TOWERCOURT TRAINING

Policy. Research. Legitimacy.

Evidence that speaks for those who have served, and shapes how policing treats its people during service and beyond it.

RESEARCH LEAD

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OUR LENS

Inside fairness shapes outside trust

A twin-track model of legitimacy: how a force treats its own people shapes how officers use discretion with the public. For veterans, the test does not end at retirement. How the service treats those who have left is part of the same story.

01 A Covenant with teeth
Turn the Police Covenant's promises into duties that are measured and enforced.

02 Count what matters
Every UK force to record workforce suicides and suicide attempts.

03 Voice and fair process
Complaints and welfare systems that hear officers, staff and veterans fairly.

04 Accountable technology
Legitimacy impact assessments before AI is used on the workforce or the public.

The research

Citation · synopsis · why it matters to veterans

A WELLBEING, MENTAL HEALTH AND THE COVENANT

Ford, P. (2026f) 'A Covenant Without Teeth: Internal Legitimacy, Occupational Mental Health and the Limits of the UK Police Covenant'. CrimRxiv preprint.

Tests whether the UK Police Covenant gives real protection for occupational mental health, and argues that without enforceable duties and measurement it stays largely symbolic.

Why it matters to veterans: the Covenant is the main national promise to those who serve and have served. Mental-health harm often surfaces after service, so the promise has to hold then too.

Ford, P. (2026g) 'Silenced by Design: Voice, Legitimacy and the Failure of the NHS Mental Health Complaints System. A Documentary and Statistical Analysis of Complaint Handling, Regulatory Oversight and Patient Disproportionality Across NHS Mental Health Trusts in England', *CrimRxiv*, 4 September. doi:10.21428/cb6ab371.fb7c83ec

A documentary and statistical analysis of complaint handling, regulatory oversight and patient disproportionality across NHS mental health trusts in England, showing how the system can shut out the voices of those raising concerns.

Why it matters to veterans: veterans with service-related mental-health needs rely on NHS care. When complaints go unheard, they lose both care and confidence.

B TECHNOLOGY, AI AND FAIRNESS AT WORK

Ford, P. (2026b) 'Automated suspicion: what the Met's Palantir pilot reveals about internal legitimacy', *Policing Insight*, 17 September.

Full paper: 'Automated suspicion: algorithmic workforce surveillance and the erosion of internal legitimacy in the Metropolitan Police Service', SocArXiv preprint.

Examines the Met's Palantir-based workforce monitoring pilot and argues that algorithmic surveillance of staff risks eroding the internal fairness good policing depends on.

Why it matters to veterans: data-driven suspicion can shape careers, misconduct outcomes and reputations that follow officers into retirement.

Ford, P. (2026e) 'Signed, sealed, but not delivered: what the Met's own paperwork reveals about its Palantir pilot', *Policing Insight*, 20 October.

Reads the Met's own Data Protection and Equality Impact Assessments for the pilot. They show the force authorised collecting officers' political opinions and sex life data, went live before its ethics review reported, and never signed off the equality assessment.

Why it matters to veterans: data gathered on officers today can follow them into retirement. Safeguards must be in place before monitoring starts, not after.

Ford, P. (2026c) 'The Copilot Constable: what generative AI is really doing to policing's legitimacy', *Policing Insight*, 29 September.

Full paper: 'The Copilot Constable: generative AI, professional judgement and internal legitimacy in policing', CrimRxiv preprint, 21 September. doi:10.21428/cb6ab371.8068e44c

Considers what generative AI assistants mean for officers' professional judgement and accountability, and the legitimacy risks of handing judgement to tools.

Why it matters to veterans: experience and judgement are what the veteran community carries. This work protects the value of that expertise as policing adopts AI.

Ford, P. (2026d) 'Can a machine say sorry? AI, dispute resolution and restorative justice in police complaints', *Policing Insight*, 3 November.

Asks what role AI should play in police complaints, and proposes a Legitimacy Impact Assessment that tests each use against internal and external legitimacy and procedural justice.

Why it matters to veterans: veterans can be both complainants and the subject of complaints. Any automated process must stay fair, human and accountable.

C INCLUSION AND TRUST INSIDE POLICING

Ford, P. (2026i) 'The missing variable: why police leadership reform keeps falling short', *Policing Insight*, 17 November.

Argues that four reviews over 15 years found the same leadership problem, and that Direct Entry and the Race Action Plan fell short because internal legitimacy and voice were never measured or enforced.

Why it matters to veterans: how leaders respond when someone raises a concern shapes careers and wellbeing in service, and the trust veterans carry afterwards.

Ford, P. (2026a) 'Beyond the business case: reframing EDI in policing as legitimacy infrastructure', *Policing Insight*, 6 October.

Longer version: CrimRxiv preprint.

Argues, drawing on the Casey Review, that equality, diversity and inclusion are core legitimacy infrastructure rather than a business case to be argued for.

Why it matters to veterans: some veterans experienced unfair treatment in service. Treating it as a legitimacy issue supports recognition for them and fairness for those still serving.

Benning, L. and Ford, P. (2026) 'Building Legitimacy from the Inside: A Representative-Bureaucracy Case for Ethnic Minority Familiarisation Programmes in Armed Policing', *CrimRxiv*, 20 August. doi:10.21428/cb6ab371.bb3c6577

Makes a representative-bureaucracy case for familiarisation programmes that open armed policing roles to ethnic minority officers, arguing that fair access to specialist roles builds legitimacy from the inside.

Why it matters to veterans: it shows how fair access shapes whole careers, and where veterans' experience can mentor the next generation.

D SCRUTINY, COMPLAINTS AND PUBLIC TRUST

Ford, P. and Benning, L. (2026) 'Legitimacy Under Two Roofs: Citizen Complaints Against Counter-Terrorism and Firearms Command Policing Compared', *CrimRxiv*, 24 August. doi:10.21428/cb6ab371.4eeb82e4

Compares complaints against the Met's Counter-Terrorism Command (SO15, 2017–19, 455 allegations) and Specialist Firearms Command (MO19, 2020–24, 1,264 allegations) using one framework. Unlawfulness was the main complaint category in both, and both showed a marked 'power few' concentration.

Why it matters to veterans: specialist officers face scrutiny that can last long after service. Fair, evidence-based complaint systems protect them and the public.

Ford, P. (2026h) 'Dialogue, Legitimacy, and the "Power Few": Citizen Complaints Against CT Policing in London'. CrimRxiv preprint.

Examines patterns in citizen complaints against counter-terrorism policing in London and argues that dialogue is central to keeping public consent.

Why it matters to veterans: it draws on the kind of operational knowledge veterans hold, and shows why learning from complaints beats blame.

West, G., Satchell, J., Ford, P. and Serfaty, M. (2024) 'It's not like you're delivering Amazon packages': older victims' perspectives on how the police responded to their crime report. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 18, paae042. doi:10.1093/police/paae042

Drawing on 27 in-depth interviews with older victims who reported crime to the Met, finds that how officers responded appeared to shape victims' psychological outcomes.

Why it matters to veterans: many police veterans are older people themselves. Respectful police contact matters to their own safety and wellbeing.

Frumkin, L. and Ford, P. (2023) 'Collaborative Approaches to Countering Terrorism', in *A Research Agenda for Terrorism Studies*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Sets out how collaboration between academics and practitioners can strengthen counter-terrorism research and practice.

Why it matters to veterans: it models how veterans' operational knowledge can feed research and policy.