service organisations, particularly in relation to wellbeing, resilience, and retention?* Alongside other recent relevant sources of evidence (e.g., Engelmann, 2023; Grant et al., 2024; HMICS, 2023, 2024; HMICS and Audit Scotland, 2026) as well as insights from the internal 'Your Voice Matters' staff survey), the findings in this report are intended to inform evidence-based decision-making around CPD strategy design and development, investment priorities, delivery mechanisms, leadership capability, and the continuing growth and development of a learning culture.

Ultimately, and in support of *Vision 2030*, this work is intended to support Police Scotland's ambition of building a skilled, agile, and resilient workforce capable of thriving within increasingly complex and highly demanding environments (Police Scotland, 2024). In terms of further research, more empirical insights from police officers and staff would add to the evidence-base. Also of note, few studies to date have assessed the effectiveness of informal CPD within policing (Ordon et al., 2019), which presents a unique opportunity for Police Scotland to lead the field in this area.



7. References (* denotes peer-reviewed titles identified in the rapid review)

- *Adhikari, R., Corcoran, J., Smith, P., Rodgers, S., Suleiman, R. and Barber, K. (2023). It's OK to be different: Supporting black and minority ethnic nurses and midwives in their professional development in the UK. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 66, 103508.
- Arksey, H. and O'Malley, L. (2005). Scoping studies: towards a methodological framework. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8(1), 19-32.
- Banks, S. and May, A. (2025). The influence of new public management on the police first-line manager: Exploring the challenges faced by practitioner managers. *Public Management Review*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2025.2496714>.
- *Blake, H., Birmingham, F., Johnson, G. and Tabner, A. (2020). Mitigating the psychological impact of COVID-19 on healthcare workers: A digital learning package. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(9), 2997.
- Brinkley, I. (2024). *CIPD good work index 2024: Survey report*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
- Charman, S. (2017). *Police socialisation, identity and culture: Becoming blue*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Charman, S. and Bennett, S. (2022). Voluntary resignations from the police service: the impact of organisational and occupations stressors on organisational commitment. *Policing and Society*, 32(2), 159-178.
- Charman, S. and Tyson, J. (2023). Over and out: the conflicting identities of officers voluntarily resigning from the police service. *Policing and Society*, 33(7), 767-783.
- Cockett, J. (2025). *Labour market outlook – autumn 2025*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
- College of Policing (2015). *Leadership review*. <https://assets.college.police.uk/s3fs-public/2021-03/cop-leadership-review-2015.pdf>.
- *Cooper, L., Rawdin, C. and Burnes, B. (2025). Preparing to prepare: The process of transformational change in investigating rape and serious sexual offences in England and Wales. *Journal of Change Management*, 25(3), 179-199.
- *Cosgrave, C., Maple, M. and Hussain, R. (2018). An explanation of turnover intention among early-career nursing and allied health professionals working in rural and remote Australia – findings from a grounded theory study. *Rural and Remote Health*, 18, 4511.
- Cotton, W. B. (2024). *What's consent got to do with it? An examination of legitimacy, trust, and the police-public relationship in Scotland, United Kingdom*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh.
- *Coyte, B., Betihavas, V., Devenish, S. and Foster, K. (2023). Resilience, posttraumatic growth and psychological wellbeing of paramedicine clinicians: An integrative review. *Paramedicine*, 21(1), 16-35.
- *Craven, H. P., Hallmark, M., Holland, F. and Maratos, F. A. (2022). Factors influencing successful coping among crime scene investigation (CSI) personnel: Recruiting for resilience – A mixed methods study. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 37, 549-568.
- Demou, E., Hale, H. and Hunt, K. (2020). Understanding the mental health and wellbeing needs of police officers and staff in Scotland. *Police Practice and Research*, 21(6), 702-716.
- Dobbins, M. (2017). *Rapid review guidebook. Steps for conducting a rapid review*. <https://www.nccmt.ca/uploads/media/media/0001/02/800fe34eaedbad09edf80ad5081b9291acf1c0c2.pdf>.
- *Eaton, G., Happs, I. and Tanner, R. (2021). Designing and implementing an educational framework for advanced paramedic practitioners rotating into primary care in North Wales. *Education for Primary Care*, 32(5), 289-295.
- Elliott, G., Day, M. and Lichtenstein, S. (2020). Strategic planning activity, middle manager divergent thinking, external stakeholder salience, and organizational performance: a study of English and Welsh police forces. *Public Management Review*, 22(11), 1581-1602.
- *Elliott, J., O'Malley, L., Walker, C., Van Erp, A., Martin, P., Sin Chong, H. et al. (2025). Retention patterns of the public sector nursing and midwifery workforce in regional and rural settings of southern Queensland, Australia: A 12-year retrospective analysis. *BMC Nursing*, 24, 722.

Engelmann, L. (2023). *A critical exploration of the role, value and culture of police learning in Scotland*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Edinburgh: Edinburgh Napier University.

*Ericsson, C. R., Lindström, V., Rudman, A. and Nordquist, H. (2022). Paramedics' perceptions of job demands and resources in Finnish emergency medical services: A qualitative study. *BMC Health Services Research*, 22, 1469.

*Fallon, B. J. and Rice, S. M. (2015). Investment in staff development within an emergency services organisation: Comparing future intention of volunteers and paid employees. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 26(4), 485-500.

Farr-Wharton, B., Xerri, M., Saccon, C. and Brunetto, Y. (2023). Leadership matters to the police: Managing emotional labour through authentic leadership. *Public Money & Management*, 43(5), 415-423.

*Feerick, F., Coughlan, E., Knox, S., Murphy, A., Grady, I. O. and Deasy, C. (2025). Barriers to paramedic professionalisation: a qualitative enquiry across the UK, Canada, Australia, USA and the republic of Ireland. *BMC Health Services Research*, 25, 993.

Fernie, R., Khalil, L. and Hartley, J (2019). *Systematic literature review: Professional learning and development in occupations relevant to policing*. The Open University: Centre for Policing Research and Learning.

Fitzhugh, H., Michaelides, G., Connolly, S. and Daniels, K. (2019). *Mindfulness in policing. A randomised controlled trial of two online mindfulness resources across five forces in England and Wales*. College of Policing, https://library.college.police.uk/docs/college-of-policing/Mindfulness_RCT_report.pdf.

Foley, J., Hassett, A. and Williams, E. (2022). 'Getting on with the job': A systemised literature review of secondary trauma and post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) in policing within the United Kingdom (UK). *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, 95(1), 224-252.

*Gawthorne, J., Curtis, K. and McCloughen, A. (2025). The barriers and enablers to implementing nurse-initiated protocols in the emergency department: A focus group study. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 34(6), 2375-2385.

Grant, K., Heidl, B., Backhaus, C. and Vincent, D. (2024). *Great Expectations! Work and workplace expectations, realities, and retention of police officers in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Institute for Policing Research, <https://www.sipr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Great-Expectations-Final-Report.pdf>.

*Gray, K., Wilde, R. and Shutes, K. (2018). Enhancing nurse satisfaction: an exploration of specialty nurse shortage in a region of NHS England. *Nursing Management*, 25(1), 26-33.

Guo, S., Chen, Q. and Chan, K. L. (2025). Effectiveness of trauma-informed care programs: A meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380251366271>.

*Herrington, V. and Schafer, J. A. (2019). Preparing individuals for leadership in Australasia, the United States, and the UK. *Police Practice and Research*, 20(3), 240-258.

*Hesketh, I., Cooper, C. and Ivy, J. (2018). Leading the asset: Resilience training efficacy in UK policing. *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, 92(1), 56-71.

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (2024). *HMICS Frontline focus – wellbeing*. April, <https://www.hmics.scot/media/a2pnx44v/hmics20240411pub.pdf>.

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (2023). *HMICS thematic inspection of organisational culture in Police Scotland*. December, <https://www.hmics.scot/media/gvjlaos2/hmics20231207pub.pdf>.

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland, and Audit Scotland (2026). *Best value in policing. Joint best value audit of policing in Scotland*. January, https://www.hmics.scot/media/yxvmaju4/nr_260122_best_value_policing.pdf.

*Hobbs, L., Devenish, S., Long, D. and Tippet V. (2021). Facilitators, barriers and motivators of paramedic continuing professional development. *Australasian Journal of Paramedicine*, 18, 1-7.

*Jee, M., Murphy, E., Umana, E., O'Connor, P., Khamoudes, D., McNicholl, B. et al. (2023). Exploring barriers and enablers to simulation-based training in emergency departments: An international qualitative study (BEST-ED Study). *BMJ Open*, 13, e073099.

*King, R., Taylor, B., Talpur, A., Jackson, C., Manley, K., Ashby, N. et al. (2021). Factors that optimise the impact of continuing professional development in nursing: A rapid evidence review. *Nurse Education Today*, 98, 104652.

Lewis, K., Higgins, A. and Muir, R. (2019). *Police workforce wellbeing and organisational development: February 2019*. The Police Foundation, https://www.police-foundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/organisational-development-report_final.pdf.

*Lonne, B., Higgins, D., Herrenkohl, T. I. and Scott, D. (2020). Reconstructing the workforce within public health protective systems: Improving resilience, retention, service responsiveness and outcomes. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 110 (Part 3), 104191.

*Manley, K., Martin, A., Jackson, C. and Wright T. (2016). Using systems thinking to identify workforce enablers for a whole systems approach to urgent and emergency care delivery: A multiple case study. *BMC Health Services Research*, 16, 368.

*Morton, S., Surman, K., Bayliss, R., Storey, H., Gray, E., Gant, A. et al. (2025). FPHC Wellbeing Charter: The 'whys' and 'hows' of the Charter. *Scandinavian Journal Trauma, Resuscitation and Emergency Medicine*, 33, 187.

*Ordon, G., Dewar, L. and Cameron, A. (2019). *Leadership, wellbeing, professional development and innovation for the police front line: An evidence review*. London: Home Office.

Overton, L. (2023). *Learning at work 2023 survey report*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D. et al. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *The BMJ*, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>.

*Phythian, R., Birdsall, N., Kirby, S., Cooper, E., Posner, Z. and Boulton, L. (2021). Organisational and individual perspectives of police wellbeing in England and Wales. *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, 96(1), 128-152.

Police Scotland (n.d.). *Competency & values framework (CVF) for Police Scotland*, <https://policescotland-spacareers.tal.net/vx/spa-1/candidate/cms/Police%20officer%20CVF%20guidance>.

Police Scotland (2025). *Officers & Staff Quarterly Fact Sheets, Quarter 3 – 30/09/2025*. <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.scotland.police.uk%2Fspa-media%2Fuvdae3fz%2Fweb-document-v1-00-september-2025.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>.

Police Scotland (2024). *Strengthening the frontline and reconnecting with communities*. <https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/news/2024/september/strengthening-the-frontline-and-reconnecting-with-communities/>.

Purba, A. and Demou, E. (2019). The relationship between organisational stressors and mental wellbeing within police officers: A systematic review. *BMC Public Health*, 19, 1286.

Randles, R. and Finnegan, A. (2023). Guidelines for writing a systematic review. *Nurse Education Today*, 125, 105803.

*Rankine, M., Weld, N. and Browne, L. (2025). Learning and relationships matter: an exploration of effective professional supervision in an allied health service. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, 39(8), 1772-1790.

*Rawdin, C. (2023). Re-thinking learning and development and well-being in the policing of rape: Insights from a rapid review of comparable public-service occupations. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 17, paad074.

Reio, T. G., Rocco, T. S., Smith, D. H. and Chang, E. (2017). A critique of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model. *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, 29(2), 35-53.

Scottish Government (2025). *Fair and inclusive workplaces*. <https://www.gov.scot/policies/fair-and-inclusive-workplaces/>.

Scottish Government (2023a). *Mental health and wellbeing. Workforce action plan 2023-2025*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2023b). *Strategic police priorities*, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/strategic-police-priorities/>.

Scottish Police Authority (2024). *Police Scotland three-year business plan*, <https://www.spa.police.uk/publication-library/police-scotland-three-year-business-plan-26-september-2024/2030-vision/>.

*Smith, E.C. and Burkle, F. M., (2018). Working towards wellness: Lessons from 9/11 paramedics and emergency medical technicians for Australian Ambulance Services. *Australasian Journal of Paramedicine*, 15, 1-7.

*Smith, R. (2024). Lifelong learning: Exploring inclusive adult education amongst police officers in England and Wales. In: Jones, M. and Jones, D. (Eds.). *Inclusive adult education. Palgrave studies in adult education and lifelong learning*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

*Tyson, J. and Charman, S. (2025). Leaving the table: Organisational (in)justice and relationship with police officer retention. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 25(4), 1016-1032.

*Westera, N. J., Kebbell, M. R., Milne, B. and Green, T. (2016) The prospective detective: Developing the effective detective of the future. *Policing and Society*, 26(2), 197-209.

Williams, E. and Sondhi, A. (2022). A narrative review of the literature on the recruitment of younger police officers in age and in service: What are the implications for the police in England and Wales? *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 16(4), 648-662.

*Wilson, C., Budworth, L., Janes, G., Lawton, R., and Benn, J. (2024). Prevalence, predictors and outcomes of self-reported feedback for EMS professionals: A mixed-methods diary study. *BMC Emergency Medicine*, 24, 165.

*Wilson, C., Howell, A. M., Janes, G. and Benn, J. (2022). The role of feedback in emergency ambulance services: A qualitative interview study. *BMC Health Services Research*, 22, 296.

Appendix: Overview of Peer-reviewed Studies Included in the Systematic Review

Autor	Title	Context and Country	Methodology	CPD Type	Workforce Outcomes Covered	Key Implications
Adhikari et al., 2023	It's ok to be different: Supporting black and minority ethnic nurses and midwives in their professional development in the UK	Nurses and Midwives UK, Scotland	Action Research with mixed methods	Formal and reflective Leadership Development, Mentoring, Reflective Practice	Confidence Feeling valued Inclusive workplace culture Team working Career progression	Collaborative leadership development supports positive workforce outcomes CPD is presented as organisational condition that promotes retention.
Blake et al., 2020	Mitigating the Psychological Impact of COVID-19 on Healthcare Workers: A Digital Learning Package	Healthcare workers UK	Mixed methods	Formal Structured digital learning package including online content and self-directed learning	Wellbeing	Digital learning package can be delivered at scale to support healthcare workers' psychological wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Cooper et al., 2025	Preparing to Prepare: The Process of Transformational Change in Investigating Rape and Serious Sexual Offences in England and Wales	Police UK, England and Wales	Mixed methods	CPD as part of change management	Wellbeing	Time for CPD and wellbeing is regarded as an abstraction from duty and a 'luxury', rather than investment in the officers themselves. The lack of investment in officer CPD had negative effect on officer wellbeing
Cosgrave et al., 2018	An explanation of turnover intention among early-career nursing and allied health professionals working in rural and remote Australia – findings from a grounded theory study	Nursing and allied health Australia (rural)	Qualitative	Formal CPD in a formal sense, including access to training and development opportunities	Turnover intention Satisfaction	CPD as a key factor for satisfaction and turnover intention.

Autor	Title	Context and Country	Methodology	CPD Type	Workforce Outcomes Covered	Key Implications
Coyte et al., 2024	Resilience, posttraumatic growth and psychological wellbeing of paramedicine clinicians: An integrative review	Paramedicine global	Review	None investigated (review) but findings suggested formal psychoeducation early in career or training and then ongoing education and informal (org, climate) support	Posttraumatic growth Resilience Psychological wellbeing	It is recommended that organisations take a proactive role and support clinicians with tailored continuing professional development programs that target the identified coping strategies including active coping, planning, focus on and venting emotions, suppression of competing activities, seeking social support, use of emotional support and behavioural disengagement.
Craven et al., 2022	Factors Influencing Successful Coping among Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) Personnel: Recruiting for Resilience - A Mixed Methods Study	Police and respective students UK	Mixed methods	Formal Referring to induction and early career training, role modelling, mentoring and shadowing	Resilience Coping self -efficacy Depression Anxiety Stress Difficulty in emotional regulation Mindfulness Locus of control Optimism Self-esteem	Resilience and difficulties in emotional regulation predict coping self-efficacy. Qualitative analysis further highlights importance of locus of control and meaningful work to support coping. The study suggests including these in CPD for CSI personnel and students to address retention challenges
Eaton et al., 2021	Designing and implementing an educational framework for advanced paramedic practitioners rotating into primary care in North Wales	Paramedics UK, Wales	Qualitative	Formal Describes a structured, organisationally supported educational framework for Advanced Paramedic Practitioners rotating into primary care including taught education, clinical supervision and feedback	Professional development	The educational framework (combining formal teaching, clinical supervision and feedback) was developed in response to retention challenges to support practitioners undertaking rotational roles and to enable safe practice and professional development across settings. Clear structure protected learning time and supervision were identified as critical to the viability of rotational models. Barriers to learning transfer and practitioner confidence include variable access to supervision, feedback remaining largely informal and undocumented, and workload pressures restricting protected time for learning and reflection.
Elliot et al., 2025	Retention patterns of the public sector nursing and midwifery workforce in regional and rural settings of southern Queensland, Australia: a 12-year retrospective analysis	Nurses and Midwives Australia	Quantitative	Formal Discussed conceptually	Retention	Rural and remote staff - especially full-time and higher-grade nurses - are significantly more likely to leave early. Retention interventions should occur within 12-18 months post-recruitment.

Autor	Title	Context and Country	Methodology	CPD Type	Workforce Outcomes Covered	Key Implications
Ericsson et al., 2022	Paramedics' perceptions of job demands and resources in Finnish emergency medical services: a qualitative study	Paramedics Finland	Qualitative	Formal CPD is discussed indirectly as part of job resources and professional self-actualisation, including professional training, simulation-based learning and annual competency testing	Wellbeing	CPD is not examined directly but expectations around professional competence and development are discussed as job resources (e.g. peer support, coping strategies, opportunities to influence workload, and experiences of professional competence and self-actualisation) and job demands (e.g. high workload, environmental hazards, emotional burden, performance expectations, and a workplace culture emphasising toughness) which shape wellbeing. This highlights that CPD can function as both a supportive (empowering) and stressful (performance expectations) element of work, depending on how it is organised, supported, and experienced within the organisational context.
Fallon and Rice, 2015	Investment in staff development within an emergency services organisation: comparing future intention of volunteers and paid employees	Emergency service Australia	Quantitative	CPD is operationalised as Perceived Investment in Employee Development (PIED), the adequacy and availability of training, and support and recognition)	Intention to stay	Perceived Investment in Employee Development (PIED) is indirectly associated with intention to stay, through its positive effect on job satisfaction. Difference between employees and volunteers: PIED is strong predictor of job satisfaction for employees, while supervisor support and recognition predict job satisfaction for volunteers.
Feerick et al., 2025	Barriers to paramedic professionalisation: a qualitative enquiry across the UK, Canada, Australia, USA and the republic of Ireland	Paramedics UK, Canada, Australia, USA, Republic of Ireland	Qualitative	Formal This paper is about professionalisation and mainly barriers thereof, education and training are framed as key factor	Retention Burnout	Achieving formal title through regulated education is critical for professionalisation. Well defined career pathways and support for education supports retention, reduces burnout and enables stronger professional identity.

Autor	Title	Context and Country	Methodology	CPD Type	Workforce Outcomes Covered	Key Implications
Gawthorne et al., 2025	The Barriers and Enablers to Implementing Nurse-Initiated Protocols in the Emergency Department: A Focus Group Study	Emergency Nurses Australia	Qualitative	Formal A scaffolded approach, incorporating practical and hands-on methods including case studies, scenario-based training, skills stations and simulation exercises, time to practice using protocols outside of the clinical setting, ongoing clinical support	Anxiety	The study examines the implementation of nurse-initiated protocols. Additional workload, stress and lack of competence/knowledge are cited as main barriers. Targeted education acts as enabler and reduces anxiety.
Gray et al., 2018	Enhancing nurse satisfaction: an exploration of specialty nurse shortage in a region of NHS England	Registered nurses and healthcare assistants (emergency departments, paediatrics and cardiology - where shortages are acute) UK, England	Quantitative	Formal Examines satisfaction with CPD opportunities provided through employing organisations	Job satisfaction Teamwork Access to CPD Workplace autonomy	Access to CPD is examined as determinant of job satisfaction. Staff were largely satisfied with teamworking, CPD, more mixed findings around workplace autonomy. Recommendation to work closely with CPD providers to commission appropriate professional development.
Herrington and Schafer, 2019	Preparing individuals for leadership in Australasia, the United States, and the UK	Police leaders UK, Australia, USA	Qualitative	Formal and informal	Leadership as organisational capacity	There is a lack of consistency regarding leadership development across countries. Even where centrally delivered programmes exist, individual organisations prefer to have input into leadership development processes. A key barrier to leadership development is the absence of a spine of developmental intent to which individuals could anchor their development activities leading to ad hoc activities and an overreliance on experience in the ranks. Individual development strategies include seeking out mentoring, formal studies and developing skill sets for leadership roles.

Autor	Title	Context and Country	Methodology	CPD Type	Workforce Outcomes Covered	Key Implications
Hesketh et al., 2019	Leading the asset: Resilience training efficacy in UK policing	Police UK, England	Quantitative	Formal Work-based, classroom-based personal resilience training programme, delivered by external provider	Wellbeing Resilience Resources and Communication Control Work Relationships Balanced Workload Job Conditions	Work-based resilience training is associated with improved wellbeing and resilience among police officers and staff, compared with those who did not receive training within the same organisational context. The findings suggest that resilience training can help employees better manage workplace stressors in policing environments, as reflected in improved perceptions of control, workload, and job conditions in policing environments.
Hobbs et al., 2021	Facilitators, Barriers and Motivators of Paramedic Continuing Professional Development	Paramedics Australia	Qualitative	Formal and informal	CPD participation	Barriers to CPD: time (as CPD is done outside work), cost (CPD sometimes self-funded), limited value or recognition, fear Motivators: Patient safety, career progression, personal enjoyment
Jee et al., 2023	Exploring barriers and enablers to simulation-based training in emergency departments: an international qualitative study (BEST-ED Study)	Emergency Medicine Ireland, Malaysia, UK, China, India, Nigeria, Mauritius, Sudan, Australia, Pakistan, Romania, Singapore, Portugal, Greece, UAE	Qualitative	Formal Simulation-based training	Not specified	This study identifies barriers and enablers when establishing simulation-based training. The central themes in terms of barriers and enablers were local culture, leadership, individual needs, resources and optimisation.
King et al., 2021	Factors that optimise the impact of continuing professional development in nursing: A rapid evidence review	Nurses UK, some evidence drawn from comparable international systems	Review	Formal Explicitly examines CPD as organised, workplace-based professional learning including action learning, coaching, mentoring, leadership development, reflection	Recruitment and retention	The review identifies factors that optimise CPD impact, self-motivation, relevance to practice, workplace learning environments, enabling leadership and a positive workplace culture. King et al (2021) describe a positive association between access to CPD and recruitment and retention, though this is not the key focus of this paper

Autor	Title	Context and Country	Methodology	CPD Type	Workforce Outcomes Covered	Key Implications
Lonne et al., 2020	Reconstructing the workforce within public health protective systems: Improving resilience, retention, service responsiveness and outcomes	Child protection agencies Australia, with reference to comparable contexts	Review	Formal Discusses CPD at a system level, doesn't detail specific CPD interventions	Workforce resilience Retention	The paper argues that workforce development is central to improving resilience and retention. Resilience is conceptualised as a system-level capability embedded into business-as-usual processes rather than individual or reactive responses. CPD is positioned as one component of workforce development, alongside broader reform, organisational practices and policy and governance change, rather than as a standalone intervention for building resilience.
Manley et al., 2016	Using systems thinking to identify workforce enablers for a whole systems approach to urgent and emergency care delivery: A multiple case study	Healthcare (Emergency Departments) UK	Mixed methods	Formal Holistic system incorporating workplace learning, mentoring, leadership support	Retention	The key workforce enablers for whole systems urgent and emergency care delivery identified were clinical systems leadership, a single integrated career and competence framework and skilled facilitation of work-based learning for greater role clarity. Pressures arising from increased workloads and limited resources are diminishing the desirability of careers in emergency medicine and leading to recruitment and retention challenges
Morton et al., 2025	FPHC Wellbeing Charter: The 'Whys' and 'Hows' of the Charter	pre-hospital care (ambulance service, helicopter emergency medical service, British Association for immediate care volunteers, coastguard volunteers, mountain rescue volunteers and other participants) UK	Mixed methods	Formal and informal Suggesting time for study leave, peer support, mentoring, educational and clinical supervision, revision support and resources for CPD	Wellbeing	Four main themes were developed: 1) policies for a good organisation; 2) facilities for a good organisation; 3) support for colleagues in a good organisation and 4) continued professional development, study leave and examination support in a good organisation.

Autor	Title	Context and Country	Methodology	CPD Type	Workforce Outcomes Covered	Key Implications
Ordon et al., 2019	Leadership, wellbeing, professional development and innovation for the police front line: an evidence review	Police UK, England and Wales, some evidence drawn from USA, Australia, Europe	Review	Formal, Informal, & Reflective Conceptual synthesis of CPD, leadership development, and learning environments rather than delivery of a single CPD intervention Includes training programmes, mentoring, peer support, reflective practice, leadership development, organisational learning	Wellbeing Resilience Burnout Engagement Intention to leave PTSD / trauma	Professional development in policing is more effective when it is actively supported by line managers and embedded within routine operational practice, rather than delivered as stand-alone training. The review conceptualises CPD as indirectly supporting workforce wellbeing, resilience, and engagement, with downstream implications for retention. Organisational culture and leadership behaviours mediate the effectiveness of CPD. The review also identifies substantial limitations in the existing evidence base, including a lack of robust longitudinal evaluation and limited evidence relating to non-officer roles, highlighting key gaps for future CPD strategy and research.
Phythian et al., 2023	Organisational and individual perspectives of police wellbeing in England and Wales	Police England and Wales	Mixed methods	Not specified	Wellbeing	Embedding wellbeing requires top-down and bottom-up engagement, i.e. support and buy-in from leaders, aligned policy and practice, personal ownership, responsibility and accountability.
Rankine et al., 2025	Learning and relationships matter: an exploration of effective professional supervision in an allied health service	Public sector healthcare (allied health staff - adults and paediatric physical health services) New Zealand	Mixed methods	Formal Focus on professional supervision	Wellbeing	Effective professional supervision is perceived as psychologically safe space that supported reflection and wellbeing. Constraints on supervision delivery include particularly high caseloads and competing workplace demands, which limited time and consistency for supervision. Enablers of effective supervision include clear definitions of supervision, relational supervisory practice, learning-oriented workplace cultures, and the separation of line management from supervision roles. While retention is not examined empirically, professional supervision is conceptualised to improve retention and workforce resilience.

Autor	Title	Context and Country	Methodology	CPD Type	Workforce Outcomes Covered	Key Implications
Rawdin, 2023	Re-thinking learning and development and well-being in the policing of rape: Insights from a rapid review of comparable public-service occupations	Policing UK, England and Wales as focus, but review includes international papers in English language	Review	Formal and informal Incorporating blended learning, classroom, online learning, videos, mentoring, reflection, active learning placement	Wellbeing	Need to consider specialist content and include soft skills Encourage active and reflective learners, the report highlights an absence of reflection. Need to measure impact of learning and development. Lack of adequate CPD is presented (though not measured) as organisational stressor affecting confidence, self-efficacy and well-being.
Smith and Burkle, 2018	Working towards wellness: Lessons from 9/11 paramedics and	Paramedics and Emergency workers USA but linked to Australian context	Qualitative	Not specified but reads like formal CPD	Wellness/wellbeing	Paramedic wellness requires: 1) understand the workforce and key influences on their health and wellbeing; 2) engaging staff in the development-phase of wellness strategies, 3)avoiding silo-approaches to physical and mental health; 4) providing ongoing CPD, 5) providing tools for effective peer-to-peer communication; 6) including family members in wellness initiatives; 7) including retiring workforce.
Smith, 2024	Lifelong Learning: Exploring Inclusive Adult Education Amongst Police Officers in England and Wales	Police UK, England and Wales	Book chapter	Formal Adult education, UG and PG study supported through bursary scheme, leadership development and researcher-practitioner partnerships	Recruitment and retention	CPD is framed primarily as an intervention in service of professionalisation, leadership development, and evidence-based policing. Currently CPD pathways are inconsistent and untransparent, leaving a need for officers to forge their own path. Critical enablers include organisational culture and leadership practices, while barriers include hierarchical and exclusionary culture with limits participation. Empasis is on inclusive and accessible CPD models to avoid inequality within the workforce with potential implications for retention.
Tyson and Charman, 2025	Leaving the table: Organisational (in)justice and the relationship with police officer retention	Police UK, England and Wales	Qualitative	Not specified	Retention Organisational justice	Reasons for leaving the police force include lack of voice, lack of recognition of skills and experience, and barriers to career development and progression.

Autor	Title	Context and Country	Methodology	CPD Type	Workforce Outcomes Covered	Key Implications
Westera et al., 2026	The prospective detective: developing the effective detective of the future	Police Australia and New Zealand	Qualitative	Formal and informal With emphasis on formal systems for mentoring, flexible and timely CPD, need for broader range of content	Recruitment and retention Technology (link to training on tech-specific issues) Training and development (or lack thereof, or lack of support for this)	Key challenges for future: 1) retention and recruitment of detectives 2) rapid growth of technology 3) training and professional development 4) accountability. Focusing on CPD, findings suggest revisiting methods of learning, including initial training which is perceived as a barrier to recruitment, evaluating relevance of content and including more on-the-job training and evaluation, developing formal mentoring frameworks, and particularly for ongoing professional development officers suggested a formal, accessible system, considering changes in legislation, and enabling development of a broad range of skills irrespective of specialisation.
Wilson et al., 2024	Prevalence, predictors and outcomes of self-reported feedback for EMS professionals: a mixed-methods diary study	Emergency Medical Services UK	Mixed methods	Formal - feedback	CPD Wellbeing	Feedback was perceived to improve personal wellbeing, professional development and service outcomes.
Wilson et al., 2022	The role of feedback in emergency ambulance services: a qualitative interview study	Emergency Medical Services UK	Mixed methods	Formal - feedback	Wellbeing	Participants viewed current feedback provision as inadequate and consistently expressed a desire for increased feedback from a variety of stakeholders Enhancing feedback provision was thought to improve patient care and staff wellbeing by supporting personal and professional development.



SIPR | Scottish Institute
for Policing Research

Edinburgh Napier
UNIVERSITY 



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH