



# **An Evaluation Plan for Neighbourhood Alert**

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## Introduction

The importance of neighbourhood policing and the need for police forces to build strong relationships with communities has never been more evident. In 2019, the previous government announced plans to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers across England and Wales by the end of March 2023 to partly reverse the significant decrease in officer numbers over the previous decade. The current government has announced a further commitment to neighbourhood policing as part of the Safer Streets Mission: the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee is intended to deliver 13,000 extra officers, police community support officers (PCSOs), and special constables in neighbourhood policing roles by 2029<sup>1</sup>. A rapid evidence assessment conducted by the College of Policing in 2018 found that effective neighbourhood policing could reduce public perceptions of disorder, increase trust and confidence in the police, and reduce victimisation. The review also found that “targeted foot patrol, community engagement and problem solving delivered in combination at a local level” was an element in delivering effective neighbourhood policing<sup>2</sup>. Specific policing interventions, such as Clear Hold Build (CHB) and the Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) are predicated on the need for the police and local communities to work together and share information in order to ensure crime is prevented, identified, and resolved.

Andy Cooke, His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary, highlighted in his 2022 annual report that neighbourhood policing is fundamental to the police’s relationship with the public and its ability to prevent crime<sup>3</sup>. However, he also noted that “...many forces don’t collect enough data or enough good-quality data. This prevents them from having a good enough understanding of, among many other things, problems in their communities...”. Neighbourhood policing has been described as the most effective way to build community confidence<sup>4</sup>. Within this context, the VISAV Neighbourhood Alert tool (the NA tool) represents a potentially powerful facilitator for police forces to engage with communities and improve the public’s perception of the police. In order to maximise the effectiveness of the tool, it is critical for policing to understand what positive outcomes and benefits are currently being realised by the police forces using the NA tool, which forces are achieving the greatest positive impacts, and how best practice can be implemented across police forces. A robust evaluation of the NA tool would highlight good practice, identify areas for improvement, and support forces to achieve the best possible outcomes for the public.

### Background and context to the Neighbourhood Alert Tool

The NA tool is a digital communication platform that enables law enforcement agencies and partner organisations to share crime updates, intelligence requests and safety messages with the public. It is designed to improve the flow of timely and relevant information, encourage community

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from the Home Secretary to police and crime commissioners and chief constables on the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, published 10th April 2025 ([link](#))

<sup>2</sup> Neighbourhood policing: impact and implementation. Summary findings from a rapid evidence assessment, Sarah Colover and Paul Quinton, College of Policing (2018) ([link](#))

<sup>3</sup> State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2022 ([link](#))

<sup>4</sup> State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2023 ([link](#))

participation and enhance trust in police. Launched in 2008, the tool is currently used by 35 police forces, alongside national coverage from Action Fraud and Neighbourhood Watch. There are 1.3m registered members, and 12m messages (alerts) sent every month.

NA is a bespoke product built with the aim of supporting neighbourhood teams to deliver efficient and effective community engagement. Once registered, members of the public select their preferences and receive tailored alerts relevant to them and their priority concerns. Forces can share alerts about crimes and local activity as well as updates about upcoming engagement events and incidents. The public can message directly back to the sender of the alert as part of the basic package.

Other features of the tool include inbuilt survey functions, community mapping tools and various data dashboards. These enable forces to listen, respond to and update communities with local priorities; identify and engage better with seldom heard groups; quickly develop and operationalise problem-solving plans based on live data; capture and manage all engagement activity; receive KPI management data; and enhance outcomes in relation to various police operating models and campaigns (e.g. POP, SARA, CHB, PRAP).

The NA tool sends out an annual survey to all registered users. In 2023, the survey was sent to 1,056,457 registered users and 108,690 people (10.3% of all users) responded to the survey. Analysis of the responses identified a 29% increase in public confidence in policing amongst NA users who stated that they felt “listened to” and agreed that the police “understand their concerns”. Of the users that responded, 30% stated that information from the alerts had directly prevented them from becoming a victim of crime. In addition, 63% of registered users stated that they didn’t follow their local force on social media and thus the tool provides an alternative platform for forces to engage with previously unreached communities.

### [An evaluation plan for Neighbourhood Alert](#)

This evaluation plan, in combination with the theory of change (ToC) and outcomes framework, provides a robust and feasible approach to evaluating the Neighbourhood Alert (NA) tool within a policing context. An evaluation of NA will generate, and build upon, the evidence base of the tool’s ability to enhance crime prevention, improve police understanding of crime incidents and methods of deployment, and foster community engagement and trust.

The ToC and outcomes framework were designed and iterated following two workshops and three in-depth interviews with approximately a dozen police officers either involved in implementing the tool in their force or who are involved within neighbourhood policing at a national level. In addition to stakeholder insights, existing VISAV survey data was analysed, comprising 221,310 survey responses collected in annual surveys of NA tool users in 2023 and 2024. This analysis explored potential relationships between the use of the NA tool, crime prevention and public perceptions of the police. Furthermore, strengths and weaknesses of the existing data, including any gaps, were identified to understand how this data can support a robust evaluation, and where additional data capture would be beneficial. Given the availability of pre-existing data and data collection methods

already in place, this evaluation plan builds upon these insights while incorporating additional data collection to strengthen the evidence base, test the hypotheses causal chains set out in the theory of change, and address identified gaps in understanding.

This document includes an overview of the background to the Neighbourhood Alert Tool, the purpose and scope of the evaluation, and key data sources and analytical methods that could be used. This plan provides general, high level considerations for the evaluation and the outcomes framework includes more detailed information on outcomes and how they could be measured and evaluated.

### Evaluation scope

This evaluation plan provides a framework for evaluating the NA tool and its impact on crime prevention and public safety, police understanding of community priorities and concerns, police deployment, and community engagement and trust. The theory of change and outcomes framework have been focussed on understanding the intended outcomes from a policing perspective, though there are additional potential benefits for wider partners (such as Police and Crime Commissioners, Action Fraud, and local authorities) which were not in scope for this evaluation plan.

The focus of the evaluation plan is on the effectiveness of the NA tool as a mechanism for information sharing, intelligence gathering and public engagement. The evaluation plan is not focussed on broader police-community interactions beyond the platform (e.g., direct neighbourhood policing activities) unless they are directly influenced by the information shared via the NA tool (such as knowing how many people are expected to attend an event).

## Evaluation aims

### Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation plan is to set out an approach that would allow a police force or a national stakeholder (such as the College of Policing, National Police Chiefs Council, or Home Office) to assess the impact of the VISAV Neighbourhood Alert tool on key policing and community outcomes. A robust evaluation would extend the evidence base and inform operational improvements including potential future enhancements to the tool. The overarching question addressed by an evaluation is:

What is the impact of police use of the NA tool on:

- Crime prevention and public safety,
- Police understanding and responding to community priorities and concerns,
- The effective use of police resources,
- Engagement and trust between police and communities?

### Research questions

The theory of change details the expected impact of the NA tool on outcomes across a number of strategic areas. In practice, there is considerable overlap between the strategic areas. For example, when a community member provides intelligence on a specific crime incident through the NA tool, that same interaction potentially provides valuable intelligence about broader issues such as emerging trends and general community concerns. This dual-purpose reporting not only helps provide police with intelligence on specific incidents, but also contributes to an understanding of community priorities and provides a method to improve trust within the community by responding to the intelligence provided through the tool.

The key research questions relating to the strategic areas that could be addressed through effective use of the NA tool are outlined below and align to the theory of change and outcomes framework. The key strategic outcomes that the NA tool can support are highlighted in bold.

### *Crime prevention and public safety*

1. Does the implementation of the NA tool lead to an **increase** in:
  - a. Short term:
    - i. Members of the community being aware of (relevant crimes)?
    - ii. Members of the community being fearful of crime? [a disbenefit]
    - iii. Members of the community being aware of crime prevention methods?
    - iv. Police intelligence and evidence relating to specific crime and anti-social behaviour incidents?
  - b. Medium term:

- i. Members of the community taking action to reduce their risk of being victimised?
    - ii. Crime detection?
    - iii. Safeguarding?
    - iv. Arrests?
    - v. Police understanding of the broader crime risks in a neighbourhood?
  - c. Long term:
    - i. **Positive case outcomes?**
    - ii. **Public protection?**
    - iii. **Community perceptions of safety?**
- 2. Does the implementation of the NA tool lead to a **reduction** in:
  - a. Long term:
    - i. **Crime and anti-social behaviour?**

#### *Police understanding and responding to community priorities and concerns*

- 1. Does the implementation of the NA tool lead to an **increase** in:
  - a. Short term:
    - i. Community members sharing their experiences and perceptions of crime-related issues with the police?
    - ii. Community members sharing (non-incident specific) intelligence with the police?
    - iii. Police understanding of non-incident-specific issues for the community?
  - b. Medium term:
    - i. Police understanding of the scale and priority of local concerns?
    - ii. Police visibility in priority areas identified by community members?
- 2. Does the implementation of the NA tool lead to a **reduction** in:
  - a. Long term:
    - i. **Non-crime incidents that affect the community?**

#### *Effective use of police resources*

- 1. Does the implementation of the NA tool lead to an **increase** in:
  - a. Short term:
    - i. Police sign-posting people to relevant organisations when non-crime issues are raised?
  - b. Medium term:
    - i. Effective case progression?
    - ii. Effective targeting of police deployments to areas most at risk of crime?
    - iii. Effective targeting of police deployments to address community priorities?
  - c. Long term:
    - i. **Effective use of police resources?**

2. Does the implementation of the NA tool lead to a **reduction** in:
  - a. Short term:
    - i. Police time spent dealing with non-crime incidents

### *Engagement and trust between police and communities*

1. Does the implementation of the NA tool lead to an **increase** in:
  - a. Short term:
    - i. Police identification and successful engagement with seldom heard communities?
    - ii. Community awareness of policing activity?
    - iii. Community attendance at policing events?
    - iv. Community awareness of who their local police are?
  - b. Medium term:
    - i. Trust and confidence among members of the community who interact with the police?
    - ii. community perceptions that the police force is representative of the community?
    - iii. Community members' understanding of the policing response to crime incidents?
    - iv. Community members seeing their local issues being responded to?
    - v. Community members' understanding of the outcomes of policing activity?
  - c. Long term:
    - i. **Trust and confidence in the police among the community?**

### Current evidence of impact

A structured evaluation would robustly address these questions, accounting for potential confounding factors and ensuring confidence that any perceived impact is real. Some of these research questions have already started to be addressed through independent analysis of surveys conducted in 2023 and 2024. These surveys were distributed to all service users of the Neighbourhood Alert platform with a combined 244,497 responses over the two years (representing approximately 10% of the total population in each year). The results of this analysis provide valuable evidence as to the impact of the tool in several areas, such as community perceptions, police performance, and trust and confidence in policing. A summary of some of the current evidence against each research question area is provided below. The full analytical report is available separately and provides substantially broader analysis of the VISAV annual survey.

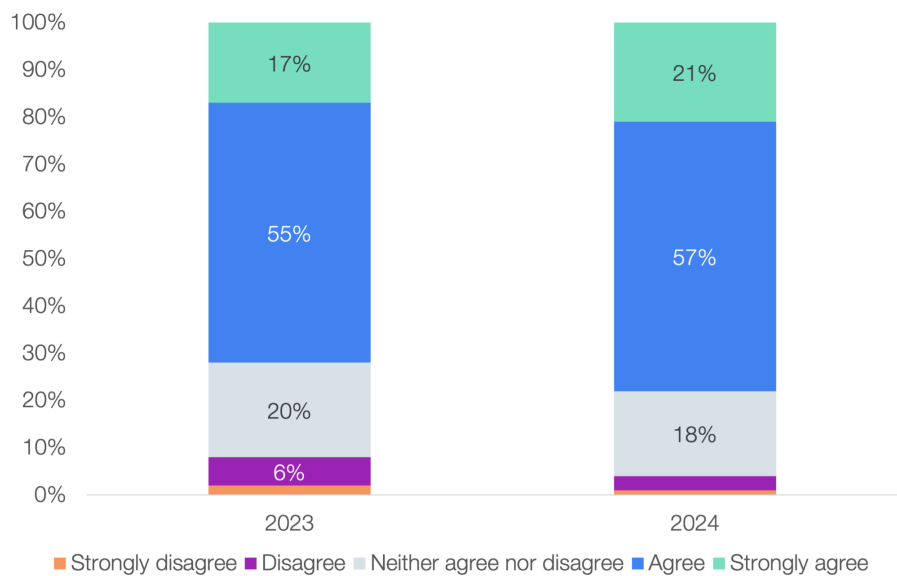
### *Crime prevention and public safety*

Perceptions on the usefulness of the platform in contributing to a user's feelings of safety and ability to safeguard themselves from being a victim of crime were positive. In 2024, 78% of



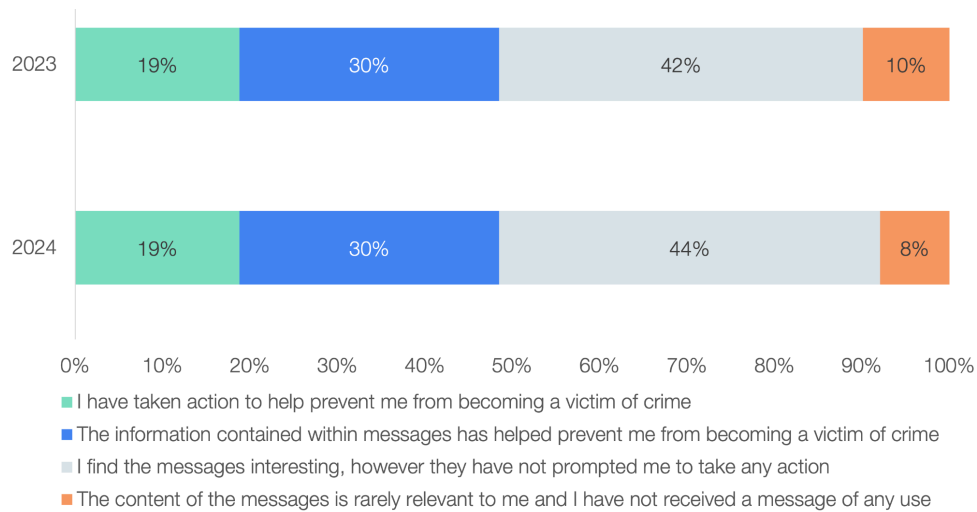
surveyed users of the NA tool agreed that being a member of the platform **made them feel more informed and better at identifying scams, fraud and potential criminal activities**. This has increased slightly from 2023, where this statement was agreed with by 72% of surveyed users. This was reflected similarly across different demographic groups, including gender, age and ethnicity.

*Do you agree or disagree that being a member of this messaging system makes you feel more informed and better at identifying scams, fraud and potential criminal activities?*



In 2023 and 2024, 49% of surveyed users stated that the messages they had received on the platform had either **prompted them to take action or that the information contained within the message had helped prevent them from becoming a victim of crime**. This finding also broadly reflects the patterns within demographic sub-groups.

*Thinking about the messages you have received in the last 12 months, please select the most relevant statement to you*

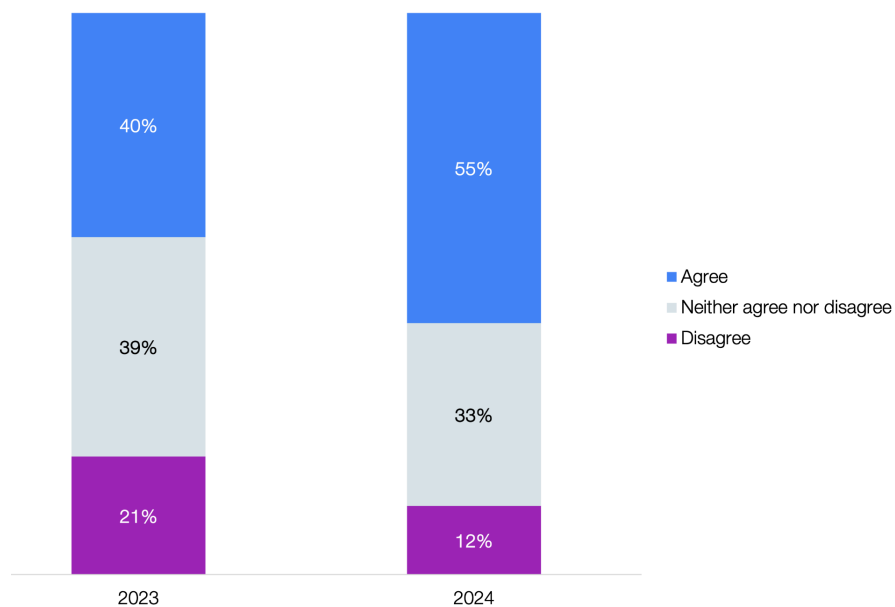


These findings present promising perceptions of changing behaviour and a robust evaluation should seek to further evidence them by assessing whether users of the NA platform do take action and are less likely to be victimised compared to non-platform users.

#### *Police understanding and responding to community priorities and concerns*

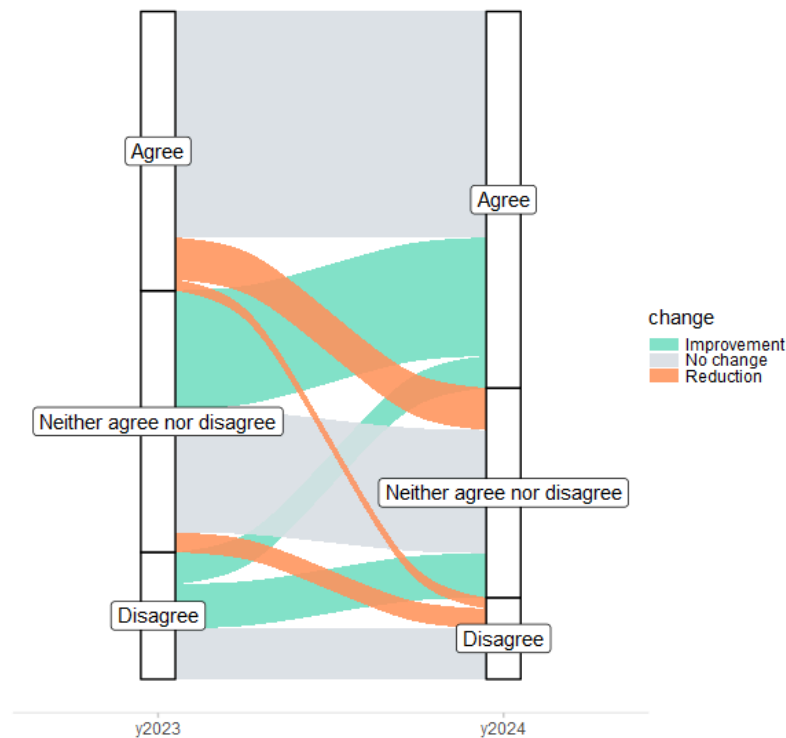
Several questions within the survey data provide evidence as to whether users believe the police understand and respond to community priorities and concerns. In 2024, 55% of surveyed users agreed that the police understand the issues that affect their local community, an increase of 15% from 2023 (40%).

*Do you agree or disagree that the police in your local area understand the issues that affect this community?*



By analysing only platform users who had completed both surveys, it was possible to demonstrate that increased levels of agreement with this statement were driven by improved perceptions among users, and not just new people that have joined the platform.

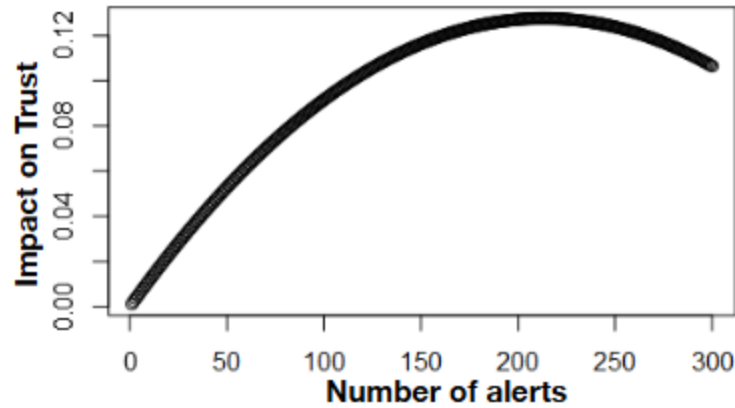
*Do you agree or disagree that the police in your local area understand the issues that affect this community?  
(year on year change amongst users who completed both surveys)*



More direct measures linking membership of the platform with whether a user feels that the police understand their priorities and concerns were also positive. In 2024, 61% of surveyed users agreed that being a member of the platform made them feel reassured that the police understood what matters to them, an increase of 18% since 2023 (43%). Changes in confidence that the police listened to and understood a user's concerns, however, remained similar across 2023 and 2024. In 2024, 22% of surveyed users stated that their confidence that the police listened and understood their concerns had increased, compared to 20% in 2023.

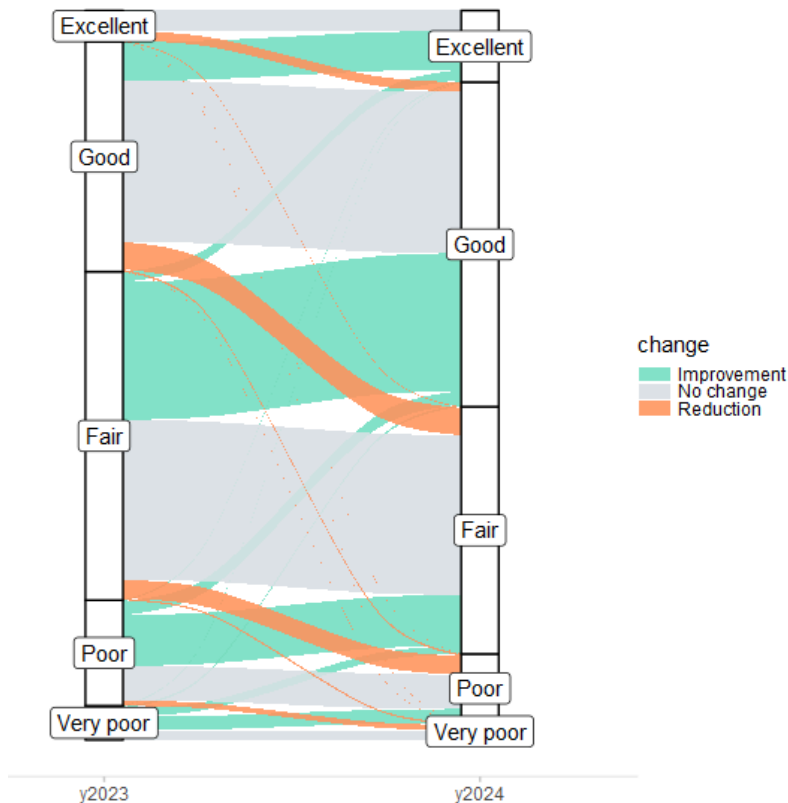
### *Engagement and trust between police and communities*

Trust in the police among surveyed users was high, with at least 80% of respondents in each force who stated that they trust the police "a lot" or "a fair amount". Older, more rural users are significantly more likely to trust the police, as are users who were registered to the platform by the police or Neighbourhood Watch staff and users in forces using the Enhanced Survey tool. A regression model was created (based on the 2024 survey) to understand the relationship between trust in the police and other factors such as the modules in use by the force, demographics, and NA usage. The analysis found that the number of alerts that a user receives has a positive impact on their trust in the police, but that there are diminishing returns and a potentially negative impact once a very high number of alerts (more than 200) are received. For context, the average user received approximately 50 alerts in 2024



Confidence in policing can be measured in a number of ways. The current VISAV survey, asks users about their perception of police performance and whether the police can be relied upon to be there when needed. In 2024, 54% of surveyed users stated that their local police were doing a “good” or “excellent” job, an increase of 20% since 2023 (34%). This change was again driven by users of the platform changing their perception over time - a significant number of users who completed both surveys saw an increase in their confidence in the police between 2023 and 2024. Police forces that used the NA Targeted Engagement module were also significantly more likely to be rated better than forces that did not.

*Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in your local area are doing?*



The analysis also suggested that these perceptions are likely to change gradually. Very few users saw more than a one-level increase or decrease in their perceptions of police confidence, which suggests that significant change will take time. This will be an important consideration in any evaluation of the tool, as a short time span for data collection and evaluation may not be sufficient to identify an effect on public confidence.

A substantial proportion of users saw an improvement in their perceptions about the police having good local connections and working well with the community, particularly moving from neutral to agreeing with the statement.

Perceptions of how the police treat people were positive. In 2024, between 50-60% of surveyed users in forces felt that the police treated people fairly, regardless of who they are, and between 70-80% agreed that the police treated people with respect. Across both measures, non-White users tended to be less positive than White users. Users were also much more likely to trust the NA platform than other platforms. 39% of respondents in 2024 said they always trust information they receive through Neighbourhood Alert compared to just 10% of LinkedIn users who trust information received on LinkedIn and 7% of Nextdoor users who trust information on Nextdoor. At least 50% of users of Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter (X) said they either never or generally do not trust information they receive on those platforms and 55% of respondents do not follow their local police on social media.

## Measuring outcomes

### Outcomes and indicators

Each strategic area has several short, medium, and longer term outcomes that could be measured to either monitor or evaluate the impact of the NA tool. In total, the theory of change identifies 14 short-term, 15 medium-term, and 7 long-term outcomes. For each outcome, at least one indicator has been identified that would allow an evaluation to measure whether the outcome is being achieved, with a substantial majority of indicators being quantitative. The outcomes framework provides individual detail for each of these including:

- What indicators could be used to assess the successful achievement of the intended outcome.
- Whether the indicator would be used to simply monitor the outcome (e.g. setting an expected standard) or to evaluate the impact of using the NA tool to achieve the outcome.
- Experimental or quasi-experimental design options for evaluating the impact of the NA tool in achieving the intended outcome.
- Whether data sources already exist or if new data collection would be necessary to measure the outcome
- Assumptions, enablers, and considerations to support the measurement of an outcome

### Key data sources

This section provides an overview of the key data sources that have been identified to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the NA tool and how the data could be collected and analysed to ensure an evaluation addressed the research questions that have been posed. Data sources fall into four categories of data owner:

- data held by **police forces**;
- data held by **VISAV** (as part of NA tool user and platform management);
- data held by **third parties** such as local authorities;
- and **new data** that would need to be collected for the specific purpose of an evaluation, such as perceptions data for members of the public - both those that use the NA tool and those who do not.

Some data sources, such as a public perceptions survey, would address a wide range of outcomes in a single data capture exercise or through a single dataset that is updated regularly. Other data sources would evidence fewer outcomes but a single data owner may hold several data sets of value. Some research questions are best addressed through a combination of data sources and analytical approaches which would ensure the most robust conclusions can be drawn from the evaluation through the triangulation of findings. For example, the medium term outcome of 'An increase in community members taking action to reduce their risk of being victimised' could be assessed by:

- Surveying users of the NA tool to explicitly ask what, if any, action they have taken explicitly in response to communication received through the NA tool (a question that has been asked through the internal survey as outlined in the previous section)
- Using either an experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation design:
  - Conducting a survey of both a treatment and control cohort that asks about crime prevention actions people have taken.
  - Recording attendances at bicycle marking events and similar events that specifically support the public to reduce their risk of being victimised and comparing treatment and control cohorts.

Depending on the scale, scope, and focus of any evaluations, all or none of these indicators might be included in an evaluation. The evaluation team and any forces engaged in the evaluation should agree which strategic research questions - and which indicators - should be included in the evaluation.

### *Police data sources*

#### *Police crime and incident reports*

Incident reports provide crucial data on crime and non-crime incidents reported within communities, helping to assess whether the NA tool contributes to changes in crime and non-crime trends, in particular, whether the NA tool leads to a long-term reduction in crime and non-crime incidents that affect the community.

One key consideration for an evaluation is the expected trajectory of reported incidents. In the short term, as community engagement increases and awareness grows through the NA tool, a rise in reported crime and non-crime incidents may be observed. This may be a positive indication that more individuals feel empowered to report issues and that intelligence-sharing between the police and the public is improving, particularly in areas where police-community relations were considered poor. However, over time, as police become better equipped to proactively address crime and disorder, we would expect to see an overall reduction in crime incidents, particularly in areas with high NA tool usage. As such, the evaluation could analyse:

- **Short-term effects:** a potential initial increase in reported incidents as awareness and reporting behaviours change
- **Medium-term trends:** a potential stabilisation of reports as police address concerns, improve prevention, and build more intelligence-led responses
- **Long-term outcomes:** a sustained decline in both crime and non-crime incidents as policing strategies improve and crime prevention measures take effect.

Another way to assess effectiveness is by examining and tracking the ratio of crime to non-crime incident reports over time. For example, if proactive engagement and timely interventions are effective, you would expect to see a reduction in serious crimes and repeat victimisation, even if



reports of non-crime incidents (particularly incidents that are the responsibility of other agencies) remain stable.

An important consideration for analysis is the unit and resolution of measurement - specifically, how 'communities' are defined. Geospatial analysis is complex and persistent challenges exist such as the modifiable areal unit problem (MAUP). The MAUP creates an aggregation fallacy that is unique to geographic data. In short, the way in which the boundaries of areas are defined can substantially alter the results of any analysis at the area level. Furthermore, the more granular the resolution the fewer incidents that will be observed or estimated in an area which will reduce the likelihood of any analysis identifying statistically significant changes. Before an evaluation is implemented, preliminary analysis should be conducted to ensure that any analysis at community-level will have sufficient volumes over the evaluation period to ensure valid results can be obtained.

#### Police intelligence data

As well as greater public cooperation with specific incident investigations, the NA tool is used to improve wider information sharing from the public to the police, including issues and risks within the community. To this end, wider police intelligence data systems could be interrogated to assess whether the use of the NA tool leads to a more comprehensive intelligence picture of the local area. The ability to use such data systems would be highly dependent on the structure of the data contained within the system, the types and manner of information storage in such a system, and the exact research questions or operational challenges being addressed by the police force.

Potential avenues for analysis could include a dip sample of case files to assess the number of members of the public who have provided useful information on the case or whether a suspect was identified. Analysis would need to incorporate whether the incident occurred in an area well served by the NA tool

#### Police management data

Police management data consists of data detailing how police resources are allocated and utilised. This includes deployment schedules, the number of officers assigned to various duties, and the time spent on responses. This data can be used to assess whether the NA tool is enhancing operational efficiency and enabling a more strategic use of police resources. For example, if the NA tool facilitates more targeted intelligence sharing, we might see an adjustment in deployment schedules- such as an increased police presence in high risk areas and a reduction in time spent on manual intelligence gathering.

In order to support a Value for Money (VfM) evaluation of the NA tool, costing information should also be collected. The Police Activity Survey (PAS), conducted by the Home Office in 2023 (with the intention to repeat the exercise in 2026) may provide the evaluation with the necessary costings associated with police activities that are affected by the use of the NA tool. If however those data are not available, a VfM evaluation would need to capture police activities and their associated costs. For example, the costs associated with engaging communities to increase usage of the NA tool; the costs associated with dealing with calls for service (through 999 emergency calls or lower

priority engagement, including online); the costs associated with specific incident types including antisocial behaviour. An evaluation would ideally seek to capture these costs for the specific police forces involved in the evaluation and for the specific activities conducted during the evaluation. However, if that is not feasible, other data sources exist that provide some indication of these costs - such as the Greater Manchester Cost Benefit Analysis Database - though the use of these sources would substantially weaken the strength of attribution based on HM Treasury Green Book guidance.

#### *Police engagement (surveys, focus groups, and interviews)*

Local police engagement provides direct insights from officers on how the NA tool influences policing practices, intelligence gathering, and operational efficiency. These engagement tools will assess officer's perceptions of how the tool contributes to crime prevention, public engagement, and workload distribution. This includes asking officers to provide feedback on whether they believe the tool enhances their ability to respond to emerging crime trends in a timely manner, and whether intelligence gathered through the NA tool influences decisions in police deployment. Local engagement should include officers with strategic roles, those with more operational roles, and engage officers that use the tool and those that do not – with the exact engagement strategy used determined by the number of staff in each role, the variability in their activities, and the available resource for the evaluation.

#### *Public engagement (surveys)*

One of the key outcomes that police forces are seeking to achieve with the NA tool is a better understanding of and response to public priorities for the police. Police forces using the NA tool conduct regular 'priorities surveys' with members of the public to inform their deployments and these data (as well as any data collection outside the NA platform) would be key to understanding how the NA tool impacts on police prioritisation and communication back to the public about how the police have or are responding to their priorities.

#### *VISAV data sources*

##### *VISAV management data*

VISAV management data consists of the internal operational and administrative records related to the implementation and function of the tool. This includes:

- User characteristics data such as when users registered with the platform, what modules within the platform they have access to, which providers they are signed up to, their age, gender, and location information.
- User usage data such as activity logs, including how frequently individuals engage with posts or how often administrators (such as the police) send messages.

VISAV management data is a key source for measuring community engagement, awareness, and participation. Specifically, it will be used to monitor whether there is an increase in the number of

people engaging with crime awareness and crime prevention content, the effectiveness of police communication through the platform, and whether seldom-heard communities are being reached. It can also help assess how often police forces use the tool to share updates and whether there is a causal relationship between the levels of engagement and a number of intended outcomes such as awareness of local policing activity and engagement with police events.

Key management data that could be measured during an evaluation are:

1. Count of 'awareness raising' and 'crime prevention posts' posts in neighbourhoods
2. Count of people looking at 'awareness raising' and 'crime prevention' posts
3. The number of replies on 'awareness raising' posts
4. Usefulness ratings from 'awareness raising' posts
5. Number of messages opened/ignored
6. Number of replies by message type
7. Number of hits generated from URL links
8. The proportion of people on the platform from seldom heard communities and the proportion of seldom heard population on the area who are on the app
9. Number of messages to seldom-heard groups
10. Count of community responses to alerts

One of the hypotheses of the evaluation is that with a consistent increase in the number of awareness-raising and crime prevention posts, as well as stable or increasing levels of engagement with these messages over time, then there will be an increase in members of the community aware of relevant crimes and aware of crime prevention methods/tools. Furthermore, if police forces are making frequent and strategic use of the tool, there may be a relationship between engagement levels and improvements in crime intelligence, community awareness, and crime prevention actions taken by the public. Rates of awareness and engagement from those on the app can be compared to rates of awareness and engagement from the general public through a representative survey to determine whether there is a correlation between use of the app and being aware of local crime and crime prevention methods.

#### [VISAV annual user survey data](#)

The VISAV annual survey data provides insight into public attitudes towards policing and crime prevention as a result of being a member of the app. For a full overview of the existing survey data to be analysed during an evaluation, please refer to the outcomes framework.

If the NA tool is working as intended, we would expect to see increased survey responses indicating greater awareness of crime trends, confidence in police responsiveness, and a sense of being informed about local policing activity. A higher proportion of respondents should also report taking proactive steps to prevent crime as a result of receiving NA messages. Additionally, the survey data should reveal whether the tool is successfully engaging seldom-heard communities and whether those groups feel that their concerns are being heard and addressed by police.

Such data should be compared to data from a representative survey of the public, ensuring that the design of these surveys allows for direct comparison with previous surveys hosted on the NA platform. For example, data on the actions that the general public have taken to prevent crime can be compared with survey data on the actions that members on the app have taken to prevent crime, to understand if those on the app are more likely to proactively prevent victimisation.

#### [VISAV evaluation-specific user survey data](#)

The NA tool has the pre-existing ability to host surveys on the platform, providing a direct mechanism for gathering insights from users about their perceptions of local crime and safety. It is a key source of data for understanding changes in community awareness of crime in their area (including perceived levels of crime in their area), confidence in policing, and willingness to participate in crime prevention efforts (such as attending community events). Therefore, the purpose of a survey on the NA platform during this evaluation should be to assess whether the tool is successfully increasing awareness of crime prevention methods and individuals acting on crime prevention advice, an increase in positive perceptions of a police force, and a perceived reduction of crime in their local area.

#### *Third party data sources*

##### [Local authority data](#)

Local authority data comprises records maintained by local government agencies related to community issues such as noise complaints, environmental concerns and other non-crime related incidents that impact public safety and quality of life. This data can be used by an evaluation to evaluate whether the NA tool contributes to a reduction in such incidents. For example, a reduction in local authority complaints in areas with high NA tool engagement may indicate that proactive community policing and improved communication are leading to a safer environment.

##### [Local business sales data](#)

Local business sales data includes information on sales trends for products associated with crime prevention, such as home security devices and alarm systems. This data is valuable for evaluating whether increased community engagement through the NA tool translates into tangible actions by residents to prevent victimisation. If the tool is effective, we may see an uptick in sales of these devices in areas with high NA engagement, reflecting a community that is taking active steps to prevent victimisation. By comparing sales data from local businesses before and after implementation of the tool- and triangulating these findings with survey responses on preventative actions- the evaluation can better understand the broader impact on crime prevention behaviour.

##### [Administrative data from local events](#)

Administrative data from local events encompasses records of community events organised by the police, including attendance figures, event feedback, and other engagement metrics. This data is important for evaluating the effectiveness of outreach initiatives related to the NA tool and gauging community involvement in local policing activities. For example, an increase in attendance at local

events following implementation of the tool, or following advertisement of the event on the tool, may indicate that the tool is effectively increasing community engagement. To enhance an evaluation, feedback forms should include a question on how attendees heard about the events – offering the NA app as one of the options – to directly measure the tools' reach and impact on community engagement.

### *Additional evaluation data sources*

#### *Representative survey of the public*

A representative survey of the public will provide a broader perspective on public attitudes towards crime, safety, and police engagement beyond NA tool users. This survey will be used to compare the experiences and perceptions of those who use the NA tool with those who do not, with the aim of establishing whether engagement with the platform may lead to distinct changes in behaviour and perceptions of safety. To maximise the value of this survey, it should align the questions asked, wherever feasible, with other survey data being used as part of the evaluation such as the VISAV annual user survey and the VISAV evaluation-specific user survey outlined above. All the surveys should ensure that the sample demographics – such as age, gender, geographic distribution – are properly captured and the sample definition for the public survey mirrors those of previous surveys. This consistency in both question design and sample compositions will enable direct comparisons.

#### *Public data on demographics*

Public data on demographics provide detailed information on the local area's composition (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, income levels). This information is critical to ensure that the evaluation samples are representative and to assess whether the NA tool effectively reaches all segments of the community, including seldom-heard groups. By comparing the demographic profiles of NA tool users with public demographic data, the evaluation can identify any disparities in engagement. Such comparisons can help determine if the tool is equitably engaging the whole community and inform targeted strategies to improve inclusion and participation.

#### *Benefit realisation data*

Monetising the benefits of an intervention can be challenging, but there is a growing body of evidence that specifies the monetised benefit of police activities and outcomes. Often these benefits are identified as costs-avoided (e.g. prevented ASB, reduced calls for service) but other benefits such as increased wellbeing for victims or potential victims of crime have been monetised and could be used in assessing the Value for Money of the NA tool. Capturing data on police processes, resource use, and timings could also be valuable for assessing VfM and these would include:

- Response times to calls for service or communication from the public
- Resource needs to engage with members of the public (online or face to face)
- Resources used/time elapsed from case initialisation to charging decision
- Number of individuals police engage with at community events

## Evaluation design options

Given the diverse outcomes and multiple data sources outlined in this evaluation plan, several design options can be considered and it is likely that multiple approaches would be used in any evaluation. For example, it might be unfeasible to conduct a fully randomised control trial, deploying the Neighbourhood Alert tool in some neighbourhoods and not in others whilst maintaining clear distinction between areas (ensuring that areas that have not been actively recruited to join the platform don't still have some level of usage would be challenging). However, specific outcomes could be tested through randomisation such as whether specific events are advertised/promoted through the NA tool and their attendance levels. The following options provide a framework for how an evaluation might be structured and where approaches might be most appropriately implemented.

In devising a final evaluation approach, an evaluation team would need to first agree the scope of the evaluation and which outcomes to measure (quantitatively and/or qualitatively). Considerations that will have an impact on the evaluation methods used would include:

- Whether the evaluation is being conducted in one police force, multiple forces, or on a national scale
- If more than one police force is involved, whether the same police systems and NA modules are used across each force
- If more than one police force is involved, how similar/aligned are they in the processes and engagement material used (e.g. survey questions, frequency, alert wording)

Inconsistency in any of these factors is not necessarily a weakness as it would allow for comparisons to be made and best practice to be identified. It would however make it potentially more challenging to measure and attribute impact to the use of the NA tool if some forces were less effective than others (i.e. a dilution of estimated impact would be seen).

### Sample size

The sample size must be determined to ensure that there is confidence in the findings, and to meaningfully detect statistical differences between groups. A sufficiently large sample size helps ensure that any observed differences in outcomes can confidently be attributed to the NA tool usage. The larger the sample size, the more likely it is that smaller effect sizes can be detected. The more representative a sample is then the more confidence can be asserted that the findings are generalisable to the wider population. Achieving adequate statistical power is essential and should be calculated based on:

1. The desired confidence level for the final analysis (standardly 95%)
2. Any known homogeneity/heterogeneity in the cohorts (for example, if it is anticipated that the outcomes will differ greatly by demographics then sufficient sample size would be necessary to analyse sub-sample groups)

3. The expected or desired level of change that should be observable. For example, a measure that has the potential to see significant volume change even if historically it has remained broadly stable.

Sample sizes should be considered across all data sources that the evaluation intends to use and may inform the length and scale of the evaluation, or alternatively the methods used to evaluate the NA tool.

### [Ethical considerations](#)

An ethical framework should be developed at the beginning of the evaluation and refined throughout the design and implementation. The GSR ethics checklist/template<sup>5</sup> can be used as a framework, which includes guidance on key ethical considerations.

Careful consideration should be given to the impact of providing a service to some people and not others. For example, in order to test the effect of crime alerts a methodologically valid approach would be to randomly allocate incidents to test and control groups and then only send alerts for incidents in the test cohort. This has ethical implications for the potential negative effects upon the control cohort (e.g. these cases may be less likely to receive critical information that leads to a positive outcome) but may be justifiable to ascertain the value for money provided by the NA tool. For example, if the evaluation found that there was no relationship between crime-incident alerts and the outcome of the case then funding for the tool could be better allocated elsewhere.

Where primary data are collected for the purpose of the evaluation, informed consent must be obtained from all participants, with there being clear communication about the nature and purpose of the evaluation, how their data is used, and how they can withdraw from the trial.

### [Experimental design options](#)

#### *Randomised Control Trial*

Randomised control trials (RCTs) enable straightforward investigation of cause-effect relationships with minimal bias and confounding factors. An RCT would involve randomising which communities (or individuals, depending on the designed unit of analysis) have access to the NA tool or receive alerts through the tool. This approach would allow for controlled comparison of outcomes, such as changes in crime detection or community engagement, between treatment and control groups but would require that the NA tool is not already in use for this design to cover the entire evaluation. This approach would allow the evaluation to most clearly define cohorts, streamline analysis, and isolate the impact of the tool on the desired outcomes. However, it is unlikely that a fully

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<sup>5</sup> [GSR ethics checklist](#)



randomised control trial at a force or national level could realistically be designed given the current prevalence of the tool across police forces.

Instead, certain elements of the evaluation could use a randomised design. This would involve randomising the modules and functionality that different communities have access to rather than the overall tool itself. These elements are primarily related to who receives what sort of notifications or access through the NA tool and include:

- Who receives crime incident alerts
- Who receives crime prevention advice
- Who is notified about police events
- Who is sent priority surveys
- Who is informed about the results of priority surveys
- Who is provided further information about police activities
- Who is updated on the outcomes of police activities
- Who is made aware of their local police team

#### Eligibility and randomisation:

For a robust evaluation, it is essential to clearly define eligibility criteria for user groups or communities. Eligibility may be determined based on geographic boundaries, baseline crime rates, or demographic factors (most likely a combination of all three). This ensures that communities included are comparable at the outset, reducing confounding factors.

Once the eligibility criteria is established, individuals should be randomly allocated to treatment and control cohorts. This is known as randomisation. Randomisation can be approached in a number of ways:

1. **Simple randomisation:** this uses a basic form of using randomly generated numbers to assign participants to the the treatment or control groups, which can be done by using random numbers generated by computer software, flipping a coin, or rolling a dice. This is only suitable for larger sample sizes, as this approach can result in uneven groups for smaller samples
2. **Stratified randomisation:** this involves grouping communities by characteristics e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, and then randomly assigning these individuals to treatment or control groups. This ensures that any observed differences in outcomes can be more confidently attributed to variations in tool usage rather than pre-existing differences.

Depending on the scale of the evaluation and the research questions that the evaluation aims to answer, a number of overlapping randomisations might be used - known as a Factorial RCT - whereby communities may be randomised into cohorts based on different intervention levels. For example, cohorts might include:

- Control: No implementation of the NA tool



- Treatment-basic: Only receives incident alerts
- Treatment-prevention: Only receives prevention alerts
- Treatment-priorities: Only receives surveys and feedback on community priorities
- Treatment-basic-prevention: Receives incident and prevention alerts
- Etc.

Randomisation allows an evaluation to control for unknown biases by selecting people into treatment and control cohorts before they receive any intervention. However, randomised control trials require considerable planning and implementation management to ensure the parameters of the trial are maintained throughout the evaluation. The practicality of a randomised design may make it infeasible, particularly within force already using the tool. In that case, quasi-experimental designs (QED) can be used instead. The following section outlines QED options and which outcomes they would be most appropriate for evaluating.

### Quasi-experimental design options

Where an RCT is not feasible, the impact of the NA tool can be evaluated by comparing a treatment group to either a natural or synthetic control group. A natural control group would contain individuals or communities that would be eligible for access to the NA tool but do not do so. This might be because the group is selected from a time period before the tool was implemented or in an area with extremely low take-up of the tool. A synthetic control group would be a combination of other potential control cohorts that, once aggregated, provided a good approximation of the treatment group.

Some QED methods are able to account for known differences between the treatment and control groups when conducting the analysis and these are preferable to other methods, however the selection of an appropriate method is dependent on how people/communities are selected into treatment and control groups (i.e. can the evaluation team control who receives what part of the intervention), whether the control group is contemporary or historic, the data that already exists for measuring outcomes and its structure, and the volume of data available (which relates to the previous section regarding sample sizes).

The Magenta Book outlines a series of questions that can be used to identify the most appropriate approach for a quasi-experimental design. The table below includes these questions and how they apply to the data sources outlined in the previous section. The options at the top of the table provide more robust means of assessing impact by controlling for more bias or potential error in the analysis.

Question	Data sources for which the answer is “Yes”	Method option
Is data available for both treatment and control groups before and after the intervention started?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Police crime and incident data</li> <li>-Police intelligence data</li> <li>-Local authority data</li> <li>-Local business sales data</li> <li>-VISAV annual survey</li> </ul>	Difference in difference
<i>Are people assigned to treatment and control groups based on a cut-off in a pre-intervention measure?</i>	None	<i>Regression discontinuity</i>
Are individual-level data available on known factors influencing participation for both treatment and control groups?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Public engagement surveys (conducted by the police)</li> <li>-Independent public perception surveys</li> </ul>	A matching approach such as propensity score matching or entropy balancing
<i>Can historic data be used to create a ‘clone’ of a group receiving treatment</i>	None	<i>Synthetic controls</i>
<i>Is there any external factor that affects the likelihood of being affected but not the outcomes of interest?</i>	None	<i>Instrumental variables</i>
Is it possible to look at trends before and after the intervention started but no concurrent control group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Depending on the ability to clearly define a robust control group, this could be an option for:</li> <li>-Police crime and incident data</li> <li>-Police intelligence data</li> <li>-(Police management data)</li> <li>-Local authority data</li> <li>-Local business sales data</li> </ul>	Interrupted time series
Can the outcome of interest affect the likelihood of someone receiving the intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local business sales data</li> <li>- Public engagement data</li> </ul>	Time-to-event analysis

### *Interrupted time series or pre-post comparisons*

An interrupted time series analysis uses trends before and after an intervention is implemented to test for a causal change in the outcome following intervention. This should only be used if a robust control group cannot be defined as there are substantial risks to the validity of this approach when using crime data. A key assumption of this approach is that, absent the intervention, the outcomes of interest would have remained the same over time. This is often not the case, particularly when analysing crime patterns. Namely, that crime patterns vary substantially over time and a comparison across forces to times before the NA tool was in use with outcomes since it has been implemented could create a misleading perception of impact. The analysis is also heavily impacted by significant unique events, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

This approach would only be valid for outcomes for which there is a strong theoretical basis to assume would have remained the same without the NA tool being deployed which might include reporting of non-crime incidents to local authorities or business sales data relating to, for example, burglar alarms. This approach is improved substantially through the use of control groups and this is covered further below under difference-in-difference testing.

#### **Dependencies:**

- This requires suitable data from before and after the intervention and consideration for the time periods used.
- The point at which the intervention is implemented needs to be clearly defined to allow for a 'before' and 'after' comparison. The before and after periods do not need to be directly adjacent, however the approach loses validity the more time is elapsed between the treatment and control periods.

*This approach is most applicable for police recorded data (crime, incident, and intelligence), local authority data, local business data, and potentially the VISAV annual survey as in these cases, the data required for analysis already exists and has been collected since before the NA tool was implemented.*

### *Matching approaches*

Matching approaches use statistical techniques to create a comparison group that matches the treatment group on critical factors that have been identified as potentially impacting on the outcome (and participation). For example, the following criteria might be used to match a community that is using the NA tool substantially to one that has little or no usage:

- Historic levels of different crime types and calls for service
- Age, gender, and ethnic make up of the communities
- Non-English speaking proportions of the communities
- Indices of multiple deprivation scores
- Housing prices and availability of civil amenities such as health outcomes

- Relative size and population density
- Any historic understanding of sentiment towards policing

A matching approach requires confidence that critical factors are controlled for that could influence the outcomes being tested. Geographic analysis is also complicated by shifting geodemographic characteristics. For example, changes in geography (new housing, facilities, infrastructure) would significantly damage the validity of findings.

Propensity score matching is an approach that identifies a best match for each subject in the treatment group (whether that is a person or community), thereby building a control group that matches the overall characteristics of the test group. This approach is sometimes challenging if a test-subject has unique characteristics or is a substantial outlier compared to other members of the treatment group - i.e. a suitable control pairing may be difficult to find.

Entropy balancing is another matching technique that matches the overall characteristics of the cohort rather than individual characteristics of cohort subjects. This requires a set of 'balancing conditions' to be applied to the control cohort, which weights the relative contributions of each subject in the control cohort so that it matches the treatment cohort. Using the examples given above, the balancing conditions might require that the control cohort is weighted to match the treatment cohort's aggregated historic crime rate, that the age, gender, and ethnic make up of the whole control cohort matches the whole treatment cohort, etc.

A matching approach can allow for contemporaneous comparisons of outcomes based on historic/static characteristics of potential treatment and control cohorts. This would allow, for example, public perception surveys to be conducted in treatment and control areas and the results compared with confidence that any statistical differences in the results were due to the impact of the NA tool and not inherent differences between communities.

### **Dependencies:**

- In order for the matching process to be valid, data must be available on the characteristics that are expected to affect the outcome. If a critical factor is not included in the matching process, the results can be significantly undermined.
- The characteristics that are used for matching must remain static over the period of the evaluation to ensure the matching remains valid.

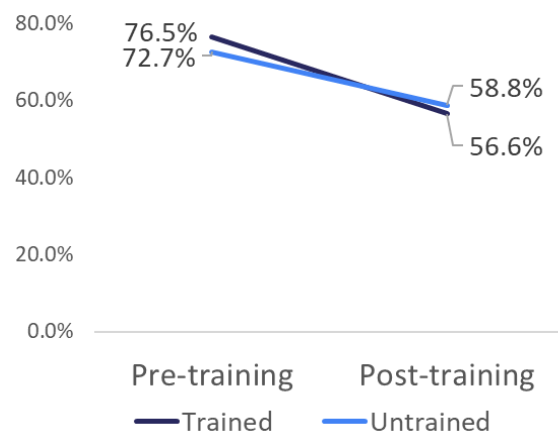
*This approach is particularly applicable to survey data where historic information (such as public perceptions of the police) is not available for both treatment and control groups.*

### *Difference-in-difference testing*

Difference-in-difference testing (DID) improves on interrupted time series or pre-post comparisons by comparing changes in outcomes over time between areas or groups with high NA tool usage and those with lower or no use (the control group). This method helps isolate the effect of the tool by accounting for broader trends.

As an example, the chart below shows the victim withdrawal rate in RASSO cases within a police force in England and Wales before and after a specific training module was rolled out. If a pre-post comparison was conducted, it would show that victim withdrawal declined significantly (from above 70% to under 60%) which would either lead to the conclusion that the training was effective, or confusion over how much the training contributed to the decline (the force was also at the time implementing changes based on findings from Op Soteria). By having a clear comparison group (i.e. those who did and didn't complete the training) a DID analysis showed that although those who received the training saw a slightly greater decline in victims withdrawing from cases, it was not statistically different to those who didn't receive the training.

*Figure: Rate of victim withdrawal in RASSO cases before and after RASSO-focussed training in a police force in England and Wales*



### **Dependencies of DID:**

- In order to perform a valid DID analysis the treatment and control groups need to be well matched. The approaches outlined in the previous section can be applied here.
- There needs to be robust sample sizes for both groups both before and after the intervention. This means that the necessary data is either already being collected or that data collection is set up with sufficient time before the intervention to ensure the 'pre' sample is robust. Based on the data sources for which DID might apply, this is not assessed as a major risk.
- The intervention is well defined. If there is uncertainty over whether everyone in the treatment group received the intervention (or the best version of the intervention) then this will weaken the robustness of the results. It is possible to extend the analysis to incorporate

a measure of 'dosage' - i.e. how well implemented the NA tool is within a given community. This would require data on the prevalence of use by communities. This is assessed as being feasible based on VISAV management data and publicly available demographic data.

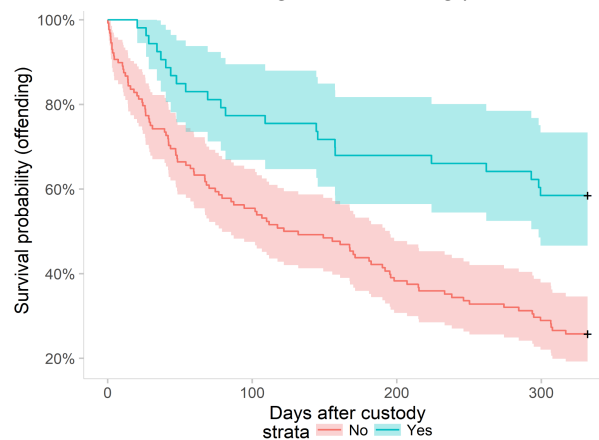
*This approach is also most applicable for police recorded data (crime, incident, and intelligence), local authority data, local business data, and potentially the VISAV annual survey as in these cases, the data required for analysis already exists and has been collected since before the NA tool was implemented. However, it requires a robust control group to be defined, which could represent a risk for an evaluation.*

### *Time-to-event modelling (also called survival analysis or hazard modelling)*

Time-to-events analysis can be applied when the timing of outcomes is dependent on receiving the intervention. For example, this method could be used to evaluate whether the use of the NA tool shortens the time between an incident being reported and a charge being laid (on the assumption that increased community engagement and intelligence sharing leads to an increase in charging). By incorporating the proportion of a community that uses the NA tool as a covariate, the model can evaluate whether increased engagement with the NA tool is associated with faster response times or more efficient case resolutions.

The example below shows the likelihood of a young person re-entering custody after receiving a post-custody support service and shows that those who did receive the service (Strata = Yes) 'survive' (i.e. avoid reoffending) longer - after 90 days, 44% of the young people who did not receive the intervention had been brought back into custody, compared to around 23% of those who received the intervention.

*Figure: risk over time of offending after receiving post-custody support*



### **Dependencies:**

- As with other approaches, a clear definition of when the intervention was received and the timings of outcomes is critical. Taking the example above of the NA tool leading to shorter times between offences being reported and charges being laid, this would require a clear

definition of when the crime was first reported, when the NA tool was live in the community, and when the charges were laid.

*This approach is also most applicable for outcomes that relate to speed or more efficient processes. This is also a potentially important factor for assessing Value for Money by providing an estimate of time saving that can be monetised.*

### Data analysis

Data analysis will depend on the design (experimental or quasi-experimental, and if quasi-experimental whether a control group has been included), the type of data collected for each relevant KPI/metric (e.g. continuous or categorical), when data are collected (e.g. if collected pre and post, at regular intervals, or just post intervention), whether the data meet the assumptions required for the suitable inferential statistical analysis, and whether it is possible and desirable to include covariates in the analysis. Key variables that may have a confounding effect on outcomes have been identified throughout the evaluation plan, the evaluation team will need to consider general factors that would always apply and those that may be specific to a pilot force.

Before any of the above methods can be implemented, the data will need to be cleaned and tested for assumptions for the suitable statistical tests. Identifying the suitability of statistical tests can be done using standard guidance<sup>6</sup>.

Each strategic area and its KPIs/metrics has high level detail on what could be analysed (e.g. count or mean/medians) between treatment and control groups in the outcomes framework. Please note, that depending on how survey answers are structured, they can either be categorical (e.g. bought a burglar alarm, carry a personal alarm, lock windows) or they can be a Likert scale (e.g., strongly agree to strongly disagree), which will determine what type of analysis is suitable based on the type of data collected.

### Monitoring and reporting

Timing of monitoring and reporting of KPIs/metrics will depend on the length of the evaluation period which may be based on the availability of the data, how easy data are to collect, and the funding available for the evaluation. The more short and intermediate outcomes included, the more detailed level of understanding can be achieved in testing the longer-term assumptions on the theory of change. Short and intermediate outcomes are often outcomes in their own right, but they also provide insight into how long-term changes may be occurring. As noted in the section describing current evidence of impact, some longer term outcomes should not be expected to be evident on short time scales. Confidence in policing in particular appears to be a measure that the NA tool can positively impact but over relatively long timescales.

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<sup>6</sup> Wooditch, A., Johnson, N. J., Solymosi, R., Ariza, J. M., & Langton, S. (2021). A Beginner's Guide to Statistics for Criminology and Criminal Justice Using R. Springer. At: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-50625-4>

All results from inferential statistical analysis should include reporting on p-values and effect sizes, for all designs used.

### *Limitations*

Limitations of the design and the potential confounding variables that have not been controlled for (either through design or analysis) will need to be acknowledged in any reporting, whether technical reports or other dissemination of findings.

## **Value for Money evaluation**

Value for money methods compare the benefits achieved by the intervention with the costs associated with implementing and maintaining the intervention. There are two methods of VfM evaluation that are standardly used:

- **Cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA):** which compares the costs of an intervention against alternative methods of achieving the same outcomes.
- **Cost-benefit analysis (CBA):** which compares the costs of an intervention against the monetised benefits that are achieved by it.

Cost-benefit analysis is often a more challenging approach as it requires a method for monetising the outcomes being achieved. I.e. assigning a financial value to the outcome being achieved. In order to do this, the outcomes also need to be quantified through experimental or quasi-experimental designs.

Thus, the inputs to a cost-benefit analysis are:

- The **costs** associated with delivering the intervention:
  - **Capital costs:** one off investments such as new equipment or training
  - **Revenue costs:** the on-going costs of delivering the intervention such as staff salaries, maintenance contracts
  - **In-kind costs:** inputs that are necessary for the project to be successful but which do not generate a direct cost to the organisation implementing the intervention, such as facilities that a third party provides for use free of charge.
- The **outcomes** produced by the intervention, and the value of two types of benefit this achieves:
  - **Fiscal benefits:** The direct savings to the public sector, such as reduced police time responding to incidents or investigating offences
  - **Public value benefits** (also called social and economic benefits): A measure of the overall value of the outcome to society, such as improved perceptions of safety, better social cohesion, better quality of life.

These inputs allow evaluators to calculate the **Net Present Value (NPV)** of the intervention which is a measure of the additional value created by implementing the intervention and calculated as:



$$NPV = \text{present value of the benefits} - \text{the present value of the costs}$$

The Green Book highlights the importance of understanding value for money in commissioned services by stipulating that *“Among projects with similar cost outlays, it is those with a relatively high NPV that should normally be first considered for commissioning.”*<sup>7</sup>

### Evaluation Value for Money for the NA tool

As part of the evaluation design, a rapid review of current monetisation approaches for the benefits identified for the NA tool was conducted. The findings suggest that a CBA approach would be feasible and provide useful information on the value of the tool. The table below outlines the outcomes in the outcomes framework that have previously been monetised or that could be monetised through accepted data collection approaches as outlined in HMT Green Book. The table only includes outcomes that do not lead to further outcomes that could also be monetised to avoid double-counting of benefits.

Outcome	Monetisable benefit	Monetisation source
Reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour	Costs avoided related to the response to and consequences of crime  Costs avoided related to the response to and consequences of ASB	The Economic and Social Costs of Crime, (Home Office, 2018)  The Economic and Social Costs of Anti-Social Behaviour: a review' (London School of Economics and Political Science, 2003)
Reduction in non-crime related incidents that affect the community	Costs avoided to local authorities in responding to non-crime incidents	Scottish Executive (2003): The role of mediation in tackling neighbourhood disputes and anti-social behaviour
More effective use of police resources	Reduced police time taken to prepare a case for charge  Reduced police time taken to respond to non-crime incidents	Primary data collection required using activity-based time tracking.
Increased community perceptions of safety	Increase in Wellbeing Adjusted Life Year value (known as a WELLBY)	Wellbeing Guidance for Appraisal: Supplementary Green Book Guidance, (HM Treasury, 2021)

<sup>7</sup>Supporting public service transformation: cost benefit analysis guidance for local partnerships, HM Treasury, Paragraph 5.5

### Indirect value of the NA tool

As well as direct benefits outlined above, the NA tool presents opportunities to support the evaluation of other interventions. A full appraisal of the value for money provided by the NA tool should look to estimate the costs of data capture that could be off-set through the use of the NA tool to, for example, survey members of the public in areas relevant to other interventions such as Clear Hold Build. Furthermore, as discussed in the introduction, through the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee (NPG), the current government has committed to improving police-community relations and outlined a framework for monitoring this which includes measures of community satisfaction with policing. The draft framework<sup>8</sup> includes measures of:

- Public trust and confidence in policing
- Public perceptions of police legitimacy
- Public perceptions of whether police understand and deal with their local concerns
- Public perceptions of police visibility in local areas
- Up to date neighbourhood policing priorities
- Public awareness of community engagement activities
- Public experience of ASB in their local area
- Public perceptions of ASB in their local area
- Satisfaction with police response to reported ASB

These measures span all five pillars of the NPG but currently will only be measured at a national aggregation. The NA tool's survey capability, previous annual survey data, and substantial user base present potentially a unique opportunity for force-level measurement of this central government endeavour. Any future evaluation should seek to work with the Home Office to understand how they intend to evaluate the NPG, what the cost of such an evaluation might have, and whether the NA tool can be used in such an evaluation.

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<sup>8</sup> [Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee: Performance Framework \(2025\)](#)