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TO BE SEEN AND HEARD: DEVELOPING PHOTOVOICE AS A METHOD FOR THE POLICE TO ENGAGE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN UNDER-SERVED COMMUNITIES

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Police Scotland, the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) joined together to provide significant funding for projects and activities which meet genuine evidence gaps and support Police Scotland to further contact and engagement with all elements of our communities in Scotland, but particularly those groups which are seldom heard.

The term 'seldom-heard groups' refers to under-represented people who may be less likely to engage with Police for a variety reasons (such as race, religion, sexuality, disability, age, and communities isolated through geography or deprivation). A focus on understanding seldom heard groups will place more emphasis on Police Scotland and our collaborators to connect with these communities ensuring their voices are heard; their needs are met; and their perspectives are understood.

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To be seen and heard: developing photovoice as a method for the police to engage with young people in under-served communities

Executive summary

Summary

Photovoice is a research method which has been used to work with people in a variety of circumstances to try and maximise engagement and amplify their voices. We sought to understand whether and how photovoice would engage young people to identify places and spaces where their voices are heard or ignored. Our project in Wallacetown, Ayr with the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit identified a number of opportunities and challenges to be considered when using photovoice. Practical issues were encountered with recruiting and engaging participants as well as protecting participant confidentiality with the cameras. Photovoice project participants should feel some ownership of the project, which means a rigorous consent process is needed, especially if under 16 year olds are participating. It is important for participants to understand and agree with how the photos and interview transcripts will be used and how the police are involved. Interviews about the photos taken can cause distress, and there can be risks related to who, what or where the photographers capture, therefore measures are needed to protect participants.

We found that those who chose to participate welcomed the creative opportunity to be heard by the police. The photos often relate to issues of concern in the community (crime, antisocial behaviour, environmental issues, etc.), they can be stark and photovoice allows a way of showing what is of concern in a way that might not be elucidated from surveys or focus groups. It therefore is a way of meaningfully engaging with participants which encourages their creativity and allows their voice to be heard which will help make the project more likely to be a success.

Twelve participants took part in the project, all of whom were female aged 14 to 25 years. They were asked to take photos in response to this question: What makes you feel heard or ignored in Wallacetown? They took over 200 photos, and 7 participants took part in interviews to discuss the photographs they took. There were four themes across the photos and interviews:

1. Safety
2. People
3. The Police
4. Positive aspects of Wallacetown

These four themes were interrelated but illustrated that there were some fundamental issues linking a sense of belonging to a community with the ability or desire to feel heard. Safety was not just about the other people in the community, but the environment making this a combined police, local authority and community responsibility. The experience of being done to by the 'Council' was reported as being similar to experiencing antisocial behaviour from other residents, increasing someone's sense of not belonging or feeling part of the community.

These were topics which may not often be discussed with the police but which were facilitated by the photovoice method. With the interviews being conducted by the police, it was felt that the photovoice method enabled a different kind of conversation with the community. Particularly making it possible to see the community perspective. These insights might support more work in collaboration with communities hopefully supporting more positive change.

The photos will now be shared widely as well as with Wallacetown as stark illustrations of being heard.

Recommendations for policy or practice:

1. Photovoice is a valuable method for use on specific projects, where the police want to hear about a specific topic or from a specific group.
2. Involving researchers as part of the process is probably necessary to ensure the ethics and rigor of the project.
3. Photovoice is unlikely to work where the relationship between the police and community is particularly difficult.
4. Photovoice probably works best over shorter periods of time (days or weeks), but this requires that digital photography be used, so the photos are quickly available for the interviews.

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Title

To be seen and heard: developing photovoice as a method for the police to engage with young people in under-served communities

1. Introduction

Photovoice is a research method that was developed in the early 1990s by two researchers working on women's health in China. It was inspired by photojournalism methods and is grounded in theory around feminism and empowerment. It is a participatory research method which the creators described as having the following goals¹:

- 1) to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns,
- 2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and
- 3) to reach policymakers. (p. 369)

Photovoice has been widely used in community and international development as well as public health and education, as it is recognised as a valuable approach to learning from and about 'seldom heard' communities. The aim of this project was to support the police in adopting photovoice as an approach to engage young people in an area impacted by significant inequality and help understand the places and people that matter to them. The focus on this population group aligned with the findings of the Your Police 2020/2021 survey where both children and young people (aged 10-29 years) and people living in neighbourhoods in quintiles 1 and 2 (most deprived) of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) were identified as 'seldom heard' voices. Working with the community of Wallacetown we sought to achieve this aim through the following objectives:

- Use photovoice methods to elicit the perspectives of young people living in Wallacetown about the places they live and work
- From the photographs taken, identify images that could support the police to think about how to continue their engagement of young people
- Share the findings with the residents and service providers to reflect on how they can work together to respond to what young people identify as significant
- Train members of the police in how to use photovoice methods
-

In this report we discuss both the process of conducting the project and the findings of the project. Subsequently the issues that needed to be considered and overcome to deploy photovoice in this community with police involvement are described. There were practical, ethical and police specific issues which will be discussed to inform future use of this method by the police to engage with

¹ Wang, C. & Burris, M. A. (1997) Photovoice: concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education & Behavior*, 24, 3: 369-387. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/109019819702400309>

seldom heard voices. The specific insights from the photos and interviews into helping communities be heard are also described.

2. Wallacetown, Ayr

Wallacetown is an area north of the River Ayr in the town of Ayr on the south west coast of Scotland. While the community dates back to the 18th century, following the Second World War it was an area where significant social housing was developed. Most recently the 2020 SIMD ranked Wallacetown as the 22nd most deprived area in Scotland, a marked change from being the 64th most deprived area in 2016, highlighting some of the challenges within this community and the opportunities for change. Subsequently, the charity C2:Connecting Communities National Network were supporting the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit to work in Wallacetown, and the opportunity for this project arose.

Significant work is underway in the area to improve communication and relationships between service providers and residents and ensure the services provided in the area match those needed and wanted by those who live there. An initial community survey was undertaken in Wallacetown where Service Providers knocked on every door in the area and spoke with residents to capture directly the views of those who lived there and find out what matters most to residents. While participation levels in the survey were high there were clear gaps in the voices of young people and PhotoVoice was seen as a potential opportunity to engage younger people living in the area.

In response to the findings of the initial survey a number of actions have been undertaken by partners in the area, residents have been participating in environmental improvement work and various activities are now provided in spaces including a new 'Community Hub' which opened in 2022 to provide opportunities for people living in Wallacetown.

3. Establishing the Project

Gaining ethical approval and recruiting participants were necessary to establish the project. An important aspect of the photovoice method is that the participants take some ownership of the project. This means that the photos taken during the project belong to the participants who grant permission for them to be used. To facilitate this we adopted a three stage consent process:

- (1) Consent to take part in the project collected at the end of the project initiation workshop
- (2) Consent for an interview about their photos with potential observation by someone from the police to learn about the process
- (3) Consent for the project to exhibit specific photos

A participant information leaflet explained the whole project, and as members of the police were involved in the project we had to be clear that there was a risk that the police would have to act on anything incriminating disclosed.

The original intent was that the project would recruit around 20 participants aged 16-25 years. Working with existing community partners involved with C2, a poster was co-created for the project with members of the public to ensure that it was clear, understandable and appealing. This was adapted in a range of colours, and an example is shown in Figure 1. These posters were displayed around Wallacetown, however, participation in the first workshop was lower than hoped. Those who participated mentioned that there were people interested in taking part, but they were aged less than 16 years. Subsequently, it was necessary to amend the ethical approval with additional paperwork created as parents or guardians would need to consent for people aged less than 16 years old taking

part. We specified a lower age limit of 14 years old given the complexity of the issue of being heard and the factors which needed to be considered when taking the photos. Further recruitment was achieved by going to meet with young people's groups in the community and by word of mouth, rather than repeating the workshop. This was undertaken by the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit Project Lead working in Wallacetown alongside partner organisations (e.g. local school and youth group).

16-25 YEARS OLD?

SHOW US WHAT MATTERS TO YOU IN WALLACETOWN!

YOUR INVOLVEMENT WILL INFLUENCE THE WAY SERVICE PROVIDERS WORK IN WALLACETOWN IN THE FUTURE

WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

We want you to show us Wallacetown through your eyes by taking photos of what matters to you and telling us why you took each photo. Cameras will be provided as part of this research project.

WHY SHOULD I TAKE PART?

We will share your photos and feedback anonymously with service providers to help implement change in your community.

CREATIVE, FUN, AND IMPACTFUL

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Speak to whoever shared this poster with you

Come along to the meeting on Tuesday 15th March 2022 at 4-6pm, in Newton Primary School

Or phone Andrew (01334 463 522) or Kirsten (07746965689, also WhatsApp)

Or email ajw45@st-andrews.ac.uk or kirsten.russell@strath.ac.uk

University of St Andrews UNIVERSITY OF EXETER VIOLENCE reduction unit C2 Connecting Communities The Scottish Institute for Policing Research

Figure 1: Example project recruitment poster, co-created with the public

4. Taking the Photos

Anecdotal information suggested that access to mobile phones with cameras may be a challenge for potential participants and we subsequently decided to purchase disposable cameras to be as inclusive as possible. We chose to buy disposable cameras as more could be purchased for the money and there was less loss if a camera was not returned. Using disposable cameras is not unusual in photovoice as they are relatively simple to use, and you cannot manipulate a photo once it has been taken. For this project, it also meant that none of the researchers and participants had to interact over social media to share the photos, which could raise a number of additional concerns, especially with police involvement which might have dissuaded some young people from participating. However, using disposable cameras meant that it was necessary to find ways to label the cameras so the photos could be discussed with the right participant later in the project. To achieve this stickers were attached to each camera, and the first photo on each camera was of the form in Figure 2.

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reduction unit  The Scottish Institute
for Policing Research

These photos have been taken as part of the research project named below led by the University of St Andrews and funded by the Scottish Institute for Policing Research.

To be seen and heard: developing photovoice as a method for the police to engage with young people

Dr Andrew James Williams, Dr Kirsten Russell, Professor Katrina Wyatt, Jason Peter and Susanne Hughes

If there are any concerns about the photos or their contents, please contact:
Dr Andrew James Williams ajw45@st-andrews.ac.uk

The developed photos should be returned to the address below:
Dr Andrew James Williams,
Room 219, Medical and Biological Sciences Building,
School of Medicine, University of St Andrews, North Haugh,
St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9TF

Camera ID: _____

Figure 2: Form photographed onto each camera to help match it to the participant

The project initiation workshop (2 hours) and ongoing conversations with participants needed to cover a number of details about the practicalities of the project, ethics and consent and police involvement:

- a. Why photos are a powerful way of sharing experiences
- b. Hints and tips on taking the photos, including specific instructions for the disposable cameras
- c. An exploration of the topic of the photos: 'What makes you feel heard or ignored in Wallacetown?'
- d. Full discussion of what being a participant means in order to gain written informed consent.

Part b covered details like composition and lighting, but more importantly discussed safety and privacy when taking the photos. Participants were told that consent was needed from anyone identifiable in a photo, and it was their responsibility to collect this. It is also vital that the participants do not risk their safety while taking the photos. Risks to safety and privacy could result from where, what or who they are photographing. This needed to be explained and discussed with the participants.

The illustration in Figure 3 was used to facilitate a discussion with the participants around how to take the research topic translate it for themselves, and subsequently take photos. This was taken from the PhotoVoice facilitators guide produced by Rutgers in 2016. While the four elements of the workshop make it seem quite technical, it was important to demonstrate that the researchers genuinely wanted to hear the participant's perspectives and experiences. Previous work has shown that if the workshop can also encourage the participants to be creative then this also helps the project to succeed.

The project recruited 12 participants, which was fewer than we hoped for. All of the participants were female, aged between 14 and 25 years and a number were parents. Participants were given at least 1 week to take their photographs. At the initiation workshop participants asked if photos which had previously been taken could be submitted, and some wanted to send these from camera phones. The ethics was updated to permit this, but no photos were received through this route.

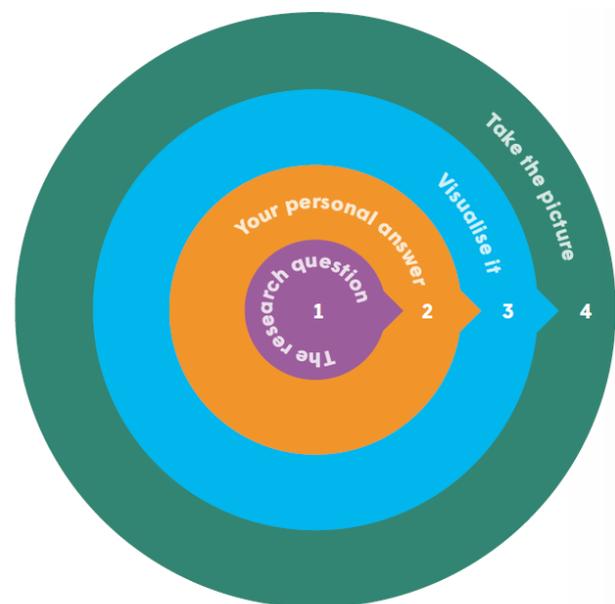


Figure 3: Illustration of the process participants should follow to interpret the research topic (source: Rutgers PhotoVoice facilitators guide)

5. Interpretations of the Photos

Over 200 photographs were taken by the 12 participants, and the next step was to interview each participant about their photographs and ask them to select some of their photos for wider dissemination. Two common interview techniques for photovoice projects are shown in Table 1. For this project, a modified version of the SHOWED technique was used (Appendix 1). Each participant was asked to select up to five of their photos and provide consent for them to be used by the project. As with the photo-taking phase it is important to avoid putting the participants at harm as part of this phase of the project. Therefore, we had prepared a list of support organisations (Appendix 2) to signpost participants to if they become distressed during the interviews.

Table 1: Two interview techniques often used in photovoice projects

| SHOWED | PHOTO |
|--|--|
| S: What do you see ? | P: Describe your photo ? |
| H: What happened or is happening in the picture? | H: What is happening in your picture? |
| O: How does this relate to our lives? | O: Why did you take a picture of this? |
| W: Why does this happen? | T: What does this picture tell us about your life? |
| E: How could this image educate others? | O: How can this picture provide opportunities for us to improve life? |
| D: What can we do about it? | |

The intention had been that the interviews would be conducted by a researcher and shadowed by someone from the police when the participant consented to this. As the interviews involve working through the photos systematically, there was a concern that it could be like a police interview asking about evidence, and therefore this may be an area where a researcher is required. However, changes in the staff linked to the project and staff sickness caused delays as well as difficulty in getting participants to commit to specific dates, meant that interviews were conducted whenever convenient to the participants and that the police (Jason Peter or Martyn Callaghan) conducted the interviews with remote support from the researchers. The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed (by AJW) to enable common themes and differences to be identified, which is a significant research task.

Participants mostly preferred to be interviewed in pairs and seven of the 12 participants (58%) took part in an interview. Within this project an interview with an individual took around 20 minutes, while an interview with a pair took around 1 hour. The delay between the photos being taken and the interviews meant that some participants had difficulties recalling why a specific photo had been taken. However, thematic analysis² of the interview transcripts and photos identified four common themes, which were also reflected in the photos taken by the participants who were not available for interview. Each of the themes is discussed alongside a collage of photos illustrating that theme and relevant participant quotes.

² Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 2: 77-101. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

Theme 1: Safety

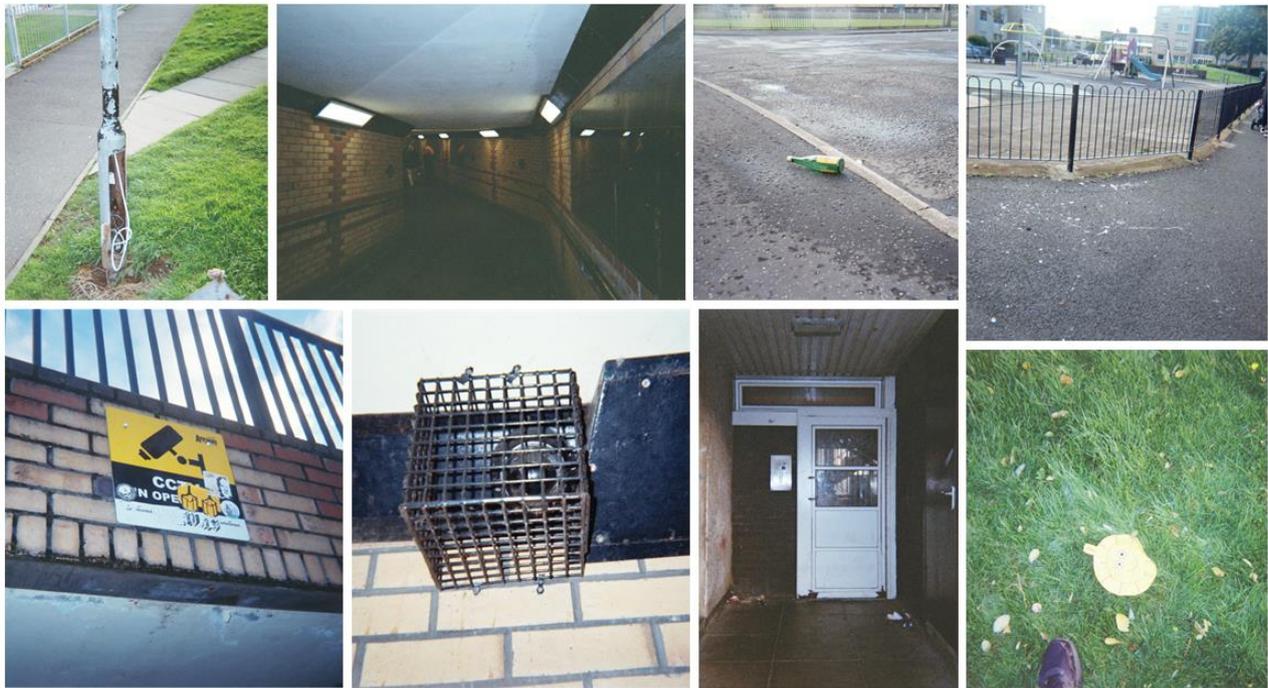


Figure 4: Eight participant photos on the theme of 'Safety'

Initial responses to the question about what it was like to life in Wallacetown often attracted responses about safety:

"It's very entertaining, because there's never a dull night."

"It's scary, riddled with junkies."

"Alright, till night time."

"If I go out at night, I go with somebody."

A couple of the photos in Figure 4 illustrate specific dangers like the loose wires in the lamp post and the broken glass next to a children's playground. Participants particularly commented on how it was not safe for children, especially in relation to the photos showing a baby's toy on the grass and the broken glass next to the playground. There is an underpass from Wallacetown, which leads to nearby shops, which has lighting and CCTV monitoring. However, multiple participants refused to use the underpass after dark, preferring to cross the busy road. Two participants claimed that the CCTV cameras were not working or monitored. Finally in this theme there is the empty bottle of Buckfast tonic wine on the street. As well as leading to the broken glass, this photo illustrated situations where the participants encountered people who had been drinking (often alongside taking illicit drugs).

"Can be quite intimidating, folk that like to make their presence known."

"I actually get quite scared."

Participants explained that they were scared because under the influence of drugs or alcohol people became unpredictable and irrational. Finally, two participants spoke about needing to stay indoors when the situation was bad, including having to lock themselves and their children in.

"We have kind of got to the stage, we know when something is going to kick off here."

While safety might not immediately appear to be related to being heard, it is recognised as one of our fundamental needs. For the participants feeling safe in their community appeared to be strongly related to a sense of being heard or belonging within a community. Living in a community where you and your family don't feel safe may be related to feeling unheard, or obscured within the community. We tend to talk about three common responses to a threat: fight, flight or freeze. The freeze response is an attempt not to be noticed by the threat and therefore trying not to be heard. Previous research has identified a connection between a sense of safety and belonging³ and speaking up⁴.

Theme 2: People



Figure 5 – Eight participant photos on the theme of 'People'

One of the words used most frequently by participants was 'people'. This was a generic term used to describe those who did negative things in Wallacetown, and these photos show examples of graffiti, fly tipping and vandalism.

"Get people to pick up their rubbish and put it in the bin."

"Cause, they have probably tried doing it up, but people just ruin it every time."

"Not good, cause people just drink and all that."

"Nae body bothers."

The photograph in Figure 5 showing a derelict building with a hole in the roof, also shows the overgrown alleyway next to the building which was reported as both unsafe and a way to escape the police. The lower windows of the building have been boarded up to try to prevent further

³ Leviten-Reid, C., Matthew, R. & Wardley, L. (2020) Sense of community belonging: exploring the impact of housing quality, affordability, and safety among renter households. *Journal of Community Practice*, 28, 1: 18-35. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705422.2020.1718050>

⁴ Radl-Karimi, C., Nielsen, D. S., Sodemann, M., Batalden, P. & von Plessen, C. (2022) "When I feel safe, I dare to open up": immigrant and refugee patients' experiences with coproducing healthcare. *Patient Education and Counseling*, 105, 7: 2338-2345. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2021.11.009>

vandalism; several participants spoke about wanting the building developed into something for the community. Another photo shows a child's scooter in a graveyard, which the participant felt was disrespecting the place and consequently the community. Two photos show piles of rubbish in the stairways of two closes in Wallacetown: *"People won't want to live here if they see that."* Although, there was acknowledgement that it is difficult to carry rubbish down the stairs and out to the bins, especially if you have children to watch. The Council sends letters warning people about leaving rubbish outside their flats, but some people still ignore these. One participant summed up how it made her feel *"Just, makes it seem like a horrible place."*

One of the photos shows some graffiti (censored to cover the name of an individual) on the side of one of the blocks of flats, and another shows a fridge freezer and pram dumped next to some bins (fly tipping). Both of these photos were taken to illustrate how people behave in Wallacetown. There were many pictures of litter, especially near bins, with people being described as too lazy to put it in the bin: *"People just can't be bothered walking to the bin."* However, both of these photos illustrate people making a statement to be heard. When asked about the graffiti the participant made the following three comments:

"Somebodies being bullied." "Publicly instead of going on twitter." "So its gets known."

Similarly, talking about the fly tipping photo the participant said *"It is there, everyone sees it, it will get lifted."* These two photos subsequently also illustrate the community communicating, and potentially highlighting issues with the available methods for communicating with services. The final photo of the Wallacetown Community News noticeboard is a stark example of the opportunities in Wallacetown. The only poster under the 'Activities for young people' heading is a poster about alcohol misuse. Participants often talked about the bad behaviour in the community being related to boredom and lack of opportunities.

This theme illustrates that there were many visible statements being made by members of the community. How services respond to these statements could reinforce the behaviours, for example being quicker to remove fly tipping in public outdoor spaces, than in the stairways of closes. Members of the community are also aware of the messages these images communicate to people both inside and outside the community. The challenge becomes how to bring the community together to help bring about changes. How do you help people to recognise that they are all part of Wallacetown and could have a responsibility to each other? Challenging the use of language to marginalise and stigmatise people within the community like 'junkie' could be an opportunity to help bring the community together.

Theme 3: The Police



Figure 6: Three participant photos on the theme of "The Police"

Unsurprisingly for a project collaborating with the police, many participants took photos of the police presence in the community (Figure 6). These three photos show the Police Scotland office overlooking Wallacetown, a police van pulling into the community and two police cars parked outside the primary school, near the end of the school day.

Participant 1: *"We want to see less of the police."*

Participant 2: *"There is always police somewhere in White city."* [another name for Wallacetown]

Interviewer: *"Is that a good thing?"*

Participant 1: *"No."*

Participant 2: *"It could be, because they are always talking, they are always very very up to date, so that if anything does happen they are there."*

Another participant said: *"The police presence is after something has happened."* *"By the time the police come out, you could be dead."* While the police office building shown in one of the photographs is on the corner of Wallacetown these participants highlighted that it was now closed most of the time, where it used to be open 24 hours a day for help.

Talking about their photo showing the two police cars outside the primary school the participant said: *"Kids should be, not scared of the police, but they should see them as there for serious issues. And if they see them there something's happened, not just come of school 'Oh, there's the police!' [excitedly]"* The photo of the police van pulling into the community related to a specific incident around how the police and community interact. A number of the project participants were out together taking their photos, and waved at the police officer in the van, but they did not wave back.

Interviewer: *"Why do you think the police don't wave at folk?"*

Participant: *"Because they are being serious."*

Interviewer: *"How does waving help build a relationship?"*

Participant: *"Just makes us feel nice, they don't mind us. It makes them seem friendly, [otherwise] they seem scary."*

Youth work was one of the other services discussed in relation to the photographs and one youth worker in particular. Two participants in the same interview made the following statements about this youth worker: *"Sound girl."* *"She listens to us."* *"She is trained to listen."* *"She understands"* *"Gives us something to do."* *"Keeps us away from trouble."*

Theme 4: Positive aspects of Wallacetown



Figure 7: Three participant photos on the theme of 'Positive aspects of Wallacetown'

A couple of the participants took photos of positive aspects of Wallacetown (Figure 7). One of these photos shows a street without any litter with well-maintained blocks of flats on either side. There is also a tree in the photo, and the participant spoke about how nice it looked compared to all the streets with litter and vandalism. Their intention seemed to be to show that it was possible to have nicely maintained areas in Wallacetown. But that these areas then became the focus of services, rather than upkeep of the poorly maintained areas. The next photo shows the underpass to the shops discussed under Theme 1, but also shows some trees and the Lidl and Dominos reached via the underpass. Again the trees were highlighted as making the area look better, and the shops were a source of "quality food" that caused people to visit Wallacetown or shops nearby. These shops being within reach of residents and a reason for others to visit Wallacetown elicited some sense of pride in their community from the participant. The Working for Wallacetown photo shows a space where community members can exist that is indoors, but outside of their homes (a third space), and where people are working for Wallacetown.

Themes 1-3 relate to the reputation of Wallacetown and participants often spoke about the stigma this causes. Copied below is what someone said about their experience of moving to Wallacetown:

"See when I moved here I was terrified to move here, and it was just more what I was told. And half of it was from people who didn't even stay here. And, when I moved here, what I was quite shocked about, I don't want it to sound bad, but I was quite shocked at the amount of working people that are here. I wish I had moved here sooner."

While the photos taken as part of this project certainly confirm some part of the communities reputation, there is clearly more than the reputation. Wallacetown is a community where some people enjoy living and want to see improvements. As the above quote shows, when people are able to see past the stigma attached to the area, they have a more positive view. The responses show there is more work to be done in tackling this stigma and also in tackling the stigma of problematic drug and alcohol use and bringing the community together. Police Experience of the Project

Having conducted the interviews the police were asked to reflect on the experience to inform the findings of this project. Both Jason and Martyn said that the use of photos helped prompt conversations which were unlikely to happen otherwise.

'By using photographs as a tool to gain an insight into the views and feelings of particular groups we introduce personal choice in terms of what they take photos of rather than what questions we choose to ask in a survey for example.'

The photographs helped them to see the problems they know about in the community from the perspective of the community members.

Both Jason and Martyn commented on the logistical issues around recruiting and the impact of the delays, which we address in our recommendations for future use of this method by the police. However, overall both felt that the method was valuable for the police.

'In the main this approach is relatively easy to undertake – my key bit of advice would be to use existing staff/key residents to act as an intermediary for the research team. It is these relationships that are key to having people participate. Perhaps an initial event to 'sell' the idea to a particular group in an area then have them engage people to participate would work better. A 'toolkit' building on this project and consisting of sample consent forms, interview questions etc could also assist in the future.

'People are only seldom heard as we (service providers) don't provide the means or opportunity for them to be listened to. Some may choose not to participate but in the main people will share their views and insights if we just find the right method. Photovoice provides a platform for people to have their voices heard and opportunities for the often untapped creative potential of people to be tapped into also.'

6. Researcher Reflections on the Project

Within this project it has been possible for the police to implement and undertake a photovoice project. Whilst it is not possible for us to estimate whether participation would have been higher had the police not been involved, those who took part mostly had no issues with the police involvement. Conducting the study with a small research team located away from the community added challenges, including a delay between when the photographs were taken and the interviews held. However, the project was able to generate important insights from a group who had been identified as a seldom heard community within an area experiencing significant economic disadvantage.

Across the interviews there were two topics of discussion which span across the themes and might be particularly unusual topics of conversation between the police and public without the photovoice project having facilitating these conversations.

1. Public preference or acceptability of laws and policies – As part of the interview process participants are asked ‘What can we [residents and services] do about it?’ Asking for their ideas about how to address the issues they have photographed. Within this project this meant that the following matters were discussed:
 - a. Age at which spray paint can be purchased
 - b. Fines for fly tipping
 - c. Replacing glass bottles with plastic
 - d. Police presence in communities (day and night)

These were particularly interesting conversations where the importance of the police and legal system in the community was recognised and support for these methods could be discussed.

2. The importance of engagement with the community – Whilst Theme 2 focused on the role of other people living in the community, there was also discussion about how those serving the community contribute to a sense of not belonging or being unwanted. In discussing the photos, the participants noted when facilities had been changed without them being aware that this was going to happen. For example, participants noted a phone box and swing being removed without any advanced notice, while issues like graffiti, broken windows and things needing to be repainted were not addressed. These led to the residents feeling like they have less control. One particularly challenging example of this is when people are placed into the flats/closes without any apparent thought about who is living around them. Participants spoke about drug users being placed near families, or a family being moved into a close where everyone else was a drug user. They recognised that these people needed housing, but the approach taken made people feel like they were not important.

Both of these topics related to a shared sense of responsibility for the community, which is an important feedback loop. For example, if a bench in the community was vandalised, the council might come in and remove that bench before checking what the community wanted to happen. Although the bench had been vandalised it was important for the young mums in the community to sit on while their children were playing. That group of mums feels ignored as it is now more difficult for them to interact while their children play, so they become less like to communicate next time something happens. Therefore the council again does not know what action to take next time so act without consulting the community.

For those people who participated in the project, there were people in the community who wanted to make them feel unsafe or like they did not belong in Wallacetown. At the same time services such as those delivered by the local council were seen to be making changes without talking to the community, making the individuals feel like they did not belong or matter. If the community is seen as the problem the members become more distanced from the services making the situation worse: a negative feedback loop. Whereas, when the community are asked about what issues matter to them and how to address them, and they are heard, support for actions to address the issues grows and you have a positive feedback loop.

There are other complexities to these relatively simple illustrations, but methods like photovoice can help us see each other’s perspectives hopefully leading to collaboration to address issues.

7. Dissemination of the Findings

A key dissemination activity for any photovoice project is an exhibition or other dissemination activity to hand the work back to the participants and community, celebrating what has been achieved. The initial plan was for the researchers to develop the final project exhibition from the photos selected by the participants and the analysis of the interview transcripts, as we did not know how much the participants would want to share their experiences with the other participants. However, it is also common in photovoice projects for the exhibition curation to be undertaken in a workshop with all the participants: co-creation. When this was offered to the initial participants, they were keen to follow this approach and subsequently this was covered within the ethics amendment. However, with the delay in conducting the interviews the curation workshop has not been possible, but we will still hand the findings back to the community.

It is also now possible to disseminate them more widely. The photos will be made available to be exhibited by the police locally and across Scotland. In order to protect the project participants none of the photos have been attributed to any individual. With the consent of the participants who took each photo, the photos and captions will also be shared over social media and large prints will be made for display wherever the police feel it would be more appropriate. An academic paper will also summarise the methods and findings of the project.

8. Conclusion

Photovoice is a powerful method for engaging with seldom heard communities and making sure those voices are heard. However, there are a number of challenges to the police adopting this method.

1. Practical challenges
 - a. Some degree of existing relationship is needed to engage participants, otherwise significant effort will be needed to engage those more seldom heard in such approaches.
 - b. The cameras need to be selected based on the needs of the community and processes are needed to protect participant confidentiality (and that of those photographed) while also making sure photos are attributed to the right participants for the rest of the project.
 - c. The busy-ness and unpredictability of participants lives makes arranging project activities challenging.
2. Ethical challenges
 - a. Participants need to have some ownership of the project and therefore extensive efforts are needed to make sure the project is transparent and ethical, while protecting people in challenging circumstances.
 - b. As well as technical and artistic aspects of photography, it is essential to discuss with participants the need to protect their own and other's privacy and safety as part of the project.
3. Police specific challenges
 - a. It was essential to acknowledge that the project involved the police, however, it is possible that this may have deterred some participants.
 - b. Conducting the interviews and analysing the transcripts may require specific research skills which would mean additional research training for the police.

Within this project it has been possible to address these challenges and conduct a photovoice project with a seldom heard community in an area experiencing significant

disadvantage and inequalities. It was not only possible for the police to be involved in the project, but for them to lead on the recruitment and interviews. It was felt that the method was valuable to the police enabling different types of conversations to be had with communities and drawing out different insights. As the focus of [Police Scotland](#) is 'Keeping people safe', it was notable that safety was an important aspect of being heard for the participants. However, safety was not just about the other people in the community, but the involved the physical environment such as broken glass. People and services, including the police, significantly contribute to whether people feel like they belong and are heard in a community. However, the people living in a community may have positive aspects of the community that they value and photovoice is a good method for allowing people to highlight what they like about where they live too. Problematising the whole community does not help and contributes to stigmatising an area which affects people's sense of wellbeing. As Hazel Stuteley, OBE, founder and director of C2: Connecting Communities said:

"Disadvantaged communities and their people are not the problem – they are the solution"

Methods are needed to help community members be heard and involved with the decisions affecting them. The residents and services need to recognise that they together make up Wallacetown.

9. Recommendations

Photovoice is a powerful method for engaging with populations with seldom heard voices, which can be delivered with the police.

1. However, based on our experience it is probably best delivered in collaboration with researchers. Working with researchers might mean that participants feel able to share insights that they would not share with the police. Researchers are also better positioned to analyse the interviews.
2. We recommend that photovoice is considered for specific projects in specific communities, but is probably not suitable for use in places where very little relationship with the community exists.
3. Conducting the project over a longer period of time introduced challenges and therefore we recommend that photovoice be implemented over single days or weeks. This keeps the participants engaged and prevents loss of data through difficulties recalling the purpose of a photo taken weeks ago.
4. Conducting a project in a shorter window of time will mean that digital cameras or camera phones will need to be used. There is a cost to using digital camera, and using camera phones means that a secure way of transferring the photos without participants sharing contact details with the police would be needed, however issues of inclusion need to be considered if the work requires people to have a camera on their phone.
5. Recruitment through posters did not work on this project, and therefore we had to recruit through the networks of the project team. Subsequently, photovoice methods are probably not suitable when there is little relationship between the police and community.

We will continue to use photovoice to engage with seldom heard voices and thanks to Police Scotland Academic Research team have discussed the potential of running photovoice projects in other communities.

10. Sources of Further Information

Jongeling S, Bakker M, van Zorge R & van Kakebeeke K, 2016 PhotVoice facilitator's guide. Rutgers. Available from: <https://rutgers.international/resources/photovoice-facilitators-guide/> (cited 08/11/2022)

Wang C & Burris MA, 1997 Photovoice: concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. Health Education & Behavior, 24, 3: 369-387.

Scottish Violence Reduction Unit <http://www.svru.co.uk/>

C2: Connecting Communities <https://www.c2connectingcommunities.co.uk/>

There is a UK based charity called PhotoVoice who can be commissioned to undertake photovoice projects: <https://photovoice.org/>.

11. Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1 – To be seen and heard – Photovoice interview topic guide

Introductions and checking participant is comfortable with the interview and its purpose

Opening question about what it is like to live in Wallacetown, what did they set out to capture with their photos?

[Bring out the participants photos and allow them to look through them]

With the topic of the project in mind, pick out 10 of your best photos

[Using the map of Wallacetown provided, ask the participant to mark where each photo was taken]

[Use the SHOWED technique to get the young person to discuss each of the selected photos]

- What do you **S**ee?
- What **H**appened or is **H**appening in the photo?
- How does this relate to **O**ur topic/lives?
- **W**hy does this happen?
- How could this image **E**ducate others?
- What can we **D**o about it?

Following this process ask the participant to select 2-3 photos that they want the police to see and why. How do you want the police to respond to this photo?

[Get consent for wider use of these photos using the consent form, and double check whether consent was gained from anyone featuring in these photos. Collect these consent forms for retention by the study. Note down the numbers of photos related to any photograph subject consent forms in order that the photos can be destroyed if the subject withdraws. Note if any of the people identifiable in the photos are under 16 years old so that parental consent can be sought.]

Do you have any final comments or additions?

Thank them for their time, and explain that the next steps will be an exhibition of the photos, and we will contact them once this is scheduled. It might take a few weeks or a month or two.

Appendix 2 – Signposting support organisations

This list of services has been compiled should we need to signpost any participants in the project. If needed, additional services can be identified through the South Ayrshire Council SignPost Directory of Services: <https://ww26.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/a/f?p=SignPostAZ:DIRECTORY>.

Addaction South Ayrshire Recovery. A free and confidential service providing support and encouragement to help people recover from problematic drug and alcohol use

Mon - Fri (9.00am - 5.00pm)

Contact: 01292 430529 or 08081784549

Email: southayrshire@addaction.org.uk

<http://www.addaction.org.uk/services/addaction-south-ayrshire-recovery>

Breathing space. A free, confidential phone and web based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety.

Weekdays: Monday – Thursday 6pm – 2am

Weekend: Friday 6pm – Monday 6am

Contact: 0800 83 85 87

www.breathingspace.scot

ChildLine. A free confidential helpline for young people in trouble or danger.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Contact: 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

FRANK. Information, advice and support on any drug worries, whether about yourself or anyone else.

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Contact: 0800 77 66 00

www.talktofrank.com

Mind Info Line. Information on all aspects of mental distress.

Monday to Friday: 9.15am to 4.45pm,

Contact: 0845 766 0163

Email: info@mind.org.uk
www.mind.org.uk

Police. If you have concerns for your own safety, or the safety of others, please contact Police Scotland on their non-emergency phone number: 101.

The Samaritans. A mental health charity which you can contact through phone, email, text, visit face-to-face at your local branch. You can talk about any worries you have or about anything that is making you feel down.

Free phone number: 116 123.

Email: jo@samaritans.org

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

Victim Support Scotland in Ayrshire. An independent and confidential service dedicated to providing support and information to people affected by crime.

Support in Ayrshire: 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday

Contact: 01292 266441

Email: victimsupport.southayrshire@victimssupportsco.org.uk

If you need support outwith these hours, the following services are available:

Free support helpline: 0800 160 1985 (8am-8pm, Mon-Fri)

Webchat service: (8am-8pm, Mon-Fri, 9am – 1pm Sat)

Free phone number: 0800 83 85 87

<https://victimssupport.scot>