

Police education (Pol-Ed) programme

Lesson resources for schools, to teach children and young people about the law, policing and safeguarding.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Independently evaluated
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Community engagement Training and professional development
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Region	North East
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	September 2019
Scale of initiative	National

Aim

- To help improve teachers confidence to deliver a range of lessons as part of the PSHE Curriculum, often involving more challenging and sensitive issues, by providing them with pre-planned lessons, created by subject matter education experts and West Yorkshire police.
- To develop a better awareness and understanding amongst pupils around an array of topics under 3 key areas: relationships, keeping safe and understanding the law.
- To improve relationships with the police by improving children's understanding of the law and processes which police follow.
- To reduce demand on the police through early intervention by better educating children on emerging and ongoing issues, risk and consequences of being involved in crime.
- To support children and signpost them to further help and support if needed.
- To help children keep safe by improving their awareness of becoming a victim or suspect of crime and to help teach, develop and instil key attributes to support children in making informed choices and decisions when faced with challenging situations.

Throughout our lessons, Pol-Ed has carefully considered diversity, equality and Inclusion through the various examples and scenarios provided to children to consider and discuss by ensuring all protective characteristics are considered. We also have lessons specially around these key topic areas.

Future plans for Pol-Ed will involve creating some specific content and resources for SEND.

Intended outcome

Overall, this initiative intends to educate, prevent, and provide early intervention to children and young people by providing a resource that is accurate in terms of policing, yet appropriate to be delivered by education professionals in a safe, secure personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) setting. Specifically, it will:

- **educate children in a wide range of topic areas, including more complex area of policing such as child sexual exploitation, anti-social behaviour and child criminal exploitation.**
- provide lessons that align with the West Yorkshire Police strategy and priorities

In the longer term, it is hoped that benefits of Pol-Ed will become apparent when the children become adults in the community and have a better understanding of the role of the police, insofar that it does not only enforce the law; it is also there to protect the community. This would potentially

yield a benefit in:

- demand reduction
- crime prevention
- greater engagement
- a higher level of trust and confidence in the police

Pol-Ed use quarterly data which breaks down a range of crimes for under 18s and under 12s which allows Pol-Ed to communicate directly with schools, but also work with our Partnership teams, to inform schools of what crimes are happening within their locality and then advise schools to deliver certain groups of lessons in the hope that this will then reduce these crimes over time and less demand for the police.

Description

The Police Education programme (Pol-Ed) is an educational resource created internally by West Yorkshire Police for delivery by teachers. It was initially created in 2019, however it has since gone through various stages of development to establish whether schools would proactively use educational material created by a police service which focuses on law and offences.

West Yorkshire worked with the Diversity, Equality & Inclusion (DEI) Team to ensure that content created is also subject to assessment and is compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

The programme has been keen to mitigate against any adverse impact on the community. Especially in relation to those with protected characteristics relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief sex, sexual orientation in line with the main topics/themes that the force is asking teachers to deliver.

The current team consist of: head Pol-Ed (staff role) business service and a delivery sergeant, communications officer (staff role) and educational content and CPD lead (staff role).

Internal departments consist of teams or colleagues within the organisation who are supporting with the review and delivery of Pol-Ed when required, which include, but are not limited to:

- corporate communication
- digital policing

- legal services
- learning and organisation development
- diversity, equality and inclusion team
- commercial services
- regional procurement

External support includes input from our subject matter experts and relevant partners or stakeholders who support aspects of Pol-Ed on an ad-hoc basis, including:

- PSHE experts
- design and branding
- Huddersfield University
- web developers
- local authority support
- charities

Pol-Ed can be considered part of the West Yorkshire Police strategy of education, prevention, and early intervention. This is achieved by taking information that is open to the public and developing the content in such a context that it is safe to deliver as part of a school lesson. Working with subject matter experts within the PSHE arena, the Pol-Ed programme has credibility. By liaising with learning and organisational development, the new Pol-Ed product has benefitted from an internal QA process where resources are approved by experts in policing to ensure extra credibility.

The curriculum ranges from early years to post-16 age linked to the PSHE Association objectives.

Key policing themes include:

- domestic violence
- violence against women and girls
- gang related crime
- child sexual exploitation
- anti-social behaviour
- road safety
- cyber-related crime

An Equality and Human Rights Assessment has been completed and will be revisited on a continual basis and upon completion of the resource redevelopment process.

Pol-Ed has secured POCA funding for 3 years to, from April 2023 to April 2026 which covers the costs of the Pol-Ed team within the force and external contract and organisational costs to allow Pol-Ed to grow and develop to create both a product and service which can be bought by other forces with the plan beyond April 2026, to be self-funded.

Pol-Ed works closely with partnerships both within the police and external, such as local authorities, educational settings and subject matter specialists to create content and resources and engage schools with onboarding to Pol-Ed.

Evaluation

The team conducted an initial evaluation in 2023 with Huddersfield University to better understand the performance of Pol-Ed, the voice of the customer, and the potential impact of the product in schools.

The aims of the initial evaluation were to:

- determine the take-up of the Pol-Ed package across schools in West Yorkshire
- establish the extent to which Pol-Ed is being used, and how it is being used
- consider the perceived benefits of Pol-Ed
- ascertain the reasons why some schools have not used it, or used it very little, and to consider what changes to Pol-Ed might increase uptake/use
- gather initial information relating to perceptions of impact or change resulting from the use of Pol-Ed

A mixed methodology was used to ensure the aims are appropriately addressed. This took place through quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews and/or focus groups with primary and secondary schools countrywide. Findings submitted regarded perceived and actual benefits of the programme with several learning points identified.

Pol-Ed was found to impact teachers through:

- increased confidence in delivering material (particularly complex or sensitive issues)

- 'quality assurance' of police involvement in materials
- greater student retention of information

Pol-Ed impact on the school community:

- raised awareness of various community issues (e.g. alcohol, cyber-related crime)
- helped break down misperceptions such as those learnt at home
- greater understanding and appreciation of police role in community

Pol-Ed impact on students:

- increased knowledge and awareness of risk
- greater awareness of issues in communities – also demonstrated how to keep themselves safe
- more knowledge of role of police in society, more positive perceptions, 'trusted people'

A second evaluation is currently being undertaken by the University of Huddersfield which will be completed by April 2025 and will consist of the following steps.

- Staff survey with the aim to assess the impact of the new resources for long-term users.
- Larger study based on interviews with staff with both users and non-users. Questions would also be used to allow a process evaluation and explore the impact of recent changes to the Pol-Ed programme and resources.

Surveying a sample of school pupils in high-user schools to explore changes over the course of the academic year (two-stage approach with data collection at the beginning and end of year/topics) to:

- explore knowledge change

Explore attitudinal change in relation to the topics covered in Pol-Ed. Explore (perceived) behavioural changes as relevant to Pol-Ed topics. Comparison of the impacts of the programme (dependent on the sample achieved) using the following.

- Demographic features of pupils (e.g. KS, free school meals, etc.).? • Level or format of use within the school.?
- School characteristics (e.g. OFSTED grade, school type, deprivation measure of school catchment area, etc.).?

- Focus groups/workshops with pupils using participatory and creative methods to explore knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in the three core areas in more detail will aid understanding of the pupil experience of the Pol-Ed materials. This will also provide further detail on which to build future developments or changes.

Overall impact

Through the early stages during the national lockdowns to date, there has been significant interest in Pol-Ed from both policing and education leaders, communities, and political figures, highlighting that this form of proactive early intervention is essential in a young person's development, which has led to growth in registrations.

Impact from the first research study carried out by The University of Huddersfield, completed in June 2023, showed the following outcomes.

- Teachers felt increased confidence in delivering Pol-Ed content, especially around more complex and sensitive topic areas, and knowing that resources are quality assured by subject matter experts and the police. They also felt that pupils retained knowledge from Pol-Ed lessons better.
- The school community felt that Pol-Ed lessons helped to raise awareness of issues within the local community as well as break down misconceptions learnt elsewhere. The community felt there was a much better understanding and appreciation of the role of the police.
- Pupils felt that their knowledge around topic areas and risk had improved as well as issues within their own communities helping them to know how to keep themselves safer. They felt that they gained a better understanding of the role of the police and the processes they follow for certain crimes.

Identifying the full impact of Pol-Ed will happen over a longer period of time. The data sat behind Pol-Eds website allows for Pol-Ed to drill down to lessons and content delivered within schools, wards and districts which can be reviewed against the internal data. This is when we will be able to clearly establish the demand reduction on the police attending and dealing with incidents involving children as a suspect or victim of different crimes.

Learning

It is imperative for neighbourhood and school-based officers to provide advice on the programme to increase understanding of it and stimulate registration.

Schools have many priorities in terms of lesson content, therefore West Yorkshire Police re-designed lesson plans with PSHE specialists to ensure that they comply with PSHE objectives, Ofsted lines of enquiry and policing priorities to maximise impact and usability.

Articulating shared goals and aims has been key with the benefits within education which include:

- reduced trancies and exclusions
- education colleagues feeling empowered
- legal misconceptions and ambiguities clarified
- quality safeguarding
- partnership working
- reduced workload

It was also learnt that there was need for a more focused coverage to address priority areas, such as sexual violence and harassment, child online abuse and the perception that young people have of the police.

All secondary lessons have been designed to be flexible with a 20/40/60-minute delivery model to meet different curriculum needs.

It is important to demonstrate a wide range of assessment opportunities so students can demonstrate their progress.

A hybrid team who have experts both within education and the police as subject matter experts has really helped to accelerate the development of Pol-Ed and ensure the content and materials are accurate, relevant and appropriate.

Partnership teams and local authorities

Pol-Ed works with partnership teams and the local authorities (LA) to help roll out and encourage schools to onboard, use and embed Pol-Ed within their school curriculums however, officers and LA has previously had limited insight to the content on Pol-Ed for teachers to use. As a result, a police force landing page has been added which allows officers to view content delivered in schools and

provides them with a range of supporting tools and information around Pol-Ed so when engaging with schools, they have a better understanding of what Pol-Ed is and how it looks and works. This has allowed for a better joint-up approach and buy in from all.

Content has grown and, from October, Pol-Ed will have content from Early Years, through to Post 16. Topic areas and ensuring for progression across these Key Stages is an ongoing and a continued phase of development for Pol-Ed. This includes being able to respond quickly to new and emerging topics. Pol-Ed is a small, but growing, team so development is limited by capacity although progress and development has happened quickly within the last 8 months.

Communicating about Pol-Ed across the force has been challenging at times due to capacity and availability for meetings, briefings and presentations. To overcome this, Pol-Ed are adding further information and access for forces on the force landing page, the Pol-Ed team are trying to attend as many training sessions as possible to brief and update officers about Pol-Ed to raise awareness and moving forward, we will be adding short videos to the force website and intranet about different elements of Pol-Ed as well as engaging with schools.

Best available evidence

Currently, the [Crime reduction toolkit](#) does not include an intervention similar to Pol-Ed which focuses on teaching children about the law, policing and safeguarding, but it does include the best-available evidence on [social skills training for children](#).