Limited evidence for police-involved multiagency partnerships that seek to reduce radicalisation to violence

Multiagency partnerships involving police are often implemented to foster collaboration and reduce radicalisation to violence. There is no clear evidence to support this approach, although a small number of studies provide mixed evidence about the effectiveness of multiagency partnerships for improving collaboration. Some studies offer insights about the costs and ways to best implement multiagency programmes.

What is this review about?
Police multiagency responses to violent extremism aim to reduce radicalisation to violence by fostering collaboration and partnering with other governmental agencies, private businesses, community organisations, or service providers. Police can play a central role in these partnerships because they are often one of the first points of contact with individuals who have radicalised to extremism.

What studies are included?
This review includes studies that evaluated either the processes or impacts of programmes that involve police acting in partnership with at least one other agency and that were aimed at reducing terrorism, violent extremism, or radicalisation to violence.

The systematic search identified 7,384 potential studies, of which five assessed the effectiveness of police-involved multiagency interventions. A total of 181 studies examined how the intervention might work (mechanisms), under what context or conditions the intervention operates (moderators), the implementation factors, and economic considerations. Of the 181 studies, 26 studies met the threshold for in-depth qualitative synthesis to more comprehensively understand the mechanisms, moderators, implementation and economic considerations for police-involved multiagency interventions.

What are the findings of this review?
There is not enough evidence to assess whether these programmes work to reduce radicalisation to violence. Only one study assessed the impact of a police-involved multiagency partnership on radicalisation to violence. This study evaluated the World Organisation for Resource Development Education (WORDE) programme, a Muslim community-based education and awareness programme involving police in some components.
Do multiagency programmes that aim to reduce radicalisation to violence improve collaboration?

There is a small amount of mixed evidence regarding whether these programmes can work to improve collaborations between agencies. Four studies met the inclusion criteria to assess the impact of a police multiagency partnership on interagency collaboration. The first study examined the impact of agency alignment with a Target Capabilities List (TCL). The evidence from this study showed that greater alignment with the TCL was associated with better working relationships, more intelligence sharing, and more engagement with the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), other law enforcement agencies, and fusion centres.

The second study assessed whether the number of multiagency collaborative partners influenced perceptions of clarity and understanding of the strategies and goals of organisations at three levels. Evidence from this study suggests that a larger number of collaborative partners is associated with better understandings of missions, responsibilities and goals at the state and local/departmental level, but not at the federal level, where more partners is associated with less understanding.

The third and fourth studies both examined the impact of grants from the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS). One study found a negative direct relationship between the perceptions of the influence of DHS grants, and homeland security preparedness. The final study found that the receipt of DHS funding did not significantly predict whether or not an agency engaged in at least one form of homeland security innovation.

What processes facilitate or constrain implementation of this intervention?

Twenty-six studies met our threshold for more thorough examination of the processes that facilitate or constrain implementation, as well as providing information about the costs and benefits of the programme. Some themes that emerged include the importance of taking time to build trust and shared goals among partners; not overburdening staff with administrative tasks; targeted and strong privacy provisions in place for intelligence sharing; and access to ongoing support and training for multiagency partners.