

Just a chat?
Exploring the use of
police voluntary
interviews with
children in Wales.

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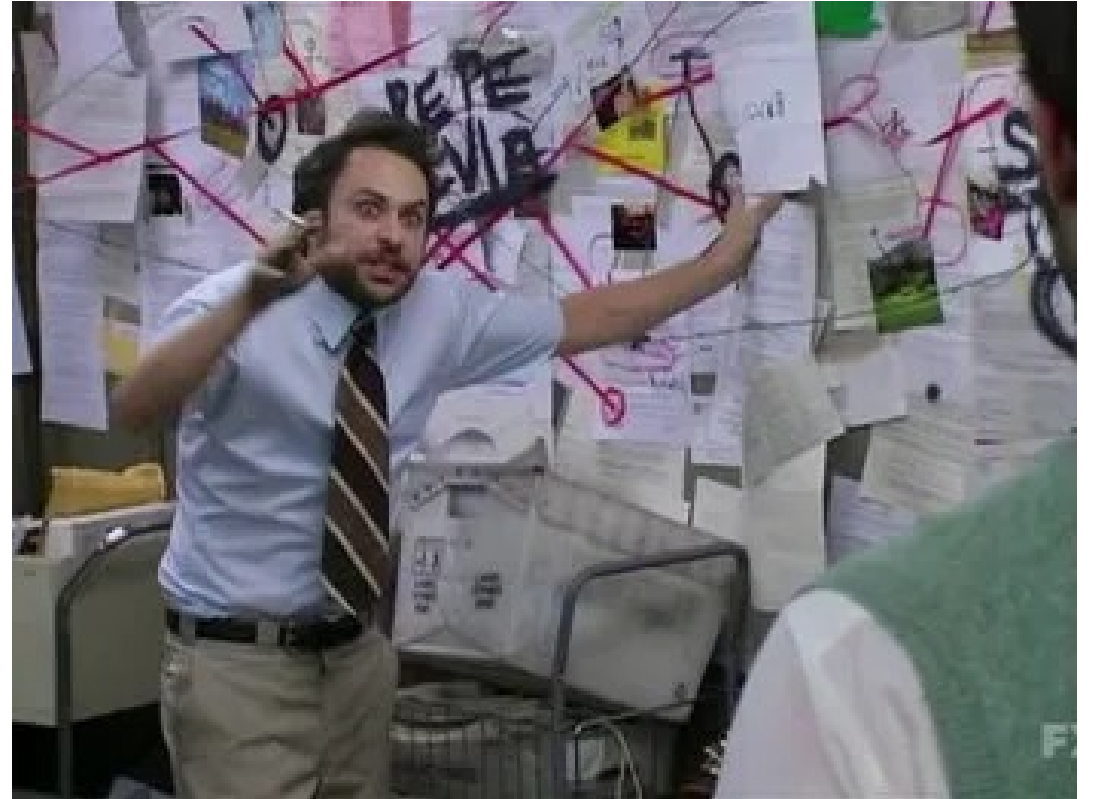
Today's session:

A. The Voluntary Interview (VI):

1. PACE 1984 Codes of Practice
2. The current use of VI
3. Potential Risks

B. My (Forthcoming) Research :

1. Research Questions
2. Research Plan



Guidance:

- Consent to remain (Code C, 3.21 & 3.22)
- Same safeguards apply (Code C, 3.21b)
 - ❑ Must be audio-recorded (Code E, 2.1 & 2.2)
 - ❑ Interviewee must be informed (Code C, 3.21A)
 - ❑ Legal advice and interpreters must be available (ibid.)
 - ❑ Vulnerable interviewees must have an AA (ibid.)
- Interview's purpose is to question the suspect (Code C, 3.21A)

Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) – Code C

Revised Code of Practice for the detention, treatment and questioning of persons by Police Officers

**E
F**

CODE E
Revised
Code of Practice on audio recording interviews with suspects

CODE F
Revised
Code of Practice on visual recording with sound of interviews with suspects

**Code
C**

**Codes
E & F**

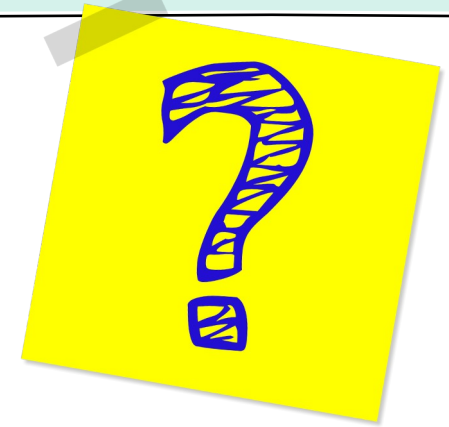
The current use of VIs:

England & Wales: In 2022-23, **1 in 5** voluntary interviews were with children (Bath, 2023).

North Wales: Increasing use of VIs for child suspects but no clear data... (HMICFRS, 2017; HMICFRS, 2022).

•Children **17% of all voluntary attendees**, and only 7% of custody detainees between 2016-17 (Pierpoint, 2020).

Between 2019-2020, **30%** of all police interviews with children were voluntary – only 9 police services (Pierpoint, 2020).



Potential Risks



1. Safeguarding the suspect
 - a. The interviewing officer's discretion. Juvenile *voluntarily* interviewed in the back of police car (Kemp & Hodgson, 2016)
 - b. The presence/absence of an AA (Bath, 2023).

Potential Risks



1. Safeguarding the suspect

c. The AA's understanding of the VI (Kemp & Hodgson, 2016).

d. The presence/absence of a solicitor.

"We do attend Voluntary Interviews but there's a lot where we're not involved."

(in Kemp & Hodgson, 2016; p. 131)

Potential Risks

2. It's not really voluntary though, is it?

▪ One officer told the interviewee:

"You can leave this interview but if at any part I feel the need to arrest you I will do so and produce you before a custody sergeant for your rights and entitlements."

(in Kemp & Hodgson, 2016; p. 132)



My Research Questions

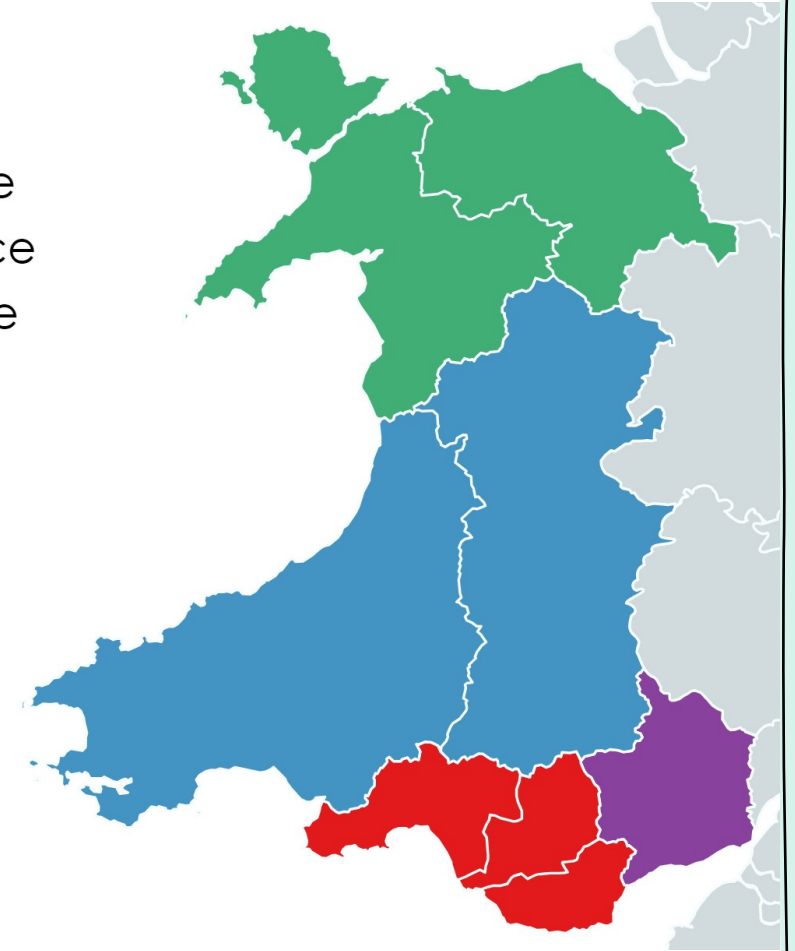
- 1) How many Voluntary Interviews are conducted with people aged 10-17 in Wales?

- 2) Do Voluntary Interviews support the 'Child First' approach in youth justice?
 - a. Are children's voices, needs and entitlements protected during VIs?
 - b. Do they promote diversion and decriminalisation?



My Research Plan

1. Police data
2. Focus Groups & Semi-structured Interviews



References

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YOU ARE NOT IMMUNE
TO **PAW** PAGANDA