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# The College of Policing stop and search training experiment

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# The College of Policing

## Our role

The purpose of the College of Policing is to provide those working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public, and secure public trust.

We have three complementary functions:

- **Knowledge:** developing the research and infrastructure for improving evidence of ‘what works’. Over time, this will ensure policing practice and standards are based on knowledge, not custom and convention.
- **Education:** supporting the development of individual members of the profession. We set educational requirements to assure the public of the quality and consistency of policing skills, and facilitate academic accreditation and recognition of our members’ expertise.
- **Standards:** drawing on the best available evidence of ‘what works’ to set standards in policing for forces and individuals, for example, through Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and peer review.

## The Home Secretary's commission

“Earlier today I commissioned Alex Marshall, the chief executive of the College of Policing, to review the national training of stop and search with a view to developing robust professional standards for officers on probation, existing officers, supervisors and police leaders. I have asked the College to include in this work unconscious bias awareness training to reduce the possibility of prejudice informing officers’ decisions.”

Oral statement to Parliament, 20 April 2014

# Evidence base

## What works in police training

- College of Policing: What works in training, behaviour change and implementing guidance? (Wheller and Morris 2010)
  - Very limited evidence – training integrated into routine practice is most effective

## Procedural justice

- Promoting procedural justice can help improve public perceptions of contact
  - College of Policing training experiment (Wheller et al. 2013) – positive results

## Unconscious bias

- Stereotyping can affect people's emotions, thoughts & ultimately actions (Glaser 2015)

## Practical legal decision-making

- Officers' knowledge & practices around the law vary (Quinton et al 2000; Quinton 2011)
- Also consulted with: academics, community groups & police practitioners

# Training and evaluation design

- Project funded by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
- Researchers involved to ensure use of evidence in development of training materials
- Training devised as a pilot to test and evaluate whether the training worked and to contribute to the evidence base
  - First ever RCT on what works in training police officers in stop and search

## Challenges

- Lack of evidence of what works in adult training and particularly in police training
- Training designers' ability to translate the limited research into practical training
- Difficult to devise and conduct training or to 'teach' people things that aim to change attitudes and change behaviour, i.e. procedural justice
- Police trainers in UK not subject specialists and delivered locally so can be and are adapted and delivered differently in different forces = inconsistencies?

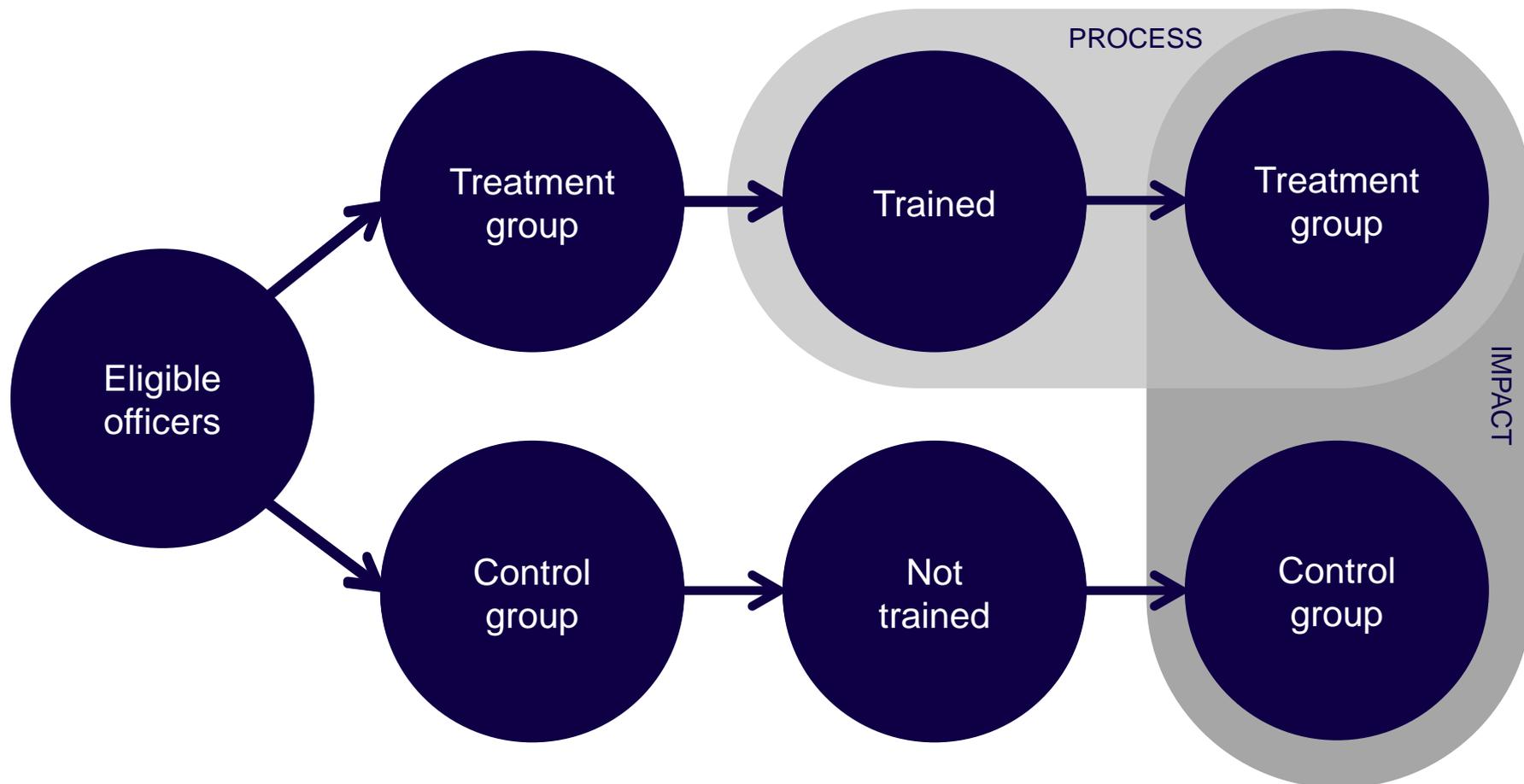
# The design of the pilot training

- **Pre-read and assessment**
  - Written document with foundational knowledge
  - Short multiple choice assessment
  
- **Classroom training**
  - 6-hour classroom session
  - A 'blended approach' to training delivery recommended – e.g. facilitation, role-play, and practical exercises
  
- **Guidance for Trainers** – broad framework rather than prescriptive manual
  - Allowed for forces to modify the training content and method of delivery locally

# The design of the evaluation

	Impact Evaluation	Process Evaluation
Research question	Did the training work?	Why did (or did not) the training work?
Aim	Test effect of the training	Explore the quality and nature of training implementation, and the context and mechanisms of change
Research methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Officer survey X 2</li> <li>- Analysis of stop and search data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observations (of training &amp; patrols)</li> <li>- Survey of trainers</li> <li>- In-depth interviews (officers, trainers &amp; training designers)</li> </ul>

# The design of the trial



# Evaluation results

- Findings of the evaluation will be published in October:  
<http://whatworks.college.police.uk/Research/>
- Lessons learned from the evaluation will be incorporated into the revised training programme to be rolled out to all officers and included in initial police training
- Revised professional practice will also be published to accompany the training and provided updated guidance for officers on stop and search



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# Thank you

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