

East Midlands Police- Academic Collaboration Sandpit

19th May, 2025 | De Montfort University | 1 Richmond Street



OVERVIEW

This half-day event brings together police professionals and academic researchers across the East Midlands (and beyond) to develop more effective partnerships that deliver real operational value for the police. In today's challenging public service landscape, police forces face increasing demands with constrained resources. This Sandpit creates a space where police and academics can jointly identify priority challenges, develop collaborative frameworks, and co-create conceptual solutions that bridge the gap between research and frontline policing.

FROM COOPERATION TO COLLABORATION

Building a Sustainable Infrastructure for Police-Academia Partnerships, Knowledge Exchange, and Innovation in the Midlands. Stimulating Long-term Responsive, Proactive and Operational Research Impact

The event will be structured around facilitated discussions rather than traditional presentations. Participants will work in mixed groups to map current operational challenges, identify barriers to effective collaboration, and co-create potential solutions. These discussions will systematically explore and document key thematic areas where research can most effectively support frontline policing priorities – areas that will form the foundation for future targeted research engagements. Through these collaborative mapping exercises, participants will identify both immediate challenges that could benefit from rapid academic input and longer-term strategic issues that require sustained research partnership. This dual focus ensures the event delivers both "quick win" opportunities and lays groundwork for addressing complex challenges that require deeper investigation. Rather than presenting a predetermined collaboration model, this event focuses on co-creating approaches that reflect the realities of modern policing and the research capabilities available across regional universities. The Sandpit will emphasize active participation, honest dialogue, and the development of concrete next steps that can be implemented within current resource constraints.



PURPOSE

This Sandpit represents our vision for transforming police-academic collaboration in the East Midlands, moving from sporadic research projects toward sustainable partnerships that directly enhance operational policing. We recognize that in today's resource-constrained environment, police forces need research input that is timely, practical, and aligned with frontline priorities. In bringing together operational officers, police leadership, and academic researchers in a structured yet collaborative setting, we aim to develop a more responsive model for knowledge exchange that delivers tangible benefits to policing. This event is the first step in building a regional infrastructure where academic expertise can be rapidly mobilized to address emerging challenges, where research is co-designed to reflect operational realities, and where insights can be quickly translated into practice. Our vision extends beyond this single event to the creation of an enduring collaborative ecosystem that strengthens police capability, improves efficiency, and ultimately enhances public safety across the Midlands region more broadly.

KEY AIMS

1. **To develop more responsive models for police-academic collaboration** by working together to create frameworks that allow research to be mobilized at the pace required by policing. This includes identifying specific mechanisms for rapid knowledge exchange, establishing clear communication channels, and developing streamlined processes for initiating collaborative projects.

2. The event will explore how existing regional networks like EMPAC can be enhanced to create **more resilient partnerships** that can withstand budget constraints and resource limitations.

3. **To identify specific policing priority areas for academic input** through facilitated discussions. We'll systematically map operational challenges where academic expertise could make a meaningful difference.

4. Working groups will develop initial **concepts for partnerships** that bring academic expertise directly into police organizations to address clearly defined problems, with a focus on projects that demonstrate clear return on investment.

5. To establish more **contextually-sensitive research approaches**.

6. **To create pathways for translating research into practice**. Participants will identify specific mechanisms for moving from research insights to practical application, including training approaches, policy development frameworks, and operational testing methodologies.



FOLLOW-UP AND IMPACT

The Sandpit is not a standalone event but part of a broader initiative to transform police-academic collaboration across the Midlands. Following the event:

1. A thematic report will capture key ideas, priorities, and proposed models for collaboration
2. Findings will inform a regional framework for more responsive collaboration between academia and policing
3. Results will be presented at the Midlands Regional EBP/RIL Conference in June 2025

Event Schedule

Date: Monday 19th May 2025 **Time:** 10:00AM **Location:** 1 Richmond Street,
Conference Room 2,
De Montfort University, LE2 7LQ

Registration <https://buytickets.at/demontfortuniversity5/1679169>

Agenda Items

Time	Topic
◇ 10:00	Welcome and Introduction: Brief overview of event purpose and expected outcomes
◇ 10:15	Setting the Context: The Operational Reality <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frontline perspective: An operational officer's view of policing challenges in 2025• Brief overview of the current landscape for police-academic collaboration
◇ 10:45	Collaborative Challenge Mapping: Facilitated small-group sessions where police and academics jointly identify key operational challenges
◇ 11:30	Coffee Break
◇ 12:00	Breaking Down Barriers: Honest dialogue about institutional obstacles to effective collaboration, Drawing lessons from both successful and unsuccessful collaboration attempts, and Identifying practical approaches to overcome common barriers
◇ 12:45	From Challenges to Solutions: Small groups work on developing initial proposals for addressing priority challenges & Mapping academic capabilities against police needs
◇ 13:30	Next Steps and Commitments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreement on concrete actions following the event• Establishing mechanisms for ongoing communication
◇ 14:15	Lunch + Networking
