Virtual Volunteers - Video

0:08
Good afternoon.

0:09
My name is Doctor Martin Wright.

0:12
And I'm a retired police officer.

0:14
I hold non salaried positions at Bangor University and the University of South Wales.

0:21
But more relevantly, I'm a Police Support Volunteer with Dyfed Powys Police.

0:25
and a specialist volunteer with Tarian Regional Organised Crime Unit in South Wales.

0:30
I want to talk to you today about Virtual Volunteers.

0:34
I'm going to demonstrate the programme to you now.

0:42
So you can now see the University of South Wales Intranet.

0:46
This is the live programme.

0:48
This is available to all students and staff at the university.

0:52
They have to have clearly have a live e-mail address, login details and authentication to access the programme. And this sits on the university's Intranet careers pages wherein the university encourages students to gain work-based learning and work-based experience to better equip themselves for when they graduate from the university.

1:15
Logically, therefore, this is available to all students at any time when they're using any device, when they're in any location.

1:25

And because none of the information posted here by the police is either restricted or confidential, it means any student can volunteer for the police in this way.

1:36
So most importantly, Virtual Volunteers is all about students formally volunteering for the police, a form of volunteering that is now recognised by the National Police Chiefs Council and their volunteering takes the form of problem solving.

1:51
In this particular case, they look at large, complex, intractable crime problems and seek to offer solutions to them.

2:00
However, it doesn't necessarily have to be a crime problem.

2:03
It could be also an issue of policing policy or practice, stop and search, police use of force, etc.

2:10
I'm going to show you an overview now what the programmes look like and then I'll show you one in in more detail.

2:17
So this is the first of the NCVPP programmes.

2:21
The second that they're developing now is around spiking both through vapes and also through alcoholic drinks.

2:30
And these are clearly very focused upon student well-being, student safety as well.

2:35
And the NCVPP are really interested in student feedback around these crimes.

2:41
And this first one here is tech facilitated abuse of women and girls.

2:45
This is the first of my own forces crime problems.

2:48
This is Organised Rural Crime.

2:51
The second is a cultivation of cannabis in abandoned properties.

2:59
And then we have a suite of crime problems posed by the Regional Organised Crime Unit.

3:04
This is artificial intelligence enabled crime.

3:07
Things such as deep fake paedophilic images, romance, fraud and then money laundering.

3:13
Again, this one is focused upon students who are targeted by organised crime groups to allow them access to their UK bank accounts.

3:21
So again, there's aspects here of student well-being and student safety.

3:27
These programmes are gamified programmes.

3:31
The students have to work through each one of the modules in sequence and as you can see, it's all branded police.

3:37
So its police that the students know they are actually volunteering for the force.

3:43
Right at the top of each one of these programmes, there's a bar that tells the students how far they've got through the programme and it's comprised of a whole series of modules.

3:53
So this part here is what we call the reading and research element within the 4R methodology that we use.

4:03
The second section is where the students are asked to answer some really complex questions.

4:09
And this is the second part of the 4R's programme where they have to reflect upon the work they've done so far and then offer up recommendations.

4:18
And then ultimately, if the students complete everything within the game, they're allowed access to this element.

4:24
And this is the prize.

4:26
And as you can immediately see, we always promote opportunities for perhaps more formal forms of volunteering with the police and or careers within the service as well. Because clearly students might have some awareness or understanding of these crimes.

4:42
we also promote both Crime Stoppers and Victim Support and these are additional support programmes in addition to what the university would offer students as a matter of course.

4:55
I'll show you very briefly what this programme looks like.

4:59
So there's always an introductory video given by a Chief Police officer.

5:03
Time does not permit me to play it in full, but I'll give you an overview of what it looks like.

5:10
Helo, fy enw i yw Ifan Charles, Prif Gwnstabl dros dro Heddlu Dyfed Powys.

5:16
Hello, my name is IFan Charles, the temporary Chief Constable of Dyfed Powys Police.

5:23
So the Chief Constable, he is now confirmed as Chief Constable, gives an introduction part in Welsh and then the remainder in English, recognising that we are a Welsh police force and this is a Welsh university.

5:35
So there's an introductory video given to the students, it gives a little bit of context about the force and then the students are asked some questions and these come in the form of both the QR code and a Microsoft forms.

5:47
The data that's generated here goes directly back to Dyfed Powys Police.

5:52
So this data captures not, no details in terms of the individual students names, e-mail addresses, no personal details whatsoever, but does capture all the demographic data that we require as a force to return to the Home Office.

6:09

As I say, each Virtual Volunteer is now formally classified as a PSV, a Police Support Volunteer by the NPCC, so each Virtual Volunteer now can go along to your Pillar 6 returns under the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee.

6:25
All of this data will match the data that you're required to send back to the Home Office.

6:30
And each time that a student submits one of these forms, Dyfed Powys Police will record a nominal 20 hours of volunteering against this particular crime type, in this case Organised Rural Crime.

6:47
I should just flag here that we also ask questions about the students' levels of trust and confidence in the police.

6:54
This is really important because sitting at the heart of Virtual Volunteers is this idea of engagement and participation with the police, seeking to try and address two key concerns.

7:05
One is trust and confidence and the second one is the reduction in the number of individuals who are now prepared to volunteer for the police.

7:13
And that's really important.

7:15
Through the problem solving approach we seek to gain something that we call winning hearts and phones.

7:24
So this element within the game is all about the reading and research, and there's a huge amount of work that the students have to complete when they begin to look at this programme.

7:35
To the extent that a number of degree programmes at the University of South Wales are now embedding these and the other crime problems within the curriculum. And that is clearly driving very large numbers of students to complete the programme.

7:49
For example, in forensic psychology, there's a module at Level 6, the final year, the third year of an undergraduate degree, where we would see something like 120 student submissions.

8:02
The students have to work through all of the materials that I've highlighted here, and there's additional reading and additional research they have to do through the forms of web links here.

8:14
Once the students have completed all their reading and research, they're then asked to actually then think about the actual nature of the crime itself and come up with some suggestions.

8:23
So they have to reflect upon it.

8:26
First and foremost, we provide an anonymised case study.

8:30
This in essence is a victim's statement and in this particular case it's concerning a family based farm in North Wales who've suffered a loss of some agricultural equipment that leads to quite a considerable impact upon the farm and the family itself.

8:46
Then ultimately what we come to is the wicked questions.

8:49
This is where the complexity sits.

8:52
What we have is we have a second video given by the Chief Constable in which the Chief Constable asks the students and encourages the students to actually come up with some suggestions.

9:02
What I'll do is just for a second now, leave up the questions for you to reflect upon them.

9:07
And what I'd ask you to do is actually think about when you're reading these questions, how they begin to talk to different academic programmes at the university.

9:18
So this programme is not just for policing students, not just for criminology.

9:23
We want to engage with as wide a reach of students as possible.

9:29
The analogy that we would use in this particular case is to picture yourselves as police officers sat in the centre circle at, say, at Old Trafford football ground in Manchester.

9:41
And you would have a complex crime problems that you would like to seek answers to, just in the way that the police have traditionally always asked the public for help in trying to prevent or to reduce or detect crimes.

9:57
Every single seat in Old Trafford is now occupied by a student, undergraduates, postgraduates and research students, not just from the UK but from all around the world.

10:07
And those students have a vast range of different life experiences.

10:11
Some may have been victims of crime, some may have been offenders who've served sentences of imprisonment, some may have been unconvicted offenders.

10:22
And those offenders will be studying a vast range of different subjects and you as a police officer are able to ask them either individually or in groups or the entire stadium full of students, what might be their suggestions in terms of preventing, detecting or reducing those crimes.

10:43
It's important to note, however, that when we begin to think about national threats, violence against women and girls, terrorism, knife crime, etc, then we're not just talking to the students at Old Trafford, we're talking to the students at every single football ground in England and Wales.

11:01
So hopefully you've seen from the questions that are in front of you here how we broaden out the nature of the context within the questions to as broad a range of students as possible.

11:11
You may want to know how we come by these problems.

11:14
Well, invariably, the police will suggest a crime problem that's of particular concern to them and the public that they serve.

11:22
They will never start from scratch.

11:24
The police will always have a vast amount of knowledge, data and information concerning that crime.

11:30
And often times all they have to do is anonymize it, make sure there's nothing sensitive, nothing confidential within the information they then share with the university and the University will

11:40
then, for example, review and reflect upon the suggestions made by the police.

11:46

They will add additional materials to it and often times suggest different forms of questions that will broaden out the reach to the student base.

11:57
Once the students have thought about their crime problems, they'll come up with their recommendations.

12:01
And what we ask the students to do is be really creative.

12:05
Not necessarily send an essay through, but think about perhaps TikTok style videos, Instagram quizzes, etcetera.

12:14
We ask the students to be creative; we ask the students to be novel and then upload everything back onto the University Intranet.

12:23
And I should just say that every interaction the student has with these programmes is recorded.

12:30
We know exactly what they've done and we know exactly what they've said in terms of their engagement with the programme through the university intranet.

12:38
All the students suggestions are then screened, screened by academics such as myself with the police background to try and pick out those elements that are new and or novel.

12:49
And it is only those that are sent through to the police.

12:52
We don't send, for example, 120 students essays, we only pick out those files that we think are new or novel.

13:00
However, each and every student at this stage will receive a letter of appreciation from the Chief Constable thanking them for their volunteering hours.

13:12
I should just flag if I can.

13:13
A couple of quick elements.

13:15

We have here a suggestion that came through from colleagues at the University of Greenwich, an opportunity for students to gain a LinkedIn badge.

13:24
They can add this to their LinkedIn profile as a micro credential.

13:29
And then as we saw at the beginning, there is now a second questionnaire.

13:35
This again comes in the form of a QR code and also a Microsoft forms.

13:40
And what we also do is we highlight here again opportunities for full time roles or volunteer roles, back in the force.

13:47
We repeat the questions that you saw at the beginning, questions in terms of trust and confidence in the police.

13:56
Now early analysis of feedback from the student, and I would suggest it is limited, but it's early feedback suggests that 16%, one six percent of students who have engaged in this programme are reporting an increase in trust in the police.

14:15
30% are suggesting that they are now increasingly supportive of the police, 75% of students are now expressing an interest in more formal roles and or careers in the police and 86% suggest that they are making Wales a safer place.

14:41
So in many regards for you.

14:42
That's the Virtual Volunteers programme.

14:45
There's multiple police forces involved with their local universities in these programmes and they're all looking at different crime problems as they develop these initiatives with the police.

14:59
We'd very much look forward to meeting me in due course and we hope this programme has been of interest.

15:05
If in the meantime you wish to receive any further information from ourselves, please contact myself at: martin.wright@dyfed-powys.police.uk

15:14
Thank you.