

5 OCT 2026

Dear Colleague

Re: Personal Invitation: EMPAC National Symposium 2026 – 19 November 2026

A unique opportunity for Chief Officers, Senior Officers and national criminal justice leaders to examine emerging evidence and help shape the future of prevention, diversion and criminal justice reform.

We are writing to invite you, and where possible, a nominated operational lead, to participate in a unique national symposium examining the findings of an independent evidence review exploring the future role of prevention, diversion and resolution within criminal justice reform. At a time when policing and the wider criminal justice system face increasing demand, finite resources, growing public expectation and an enduring ambition to improve outcomes for victims, an important question remains relatively unexplored.

Recent national reviews, including those led by Sir Brian Leveson and David Gauke, together with the implementation of the Sentencing Act 2026, have established a clear direction of travel for reform. They emphasise greater efficiency, better outcomes for victims, reduced reoffending, improved public confidence and more effective use of resources across the criminal justice system. However, whilst national attention has understandably focused on courts, sentencing policy and case progression, comparatively little attention has been given to a critical area that affects every police force and criminal justice agency.

The majority of criminal justice outcomes do not result in custody. Large volumes of cases conclude through non-custodial outcomes, diversionary approaches, deferred interventions and alternative resolution pathways. Yet there remains limited understanding of how these pathways might best contribute to improved victim outcomes, reduced future offending, stronger public confidence and a more sustainable criminal justice system.

For Chief Officers, this is not simply a policy question. It goes directly to some of the most significant challenges facing policing today:

- Reducing demand and repeat demand
- Improving victim satisfaction and confidence
- Maintaining legitimacy and public trust
- Reducing reoffending and future harm
- Making best use of finite resources
- Supporting neighbourhood and community outcomes
- Delivering meaningful criminal justice reform in practice

Recognising this gap, the East Midlands Policing Academic Collaboration (EMPAC) commissioned an independent evidence review to examine whether earlier intervention, prevention-focused approaches and

structured support can improve outcomes in suitable cases whilst maintaining public confidence, transparency and robust responses to offending. The research has not been commissioned to advocate a predetermined solution. Rather, it has been designed to test assumptions, challenge established thinking, identify risks and opportunities, and provide an evidence-informed basis for future policy and operational discussion.

Importantly, the significance of the emerging findings has led us to take the deliberate decision not to retain this conversation within the East Midlands. Instead, we are bringing together senior leaders from policing, the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, HMICFRS, the College of Policing, criminal justice agencies, academia, service providers and international contributors to collectively examine the evidence and help shape future thinking.

This is not intended to be a conference, nor is it simply the presentation of a research report.

The intention is that the evidence informs the discussion, rather than the discussion driving the evidence.

It is an opportunity for those responsible for policy, governance and operational delivery to engage directly with the findings, challenge emerging conclusions, share experience and help shape what future practice, implementation and reform may look like.

BUILDING ON LEVESON, GAUKE AND THE SENTENCING ACT 2026

Sir Brian Leveson's review of the criminal courts and David Gauke's sentencing review both helped establish a clear direction of travel for criminal justice reform. The Sentencing Act 2026 has reinforced that direction, extending the deferment period from six to twelve months and, for the first time, explicitly recognising victims within the statutory purposes of sentencing. Together, these developments have created a significant opportunity to reconsider how the criminal justice system can achieve better outcomes for victims, improve public confidence, reduce future offending and make more effective use of available resources.

What they did not seek to examine in detail was the operational opportunity that may exist within prevention, diversion and resolution activity, nor the practical realities of translating reform ambition into delivery across policing, prosecution, probation, courts and wider partners.

This symposium also marks an important milestone in the development of the Simon Cole Centre at De Montfort University. Named in honour of the late Chief Constable Simon Cole, whose career was characterised by collaboration, innovation and a commitment to evidence-informed public service, the Centre has been established to help bridge the gap that can sometimes exist between research, policy and operational delivery. Working alongside EMPAC, the Centre brings together those who experience problems, those who research them, and those responsible for delivering solutions.

Its philosophy is simple: **Co-Examine. Co-Design. Co-Deliver.**

Many of the challenges facing policing, criminal justice and wider public services are now too complex to be solved by any one organisation acting alone. The ambition is therefore not simply to generate evidence, but to create practical opportunities for evidence, operational experience and policy insight to come together in support of meaningful improvement. This symposium represents that philosophy in action.

WHY WE ARE BRINGING THIS CONVERSATION TOGETHER

Whilst commissioned through EMPAC, the issues explored through the review are neither regional nor organisational in nature. The questions being examined are relevant to every force, every criminal justice agency and every organisation seeking to improve outcomes for victims and communities whilst operating within increasingly challenging financial and operational environments. We have therefore chosen to broaden this discussion nationally and create an opportunity for the research findings to be shared, tested and shaped by those with responsibility for leading change.

For that reason, we are particularly keen, wherever possible, to welcome both Chief Officers or senior strategic leaders alongside operational or tactical leads. Many of the discussions are likely to influence future policy considerations, governance arrangements and wider reform debates, whilst equally relying upon practical insight from those responsible for delivery. Bringing both perspectives together will help ensure the discussion remains both ambitious and grounded in operational reality.

The symposium will include senior leaders and influencers from across policing and the wider criminal justice system, including:

- Chief officers and Seniors leads
- Police and crime commissioners
- National policing portfolio leads
- Senior Home Office officials
- Senior Ministry of Justice representatives
- HMICFRS
- The College of Policing
- Criminal justice agencies and system partners
- Leading academics and researchers
- Service delivery and innovation partners
- International contributors and practitioners

Few opportunities exist to bring together such a breadth of policing, criminal justice, policy, inspection, academic and operational expertise at a point when views remain capable of influencing future thinking and development. This breadth of representation provides a rare opportunity to examine emerging evidence alongside those responsible for national policy, governance, inspection, operational delivery and future reform. We will also draw upon international perspectives, providing insight into what has worked elsewhere, the conditions that enabled success and the lessons that should be considered when translating evidence into practice.

The breadth of interest generated by this work extends beyond policing and academia. Organisations including Make Time Count and Red Snapper have supported wider engagement activity around the programme, reflecting the significance of the questions being explored. However, the evidence review itself remains entirely independent and has been deliberately designed to test assumptions, challenge established thinking and objectively assess both opportunities and risks.

Most importantly, this is not about promoting a predetermined solution. It is about bringing together those capable of shaping future thinking and exploring what the evidence may mean for victims, communities, policing and the wider criminal justice system.

DATE AND PROGRAMME

We have moved the symposium to 19 November to enable the research programme to conclude fully and allow attendees to receive the findings in advance rather than encounter them for the first time on the day. In advance of the symposium, a series of focused discussions and deep-dive sessions will be undertaken with subject matter experts and practitioners to further strengthen the evidence base and sharpen the questions we explore together.

This conversation is taking place before future approaches have been determined, creating a genuine opportunity for policing and criminal justice leaders to engage with the evidence and help shape future thinking.

The symposium will provide an opportunity to:

- Examine the findings of the independent evidence review
- Explore the implications for policing and criminal justice policy
- Consider the impact on victims, communities and public confidence
- Review emerging national and international practice
- Test assumptions and challenge established thinking
- Share operational experience and lessons learned
- Explore practical opportunities for implementation and reform
- Contribute towards shaping an evidence-informed research-to-practice framework for future consideration

Every part of the day is directed towards the same objective:

1. **Better outcomes for victims**
2. **Reduced future harm and reoffending**
3. **More effective use of resources**
4. **Greater public confidence in criminal justice**

At the heart of the symposium is a simple principle:

Co-Examine – bringing together evidence, expertise and experience to better understand the challenge.

Co-Design – exploring practical and innovative approaches capable of improving outcomes.

Co-Deliver – converting insight into action through collaboration, implementation and learning.

This is research with the system, not research about the system.

The calibre of those already committed to participating reflects both the significance of the issues being explored and the opportunity to influence a conversation that may help inform future thinking across policing and the wider criminal justice landscape.

This is not about identifying what is wrong with the system.

It is about understanding what works, identifying what may now be possible, and bringing together those capable of translating evidence into practical improvement for victims, communities and the wider criminal justice system.

For this occasion, we hope you will join us for what promises to be an important and timely discussion about the future of criminal justice, prevention and partnership working. To secure your place at the conference, kindly register your attendance through this dedicated link: [\[EMPAC National Symposium 2026: Prevention, Diversion and Justice Reform\]](#)

To assist our committee in managing attendance, we kindly request your response by 12th November 2026. We sincerely hope you will be able to accept this invitation and attend this milestone event. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please accept the assurances of our highest consideration.

Yours sincerely



DR PAUL GIBSON

Chief Constable, Lincolnshire Police
EMPAC Chief Constables' Lead



PROFESSOR ROB NIXON CBE QPM DL

Honorary Professor, Founding Chair, Simon Cole
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On behalf of EMPAC, De Montfort University, the Simon Cole Centre and partners across policing, criminal justice, academia and service delivery.

*This work has been made possible through a partnership between **EMPAC** and the **Simon Cole Centre at De Montfort University**, with the independent evidence review and national symposium enabled by **Make Time Count (MTC)**, in partnership with **Accenture** and **Red Snapper**. Together, these organisations have supported this important programme whilst maintaining the independence and integrity of the research and symposium.*



**SIMON COLE
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