

Airwave Newsletter 2025

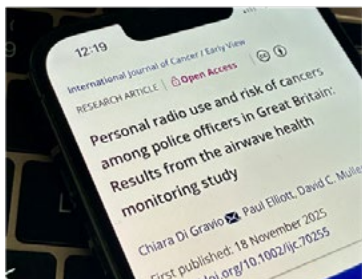
This year the Airwave Study had its 21st birthday! Thank you for being part of Airwave, you are contributing to the largest police occupational study in the world.

Early in 2026, we are planning to invite you to complete an online survey with a cognitive test, hearing test and food diary, after which you will have the option to view your results. We also continue to monitor your health through linkage to the NHS in a highly secure process - that's 53,044 of you! This is crucial as it allows us to track changes in the health of participants over time.

The Airwave team are busy investigating occupational and other factors such as shift work that may affect your health, including cancer, cardiovascular diseases, dementia, mental health, and hearing. We are now also part of the UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration, supporting health research nationally and informing public health policy. For more on this see <https://police-health.org.uk/airwave-uk-llc>.

Thank you for your continued support and contributions as we move forward with this important research. I hope you find the updates in this newsletter interesting.

Professor Paul Elliott, CBE Airwave Principal Investigator



OVER 100 PAPERS PUBLISHED!

Since our last Newsletter in 2023, your data have contributed to a further 60 publications in scientific journals, which have directly benefited from the data and samples collected by the Airwave Study. To date we have 101 publications which are all available through our website <https://police-health.org.uk/publications>.

Here are two of our recent research publications:

Police radio use and Cancer: Across an average follow-up time of 12.4 years, there were over 1,500 new cancer cases in the Airwave cohort. We found no association between personal radio use and all cancers. This is an update of the analysis published in 2019 which also reported no association with radio use. The published paper is available at <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijc.70255>

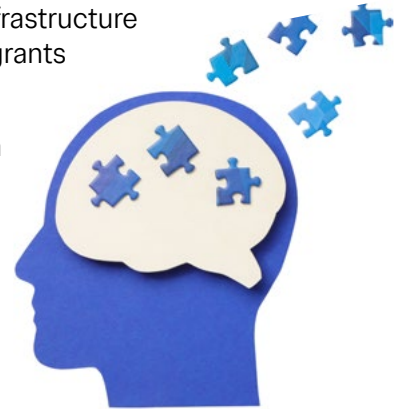
Airwave study participant experiences: 241 Airwave participants took part in an experiences survey in 2024, and follow-up interviews were conducted with 23 participants who were willing. This research looked to understand what motivated people to take part in Airwave. Participants highlighted the value of the free health checks received as part of the study, although they also saw their participation as important in supporting the police community. This paper is available at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/41151116/>



FUNDING AND ONGOING RESEARCH

Airwave has recently been successful in a bid to the Medical Research Council for infrastructure funding which will 'keep the lights on' for the next 4 years. In addition to this, further grants have been awarded to carry out important research investigating:

- Long term air pollution exposure and cognitive performance as well as association with biomarkers, such as proteins and small molecules in the blood.
- Risk factors for mental health conditions particularly relating to shift work
- Impact of shift work and sleep on police officers' health and wellbeing
- We are also investigating suicide risk, which was identified as a key concern by the Police Federation, as well as risk more generally for mental health issues



Look out for updates on our website, <https://police-health.org.uk/>

NEW: HEALTH TESTS AT HOME

Is your hearing and memory as sharp now as it was when you first joined the police service?

We're continuing to monitor the health of the cohort remotely, and in early 2026 we will invite you to complete a follow-up online survey at home which will include 4 parts:

- Hearing test
- Cognitive test
- Questionnaire
- 7-day food diary

You will have the option to view your results on completion of the tests. These tests don't have to be completed at the same time; you can take a break, and it will pick up from where you left off. These tests are for everyone in the study; it doesn't matter if you have now retired or are working elsewhere. Look out for our invitation!

SUNBED USE SURVEY

Sunbeds, such as in tanning salons, are quite commonly used but the potential effects on the risk of melanoma and other skin cancers are not well understood. We plan to investigate this question in Airwave alongside other large studies to inform public health policy on their use.

HELP US KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOU



The financial cost of keeping in touch with you by post is high and if at all possible we would like to keep in touch by email.

Please make sure we have the best email for you by going to <https://www.police-health.net/follow-up> or emailing us airwave@imperial.ac.uk. You can opt out of receiving emails at any time. By registering your email address with us we can save trees and energy and spend more money on the research.

THE LAUNCH OF APAG

The Airwave Participant Advisory Group commenced in 2024 to give study participants a direct voice in shaping the research. It was created after an overwhelming response to a call for expressions of interest in the 2023 newsletter, with over 400 applications received to fill eight roles. Thank you to everyone who applied. The members are from across England, Scotland and Wales, with a broad range of policing roles, ranks and experiences. The group have provided feedback and insight that has been extremely useful, for example, with our recent successful funding application to the Medical Research Council and for this newsletter!



You can opt out of receiving Airwave Study newsletters and this will not affect your continued inclusion in the Airwave study. Please see the study privacy notice page of the website for more details <https://police-health.org.uk/imperial-college-research-privacy-notice>. To opt out of receiving newsletters, please notify us via <https://www.police-health.net/followup> or email airwave@imperial.ac.uk.