

## Developing an evidence based police degree-holder entry programme **Final Report**

Home Office Police Innovation Fund 2016-18

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Thanks are also due to the College of Policing, which became an increasingly important partner and stakeholder in this project as it evolved. The College has provided us with a great deal of encouragement and practical help throughout the life of the project.

We would like to thank Betsy Stanko for the vision to initiate this project, and for providing strategic advice throughout.

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## FOREWORDS

The safety of Londoners is the key priority for the Mayor. It is one of the essential foundations of London's success as a global city. Our Police and Crime Plan provides a strong pathway for progress, and sets out MOPAC's role in ensuring the Plan is delivered. However, I recognise that if we are to move forward effectively, we need to place the officers, staff and volunteers within the Met at the core of our plans. People are central to all we do; we need to recruit the right people, and properly support them to learn and develop. As part of the Plan, MOPAC and its partners aim to transform police learning in London, ensuring that we deliver a service to the public that is fit for current and future challenges. Having police officers with the right skills, knowledge and behaviours is absolutely fundamental to effective policing. MOPAC created this project to develop the evidence base for future training, learning and development of police officers.

One of the key pathways is to transform the police service into a learning organisation that fully embraces evidence based practice, and this is consistent with the National Police Chiefs Council's Vision 2025. As part of this the College of Policing has set out the Policing Educational Qualifications Framework (PEQF).

The project findings presented here are one element in this process of change. MOPAC led this collaborative project, working with the Metropolitan Police Service and other forces nationally, the College of Policing, two universities and Police Now. The ambition was to provide support in developing the Degree Holder Entry Programme, one of the three PEQF initial entry routes to policing - whereby on joining the police service graduates embark on a programme to convert their degree into a policing qualification. These research findings have already informed the development of this programme, which police forces need to implement by 2020.

The project was made possible through a grant from the Home Office Police Innovation Fund. The fund is intended to drive innovation in policing through collaboration, and this report is ample proof that the project has been successful in achieving this.



**SOPHIE LINDEN**

Deputy Mayor Policing and Crime,  
Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime

Modern policing is changing. Crime is taking on new forms, generating a new set of challenges to which the police service must respond. More than ever, those working in policing are required to engage in critical thinking, deal with complex policing situations and environments, work with a high degree of autonomy, make decisions independently, communicate and negotiate successfully, engage in professional reflection, and contribute in visible ways to supporting and protecting the public.

The role of police constable remains the bedrock of effective policing, but increasingly it requires knowledge and skills to be applied across a range of different situations, as well as behaviours consistent with efficient, appropriate and supportive policing. The College of Policing is working with the police service to introduce three new degree-based entry routes into policing at the rank of police constable. We are determined that programmes of education within policing will foster the highest standards of educational and professional development, enhancing knowledge, skills and competence within the service. The way in which we equip those working in this key role must reflect its wide-ranging responsibilities and support them to succeed.

In this regard, policing has much to gain from partnership working with those in the education sector who are directly engaged in policing-related research, in ways that can improve police learning and development and, ultimately, practice.

We welcome the publication of the research findings of this MOPAC project as a significant contribution to the research base on the education of new recruits to the police service.

Although the report concentrates upon graduate entry into policing, many of the research findings have a broader relevance to policing education. Emphasised throughout the report is the importance of full integration of theoretical and practical elements within policing education. As the professional body setting the national education standards for the police, we are committed to ensuring that the new degree-based entry programmes for the Police Constable (PC) role are fundamentally based upon demonstration of effective, evidence-based professional practice in the workplace. Delivery of a new framework of practice-based education for the police constable will play an important part in the service's delivery of what the Policing Vision 2025 describes as 'a more sophisticated response to the challenges we face now and in the future'. The MOPAC report will help the service to frame that response, supporting us to deliver a better policing service to the public.



**MIKE CUNNINGHAM**  
Chief Executive, College of Policing

## SUMMARY

The College of Policing launched a consultation in 2016 on plans to require all police recruits to hold a policing qualification at degree level. The plans were agreed in 2017 as part of the College's PEQF with the expectation that the degree requirement would take effect from 2020. The PEQF provided for three entry routes for police constables:

- the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA), introduced from April 2018, involving academic study in parallel with operational work
- the pre-join degree in professional policing, introduced from 2020, where prospective recruits acquire their degree in policing in advance of recruitment
- the Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP), introduced from 2020 – the focus of this report.

The aim of the project reported here, funded by the Home Office Innovation Programme, was to contribute to an evidence-informed dialogue about the nature, quality and purpose of police education.

More specifically the project examines questions that relate to the development of the DHEP:

- How do graduate police recruits learn about the standards for policing and the public expectations of a police officer?

- How do graduate police recruits apply their critical skills (gleaned from their university study) to their decision-making as a police officer? What is the role of evidence here?
- How do graduate police officers learn the essential skills/craft of policing? Do they have different learning styles from non-graduate recruits? What is the role of evidence here?
- What is the theory of change for requiring graduate entry – that is, what are the key elements of policing that are expected to result from graduate training, and how?

The project involved several separate elements, carried out by researchers at Birkbeck, University of London and University College London. The team conducted a review of the UK research literature on analogous conversion courses provided for graduates entering law, teaching, and the social work profession, and a further review of the international literature about effective police training. Team members interviewed staff in police force Learning and Development (L&D) Departments to assess readiness to introduce the DHEP from 2020. They also interviewed recruits undergoing a graduate-entry programme designed and delivered by Police Now (PN), to track experiences of the pre-existing graduate programme that is closest to DHEP.

## **The learning from analogous conversion courses**

The single most important aspect of a successful professional conversion course is its ability to integrate theoretical learning and the learning of practical skills. This can be achieved through a variety of teaching tools, resources and opportunities to put theoretical learning into practice under the supervision of a capable mentor or tutor as well as providing the space for reflection on the experience and how practice can be improved.

It is also important to be clear about the assumptions being made about graduate recruits' critical thinking abilities, relevant skills and preconceptions about policing. This would sensitise curriculum developers and those involved in delivering education to understand the needs of graduates from the outset. However, it is equally important to understand that different individuals have different learning styles – and adapting suitable teaching methods for adults is needed for the delivery of both theoretical learning and practical skills.

Another critical aspect of curriculum design and delivery is to put in place appropriate forms of assessment. These should serve as tools not only to test but also to enable learning. Assessment needs should be properly quality-assured and validated by experts.

Finally, and fundamentally, outcomes which learning should achieve both in terms of practical skills (getting the job done) and practice skills (ensuring that behaviour promotes the proper goals of the organisation) must be specified.

Focusing on practical day-to-day competence whilst losing sight of what makes for good policing is counter-productive.

## **Research on effective police learning**

A thorough review of the international English-language research on police training identified 33 high-quality studies of police recruit training. Some very consistent messages emerge.

The first is that teaching and learning methods have to be tailored to adult learning styles, and where recruits are degree holders, teaching methods appropriate to graduates are required. The principles of andragogy (adult learning) and of problem-based approaches need to be followed if deeper learning is to remain with recruits beyond the classroom and to survive the more corrosive elements of the police occupational culture.

The theoretical and practical parts of programmes must be properly integrated if the theoretical elements are not to be jettisoned as soon as recruits arrive in the field and become inculcated with the occupational culture. This is essential but challenging to achieve. Related to this point, several studies stressed the importance of organisational buy-in to the aims of the learning programmes, and in particular in ensuring that teachers and mentors in the field are appropriately qualified and provide proper support for recruits when they acquire skills.

Findings on programme aims and outcomes from the studied police force in-house learning and development approaches were disappointingly thin.

Aims were often poorly articulated and we have been unable to say much of significance about outcomes. Clearly the PEQF provides an important opportunity, that should be firmly grasped, to evaluate the outcomes of the three new training routes into the police in England and Wales. Any such evaluations would need to state fully and carefully, the aims of the graduate entry programme in terms of the qualities and skills that recruits should acquire.

### **Police forces' readiness to implement the DHEP and other parts of the PEQF**

There needs to be a significant shift in organisational culture to recognise and accept the value of graduate training for recruit officers. The workforce needs to accept the case for the PEQF. For this to happen, police leaders and the College of Policing need to articulate the rationale – and the benefits for the workforce – of professionalisation and graduate level education. Forces' senior management teams need to support, and have the full support of, their L&D staff in this process. So too do forces need to think holistically about the changes to learning that require additional support. As this report makes clear, mentors are critical to the success of transferring new knowledge into practice. How mentors learn their role, and are supported in doing so in situ, must be considered as a fundamental part of the graduate entry programme.

The daunting logistical challenges, such as getting contractual arrangements in place with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), upskilling in-house learning staff and mentors and bringing the changes in on budget may distract L&D units from finding solutions to the difficult intellectual and pedagogic/andragogic challenges in designing and implementing

a conversion course that equips recruits with complementary practical and intellectual skills.

Tight budgets increase the risks of making false economies. The cheapest and quickest routes to learning how to be a police officer and bringing recruits to the level of independent patrol status may not be the best long-term investment for a police service. Without more careful thought about how all recruit officers achieve the competence of independent patrol status (regardless of which entry route recruits choose into policing in England and Wales), changes introduced may undermine the aspirations of professionalisation.

Given the complexities of setting up partnerships between forces and universities and sharing the design and delivery of learning, there is a need for an independent body – with expertise in both the theoretical and practical aspects of police learning – to oversee these arrangements and to quality-appraise and assess the various training programmes on a national level. The College of Policing could take on this role, or an independent assessor could be found or set up.

Finally, there is little evidence to date about the impact that making policing a graduate profession has on people's experience of their police. The PEQF promises to achieve a radical transformation of police learning, and of the nature of policing in England and Wales. Now is the time to put in place rigorous evaluation plans to track the outcomes achieved by the PEQF's three entry routes, so that recruit learning can be closely monitored and refined, as implementation proceeds.



### **Motivation and appreciation of evidence based policing practice amongst Police Now participants**

This part of the project involved psychometric data collected from PN participants. They emerged as a highly motivated and able group of graduates, with a clear commitment to 'making a difference'. Measured on their emotional intelligence, they scored higher on empathy, emotional control, conscientiousness and structure than a benchmark group of comparable professionals, but lower in decisiveness and influence.

Other key points relate to the way recruits learn about evidence-based policing practice.

- Repeated exposure to examples of evidence based practice for the PN participants reaped rewards by increasing knowledge of basic principles and increased the likelihood of a more focused approach to addressing real-life policing problems.
- Enabling PN participants to frame stronger research designs together with a greater appreciation of some basic tests of statistical significance, or appropriate qualitative methodological approaches, may reap earlier rewards for adopting evidence based practice.
- There was little evidence to suggest that when PN participants undertook systematic problem solving approaches, these ideas were taken up elsewhere within force or the learning exploited for trialling elsewhere.
- Further research is needed to show how graduate recruits learn about policing – as a craft as well as through better exposure to evidence based practice – and how better to transfer this knowledge to the whole of the workplace.

### **In-depth interviews with Police Now participants**

Our interviews with PN participants and their police line managers about their experiences of this programme highlight some important learning points for developing the DHEP

- While our interviewees could largely cope with learning over a condensed period of time and were happy to complete some of these elements independently, there was a general call for more discussion and reflection alongside lecture-style learning. This might also help reinforce the connection between the more theoretical or 'soft-skills' aspects of the training curriculum and policing practice. Common concerns about a lack of practical knowledge or skill on completion of learning the curriculum components could be addressed through better coordination in the immersion and mentoring period and clearer plans for how graduates' practice will be developed in force and through top-up learning and reflection opportunities.
- More generally, issues between in-force learning and development staff, HEIs (when these come on board) and those front-line staff who provided entry recruits with support and management – show a potential risk for the DHEP. PN participants are expected to apply and promote evidence-based practice.

However, interviewees met with various obstacles, including the lack of support for Evidence Based Practice (EBP) in participants' local forces, and this would need to be addressed in readiness for the DHEP as well as the other two entry routes.

- The PN impact presentations could be viewed as one opportunity for reflective practice, and these are promising practice for PN. The 100-day assessment process used by PN has several objectives including: to enhance participants' problem-solving skills and to inspire reflective innovation and creative problem solving. There is clear scope for thinking further about how these presentations test and improve the police knowledge base, not only for PN, but across the developments in recruit education.

### **Evidence based practice: researching police learning**

This project was fortunate to have the cooperation of Police Now (PN), whose participants, force based mentors and staff agreed to be interviewed and observed. The research on police learning across the globe is thin, and the establishment of the PEQF provides the opportunity to learn more about how police learn. This report is not an evaluation of Police Now. Police Now's participants who took part in this research did so with expressed research consent and we thank these participants for taking the time to contribute to making police education better. The issues identified here are issues relevant to all the forces across England and Wales who will be adopting the DHEP.

### **Fundamental issues and principles arising from this project's research**

A number of key issues and fundamental principles need to be addressed for successful implementation of the DHEP:

- There is a need to achieve clarity on the model of police professionalism to be adopted
- The model of professionalism steers the respective underpinning principles for education and continuous professional development and should draw on learning gleaned from other occupations' experience
- There is a need to refine on an ongoing basis the operationalisation of evidence based policing practice, integrating the recognition and inclusion of craft-based practice
- There remains a suspicion of the added value of graduate officers, and for the sake of those entering the police service through the DHEP, there is a need to address continuously the service's receptivity to graduate officers so that they experience the welcome they deserve in the job
- There is a need to support stronger and more collaborative engagement with HEIs to ensure best fusion of theory and practice as well as coherent standards and delivery across forces
- It would be useful to establish a framework for and undertake an iterative longitudinal study of the DHEP that becomes a basis for continuous improvement in the education of graduates who join the police service.

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## **Recommendations of this report for the College of Policing in developing the DHEP**

There are key findings that the College of Policing may wish to consider in the iterative development of the DHEP:

- To articulate clearly the desired outcomes of graduate entry education with explicit criteria for becoming a 'good police officer' and for achieving 'good policing'
- To articulate the aspired model of professionalism that underpins the PEQF by drawing on learning from other professions
- To review the published curriculum for the PCDA and concentrate on fusing theory and practice in the different modules including explicit consideration of applying EBP principles to practice
- To provide specific guidance for forces on working collaboratively with HEIs – especially in creating new ways of co-producing learning and integrating HEIs' contribution to this new curriculum
- To give more consideration to the candidate (learner) perspective in policing education from their initial selection; including the consideration of personal motivation and other characteristics, and through ongoing support and monitoring
- To highlight the receptivity of the Police Service as a whole to the creation of a graduate profession of policing as an ongoing issue
- To support the undertaking of an on-going major evaluation of the DHEP, alongside its evaluation of the PCDA
- To encourage a suitable funder to allocate monies for a major study of the introduction of the graduate entry requirement.

## INTRODUCTION

The context of policing in England and Wales is continually and rapidly evolving, as is the profession itself. There are 43 police forces in England and Wales. The professional body developing the standards for the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public and secure public trust is the College of Policing (COP), established in 2012. The College sets standards for the police service on training, development, skills and qualifications, and provides support to help the service implement these standards.<sup>1</sup>

A significant development has been the introduction, by the College, of the PEQF. Whilst this is ultimately designed to cover a wide range of the service's educational needs, a key element of the PEQF, which has been first for implementation, is the requirement that all new recruits should acquire a degree level policing qualification either before recruitment, upon entry or in the first years of service.

The project summarised in this report<sup>2</sup> supported the COP in the development of one of the three entry routes, the DHEP, which is envisaged as a conversion course akin to those for graduate entrants to law, teaching or social work.

The project addressed four sets of questions:

1. How do graduate police recruits learn about the standards for policing and the public expectations of a police officer? Is there relevant learning from academic research on other graduate entry professional conversion programmes?
2. How do graduate police recruits apply their critical skills (gleaned from their university study) to their decision-making as a police officer? What is the role of evidence based policing here?
3. How do graduate police officers learn essential skills/craft of policing? Do they have different learning styles from non-graduate recruits? What is the role of evidence here?
4. What is the Theory of Change for requiring police entrants to have degrees – that is, what are the key elements of *policing* that should be instituted by effective police training and education, and what are the key steps in making this happen?

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1. [www.college.police.uk/aboutus](http://www.college.police.uk/aboutus)

2. Fuller – and fully referenced – reports are available relating to each chapter. Contact details for the relevant academics are provided in each chapter.

3. <http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Curriculum/Initial-learning/pages/initial-learning.aspx>

4. <http://www.college.police.uk/What-we-do/Learning/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework/Pages/Policing-Education-Qualifications-Framework.aspx>

## The Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF)

For much of the post-war period the training of police recruits was in Regional Training Centres, such as those at Ashford, Bruche, and Hendon, with a focus on learning the policing 'craft' and the law as it related to policing. The regional framework was reviewed in 2003 and abandoned in 2006, with training provided thereafter through a patchwork of local provision, known as the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP). The IPLDP is pitched at Level 3 of the National Qualifications framework, equivalent to A-levels, and is delivered by police training centres, supported by mentoring arrangements in police divisions.<sup>3</sup> Former Chief Constable Peter Neyroud's (2010) review of police leadership and training reset the direction of travel of police learning on a path towards professionalisation. He argued that policing should move from being a service that 'acts professionally' to becoming a 'professional service'. He proposed (amongst many other recommendations) a Level 4 (i.e. sub-graduate) Point of Entry Qualification along with a range of additional provisions to provide for better qualified managers and leaders.

The College of Policing's draft PEQF, published in 2015, following the Neyroud Review, went further in its recommendations. Firm proposals, published in 2016<sup>4</sup> after consultation, stated that a point of entry qualification would be required, at Level 6, commensurate with a university degree.

The PEQF provided for three entry routes for police constables:

- the PCDA (introduced from April 2018), involving three years of study in parallel with operational work
- the pre-join degree in professional policing, introduced from 2020, where prospective recruits acquire their degree in policing in advance of recruitment
- the DHEP (introduced from 2020) – the focus of this report.

The PEQF sets out a consistent, national approach for the training of police recruits. This forms part of a programme of police practitioner accreditation across the ranks, which is ultimately intended to achieve a level of professionalisation in policing that has only really existed in the past as an aspiration (cf Holdaway, 2017). Key features in this professionalisation process include:

- the establishment of a professional membership body
- the specification of an organised body of knowledge which is central to learning the skills of the occupation
- making a professional qualification, usually at degree level, a precondition for practice
- developing a code of ethics that governs professional practice.

## Rationales for professionalisation

It is important to ask not only whether the current push towards police professionalisation exhibits the recognised traits or criteria that constitute professional status, but why such policies are in place. There have been calls for the greater professionalisation of policing from the 1960s and 1970s onwards, notably by Sir Robert Mark (1977). Sometimes these were clearly intended to address conduct that was clearly unprofessional, especially corruption. Other calls were for improvements in quality – to ensure that the workforce simply do the best possible job. And of course, underlying both these impulses for professionalisation was a hope that policing could thereby acquire more professional status.

Beyond these justifications is a more significant one, that professionalisation provides the key to an alternative form of institutional regulation.

Historically the structures of professional bodies emerged in the 19th century as a specific mode of regulation for occupations requiring skill, judgment and integrity, involving geographically dispersed and autonomous, generalist practitioners, where incompetence carries high social costs.<sup>5</sup> This mode of regulation is distinctively different from others, such as military hierarchy, Taylorian scientific management systems and Weberian administrative bureaucracies. These all place more emphasis on authority structures, and the latter two also involve well-defined divisions of labour.

The burden of knowledge in these more hierarchical forms of accountability fall upon senior commanders or managers, with the requirements of obedience falling upon less skilled front-line staff.

Different professions place different weight on the various elements of professionalisation. Professional knowledge carries particular weight in the case of the traditional “learned professions” of medicine and law. The same is true for those ‘helping professions’ whose practitioners are geographically dispersed, and often unbureaucratised, such as psychotherapists and physiotherapists. It is their claim to have a specific body of knowledge that legitimates their authority to practice.

Amongst the functions of their various professional bodies, ensuring that practitioners remain ‘up to speed’ with new developments in the knowledge base (continuous professional development) is important – unsurprising, given that the body of knowledge of these professions is constantly developing. Another important function is the enforcement by the relevant professional body of their code of ethics. For other professions, the requirement that practitioners have at entry a degree-level qualification is better understood as a strategy for attracting people into the workforce with particular intellectual abilities: analytic skills, the ability to think independently and critically, and the acquisition of a theoretical understanding of the problems that they address, essential for problem solving (Tilley and Laycock, 2017).

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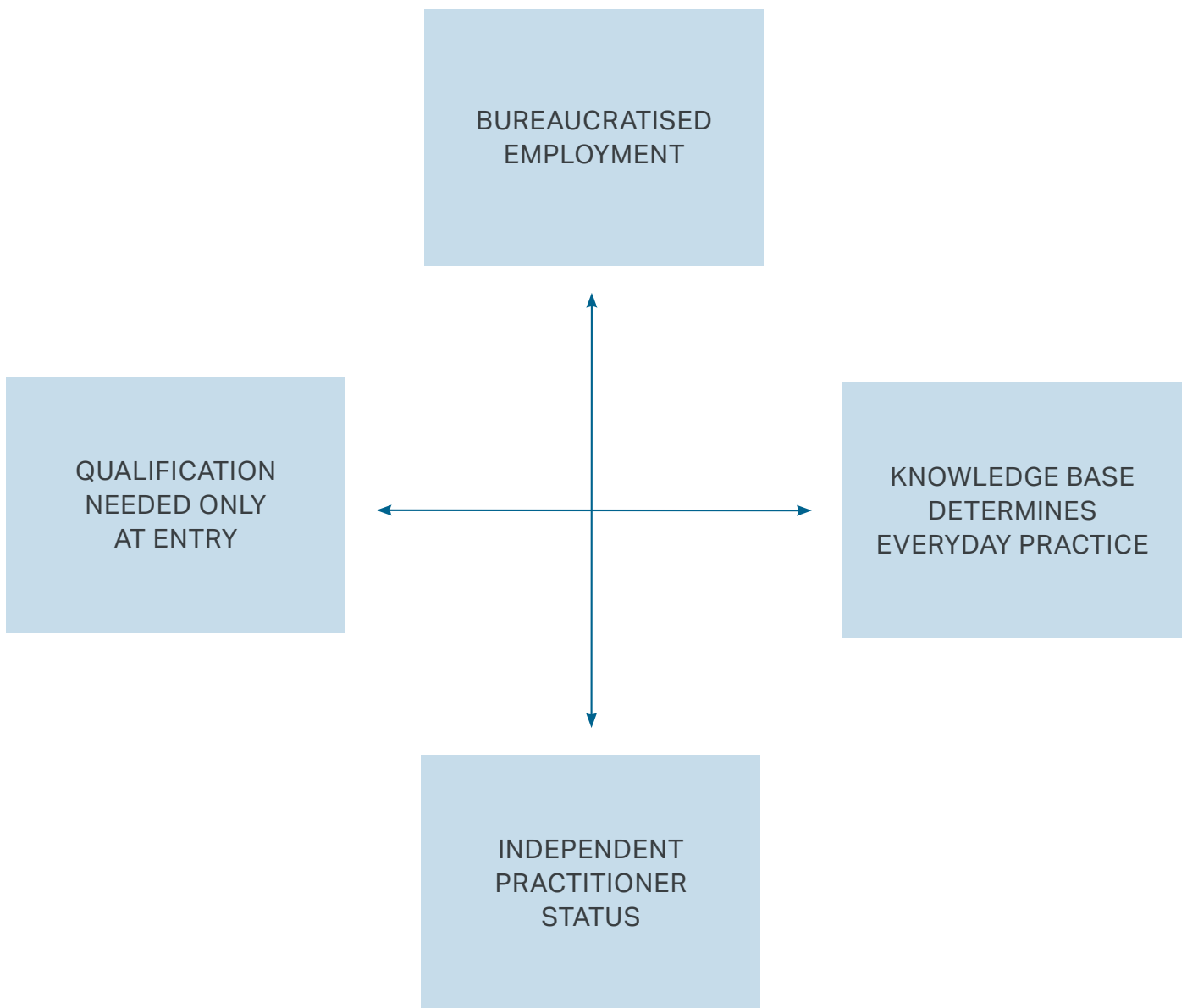
5. There is, of course, an alternative and more critical account of professions as self-serving organisations designed to exclude competition and to maintain the benefits of their members.

If professionalisation emerged as a form of regulating uncoordinated, independent practitioners in the 19th Century, many of the occupations now recognised as professions have been bureaucratised. Most teachers, academics, and social workers, and many medical professionals, work in state bureaucracies. Some professionals in the private sector now work in very large – often national or multi-national – organisations: accountants, architects, and engineers, for example. In these cases, the bureaucracy provides a further layer of regulation, specifying functions and best practice, and enforcing standards. These two dimensions – the salience of the professional body of knowledge and the extent of bureaucratisation – form a matrix in which the various professions can be located, as in Figure 1. There is obviously room for argument about precisely where each profession should be located. We leave it to readers to make their own judgments about where in the matrix they would locate teachers, for example, or lawyers, GPs, surgeons, engineers, architects and other professionals. However, we hope that it is clear that different occupations belong in different quadrants. What is less clear is where the police would sit in the various prescriptions for professionalisation.

It is obvious where the police were located on the matrix in the past: in the top of the top-left quadrant. There was no requirement for any entry qualification, no conception that formal knowledge, rather than skill and craft, should guide front-line practice, and no expectation that front-line staff should operate fully autonomously. Of course front-line staff have always operated with considerable discretion, and one reading of the hierarchical nature of policing is that it is precisely a system for regulating discretion.

It remains unclear – at least to us – precisely where the current professionalisation process will relocate policing on the matrix. It is clearly intended to transform policing into a knowledge-based profession to some considerable extent. It can also be seen as part of a process for establishing what Holdaway (2017: 591) has called “a hybrid, fragmented form of regulatory governance”, which will certainly distance the police service from the Home Office, and arguably loosen the grip of police force hierarchies on their workforces. The medical model of professionalisation, if that is to be followed, would certainly confer more autonomy on front-line staff – akin to GPs, who make significant treatment decisions by reference largely to the medical knowledge base. On the other hand, the sort of professionalisation envisaged by Peter Neyroud’s review – with additional education and qualifications for senior staff – suggests that familiarity with the professional knowledge base is mostly required in the middle and top of the police management hierarchy.

FIGURE 1: STYLES OF PROFESSIONALISATION



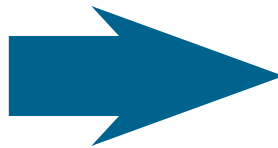


The authors of this report encourage the College of Policing to articulate more clearly the style of professionalisation it envisages, on these dimensions of hierarchical accountability and professional knowledge. There may be a case for retaining some constructive ambiguity about this, because it remains unclear how far down the route to evidence-based policy and practice the police service can realistically travel, and over what time period. Clearly it can make greater use of evidence, but defining the boundaries of policing's professional body of knowledge – and filling the gaps within this boundary – is a significant undertaking that is likely to take decades. And the degree to which policing can be transformed into an evidence-driven institution in turn determines whether loosening of the hierarchical structure of police accountability is possible or desirable.

On the other hand, designing the shape of the entry level qualification, and the routes by which it may be acquired, does require some clarity, both about the relationship of the knowledge base to policy and practice and about changes envisaged in the hierarchical structure. Our findings can speak to some – but not all – of these issues. Figure 2 below sets out what we take to be the theory of change, and the logic model that is implicit in the College of Policing's current proposals for the DHEP.

FIGURE 2: THE LOGIC MODEL AND THEORY OF CHANGE UNDERPINNING THE GRADUATE ENTRY PROGRAMME

Graduate entry:  
Academic  
degree  
harnessed  
and accelerates  
learning /  
training in  
becoming a  
Police Officer  
in England  
and Wales



Uplift approach to  
recruit training and  
integrate HEI content  
to assure functional  
equivalence of three  
entry routes into  
policing

Focus on police  
constable basic field  
skills together with  
an uplift in delivery  
level of learning

*What does success look like?*

Entry programmes cross-fertilise field and knowledge; iterative approach to the balance of field and learning; integrate police cultures within three entry routes; recruits use information and evidence to improve constable ways of working

Achieving independent patrol status; creating independent decision makers who can draw on best knowledge at beginning of career; foster high professional standards

*How will we know we have achieved success?*

Police officers are trained in EBP techniques and methodologies; knowledge is applied to everyday policing in a everyday context; uplift in police officers using EBP approaches;

Police training materials reflect evidence base; Recruits embed an approach to policing that enables improvement in managing local problems; Gaps in knowledge base of transmitting policing practice are continually identified and proactively addressed

## **Researching the value of a degree for police work**

Clearly the remit for this research took as given that degree entry would confer considerable benefits on policing, and we were not asked to review the research evidence in support of this. Nevertheless we should say something about the supporting evidence. First, we should stress that there are different versions of the argument for graduate entry. One is that a degree qualification – regardless of subject – serves as a guarantee that the holder will have certain qualities, such as analytic skills and independence of mind. A more narrow claim, and one implicit in the PEQF, is that providing recruits with relevant skills and knowledge to degree level will help them do a better job.

Secondly, research evidence in support of either proposition is unlikely to be clinching. Some differences are likely to be subtle, with the desired effects accruing in the long-term; and in the short-term, degree-holders have had to find their place in a workforce whose culture has not been positive towards higher education (Lee and Punch 2004; Silvester, 1989, Hallenberg and Cockcroft, 2017). There is research, mainly from the United States and much of it dated, on the value of in-service acquisition of degrees. Paterson (2011), reviewing the 1970s American research, found graduate officers were less authoritarian, less cynical, and behaved more ethically and professionally than non-graduates. This body of research concluded that it was not so much a particular course but the overall university experience that made the difference.

Paterson's review of research in the 1990s found that graduate officers had improved knowledge of the criminal justice system, made better sense of managerial issues and were less likely to use coercive force.

On the other hand, in a separate review, Paoline, Terrill and Rossler, (2014) found few differences between graduate officers and others in terms of attitudes and professionalism, job satisfaction and stress, a conclusion supported by their own more contemporary study. They put the lack of difference down to the overriding effects of socialisation into the police occupational culture, and graduate officers' frustration at being assigned to low level policing tasks.

The safest conclusion to draw from the available research is that the outcomes of decisions about professionalisation and graduate entry are likely to be highly context-specific, and in particular that desired effects can be undermined by staff resistance – but that there are real potential benefits to be grasped by requiring a degree-level qualification at the point of entry into the police service.

### **Different professional knowledges: what counts as the policing evidence base?**

The natural assumption to be made about the nature of the policing evidence base is that it only addresses 'what works' in reducing crime – by analogy to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) evidence base<sup>6</sup> for medical and social care. NICE's website sets out – with a high level of granularity – the best treatments for medical and social care problems.

In reality research evidence has charted the wider range of police functions, from tackling crime to public protection, maintaining public order, and dealing with emergencies that need an immediate response. There is a growing but very incomplete body of knowledge derived from experimental research about what works best in discharging all these functions.

Overlaying this work is a more reflective body of academic research that offers various 'theories of policing' that characterises how public order and the rule of law is best maintained.<sup>7</sup> Abutting *this* work are studies of the police as an occupation, charting the policing culture(s) and exploring how best to secure organisational commitment and compliance (and all this leaves to one side the more scientific body of knowledge associated with issues such as forensics).

The key point here is that the evidence base can be conceptualised as sitting on a continuum. At one end of the continuum, it can be thought of as reliable *what works* knowledge,<sup>8</sup> formulated at a high degree of granularity, that provides evidence-based solutions to the vast majority of problems that a patrol officer (or neighbourhood officer or detective) will encounter. At the other end of the continuum the core elements of the evidence base can be thought of as theories or perspectives that provide police officers with principles against

which they can test different solutions to the problems they have to tackle. This sort of knowledge will generally be more provisional and contestable than the highly granular knowledge that one might expect to find in a well-developed 'what works' warehouse, but with a much wider range of applicability. Our own view is that police too often want and expect the policing evidence-base to yield unambiguous solutions to specific problems; whilst what they *need* is a set of well-thought-through principles from which they can derive the solutions they seek. The latter is severely lacking in police learning.

Whichever characterisation of research evidence is judged more appropriate for policing, both are in tension with the assumptions firmly embedded in current learning approaches for today's police recruits. These assumptions are that policing is a craft, and that training police recruits in 'what police do, when they do it, and how they do it' is best done by former or serving police officers who hand on the knowledge in a practical apprenticeship. In this report we are making a distinction between 'training' and learning. PEQF, we suggest, requires learning strategies and learning outcomes.

The PEQF gives HEIs a central role as a co-producer, together with police forces, of learning delivery and assessment of competence. The contribution that HEIs will make to the creation of innovative

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6. <https://www.nice.org.uk>

7. Much of the sociology of policing from the 1960s and 1970s remains relevant, e.g., Banton's work on police and community, Packer's models of crime control and due process policing, and Bittner's work on the functions of the police. More recent work such as procedural justice theory, is also of central importance.

8. No 'what works' evidence is likely to lie beyond challenge. Better solutions come along, in time. And in any case, research evidence generally needs to be blended with practitioner judgement before it is fully usable.

approaches to useful principles and learning frameworks is not a simple 'add and stir' formula. Bringing academic approaches to learning in this new PEQF approach to police recruit induction to the profession will present challenges to HEIs and current police training centres who are more attuned to traditional models held by each. Both sets of learning professionals are not yet ready to translate operational craft or scholarly knowledge into grounded, blended teaching and assessment. **As this research strongly suggests, for the PEQF to succeed, HEIs and police must collaborate on a novel hybrid approach to learning – one that grounds scholarly 'what works' knowledge into principles which guide new ways of thinking, decision making and practice.**

So at this critical juncture in the journey of PEQF, intelligent strategies are needed for blending into the curriculum the craft skills and professional knowledge of experienced officers with the more formal research evidence that is generated within universities and other research centres. This takes us to one of the golden threads – the introduction of EBP – that must be welded into the PEQF curriculums for police officer recruit entry. The College of Policing offers a definition of evidence based policing as a way of working that 'creates, reviews and uses the best available evidence to inform and challenge polices, practices and decisions.'<sup>9</sup> This approach recognises both knowledge that is generated through collaboration with academics and other partners. It also recognises that evidence – such as professional consensus and peer review – may be regarded as the 'best available', if this is gathered and documented in a careful and transparent way.

Evidence based policing practice (EBP) is a required part of the curriculum for all entry routes to become a police constable.

At the risk of oversimplification, the curriculum for the policing entry qualification, regardless of which route is taken, will need to synthesise, in the right quantities, three rather different forms of evidence:

- a. The practical craft knowledge acquired through experience and tested against professional judgment, held within the organisational culture and transmitted through the organisation by formal and informal mentoring and training;
- b. Where the research already exists, the experimental 'what works' evidence that addresses questions framed at a very granular level about effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of different interventions;
- c. Research that offers theoretical understanding, or perspective, on the police role, including theories of crime, victimisation and offending, that will guide officers in their problem-solving roles.

Under the PEQF, these three conceptions of evidence imply different approaches to teaching and learning, and how learning and development units approach the preparation of modules and materials covering 'basic policing'. The transmission of craft skills is basically a process of demonstration of skills, supplemented by learning by rote of processes that have to be performed. The 'what works' model involves the transmission of formal knowledge at a higher level of generality and complexity

but does not privilege analytic ability and conceptual grasp of the nature of policing in the way that the third model does.

Policing training, learning and development has traditionally worked with model (a), although police management now has quite a long history of engagement with research both in the hard and social sciences. The EBP movement has given much more priority to the second type of evidence – experimental evaluative research – and has tended to assume that this is the model applied in the archetypal profession of medicine. Critiques of the experimental approach are numerous and sustainable: not enough Randomised Control Trial (RCT) knowledge as yet; limited sensitivity to context or mechanisms; and insufficient recognition of problems of reflexivity/adaptation. The third sort of evidence fits in to a somewhat different model of evidence based practice, described well by Tilley and Laycock (2017) as the ‘engineering model’ of evidence based trial and error, which they see as highly applicable to policing.

### **Finding a test-bed for new knowledge: Police Now**

Police Now (PN) is not a graduate conversion programme, but there are similarities between it and the proposed DHEP. Like the DHEP, PN trains graduates for a career in policing, using a different approach to traditional recruit training, and placing a greater emphasis on promoting an evidence-based approach to policing.

PN was designed, using the COP’s recruit training syllabus, to train outstanding recruits over a two-year period. It exists to ‘transform communities, reduce crime and increase the public’s confidence in policing’, and its aim is to recruit and develop ‘an outstanding and diverse group of individuals to be police officers and leaders, working on the front line and contributing to wider society’.<sup>10</sup>

The programme consists of an eight-week Summer Academy (SA) ‘*designed and delivered by outstanding, high performing frontline police officers... it is underpinned by a comprehensive pre-learn course so that participants have the legal and procedural knowledge they need to hit the ground running as well as a period of one-to-one mentoring afterwards*’. For the remainder of the two-year training period, most PN recruits work in a neighbourhood policing team. Police Now describes the Academy as ‘innovative, dynamic, inspiring and challenging’. Police Now initially worked only with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), expanding to work with 7 forces in 2016, 19 forces in 2017, and 17 forces throughout England and Wales in 2018.<sup>11</sup>

The project has much to thank Police Now for in its willingness to be a test-bed for the ideas and challenges discussed in this report. None of these findings are meant to evaluate Police Now as a programme. The curriculum for inducting recruits into policing is set by the College of Policing, adapted and applied by 43 police forces across the UK.

9. <https://www.whatworks.college.police.uk>

10. <https://www.policenow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Police-Now-Programme-Booklet.pdf>

11. <https://www.policenow.org.uk/the-programme/about-the-programme/#forces-we-work-with>

Police Now relies on the IPLDP curriculum in its current approach. The project team had frequent and continuous conversations with various PN staff, and the findings of the studies were fed back routinely to PN over the course of the project. The project reported here explores what the challenges are not only for Police Now, but for all the 43 forces across the country when they will transition to the PEQF curriculum.

### **The project**

This project's origins predated the College's announcement of the PEQF. MOPAC, with UCL and Birkbeck as academic partners and Police Now as a key stakeholder, secured a grant from the Home Office Police Innovation Fund. Its aims were to: "Enhance the effectiveness and professionalism of police officers by developing and testing a syllabus to embed evidenced 'what works' knowledge on tactics and styles of policing into police recruit training." Police Now agreed that its graduate entry programme could be used as a test-bed for research to enable the development of its syllabus to include a sharper focus on 'what works' evidence.

The College had started its consultation over the PEQF at about the time that the project formally began in Spring 2016, and it was clear at that point that the project would be particularly relevant to PEQF's graduate entry route.

The College of Policing was a formal project partner; and progressively over the first few months, the project was reshaped to provide whatever support it could for the development of the DHEP, which is, in essence, a two-year graduate conversion course that will provide existing graduates with a Level 6 Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice.

Police Now remained a central stakeholder for the project, as the graduate participants on its three cohorts have experiences and aspirations which are likely to be closely comparable to those enrolling in any graduate conversion course in the future. Detailed reports are available on the various elements of the project's full work programme from the MOPAC website.



The key elements were:

1. A rapid evidence assessment of what can be gleaned from other graduate conversion courses for the PEQF graduate entry route, supplemented by interviews with experts.
2. An international systematic review of what is known about effective police training methods.
3. Completion by recruits of: a 'tracker survey', a psychometric instrument completed at three points in time during the course; a tool assessing recruits' emotional intelligence; and an 'evidence based policing toolkit' assessing understanding of, and commitment to EBP.
4. In-depth qualitative interviews with Police Now participants in cohorts 2 and 3 of the programme, complementing the quantitative material collected at (3), tracking progress on the course, assessing reactions to it, and levels of commitment and satisfaction.
5. Interviews with Learning and Development (L&D) Unit staff across the country to capture their understanding of the DHEP and their readiness to implement the significant changes to learning approaches required by the PEQF.

### The shape of this report

This report is structured as follows.

**Chapter 2** present the results of the rapid evidence assessment on graduate conversion courses in other fields.

**Chapter 3** summarises the results of the systematic review about effective police training.

**Chapter 4** deals with findings about forces readiness to implement PEQF.

**Chapter 5** uses three quantitative monitoring tools to describe the experience of Police Now graduates.

**Chapter 6** provides qualitative findings on the experiences of Police Now graduates.

A **final chapter** offers some concluding thoughts and draws out the lessons of these findings for the DHEP.

# Chapter 2

## The evidence on conversion courses

Jyoti Belur, Winifred Agnew-Pauley and Lisa Tompson

This chapter presents the results of a rapid evidence assessment (REA) carried out by UCL, examining effective practice in graduate conversion courses for other occupations. The objective was to inform the development of this route in the PEQF. Fifty-one studies were identified and summarised. The main themes emerging from the review concerned:

- learning styles
- translating theory into practice
- teaching methods
- assessment
- reflective practice.

Inclusion in the REA was based on three criteria: that the study should relate to a graduate conversion programme for a professional qualification for entry into an occupational role; should have some description of programme content, pedagogy, duration, modes of delivery, outcomes, trainee experience or theoretical content; and should be in English.

Over half of the REA studies were from the United Kingdom (n = 30), mostly from England (n = 14). Research was predominately within the teaching discipline (n = 40) with other studies relating to either law (n = 6) or social work (n = 5). Many of the conversion courses ranged between 36 weeks and one year (n = 29). Three courses were between 18 months or two years. Eighteen courses either did not provide any information or had a variable or unclear course length.

Cross-cutting sub-themes were: the use of information technology (IT) or virtual learning environments (VLE); collaborative learning. The REA highlighted a number of more detailed questions worth examining in more detail, and e-interviews were conducted with seven people selected for their knowledge of conversion courses in education, law and social work. The results are presented at Appendix A. A full report of the findings in this chapter is available from [j.belur@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.belur@ucl.ac.uk)

### **Course structure**

Graduate conversion courses in teaching, such as the UK Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), tend to structure their practical training alongside the educational aspects of the course, with periods of university teaching interspersed with periods of practical training. This training is most often in the form of 'placements' made possible through partnerships between schools and higher education institutions. Teaching placements range from around 4 weeks to 24 weeks. The most common arrangement within the reviewed 51 studies specified that the teaching placement would comprise two thirds of the course (for example, 24 weeks of a 36 week course). The remaining studies examined shorter placements (for example, 12 weeks) or had variable arrangements. Graduate conversion courses for law tended to structure their courses as stand-alone training preceding practical training. Hannibal and Pope (2005: 237) state that the Legal Practice Course (LPC) is "an intensive nine-month full-time programme of study... which prepares students for their vocational engagement as a trainee solicitor".

Therefore, the acquisition of professional skills and practical experience comes at a later stage in the process and is not included on the graduate conversion course for law. Most of the social work studies relating to graduate conversion programmes gave no details on course structure, but according to the 'Evaluation of Social Work Degree Qualification in England' Team (2008: 95) the requirements for Social Work Training set the minimum standard for students as being at least 200 days in academic learning and 200 days in practical training, at either undergraduate or postgraduate level.

All these courses involve partnerships between training institutions and HEIs. Six of the studies made specific reference to partnership arrangements. There are various partnership models, with some courses having informal arrangements, or arrangements in the early stage of development, and others having formalised partnerships. One study (Carter 2015) found that partnership arrangements that follow the 'clinical practice' model are considered to be best practice, whereby students spend sustained periods of time in the same policing setting under the supervision of an experienced mentor. Furlong et al. (1996) differentiate three models of partnerships in teacher education: collaborative, HEI-led and separatist:

*"In 'collaborative' partnerships, teachers and HEI tutors work together in planning and discussing professional issues. The process is characterised by a genuine search for shared understanding and mutual respect. In an 'HEI-led' partnership, assessment and the content of the placement and planning is designed by*

*the HEI with, at most, consultation with small groups of teachers. In the 'separatist' model, each sector is seen to have its own responsibilities without any attempt at dialogue and with integration being achieved by the students themselves."*

Ideally, the REA suggests that graduate conversion courses should have formalised partnership models in place between learning and development and HEIs that are collaborative and based on the 'clinical practice' model.

### **Learning styles**

Graduate conversion courses need to acknowledge that applicants, as adult learners, come with a diverse range of educational and academic experiences and work or practical expertise. This should inform course design and the range of teaching methods used, as it is important to take account of the starting point of trainees. The literature on learning styles stressed three key points: understanding that students learn in different ways and have different learning styles; the importance of acknowledging past learning and experiences; and taking into consideration prior perspectives and concerns. Students of graduate conversion courses not only bring prior experiences, but also concerns and fears surrounding entering the workforce. Students starting initial teacher education courses have different levels of knowledge, understanding and experience about teaching, schools and pupils which may result in different causes of concern for students. It is important for courses, and educators, to provide opportunities for students to identify and address individual concerns so that they might develop as professionals.

The take away message is that conversion courses are designed for adult learners and must consider individual learning styles of students as well as their prior experience, preconceptions and concerns about the profession. One potential way forward, addressed later in this report, is for course tutors to identify these concerns and preconceptions about the profession early on and address them by focusing on the theory and conceptual knowledge underlying the practice elements of the profession.

### **Translating theory into practice**

This theme refers to the relationship between the educational, academic or conceptual components of a course and its practical or field training aspects. While these two components are often referred to as separate entities, both are integral and (ideally) interconnected. The practical components of a course are the practical tools introduced in both the fieldwork and classroom settings, whereas the conceptual theoretical components involve the “conceptual tools which facilitate teachers framing and interpretations of practice, but they do not offer specific solutions for practice” (Tang et al. 2016: 55). Within practically orientated professions, such as teaching, social work, or policing, there is a consensus that the practical components of the courses provide students with the essential skills to be a competent professional. Furthermore, studies have shown that students tend to privilege the practical elements of the courses over conceptual or theoretical aspects, as this is where ‘job preparedness’ is established. However, as outlined above, it is the conceptual or theoretical components of training that

inform these skills and provide the foundational guidelines that underpin practice. It is therefore essential that courses emphasise the integration of theory and practice, or devise innovative ways to translate what is learnt in the conceptual components of the course to the skills acquired during practical components.

Theoretical components of a course stimulate higher order thinking, debate, theory building and discussion. Costello and Aung (2015: 590), discussing social work education in Myanmar, outlined that social work education is “guided by principles of social justice, human rights and ethical practice and their development of critical thinking, reflection, and analysis of power, inequality and disadvantage guides their practice”. This demonstration of how conceptual components guide ethical practices and alternative perspectives is particularly important for graduate conversion courses, as students may come into the course with certain perspectives or understandings, that new knowledge has the ability to challenge. This is referred to as conceptual change, which can be made possible when “students feel dissatisfied with their current conceptions and have access to alternatives they perceive as intelligible, plausible and fruitful” (Wong et al. 2006: 2). Without these stimulating elements of conceptual learning, students are more at risk of succumbing to institutionalised professional culture and losing their enthusiasm: “without a robust theoretical knowledge, student-teachers are ill-equipped to resist institutional constraints on their teaching... and are unable to resist the sometimes anti-intellectual climate of school staffrooms” (Wong et al. 2006: 2).

This is not to say that students' prior experiences are wrong, or need to be disproven, however it is important that prior learning is acknowledged, alternative perspectives are offered, opportunities to reflect are built in, and tools are provided to translate attitudes, beliefs and values into actions.

The take away message is that the integration of the practical elements of training and the theoretical elements are achieved in order to ensure that the practical element, as it is considered to be indicative of job worthiness, is not privileged over the theoretical elements, which underpin the ethos of the profession relevant to the context it is practised.

### **Teaching methods**

Methods of teaching were noted by a majority of the studies. A wide number of teaching methods were discussed, all linked to different pedagogical theories. These included IT/VLE, the use of videos or video-papers,<sup>12</sup> academic teaching methods such as exams and written assignments, peer review, lesson planning or lesson study, portfolios, critical incident analysis, oral presentations, role play, blogs and interviews. Overall teaching methods ought to "promote cooperative, active, inquiry-based learning" (De Jong and Chadbourne 2007: 15), and utilise the best available evidence when it comes to innovative and diversified teaching methods, utilising tools such as IT, and framing methods with pedagogical practice.

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12. A video paper is when text is accompanied by video within a single electronic document so that the reader is able to "activate different modes of presentation, watching the context in which the text is placed as well as presenting authentic examples to improve the validity of text" (Krumsvik and Smith 2009: 271).

Where possible, it is important to shift focus away from the traditional classroom-based model of teaching, and encourage collaborative learning and critical thinking through engagement between student and teacher as well as among peers. Methods of teaching must have "a strong emphasis on inclusion, active and participative learning, student empowerment and cooperative approaches" (Ofsted 2005). Equally important is a diverse range of teaching and learning activities to stimulate interest and keep students engaged. Optimally courses should be designed around a blended model of face-to-face teaching and traditional lectures and tutorials with online, collaborative components. The main pedagogical practices in the literature were reflective practice, communities of practice, IT/VLE, peer learning and mentoring. These are discussed in more detail below.

*The main take away message is that teaching methods ought to be innovative, engaging and appropriate for adults; should integrate theory and practice; encourage reflection, and include a diverse range of teaching methods in order to take into account students' different learning styles.*

### **Assessment**

The evidence indicated that, like choosing appropriate teaching methods, assessments of students should be based on pedagogical principles that incorporate a diverse mix of innovative methods. Aside from the necessary evaluation of student competence, assessment should also be a learning experience, have practical relevance and, as noted, be guided by pedagogical principles.

As outlined above, graduate conversion courses consist of the two essential components of theory and practice, both of which need assessment. When this is focused on the theoretical aspect, it should be closely linked to innovative learning methods; when addressing practical competency, it should be practically relevant.

As with effective teaching methods, measures of assessment ought to shift away from a heavy dependence on traditional methods (such as written assessments and exams), and incorporate a diverse and innovative mix of assessments that promote learning and are practically relevant. As Roness and Smith (2010: 180) remark: "Students may get frustrated if they experience heavy demands for written assignments that lack relevance to their practical teaching". Practices identified as effective for assessment that also encourage learning include: "effective questioning, sharing learning objectives and assessment criteria, providing effective feedback about how to improve self-assessment and peer assessment" (Winterbottom et al. 2008: 194).

Studies provided several examples of effective methods of assessment. Portfolios, as both a teaching and assessment method, reoccur as a tool for showing how students integrate theory and practice, reflect critically on their learning, and demonstrate the breadth and depth of their learning. Concept mapping, where students visually represent concepts and how they are linked together, has been shown as effective in measuring not only students' content knowledge, but also for "promoting and assessing conceptual change" (Reitano and Green 2013).

Assessing a student's practical competency is of equal importance. The most common method is observation of trainee professional performance.

*The important take home learning from the evidence is that assessments, when used innovatively can both promote learning (assessment for learning) as well as evaluate student learning (Assessment of learning), especially if it encourages critical reflection.*

### **Reflective practice**

Reflective practice emerged as an integral theme across most of the included studies. Reflective practice is fundamental to producing competent professionals. The literature revealed that infusing graduate courses with reflective practice would produce a range of benefits essential to enhancing the learning experience, integrating theory and practice and developing good practice, higher order thinking, and professional development. Reflection can take place through a range of different tasks or observations. At the simplest level "these processes of reflection are often understood to be triggered through completion of various administrative and technocratic mechanisms", for example planning lessons in teaching (Lamb and Aldous 2016: 100). However, the key to these reflective tasks is to engage with individual reflexive processes and employ a cyclical process of planning, practice, reflection and revision. Reflexivity can be understood as a "set of meaningful processes in which the individual agent reaches a heightened point of awareness regarding their own reflective practice" and their understanding of how experience can shape understanding (Lamb and Aldous 2016: 102).

Reflective processes should occur continually throughout education and training, in particular before, during and after practical placements, in order to 'scaffold' or continually build on professional development. The different stages of reflection are referred to as reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action: "Reflection on-action can be defined as the self-evaluative thinking that teachers engage in after most lessons. Killen (2007: 96) regards reflection-on-action as a deliberate attempt by the teacher to understand past events in order to shape future actions" (Taloe 2012). Furthermore, reflection should occur both individually, and among peers as an outcome of collaborative learning.

The concept of reflection has been embedded in all themes that emerged from the qualitative synthesis, and while it is presented here separately, it is also a unifying theme throughout the literature on graduate conversion courses. Allowing time for reflection gives space for both students and trainers to consider how prior experience and learning styles will impact on the understanding of new knowledge. This space to reflect also helps develop the capacity to build on and integrate both old and new knowledge and to translate theory into practice. As put forth by Lamb (2015: 344), "acknowledging uncertainties and complexities in practice and engaging in meaningful deliberation are necessary for generating insights and for interrogating one's practice in a way that leads to sustained change". This process of reflection is also an integral element of higher order thinking and critical thinking: ability to compartmentalise knowledge and draw on different forms of knowledge and experience in different contexts is the mark of a competent professional.

*The message here about reflective practice is critical to elevating training to learning, the central argument throughout this report.*

### **The use of IT/Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)**

VLE is a teaching method that featured in many studies as a tool to facilitate the teaching/learning process and foster reflective practices.<sup>13</sup> Some examples of use included: online platforms such as Blackboard or Moodle, electronic discussion boards, using videos or video-papers and blogs. Online platforms create spaces for formal and informal interaction between students and between the students and the tutor. It is also a useful tool for distance learning and can reduce isolation while students are on placement. Falloon (2012: 9) suggests that there is a "need to blend significant offline preparation with synchronous online interaction, so that what goes on in classrooms represents deeper, more meaningful learning, rather than shallow, superficial interaction".

### **Collaborative learning acts**

This is an umbrella term covering: mentoring, communities of practice, peer learning and placements. These sub-themes are all examples of active engagement in the learning process between students and their peers or educators. While each of these sub-themes can be discussed as separate concepts, they are all linked by this guiding principle of collaborative learning.

Mentoring is a crucial element in the teaching and learning process. The role of mentors is to observe, guide, support, motivate and evaluate recruits. In contrast to supervision – where the teacher observes and oversees learnt



material – mentors are more actively engaged in the learning process. They can give students evidence of good practice, offer feedback and support, and describe the roles and responsibilities of a competent professional. Peer learning is a further example of effective collaboration which is thought to be key to developing professionals. Peer learning can involve mutual peer dialogue and support, peer observation and peer assessment or review. Peer learning is underpinned by the concept of communities of practice.

### **Implications for police conversion courses**

The evidence presented here indicates that the following factors need to be considered in creating any graduate conversion course for police entrants under the PEQF:

1. Articulating assumptions that are being made about the students' critical thinking abilities, relevant skills and profession related preconceptions that the students might bring to the table. This would help the curriculum developers and those involved in delivering the teaching to understand the needs of prospective students and address gaps at the outset. For example, it is essential to understand students' perception of the police as a force in order to engender a discussion about the purpose and role of the police (exposure to various policing theories) in order to underpin the purpose of the learning programme.
2. Understanding that different individuals have different learning styles and adapting suitable teaching methods for adults are essential for delivering the theoretical and conceptual learning as well as operational skills required in policing. Adapting learning space to learning styles based on adult experiential learning theory has been shown to have some value in higher education.
3. The most important aspect of a successful professional conversion course is its ability to integrate theoretical learning in practice. This can be achieved through the use of various teaching tools, resources and opportunities to apply theoretical learning to practice under the supervision of a capable mentor, as well as being provided the space for reflection on the experience and how practice can be improved.
4. Conceptualising appropriate assessment so that it is a tool to enable learning (assessment **for** learning) as well as test learning (assessment **of** learning) and ensuring that the assessment is quality assured and validated by objective experts is another important aspect of curriculum design and delivery.

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13. "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly"  
<http://infed.org/mobi/jean-lave-etienne-wenger-and-communities-of-practice/>

## **Chapter 3**

# The systematic review on effective police training

Jyoti Belur, Winifred Agnew-Pauley, Brendan McGinley and Lisa Tompson

## Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from a systematic review of the available research evidence on police recruit training. The review, which took a 'realist' approach, includes a total of 33 studies conducted in different countries. We searched 11 relevant electronic databases, including grey literature and dissertation databases, and searches of publications by relevant government, research, and professional agencies. We included studies in this review if they:

1. related to an entry level training programme for new police recruits;
2. reported the findings of an empirical research project on police recruit training;
3. covered substantive content on police training;
4. and were in English.

We initially identified 109 studies meeting these criteria, covering six broad themes. After consultation, it was decided to focus on the 33 studies that were (a) methodologically rigorous and (b) focused on two themes: academic and field training, and how recruits learn. Fuller details and additional findings from the review are in two detailed reports and can be obtained from [j.belur@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.belur@ucl.ac.uk)

## The studies

Twenty of the 33 studies examined programmes in the United States and five covered ones from the UK. Other studies were from Australia, Europe, Canada, Saint Lucia, South Asia and South East Asia. The studies mainly covered police training academies, but often working in partnership with a university or a college.

Two of these programmes in the US led to the attainment of a degree. Whereas research on recruit training in the UK studies post-employment, the US studies covered both pre-join and post-join models. Most training programmes covered in the studies were delivered in standalone blocks of academic and field training components, for example 20 weeks of academic and skills training in a training academy, followed by 10 weeks field training at a police force. Some were structured with the first block in the academy, second block in field training, and a final block returning to the academy.

Five studies described training programmes with interspersed periods of academic and field training. The field training component also appeared to be longer in programmes included in the US studies than in the UK studies. The 33 studies identified a wide range of mechanisms which were regarded as key factors in achieving the desired educational or training outcomes. We shall first present findings on best practice identified in the studies relating to teaching and learning strategies. We then examine issues relating to the integration of theory and practice. Next we summarise what research says about implementation. Finally we report on aims and outcomes.

## Teaching and learning mechanisms

The studies discussed a range of student-centred learning theories, the main ones being andragogy and problem-based learning (PBL). Andragogy is a learning philosophy specifically relating to the teaching of adults, contrasted to pedagogy – the teaching of children (cf. Vodde, 2008).

Andragogy emphasises active involvement of the learner in the learning process, as opposed to passive listening, and building on existing knowledge and experience. Andragogy also recognises that adults vary in their learning styles. Andragogy was identified as a mechanism in nine of the studies and PBL in five.

Problem-based learning follows a similar approach to andragogy in that it is “learner-centred and emphasised experiential learning with passive facilitation and active learning” (Lettic, 2016: 25). Both learning theories centre on active participation in the learning process. Whilst andragogy focuses on building on past experiences and different learning styles, PBL emphasises working through problems in a collaborative way: “it is through learners’ active participation in the learning event, the use of language and interaction with others, that learning occurs” (King Stargel, 2010: 14). The goal or outcome of PBL is to develop the learner’s problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Within the studies examined, both these learning theories were identified as particularly important for police recruit education:

*“Police education should make greater use of adult learning principles that encourage a learner-centred approach, promoting critical thinking skills within authentic learning contexts related to their policing duties” (Shipton, 2009: 58).*

Other techniques that were considered to be effective for encouraging critical thinking and problem solving were scenario-based training, group discussions and debates and opportunities for reflection.

The first key teaching mechanism that we found related to the use of “practical, scenario-based teaching that includes active participation” (McCay, 2011: 87). Both scenario-based learning and ‘active involvement’ of the learner were identified as a mechanism in six studies. Learning techniques such as “group discussions, simulation exercises, hypothetical case scenarios, PBL activities, the use of the case method, and peer-helping activities, all serve to capitalise on the experiences of the learner, thus enhancing the learning experience” (Vodde, 2008: 94). This is in line with previous research which found students prefer and respond well to practical learning, as opposed to traditional lecture-based teaching. Scenario-based teaching also allows students to be presented with useable examples to draw upon. An example of this was trainers’ narration of stories about actual experiences and how to respond to them which was found to be very helpful by recruits in answering exams.

Peer learning through group discussion and/or debate was considered a mechanism in five of studies. This is another example of experiential learning technique during interaction between peers:

*“Students do not come to know a concept just by having it presented to them. They must construct it through exporation, reasoning, and discussion. Various concepts and skills need to be scaffolded on top of students’ prior experiences and together with each other” (Porodysz, 2004: 13).*

This quote demonstrates the importance of recruits formulating and constructing knowledge based on prior experiences, in line with andragogy, and in discussion with other peers, adhering to PBL. The learning process must involve debate and discussion in order to challenge recruits' prior learning and encourage thinking about different perspectives. Lettic (2016: 26) found that "students benefited from the differing opinions, literature resources presented, and disagreements [which led] to better information retention, understanding, integration and application of knowledge".

Nine of the included studies referred to the importance of reflection, as in the process of thinking back on one's practice or experience and considering why something was done a certain way, what the possible impact of this was, and if it could have been done differently. Reflections challenge students' pre-conceived knowledge, past experiences or attitudes. The use of 'reality checks' can ensure that student views are challenged and placed within the correct context and, trainers frequently check in with students to ensure the correct learning is taking place.

Further, collective reflection "exposes subjects to a wider base of experiences and involves mutual resources" (Rantatalo and Karp, 2016: 720). However, the key to all of these mechanisms was considered to be effective facilitation and leadership by academic and field trainers and tutors. The evidence suggests that seamless integration of andragogy, combined with learner specific teaching methods that encourage group discussion and reflection on practice at both the individual and collective levels would be very effective in delivering the curriculum while encouraging critical thinking skills.

### **Integrating theory and practice**

Integrating theory and practice emerged as an important mechanism in seven studies – even if they did not always articulate precisely how this should be done. The importance of consistency between the academic learning component and field training component through the application of learning principles, the role of the tutor, and reflection and debriefing between the recruit and the tutor were identified as field training mechanisms, which encourage recruits to draw links between their academic learning and practical experience.

The design of recruit training programmes has important implications for the integration of theory and practice. Interspersing academic and practical components of the course provides more opportunities for recruits to apply what they have learnt in practice, and to reflect on what they have experienced operationally, to help integrate theory and practice. This can include introducing time spent back in the university while recruits are in the field training phase, or interspersing university learning with community placements. Heslop (2011b: 337) comments:

*"There were perfectly sound logistical and pedagogical reasons for sending the officers on placements only seven weeks into their training. This was at a time when it was envisioned that they would be open to learning new things as well as seeing things from different perspectives. At the same time, however, this also meant that while their experiences on the community placement had some meaning, they were not situated in their own field of policing".*

Moving away from the 'traditional academy model' (echoing the strict, hierarchical, 'paramilitary' model), by interspersing academic learning with practical experience, may also help counteract the negative aspects of recruit socialisation and police culture. Placements of recruits in organisations such as schools, hospitals, and charities have also been used to help recruits to better understand diverse communities and the workings of organisations within their policing area.

Opportunities to integrate the academic components with practice arise during the field training phase. During this phase, recruits get their first opportunity to apply what they have learnt in the academy, and begin to experience socialisation. Furthermore, this gives tutors and trainers an opportunity to observe recruits' performance and witness their development. Specific aspects of the field training component were identified as promoting the integration of theory and practice, considered pivotal for the training to be effective.

Unless field training complements academic content, recruits may begin to "question the validity of their [academic learning] as a result of their initial exposure to operational policing" (Chan et al., 2003: 122). Successful integration of theory and practice occurs when students are able to apply what they have learned in the academic component to the practice environment, or 'transfer' their knowledge. This integration encourages recruits to "see the big picture", and understand the theory behind their actions: "If the recruits understood the rationale behind their actions they... would be better prepared to learn from their own experiences in the future" (Charles, 2000: 81).

Course consistency and coherence, whereby the learning theory and principles applied in the academic components carry through to the field training components, is crucial. As some police agencies have transitioned towards training police recruits in the principles of community policing, the disconnect happens because recruits "receive academy training in community policing, then go into field training programs based on traditional philosophies of policing" (Chappell, 2007: 499). A technique that can be used to facilitate reflection during field training and link theory and practice in a cyclical process is the Model of Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC). This theoretical framework involves a cyclical process of four key components: experience, reflect, interpret, and plan action. When applied in the policing environment, it can encourage recruit officers to critically analyse and reflect on practical experiences (cf Thorneywork 2004).

Involving the learner in an active rather than passive way means there is a greater emphasis on applying knowledge instead of memorising it. One example of encouraging this is through linking key topics or 'threading' within the curriculum design:

*"Integrating key topics, or 'threading', means that selected important themes will be discussed in relation to each substantive topic or module (i.e., woven throughout the curriculum). For instance, communications lessons (or diversity training or officer safety) can be reinforced in arrest scenarios, in crowd control exercises, and in community relations material.*

*Integration helps recruits draw connections among multiple subject areas, which facilitates mastery over the curriculum and prepares recruits for problem-solving challenges when they enter the field" (Chappell and Lanza-Kaduce, 2010: 191).*

This encourages recruits to construct links between concepts and themes and to see the bigger picture of what is being taught, encouraging the ability to think critically and problem-solve. Another useful field-training technique to encourage integration of theory and practice was de-briefing, whereby the tutor discusses a practical experience with the recruit, encouraging the recruit to first reflect on their practical experience (for example, after an incident) and then giving useful feedback. Having a competent tutor to facilitate this process is vital. Tutors also need to be encouraging, and not overly critical. Encouraging recruits to reflect and improve on their experience is important in accustoming recruits with the cyclical feedback process that is an inherent part of problem-solving.

The importance of the tutor's role during this phase cannot be overstated, as the field training officer/tutor has a "long term impact on the recruit" (Novakowski, 2003: 147). "Tutors are seen to be the bridge linking the training environments where the students have to contend with group dynamics and the realities of policing" (Thorneywork, 2004: 48). Tutor constables need to be supportive, trustworthy and approachable, to maximise opportunities for development, and to be able to give and receive feedback. Tutors' approaches to their role can either be authoritative or facilitative, the latter producing more effective outcomes.

Some examples of authoritative techniques include repetition of tasks, demonstrations, feedback (without reflection) and vicarious learning.

Examples of facilitative techniques include hands-on experience, debriefing after incidents, pre-briefing prior to incidents, posing scenarios or role plays, task setting and setting action plans. Thus the evidence highlighted the role of the tutor as being key not just for recruit learning, but also for the development of a professional police officer.

### **Implementation**

Implementation quality is an important element in any intervention, including police training: *"For both successful and unsuccessful initiatives, it is important for the practitioner to know what was done, what was crucial to the intervention and what difficulties might be experienced if it were to be replicated elsewhere"* (Johnson, Tilley and Bowers, 2015: 468). This section presents findings on organisational factors, teaching styles within the police environment and trainer and tutor roles.

### **Organisational buy-in**

Most of the studies which discussed implementation examined the introduction of andragogy or PBL into police training. Charles (2000: viii) argued that implementing a new learning model into police training requires "an organisational transition of epic proportions", as the transition to an andragogical and learner-oriented model challenges existing police culture and conventional styles of police training.

Several studies identified the 'paramilitary model', characterised by hierarchy, obedience to authority, isolation, stress and discipline, as a particular barrier to recruit learning. The influence of police culture was also identified as an impediment to newer, more innovative models of policing.

While socialisation was identified as a positive mechanism by some studies, it was also found to have a negative impact in prioritising police culture over academy learning. Recruits are receptive to the environments within which they experience operational police work, and the effect of traditional police socialisation, characterised by obedience to authority, stress and hierarchy, was found by several studies to be contrary to the academic development of the independent, critical thinking and problem-solving recruit. Integrating theory and practice was often not achieved with the training programmes, if operational policing (described as "real police-work") is privileged over academy work that is seen as "scenarios" and "made up reality" (Chan et al., 2003: 155).

Another barrier that can arise from a lack of support from the organisation, or poor implementation, is a lack of adequate resources for recruits. This can include equipment that would aid recruits in their learning, such as access to computers or a library, as well as physical attributes of the learning environment. Facilitation of specific learning activities such as group discussion and debate is aided by the physical environment which must be conducive to such activities. For example, lecture halls make it difficult for classes to have this small group interaction. Poor facilities can contradict any progress that is being made with the introduction of new learning models.

Importantly, organisations must avoid the "quantity over quality" policy, whereby students are over recruited, limiting staff numbers and putting pressure on existing resources.

Organisational buy-in also covers ensuring that field training is organised and delivered so as to be effective. Field training is critically important in facilitating the integration of theory and practice, as well as exposing recruits to operational police work and socialisation into the culture. The most significant factor in the field training component is a supportive and effective tutor constable or field training officer (FTO). Key to this is continuity, whereby recruits remain with the same tutor for their field training period. This involves having enough tutors available to meet the demand of recruits, and appropriate scheduling. Continual change of tutor and environment is not optimal for recruit development. Field tutors need to be carefully selected, choosing officers who are motivated individuals with adequate expertise, training, and motivation to teach. Six studies indicated how tutors or trainers were selected for their role, with five following some type of formal selection process. Ideally, tutors and trainers should volunteer for the role and have the required skills or show an interest in teaching or alternatively be selected by their superiors on the basis of ability and potential, which may then require further education for the tutors.



## Teaching styles in police settings

Essential for the field training phase is management by shift supervisors. Managers must recognise the needs of recruits, and as such be allocated shifts or jobs that are beneficial to their development. The pressure to resist mismanagement lies with the tutor who must “manage the development of their probationers and also deal with the demands of the public, requests for assistance from colleagues on shift and orders from supervisory officers” (Green 2001: 13). It is important that adequate time is allocated for recruits and tutors to engage in reflection or de-briefing, during this crucial phase, despite organisational and operational pressures.

Studies reported that consistency of values between academic and field training was essential in order to ensure that learning is correct and retained as intended. This includes avoiding the negative aspects of police culture or recruit socialisation particularly during field training. Significant problems arise when field tutors and trainers fail to acknowledge academy learning, or actively encourage recruits to ‘forget’ what they learnt in the academy as ‘real training’ occurs through operational experience.

As one study put it:

*“For all the rhetoric of ‘professionalism’... the bulk of recruit training was based on the notion that policing is a craft to be learned ‘on the job’... Probationers developed a number of strategies for coping with the challenges of the job and for fitting in at their new environment... This strategy of ‘keep your mouth shut’ or ‘be seen and not heard’ was a demonstration of respect for experience and rank; it was also a survival technique”*  
(Chan et al., 2003: 304).

This provides further evidence of the need for field training officers and tutors to be provided with adequate training and support, to ensure that there is cohesion between academic learning and the field training component. Implementation of the field training programme therefore requires support and coordination between all agencies, including the academic institution, the field training provider and all training staff.

Andragogical models seemed to demand a different set of skills than traditional teachers, requiring knowledge of methods which put the student at the centre of learning – methods which would often be contrary to the model under which they were trained. Evaluations showed frustration by recruits with instructors attempting to teach using student-centred methods without the proper training or real “buy in” (Lettic, 2016: 95). In general, student-centred models were praised for their effectiveness in teaching recruits and were considered more likely to provide a more satisfying experience.

## Trainer/tutor roles

The evidence suggested that one of the most important factors for implementation was the need for trained and motivated trainers. Both trainers, during the academy phase, and tutors, during the field training phase, need to be sufficiently trained in order to deliver a new learning model and to understand their role. This is key within andragogy as

*“the adult education philosophy requires highly skilled and knowledgeable instructors that must be versed in various learning methods, which are often contrary to the quasi-military model under which they were trained” (Charles, 2000: vii).*

The instructor’s role within both andragogy, and PBL, is notably different to the traditional lecture-based, teacher focused model of police training. The teacher’s role within PBL is to “live in the background... which is a difficult role to assume when the instructor is used to be the focus of the students” (King Stargel, 2010: 140). However, trainers also must develop specific facilitation skills, for example, withholding immediate answers to encourage students to find information themselves, but also being conscious of when to ‘check in’ with students to ensure they are finding and understanding the right answers.

And Heslop (2013: 21) stresses the importance of effective partnership between academics and practitioners: “Along with well-qualified academics and tutors, experienced police practitioners play a necessary and large part in all pre-join training programmes including those delivered in academic institutions”. To secure trainer and tutor buy-in, they need to be persuaded about the value of a new approach, and their role within it.

Yet, training received by trainers appears to be variable. Some receiving no new training at all; others receiving training varying from eight hours, two days, a week or 140 hours.

## Training Aims and Training Outcomes

The studies offered some information on the outcomes of training programmes, but their stated aims were variable, and outcome were measured in different ways. This limits what we can say.

### Aims

The studies were sometimes unclear about whether they or the programme had defined aims; furthermore, some covered overall aims, and others were more focused, for example on teaching and training methods. Most studies defined training aims only implicitly. Chan et al. (2003: 44) explains the general aim of the Police Recruit Education Programme (PREP) was to produce “reflective practitioners” who were accountable, effective decision makers, and operationally independent. Following their training, officers should have “knowledge of policing, effective communication skills, commitment to ethical standards, respect for individual rights, self-awareness, empathy, and problem solving skills” (Chan et al., 2003: 44), though specific training objectives were not detailed. Similarly, Conti (2011) does not provide aims of training, but rather notes recruits must meet performance requirements for “physical fitness, self-defence, fire-arms, and the like”. He argues the academy experience was when “recruits must perpetually demonstrate that they are worthy of an eventual elevation to the status of police officers” (Conti, 2011: 411), and failure to meet those requirements means the recruit is unfit to become an officer.

Other studies focused on reporting the development of specific skills as part of general training. For example one study reported that the aim of various parts of the training was to improve communication skills, in the very specific context of report writing, in order to enable recruits to pass a written communication examination. Another assessed a course that aimed to improve tactical and communication skills within the community-policing model. Aims for specific parts of the field training were sometime very general: "producing constables fit for independent patrol status" (Green 2001) or "to reach a level of competence in the workplace to the satisfaction of their tutor constable" (Thorneywork 2004:2). Other studies described field training as "a 'bridge' between the academy and police work" (Hundersmarck 2004: 37), or said that field training "bridged the gap between academy training and operational police work through supplemental training and real world experience" (Novakowski 2003). Aims of academies which incorporated a community-oriented approach were said to produce officers capable of developing rapport and building trust with local communities, to have strong presence, and to be decisive and assertive. Where programmes had a narrower focus, their aims were – unsurprisingly – stated more sharply. Charles (2000) examined the implementation of an adult education model designed to help recruits to think creatively and problem-solve. An alternative 'narrative' method of teaching, examined by Poradzisz (2004) aimed to teach recruits to deal effectively with people with mental disorders.

## Outcomes

Few of the 33 studies reported on training outcomes, and where they did, some focused on measures of course completion and others on achievement of skills. Chan et al. (2003: 200) state "For most of the cohort, the transition from recruit to constable was successful: less than 10 per cent of the cohort left the police service through resignation or termination". Green (2001: 112) reported "it can be seen that the constabulary's minimum standard is being achieved in the majority of cases".

An expected outcome in academies was that the programme would be completed by most recruits and would equip them with the necessary skills and outlook to function as a police officer. A few studies reported on programmes' success in increasing specific skills or qualities. Not all outcomes were judged to be positive, however. For example, Heslop (2011b: 340) found placements which took training out of the classroom and into the community "had only a limited effect". Foley (2014: 194) found training produced physically fit recruits, due to two hours of physical education per day at the academy, but recruits felt they actually had "little or no acquisition of skills but knew how to take a direction from authority".

In short, one of the biggest gaps we found in our review was the lack of evaluation of overall training outcomes. The articulation of specific training aims was limited, and measures of outcome were variable and inconsistent. As a result, we have been unable to synthesise training outcomes in any meaningful way.

## Conclusions

This chapter has reviewed the findings from 33 high-quality studies of police recruit training across the world. Some very consistent messages emerge. The first is that teaching and training methods have to be tailored to adult learning styles – and where recruits are degree holders – teaching methods appropriate to graduates. The principles of andragogy and of problem-based learning need to be followed, for example. A second very consistent message is that the theoretical and practical parts of programmes must be properly integrated if the theoretical elements are not to be jettisoned as soon as recruits arrive in the field and become inculcated with the occupational culture. This is essential but challenging to achieve. Related to this point, several studies stressed the importance of organisational buy-in to the aims of the training programmes, and in particular in ensuring that trainers and mentors in the field provide proper support for recruits while they acquire practical skills.

Findings on the studies' programme aims and outcomes were disappointingly thin. Aims were often poorly articulated and we have been unable to say anything of significance about outcomes. Clearly the PEQF provides an important opportunity, that should be firmly grasped, to evaluate the outcomes of the three new entry routes into the police service in England and Wales. Any such evaluations would need to state fully and carefully, the aims of the training, in terms of the qualities and skills that recruits should acquire. This probably requires some sort of meaningful statement of what 'good policing' looks like, and what a 'good cop' looks like. And outcomes need to be measured on a range of dimensions including: programme completion rates; measures of recruits' acquisition of conceptual and practical skills; in-force retention rates; and disciplinary records. This would amount to a major research programme, that has not been attempted to date by any county – but its findings could be of great significance.



## **Chapter 4**

# Organisational readiness for the Degree Holder Entry Programme

Jyoti Belur with Winifred Agnew-Pauley and Brendan McGinley

## Introduction

This chapter presents findings on the organisational readiness of police forces in England and Wales to implement the new Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP). We interviewed Learning and Development (L&D) Managers, HR managers or senior managers with responsibility for training. We carried out 17 interviews, sometimes with multiple interviewees, covering 17 police forces and one civilian police organisation in England and Wales. Some interviewees represented two or more forces since they shared training and learning resources. Interviews were conducted either at force headquarters or at the university. The sample included a mix of police officers and civilian staff; almost all regions in England were represented, but no Welsh forces took part. We used a semi-structured interview schedule covering the main areas of research interest. Interviews were taped with the interviewees' permission and later transcribed. We conducted framework analysis NVIVO software (Ritchie and Spencer 2002).

Full details of the research can be obtained from [j.belur@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.belur@ucl.ac.uk).

Our findings are presented in four sections. First, we summarise current recruit training in the 17 forces. The second section describes the challenges foreseen by L&D managers in setting up DHEP partnerships with HEIs. The third section examines other concerns about implementing DHEP and the PEQF more generally. A final findings section focusses on the arguments for and against whether recruits should learn as omni-competent or specialist officers. We then offer brief conclusions.

## Current training arrangements

The current recruit training system is the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP), defined by the College of Policing. Though intended to be a standardised curriculum, there is a great deal of variability between forces in duration, delivery and assessment methods. Table 1 summarises how training was organised in the 17 forces (and the civilian security force).

The proportion of graduate recruits ranged from 25 to 50 percent in the forces, consistent with the College of Policing's estimate of 38 percent. Thus, most L&D managers expected that the DHEP would be a major feeder route into policing and thought that it was an attractive option for the police, mainly because of the shorter learning time involved as compared to the apprenticeship route.

## Training and L&D structures

One force had outsourced its learning and development provision to an outside provider. Another group of forces had formed a consortium that contracted with the local university to provide academic inputs. However, most forces provided training in-house either independently or in partnership. Some forces provided all learning under one roof; others had set up separate units responsible for initial recruit training, specialist training (such as firearms, driving, public order etc.) and training for trainers. Senior L&D managers were a mix of police officers and civilian staff. Some forces had very well-resourced L&D departments, but others were struggling with a skeleton staff.

TABLE 1: CURRENT TRAINING STRUCTURE AND ACCREDITATION

FORCE	CLASSROOM TRAINING	FIELD TRAINING	IPS STATUS IN	ACCREDITATION	ACCREDITING BODY	% OF GRADUATE RECRUITS
Force A	103 days	10 weeks	8 to 9 months	Level 3 Diploma in Policing	Skills for Justice	30
Forces B & C	18 weeks	-	6 months to 1 year	Level 4 Diploma in Policing	City & Guilds	35
Force D	15 weeks	15 weeks	~ 30 weeks	No formal qualification	City & Guilds	23
Forces E, F, G, H	17 weeks	10-12 weeks	~ 30 weeks	Level 4 Diploma in Policing	Skills for Justice	45
Force I	16 weeks	10 weeks	26 weeks	No formal qualification	No external body	50
Forces J & K	18 weeks	10 weeks	28 weeks	Level 3 Diploma in Policing	Skills for Justice	33
Civilian Security Force	17 weeks	320 hours	No set period	Level 3 Diploma in Policing	Skills for Justice	Unsure
Forces L & M	15 weeks	10 weeks	~ 25 weeks	Level 3 Diploma in Policing	Skills for Justice	50
Force N	11 weeks	17 weeks	~ 28 weeks	Level 3 Diploma in Policing	Unsure	~ 45%
Force O	15 weeks	15 weeks	30 weeks	Level 3 Diploma in Policing	Pearsons	Unsure
Forces P & Q	18 weeks	12 weeks	30 weeks	Level 3 Diploma in Policing	City & Guilds	Unsure



## Role of tutors during field training

Officer trainees spend an average of at least 10 weeks in the field with the tutor constable, who is then responsible for assessing them in various areas of competence before signing them off as fit for independent patrol status (IPS). In some forces the role of tutor and supervising officer was clearly demarcated but in others the terms tutor, coach assessor and mentor were used interchangeably. Three forces had external assessors other than tutor constables. Most forces aspired to one-to-one tutoring, but did not always achieve it. Some forces clearly valued tutors in recruit induction, but not everyone shared that view, and some (smaller forces) gave the role low priority. There is little continuous development for trainers and tutors, unless they have personally chosen to qualify themselves to degree or postgraduate level. The difficulty in upskilling currently employed trainers was a theme that will be picked up in the challenges identified by interviewees in implementing the PEQF, and especially the DHEP.

## Challenges in setting up partnerships with HEIs

Despite some initial resistance, L&D staff had accepted as inevitable HEI involvement in recruit police learning post-PEQF. But staff varied in their thinking about the extent to which universities would be involved in the design and delivery. Some did not know how to go about negotiating relationships with HEIs or what they should be negotiating about; others had already established long-standing partnerships delivering foundation or policing degrees prior to the PEQF. The issues raised by interviewees can be divided into logistical and intellectual (or pedagogic) challenges.

## Logistical challenges

Interviewees expressed some concern about delivering recruit learning in close partnership with HEIs, especially those with limited experience of working with universities. Chapter 2 showed that effective professional education involves integration of theory and practice – implying that recruit learning should be designed and delivered by academics and practitioners together. The partnership requirements need to be incorporated in the initial stages of procurement. While most interviewees were aware that their choices were constrained by the availability of capable and willing local HEIs, only a few realised that the procurement process would impose further constraints. There were four specific areas of concern:

- i. Bespoke single force arrangements vs. consortium style approach

Interviewees – especially those with limited procurement experience - were unsure whether it was better to have bespoke arrangements with individual universities, or to pool resources with a consortium of forces. On balance most interviewees favoured collaborative arrangements with regional learning and development hubs, serviced either by a single university or an academic consortium. A variant was that learning and development provision would come under regional management, but tenders would involve separate lots for each force's needs.

ii. One or more HEI providers for the three routes?

Another issue of concern was whether it was best to have one provider (single HEI or consortium) or a mix of providers for the three PEQF entry routes. Opinions were divided, with some wanting the simplicity of a single provider and others wanting to hedge their bets with a range of providers. Some favoured consortia with a lead university given responsibility for coordination – if any university would be prepared to take this on.

iii. Location of delivery

One of the main issues centres on where the academic part of the learning ought to be delivered. Research suggests that learning within academic institutions' premises has better outcomes than that undertaken in training centres. However there are potential problems about whether the university or the police force 'owns' the learning environment, whether standards of police discipline should apply during education supplied on academic locations and, for instance, whether students should wear their uniforms. Some L&D staff talked about the need for recruits to be "embedded in policing", especially at the outset. One solution might be to bring the academics over to the force venues to deliver their inputs in blocks within an operational environment; however, this deprives students of the immersive experience of being in a university, with access to libraries, lectures, academics and other students. Some interviewees thought that most learning would be delivered in-house, with universities providing a few classroom sessions and some 'theoretical

inputs' in small doses. This view was driven by concerns about 'abstraction' issues and meeting the organisation's demands for operational deployment as soon as possible.

iv. HEI capacity and requirements

HEIs face limitations around capacity to service the fluctuating demand for recruit education. There are further issues about timing, as forces currently accept intakes of recruits at several points in a year, whilst academic courses are organised around a fixed academic year. There were associated problems about forces' co-ordination of their own staff and learning resources, to mesh with three different entry routes. PEQF could thus require a sea-change in the workforce planning and recruitment calendar across all forces. Interviewees faced the added challenge of striking the right balance between the three entry routes, in order to yield the right flow of recruits who had achieved independent patrol status (IPS).

Interviewees recognised that forces with long-standing partnerships with universities were best placed to iron out all these logistical issues. Those with pre-existing partnerships had already solved many of the problems, having learnt how universities work; they also understood the time constraints that universities face in processes of course design and accreditation. Some interviewees were drawn to solutions where consortia of forces would contract with HEI consortia. Others thought that complex delivery structures of this sort could be risky as "universities are even worse than the police service when it comes to working together".

## Intellectual/pedagogic challenges

Chapter 2, on the experiences of conversion courses for other professions, identified challenges associated with design, structure and shared delivery of the curriculum, assessment processes and, in particular, effective integration of theory and practice. Our interviews with L&D staff explored these issues.

### i. Design and shared delivery of curriculum

Interviewees recognised the importance of questions about the intellectual lead in setting the DHEP agenda. They appreciated that HEIs would be issuing the degree-level qualification, and would inevitably be “in the driving seat”. At the same time, they did not think that HEIs were in a position to tell recruits “how to be a police officer”. So tensions and squabbles were expected. Generally, interviewees were unclear about managing this process. They were clear that some parts of the curriculum needed to be delivered by practitioners and experienced police officers, but had not fully worked out how other parts could be delivered in combination with theoretical inputs from academics.

### ii. Assessments

Assessment processes were flagged up by interviewees as a potential area of concern. Whilst some forces had well established assessment processes in place, they were unsure about the nature of the three-way relationships between forces, their HEI providers and the College of Policing. There were also concerns about ensuring the functional equivalence not only of the three entry routes but also between the various providers across the country for each entry route.

Several interviewees were concerned about quality assurance. They were unclear about the planned or potential role of the College of Policing here, and having an independent organisation that would be responsible for quality assurance and assessment was flagged as on possible solution.

### iii. Integrating theory with practice

L&D leaders were aware of the need to integrate the theoretical and practical components of the recruit learning. Integration is in part a practical question of the division of labour between in-force staff and HEIs, and to some extent is dependent on the structure of the proposed curriculum. However there are also intellectual or pedagogic challenges in designing a curriculum that genuinely makes coherent links between practical skill and academic knowledge. This would involve academics and practitioners working together to deliver a joined-up curriculum while giving space for the learning to set in through opportunities for reflection and peer learning. Few interviewees had made much progress on this difficult issue.

This chapter has already discussed the widely varying provision of mentors, and Chapter 6 also considers this. Interviews with PN participants showed that graduate entrants’ confidence and skills were dependent on the level of support provided to them in the force by their tutors and mentors. Some but not all interviewees were aware that DHEP recruits could require or expect tutors who operated at learning level 6 or 7, than the current level 3.

## **Other challenges anticipated in the implementation of DHEP**

Whilst interviewees had particular concerns around partnerships with HEIs, they also mentioned a range of other issues: upskilling of staff; impact on recruitment; workforce planning and costs.

### **Upskilling of trainers**

Intimately related to the issue of integrating theory with practice is the challenge associated with upskilling staff current in the role, along with the tutors and mentors. Challenges centred on issues of: staff and tutor willingness to get additional education to level 6 or 7; the organisation's ability to afford upskilling the continuous development of in-house staff in terms of time and resources; and knowing the correct level to which to upskill for specific roles. Most interviewees were aware of the need to upskill, but were well aware of the obstacles in their path. Upskilling of police learning staff and tutors was recognised as being important but interviewees were realistic enough to admit that while having a fully qualified and trained L&D cadre was ideal, it would be more of a medium to long term aspiration.

### **Impact on recruitment**

Whilst some interviewees had misgivings about the principle of graduate entry, rather more expressed concerns about the impact of the PEQF on the profile of recruits from 2020 onwards. Some interviewees thought that PEQF could increase the overall diversity of the workforce, with enhanced professional status serving to attract some ethnic minority groups.

Others, however, were concerned that graduate entry would bias recruitment to "the white middle classes"; it would serve as an obstacle to recruitment of people from ethnic minorities, as well as older people with life experience but little interest in getting a degree-level qualification. For this latter group, respondents were concerned that the apprenticeship route might seem especially unattractive.

### **Workforce planning**

Interviewees identified three sets of workforce planning issues that would have an important bearing on how the graduate entry route would be implemented:

- assessment of recruitment requirement;
- retention rates and
- planned recruitment allocation through the three entry routes.

### **Assessment of recruitment requirement**

Interviewees expressed concern about assessing force recruitment needs year on year as it had a direct bearing on setting up a working partnership with HEIs. Workforce planning would become especially difficult under PEQF if it meant matching force recruitment cycles with academic term cycles. As discussed above, most forces currently recruit on a rolling basis throughout the year. Interviewees reported a further workforce planning issue, in that operational needs would be affected when L&D staff, tutors and graduates were taken away from operational policing on learning days.

## Retention rates

Interviewees were worried about the changing nature of the police service, and potentially growing problems of retention as people no longer commit themselves to a full policing career. However, one of the main concerns about accurate workforce planning revolved around finances which we shall discuss below.

## Recruitment allocation between three entry routes

Interviewees were unclear how they would manage their workforce planning to allocate recruits to each of the three PEQF routes, given the difficulty of forecasting both overall needs and the preferences of recruits – and, of course, the overall budget that would be needed. Some interviewees had started to think about the kinds of degrees their graduate entrants should have. Some thought that recruits with a social science, criminology or law degree would be able to pick up the requisite skills and knowledge much faster than someone with a fine arts degree.

## Costs

Interviewees expressed uncertainty about the funding of the PEQF overall but particularly about how the DHEP route was to be funded. They were keenly aware that funding for the DHEP would define the scope of partnership agreements with universities. A linked issue was the geographical proximity of universities. Those outside of the force area – or distant from force HQs – raised questions about travel costs and time spent travelling.

Interviewees were aware that almost all decisions governing contractual agreements with HEIs would be

dominated by costs - the status of the HEI, the location of the training, the division of labour between L&D staff and HEIs, assessment loads, timing of recruitment entry routes and number of recruits per year, upskilling of in-house staff and tutors and finally, how costs would be distributed among a consortium of universities providing training. Added to this was the issue of whether the DHEP would cost the same for all graduates regardless of the discipline of their original degree. The cost of a graduate certificate for a recruit with a social science degree might be around £2,500 according to one interviewee, whilst provision for recruits with completely unrelated degrees might be three times higher or more.

Overall, cost was such a dominating consideration that there was clearly a risk that forces would have to settle for less than satisfactory arrangements for the DHEP and the other PEQF routes – even if this jeopardised the overall professionalisation agenda.

## Training for omni-competence versus specialist skills

The final set of findings relate to discussions around (a) the current graduate training and development provided by Police Now, which concentrated on developing neighbourhood or community officers, and (b) the MPS plans to introduce direct entry detectives.

A majority of our interviewees saw increased specialisation as inevitable, and recognised a need for some forms of specialisation starting at recruitment. For example, they thought it would make sense to support someone with a computer sciences degree to become a cybercrime specialist from the outset.

Nevertheless some interviewees, especially from smaller forces, argued for omni-competence, on the grounds that this maximised flexibility of deployment.

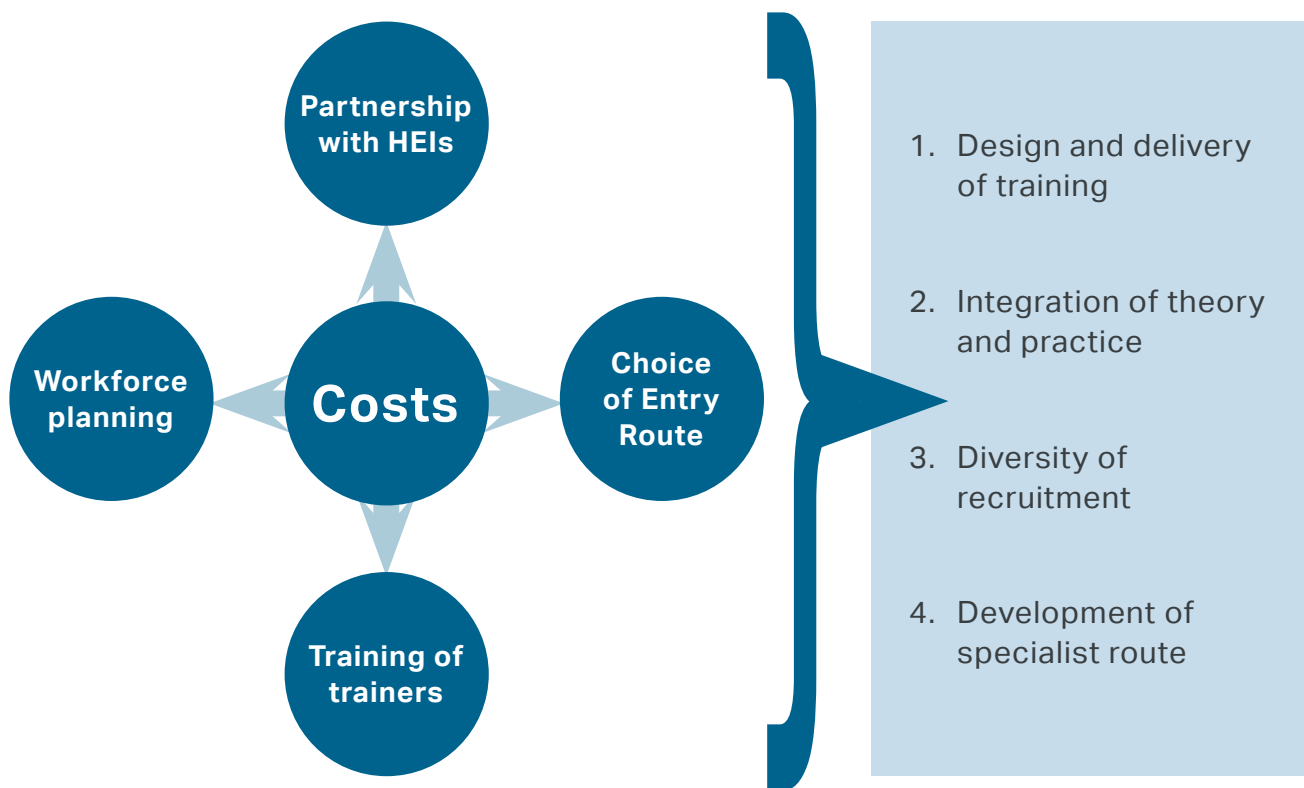
Although appreciating the case for training recruits as specialists in principle, interviewees felt that this might face resistance within the organisation. The main arguments against specialism for recruit officers were cultural and operational. Cultural arguments against specialism included the view that if there was a need for cybercrime specialists they could be civilian staff, why would they need to have police powers? The second aspect of the cultural argument was the impact recruit specialisms would have on the existing workforce more generally. For example, respondents speculated that direct entry detectives would be resented by their senior colleagues who had become detectives only after they had worked as 'beat cops' for at least five years.

## **Discussion and implications for the DHEP**

Our interviews show that L&D departments were ranged along a wide spectrum of preparedness to implement the PEQF. Some forces were well aware of developments and actively engaged in the change process through communication with HEIs and the College of Policing. Others remained on the fringes of the process, with little or no awareness of the various challenges that needed to be addressed. We have identified five main areas of challenges in implementing the DHEP. These are summarised graphically in Figure 3. The interviews indicated that these were inextricably interlinked.

To meet the challenges involved in implementing the DHEP, support of senior management is needed, coupled with a substantial change in organisational culture. From what we were told, not all chief officers were on board or invested in the PEQF – and organisational preparedness was closely correlated to the extent to which chief officers had engaged with the process. L&D managers themselves accepted the case for the PEQF, though not all were convinced that every entry level officer needed to have a graduate degree, a sentiment they felt was shared by a substantial section of the existing workforce. They felt that the acceptance of graduate professionals into an occupation that is traditionally anti-intellectual is likely to be fraught and will take time.

FIGURE 3: COMPLEX INTERPLAY OF FACTORS AFFECTING IMPLEMENTATION OF DHEP



## Implications for PEQF and DHEP

This part of our research has five main implications for introducing the DHEP:

- There needs to be a shift in organisational culture to recognise and accept the value of graduate training for recruit officers. The workforce needs to accept the case for the PEQF. For this to happen, police leaders and the College of Policing need to articulate (perhaps again and again) the rationale – and the benefits for the workforce – of professionalisation. Forces' senior management teams need to support, and have the full support of, their L&D staff in this process.
- The daunting logistical challenges, such as getting contractual arrangements in place with HEIs, upskilling in-house training staff and mentors and bringing in these changes on budget may distract L&D units from finding solutions to the difficult pedagogical challenges in designing a conversion course that equips recruits with complementary practical and intellectual skills.
- Tight budgets increase the risks of making false economies. The cheapest and quickest routes to training officers and bringing them to independent patrol status may not be the best long-term investment, and may undermine the aspirations of professionalisation.
- Given the complexities of setting up partnerships between forces and universities and sharing the design and delivery of training, there is a need for an independent body – with expertise in both the theoretical and practical aspects of police training – to oversee these arrangements and to quality-appraise and assess the various training programmes on a national level. The College of Policing could take on this role, or an independent assessor could be found or set up.
- Finally, there is little evidence to date about the impact that making policing a graduate profession has on people's experience of their police. The PEQF promises to achieve a radical transformation of police training, and of the nature of policing in England and Wales. Now is the time to put in place rigorous evaluation plans to track the outcomes achieved by the PEQF's three entry routes, so that recruit training can be closely monitored and refined, as implementation proceeds.





## Chapter 5

# Motivations and appreciation of evidence based policing amongst Police Now participants<sup>14</sup>

Almuth McDowall, David Gamblin, Jennifer Brown

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14. Acknowledgement: the chapter authors wish to thank EBW Online ([www.ebwonline.com](http://www.ebwonline.com)) for making the EI assessments available for research purposes.

## Introduction

The Police Now (PN) training programme for graduates offers a unique 'test bed' to evaluate how a graduate conversion approach might work for bright, motivated highly pre-selected graduates who are unlike traditional policing training cohorts, both in terms of prior education but also other characteristics. The chapter draws on psychometric data collected from PN participants to assess their motivations for joining the police, their levels of emotional intelligence and their reactions to concepts of evidence based policing practice. A fuller report can be obtained from [a.mcdowall@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:a.mcdowall@bbk.ac.uk)

Much of the available evidence suggests that training will only achieve intended outcomes if it addresses trainee needs and motivations: even well-designed training will 'fall flat' if trainees don't like it or don't engage in it. A second consideration is transfer of learning to the workplace: a training programme could be well received, and even may be seen as highly successful, yet be ineffective if there are obstacles in the organisational environment to applying newly gained knowledge, attitudes and skills. This chapter investigates trainee motivations and transfer of learning over a period of time drawing on and extending Kirkpatrick's model of training evaluation (1967) to provide useful feedback not only to Police Now as the research host, but also to the College of Policing and the Home Office.

### The characteristics of the PN trainees

We gathered background and demographic information for the 106 participants in Cohort 2 and the 223 in Cohort 3. We also collected data on Emotional Intelligence (EI) for Cohort 3.

Across both cohorts, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) received most graduates, although Cohort 3 were spread over a wider number of participating forces (19 forces; Cohort 2: 7 forces). The gender balance was even, which is encouraging, given the long-standing difficulties in attracting gender-diverse applications to policing (the current percentage of women officers stands at 29%). The age range increased from Cohort 2 to Cohort 3, but the average age for both groups was 23. The participants therefore compare to typical graduate programme populations age-wise, as well as being highly educated. Cohort 3 indicated a larger proportion achieving 1st class degrees (36%; Cohort 2: 28%), as well as a larger proportion continuing to Master's level (18%; Cohort 2: 13%).

On the other hand, Cohort 2 trainees were more likely to have had work experience (78%; Cohort 3: 65%), policing experience (24%; Cohort 3: 14%), and exposure to the police via a family member or close friend (39%; Cohort 3: 18%). Whilst previous exposure of policing (for example as a special constable or PCSO or from a family where a member is employed by the police) played a role in attracting Cohort 2 applicants to the scheme, Cohort 3 applicants appear to have been attracted for different reasons, potentially due to the increased recruitment campaign by PN. In addition, Cohort 3 came with increased academic achievements, in line with Police Now's own research data that shows awareness about the programme has grown, and that applications from graduates have doubled between 2016 and 2017, attracting graduates to Cohort 3 who had experience of employment before joining Police Now.

## Motivations for Joining

We asked the trainees to identify their top three reasons for joining PN. Overall 265 trainees provided at least one reason for joining, as shown in Table 2.

The reasons for joining the scheme are predominantly intrinsic – motivations from within, such as interests, curiosity, and values (Deci & Ryan, 1980). Trainees want to make a difference and give back to the community, meanwhile maximising their self-development. Extrinsic reasons such as pay, pension, or promotion opportunities featured far less. We further mapped these reasons onto more specific motivation factors as identified by self-determination theory (SDT). SDT is a broad framework of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008), which acknowledges that

people are motivated by an interplay of individual and situational factors. As part of this it considers people's basic psychological needs: a) autonomy (what can they decide?), b) competence (how can they use their skills?), and c) relatedness (relationships with other people). Using this framework, our analysis shows that PN participants were drawn to the programme as they are motivated by an even distribution of intrinsic motivation, so want to join policing because they want to feel they belong, have autonomy and develop their skills (rather than for extrinsic rewards). This is an asset to any policing educational programme, and should be harnessed and reinforced through the learning process.

TABLE 2: TRAINEES' REASONS FOR JOINING: SELF-REPORTED THEMES

THEME	EXAMPLE(S)	C'HORT 3	C'HORT 2	MOTIVATION LOCUS	MOTIVATION CLASSIFICATION
Giving back: people and places	Helping people Making a difference	22%	19%	Intrinsic	Autonomy, Relatedness
Policing specific	Join police Respected profession	18%	9%	Intrinsic & Extrinsic	Relatedness
Not a typical job	Varied / Exciting job Not an office job Active / Practical	15%	16%	Intrinsic	Autonomy, Relatedness, Competence
Intensity	Challenge & pace Early responsibility	14%	6%	Intrinsic	Autonomy, Competence
Scheme characteristics	Development & support PN values / innovation	12%	16%	Intrinsic	Relatedness Competence
Benefits	Career & promotions Salary / Pension	11%	11%	Extrinsic	-
Graduate specific	Wanted a grad scheme Chance to use degree	8%	-	Intrinsic	Autonomy, Competence
Communities	Community engagement	-	9%	Intrinsic	Relatedness
Developmental Opportunities	Learn new skills Leadership training	-	6%	Intrinsic	Competence

## Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the awareness of one's own and others' emotions, arguably an important precursor for procedural justice and policing by consent. We measured levels of EI for cohort 3 using a well validated psychometric questionnaire designed by EBW<sup>15</sup> (Emotions and Behaviours at Work), which compares people's responses against a benchmark group of working professionals. In total 84 PN participants completed the questionnaire to establish a baseline measure of EI. We have measures of:

**Decisiveness:** Willingness to make decisions, the need for control and the level of comfort with decision making responsibility.

**Motivation:** Level of energy, passion, drive and enthusiasm for work, being optimistic and positive, the need for achievement and challenge.

**Influence:** The drive to influence and persuade others, to be heard and have an impact.

**Adaptability:** The desire for, and enjoyment of, variety in the workplace; the capacity to keep an open mind and be flexible with different and creative approaches.

**Empathy:** The ability to recognise, be sensitive to, and consider others' feelings, needs and perspectives. The need to understand, to help, and work with others.

## Conscientiousness (sub-scales

**Structure and Conformity):** The need to plan and have structure, be diligent and meet deadlines; the level of comfort with conforming and following the rules.

**Stress tolerance (sub-scales Resilience and Emotional control):** The capability to relax and deal with the day-to-day pressures of work; the level of comfort with showing and managing emotions, e.g. can control/hide temper when provoked.

**Self Awareness:** This scale is an index of the extent to which an individual's EBW scores is likely to correspond with the way that others would score them on the EBW scales.

Table 3 (overleaf) summarises the results. The PN sample has been benchmarked against a comparable group of working professionals (EBW's so-called 'norm group', which included a variety of professions and occupations), whose average scores on each dimension were standardised to a score of 5.5. Shadings in green indicate scores well above the mean, those in orange somewhat above the mean, and those in yellow somewhat below the mean. The table indicates a cohort which is preparing itself for a relatively structured and 'top down' training environment, and has not yet had exposure to the need to make operational decisions and take leadership roles. The PN participants are lower than the benchmark group in decisiveness and influence than comparable professionals, yet higher on empathy, emotional control, conscientiousness and structure.

15. See <http://www.ebwonline.com>

TABLE 3 : AVERAGE EI SCORES PER SCALE, BENCHMARKED AGAINST A COMPARISON GROUP OF PROFESSIONALS

DECISIVENESS	MOTIVATION	INFLUENCE	EMPATHY	STRUCTURE	CONFORMITY
5.03	5.35	4.53	6.58	6.14	6.99
CONSCIENTIOUS-NESS	ADAPTABILITY	SELF-AWARE	EMOTIONAL CONTROL	RESILIENCE	STRESS TOLERANCE
6.62	5.68	5.18	6.53	5.85	6.31

### Reactions to training

To investigate trainee expectations for and reactions to their training as commensurate with Kirkpatrick's model (given that regardless of any discussion about the validity of attitude measures negative evaluations of any training programme make effectiveness less likely), we utilised the Tracker Survey – the first of the bespoke diagnostic tools developed for this study (the items are available on request for anyone wanting to utilise or adapt these). The tracker survey comprised a 30 item questionnaire, capturing trainee perceptions of: Training Environment; Received Training; Information & Decisions; and Understanding the Operational Role. Full details of the tracker survey's rationale and construction are available from the first author of the chapter on request (further publications are pending).

We designed it to be administered across three time points:

1. The start of the Summer Academy – capturing trainees' expectations for training.
2. The End of the Summer Academy – roughly six weeks following the first time point, capturing reactions to formal training.
3. The 100 Day Impact Conference – several months later, capturing assessments of training once they had had a chance to put the training into practice.

The survey was piloted across three time points in 2016/17 (Cohort 2), but full analysis was only possible at the level of individual survey items as there were uneven response rates across the time points. We undertook an Exploratory Factor Analysis<sup>17</sup> to help define a simple structure and refine the questionnaire items. This process was repeated in 2017 for Cohort 3, when we also ran Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). CFA results indicated a good fit for the proposed ten-factor model, supporting a refined 30 item questionnaire, with the underlying (latent) variables presented in Table 4.

17. Exploratory Factor Analysis is a statistical technique for identifying underlying patterns in complex datasets, (one of a family of data reduction techniques).

**TABLE 4: FACTORS AND EXAMPLE ITEMS FROM THE TRACKER SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

FACTOR	EXAMPLE ITEM
<b>Classroom Training</b>	My classroom training will teach me how to locate different kinds of evidence
<b>Organisational Citizenship</b>	I am prepared to go the extra mile to help my force
<b>Loyalty</b>	I have a sense of loyalty to the ward I am currently policing
<b>Work Load</b>	When analysing a lot of information, I am:
<b>Creativity</b>	When solving problems that have no obvious correct answer, I am:
<b>Autonomy</b>	When using my initiative or judgment in carrying out my work, I am:
<b>Understanding the Role</b>	It is clear to me what the goals of being a DWO are
<b>Dealing with the Public</b>	My classroom training will give me confidence to deal with the public
<b>Evidence Based Policing</b>	I do not understand the principles of evidence based policing
<b>Transfer Climate</b>	My force rewards employees for using newly gained knowledge and skills

### **Expectations at the start of the Summer Academy**

Responses from Cohort 2 (n = 106) and Cohort 3 (n = 223) participants were received, grouped and averaged for the Factors outlined in the previous section (Table 4), with the trends reported in Figure 4.

Cohort 3 trainees had significantly higher expectations than Cohort 2 for the level of training they would receive (Training Environment) which could be due to a number of factors including increased awareness of the programme itself, and that it would prepare them for Dealing with the Public. In addition, Cohort 3 trainees scored themselves higher on the Creativity self-measure, indicating that they felt more effective at solving problems.

### **Changes over Time: 1, 2 and 3**

For Cohort 2, we collected an initial baseline measure at the first time point from 106 trainees. The trainees then provided follow-up responses at the second time point (n = 29) and third time point (n = 41). The low samples mean that results from this cohort should be treated with caution, and are therefore presented as trends (Figure 5) for information, rather than statistical analysis. We managed to collect fuller data for Cohort 3: an initial 223 responses, followed by 196 and 140 responses at the second and third time points respectively. The superior response rates for this cohort allowed more detailed statistical work on the data (see Figure 6 for average scores).

Our analysis shows that there were statistically significant changes across the three time points in: Classroom Training; Loyalty; Understanding the Role; Autonomy; Creativity; Dealing with the Public; and Transfer Climate. In contrast, Organisational Citizenship, Work Load, and EBP all remained stable across the three time points. Evaluations of training and learning content (Classroom Training, Understanding the Role, and Dealing with the Public) appear to decrease over time in each cohort.

Some possible explanations for such a pattern might include that initial trainee expectations are (perhaps unrealistically high) at the outset due to the intensive nature of the training, or that the forces have different expectations for the training and preparation that their trainees will have received. Another potential reason is that the roles for which trainees are being prepared for vary across forces, for example, working in response units rather than neighbourhood policing, and that job tasks may be more mundane or repetitive than envisaged.

On a more positive note, the highest scoring Factor, Organisational Citizenship, remained stable throughout training and into the role. The Loyalty Factor also remained stable from the start of the Summer Academy to the end, one month later. More promisingly, trainees' self-reported Loyalty then increased once they had spent some time in their respective forces (time point 3).



FIGURE 4: FACTORS SCORES FOR COHORT 2 AND 3 TRAINEES AT OUTSET – BASELINE EXPECTATIONS FOR TRAINING

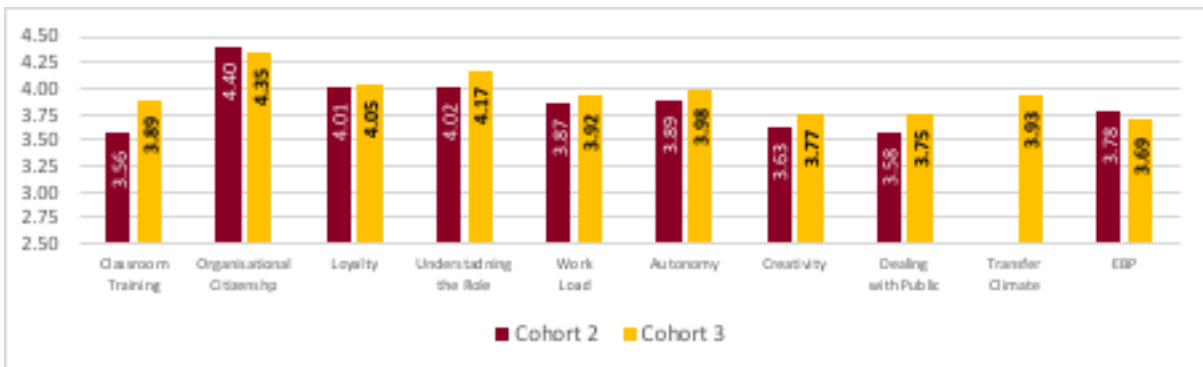


FIGURE 5: COHORT 2 TRAINEE FACTOR SCORES OVER TIME.

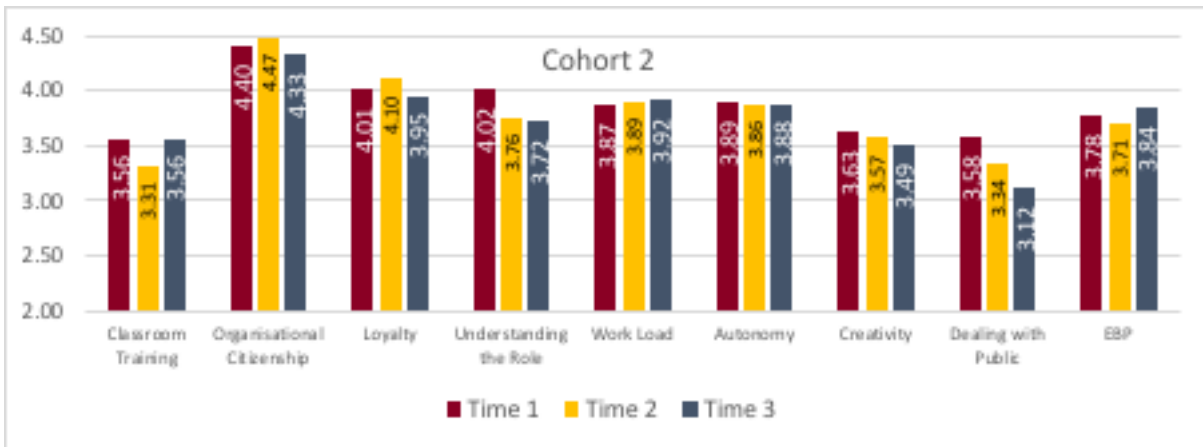
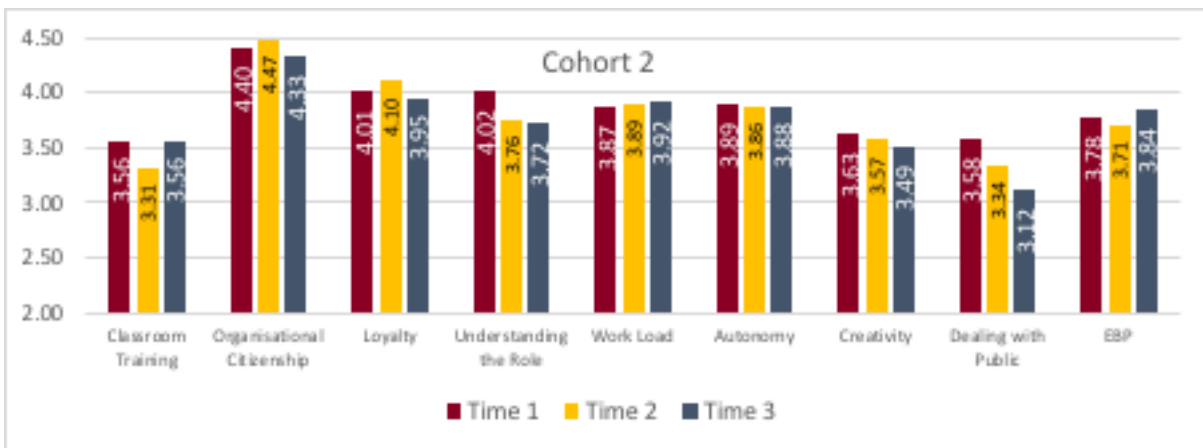


FIGURE 6: COHORT 3 TRAINEE FACTOR SCORES OVER TIME.



## Learning on Evidence Based Policing

Arguably, one of the most important things that entry-level training and qualifications need to achieve for any profession is to give entrants a good sense of the knowledge base that underpins their professional practice; such learning is the second level in Kirkpatrick's model. We therefore attach considerable importance to this section of our findings. The EBP Toolkit (the Toolkit) is a multi-method instrument which combines elements of reflective learning and data collection. The Toolkit was constructed with input from serving officers, recruited as "co-researchers", to ensure that the content was grounded in operational concerns. The Toolkit was administered online to PN trainees, as a pilot in 2016 and then again in 2017. It first assesses learning by asking participants to define EBP, and then to put the knowledge into practice and answer questions relating to a typical scenario which a neighbourhood police officer might encounter (see Appendix).

## Trainee Definitions of EBP

We benchmarked trainee responses against definitions provided by experts. The first seven key concepts followed Telep and Sommers' (2017) coding framework, to which were added an additional two concepts resulting from consultations with subject matter experts and the definition provided by the College of Policing.<sup>18</sup> The final nine core concepts are summarised in Figure 7.

In total, 82 PN trainees provided their own definition of EBP, 58 of whom did so before attending an EBP Skills Session, and 24 did so after attending the session. Responses were coded for mentions of the nine key concepts: trainee definitions were given a 1 for each mention of a key concept, and 0 if the concept was missing from the definitions. Table 5 details the percentages of definitions which made reference to each concept.

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18. <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/Pages/What-is-EBP.aspx>

FIGURE 7: KEY CONCEPTS EXPECTED IN DEFINITIONS OF EBP<sup>i</sup>

1.	What works: EBP emphasises interventions that work. This concept includes effectiveness, problem solving, and best practice.
2.	Focus: Researchers highlight the benefits of focused interventions and specific problem analysis.
3.	Evaluation: Definitions should acknowledge that interventions require ongoing evaluation and analysis.
4.	Research: EBP interventions and strategies should be based on research/empirical evidence and studies.
5.	Scientific: Building on the above, strategies should be informed by scientific research, rather than case-based, or less formal before-after type comparisons.
6.	Preventative: Academic definitions of EBP make the distinction between reactive and proactive strategies, with proactivity regarded as more effective than response-only strategies.
7.	Statistics: Definitions should also emphasise the utilisation of data and statistics, in contrast to anecdotal evidence.
8.	Resources: EBP interventions should be efficient, and make best use of police resources.
9.	Understanding: EBP should strive to understand the underlying causes of the issue.

TABLE 5: PERCENTAGE OF TRAINEE DEFINITIONS WHICH INCLUDED EACH OF THE NINE KEY CONCEPTS – COMPARING TRAINEES WHO HAVE AND HAVE NOT ATTENDED AN EBP SKILLS SESSION.

KEY CONCEPT	% OF DEFINITIONS CONTAINING THE KEY CONCEPT		
	Before Skills Session (n = 58)	After Skills Session (n = 24)	Total (n = 82)
What Works	62%	63%	62%
Research	38%	38%	38%
Evaluation <sup>a</sup>	19%	46%	27%
Statistics	28%	25%	27%
Scientific	19%	25%	21%
Resources	16%	17%	16%
Focus	7%	8%	7%
Preventative <sup>a</sup>	2%	21%	7%
Understanding	7%	8%	7%

<sup>a</sup>  $X^2$ ,  $p < .05$

<sup>i</sup> Note: Concepts 1-7 follow Telep & Sommers' (2017) framework; Concepts 8-9 follow consultation with subject matter experts.

By far the most common concept in the trainees' definitions was that of What Works, which featured in over 60% of answers. The concepts of Research and Statistics appeared relatively frequently. The Evaluation concept was also mentioned in over a quarter of definitions. Perhaps unexpectedly, considering the emphasis on focused interventions and the policing of 'hot-spots', in both the literature and training, the Focus concept featured relatively infrequently.

We were also interested in whether the EBP Skills Session had an effect on trainee's definitions. Trainees who provided their definitions before attending a Skills Session mentioned an average of 1.97 key concepts; Trainees who provided definitions after attending a Skills Session mentioned an average of 2.50 key concepts. This represented a trend towards providing a more complete definition, although this fell slightly below statistical significance. This lack of significance indicated that the frequency of many core concepts (e.g. What Works, Research) did not change between the two groups of trainees. However, on a concept level, Evaluation and Preventative both featured more prevalently in the answers from trainees who had attended a Skills Session.

Overall, some tentative positives can be drawn from findings. Firstly, the prevalence of key concepts across both trainee groups appeared higher than for a cohort of US Police Officers (Telep & Sommers, 2017), and are more in line with

more senior practitioners such as those noted in Yesberg & Dawson (2017). As this applies to both of the trainee groups it suggests that the training that they receive during the classroom lessons had a positive effect in transmitting some definitional knowledge. Secondly, the frequency of two of the core concepts (Evaluation and Preventative) in definitions was higher amongst trainees who had attended an EBP Skills Session, again suggesting a positive effect on knowledge transmission.

Despite this, even in the group of trainees who had attended the additional Skills Session, an average acknowledgement of 2.50 core concepts out of a possible 9 is low. In addition, the percentage of definitions featuring the core concepts of Focus and Understanding were both low (7%). This is in spite of both concepts receiving attention during the Skills Session itself – and there was no uplift in their relative frequencies amongst the post-training group. Nonetheless, coding in such an objective way may miss 'implied' meaning from the trainee definitions – one may know a definition without being able to effectively articulate it. Furthermore, knowing the definition of EBP does not necessarily predict effective application. Therefore, in the next section of the Toolkit, the trainees were tested with a typical scenario in order to examine their problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

## Toolkit – The Critical Thinking Scenario

Whilst knowing the definitions gives a good indicator of knowledge transmission, it does not necessarily predict effective application (learning facilitation; Kember & Gow, 1994). Therefore, follow up testing of the trainees with a typical scenario was undertaken in order to examine their problem-solving and critical thinking skills (or “deep smarts”, Leonard & Swap, 2004) to give an indication of how learning might transfer into actual behaviours in a policing context (level 3 in Kirkpatrick’s model). The abbreviated scenario is presented in Box 1.

Consistent with the pilot data from 2016, the 2017 trainees identified Dealing with the Boys’ Behaviour and Diffusing Community Tension as two of the most prevalent priorities. Both Cohorts (2016 and 2017) also mentioned that they would involve other agencies, as well as try to improve confidence in the police. There were also key differences between the two Cohorts. Firstly there was the emergence of a new theme related to protecting the V family. This theme was present in over half of the trainees’ priorities, and indicated an awareness of the family’s vulnerabilities (elderly mother, minors involved) as well as the risk of them being targeted by the community. A second new theme – Gaining Greater Understanding – illustrates that the 2017 cohort were more likely to attempt to identify the underlying causes of the problem, or pose alternate hypotheses (e.g. could be cultural misunderstanding, potential racism).

### BOX 1: SAMPLE EBP SCENARIO STRUCTURE

*On your ward, you have regular contact with the parents of the teenage boys x and y who live in local council accommodation.*

*The neighbourhood is very mixed and ethnically diverse. Recently there have been complaints from..... and there are community tensions.*

*You recently attended a community meeting where.....*

*Your sergeant is now asking you to resolve this situation.*

**TABLE 6: PRIORITIES SELECTED BY TRAINEES, BEFORE AND AFTER EBP SKILLS TRAINING.**

PRIORITY	% OF ANSWERS CONTAINING EACH PRIORITY				
	Before Skills Session (n = 31)	After Skills Session (n = 12)	Total Cohort 3 trainees (n = 43)	Experts (n = 9)	Students (n = 25)
Deal with the Boys' Behaviour	52%	58%	53%	44%	36%
Protect the V Family <sup>b</sup>	55%	50%	53%	11%	12%
Diffuse Community Tension <sup>b</sup>	39%	67%	47%	11%	12%
Consultation & Communication	32%	33%	33%	56%	40%
Gain Greater Understanding <sup>a, b</sup>	13%	42%	21%	56%	8%
Resolve the Housing Issue	16%	25%	19%	11%	16%
Improve Confidence in the Police <sup>c</sup>	16%	17%	16%	0%	0%
Involve Other Agencies	16%	7%	16%	33%	4%
Involve a Translator	10%	17%	12%	11%	4%

a X<sup>2</sup> Differences between before vs after training groups ( $p < .05$ )

b X<sup>2</sup> Differences between trainee, expert, and undergraduate groups ( $p < .05$ ) NB: whilst we recognise that Ns are low in the expert group, this is in line with typical expert consultations

c X<sup>2</sup> Differences between trainee, expert, and undergraduate groups ( $p = .052$ )

### Pulse Check Survey

As an additional measure of learning from the training as well as an indication of behaviour on the job, we distributed an additional survey amongst PN trainees. This survey was completed at the end of the 2017 EBP Skills Sessions (held in Manchester & London), and asked trainees to answer the following three open-ended questions:

1. Thinking about everything you've learned, what stands out about Evidence Based Policing? (89 responses)
2. What are your main takeaways from today's Skills Session? What will help you in practice? (92 responses)
3. In general, which aspects of the academy and beyond helped you most to do a good job? (82 responses).

Responses were collected electronically and analysed into key themes, as presented in Table 7. The Focus theme emerged as the most prevalent concept for EBP. There were also general positive comments in 16% of responses that were too broad to classify, such as that EBP was "worthwhile", "sensible", and "beneficial". However, there were also negative comments in 20% of responses, including critiques.

The main issues identified were: that EBP was "common sense anyway", that it was too demanding on time and resources, and that it was more for academics than for officers on the ground. This kind of characterisation of EBP is perhaps a reflection of its absence from the discussion and practice of front line police. Future research would do well to further entangle how policing culture influences such views; we also refer the reader to Chapter 6.

TABLE 7: RESPONSES TO PULSE CHECK SURVEY

Theme	Example	%
<b>Q1 – KEY THINGS LEARNT ABOUT EBP</b>		
<b>Focus / Specification</b>	“Define your problem – and make it much more specific” “How important it is to narrow down and hone in on key issues”	17%
<b>Research / Data</b>	“It’s a scientific academic approach to making society safer” “The ability to use the database to research previous police based activities/studies”	15%
<b>What Works</b>	““It allows you to know what tactics work and what don’t” “...trying methods that have worked elsewhere first”	13%
<b>Before acting / Proactive</b>	“Proactive can be much better than reactive” “Stepping back from an issue and properly considering it rather than rushing to a solution”	11%
<b>Learn from past (mistakes)</b>	“Being able to use experience and other existing knowledge to implement strategies for improvement” “Failure is evidence in itself”	10%
<b>Understanding / Causes</b>	“That you need to understand the issue before tackling it” “Make sure you analyse your problem”	8%
<b>SARA model</b>	“How to use the SARA model” “(I) understand the SARA model a lot better from the day”	6%
<b>Innovative</b>	“Don’t take the easy option, try something different” “Creative and innovative”	4%

TABLE 7: RESPONSES TO PULSE CHECK SURVEY

Theme	Example	%
<b>Q2 – MAIN THINGS LEARNT TODAY</b>		
<b>Focus / Specification</b>	"It is important to fully define the problem that needs solving and I need to be as specific as possible"	30%
<b>Research / Data</b>	"Make time to get to the baseline data and current crime level before I do anything"	16%
<b>Finding evidence</b>	"Studies and websites where you can find help"	14%
<b>Understanding / Causes</b>	"Think about the mechanisms to a problem"	12%
<b>Models / SARA</b>	"Use SARA, rather than thinking it obvious 'I'll just do this'"	8%
<b>Evaluation</b>	"To check if implementation has worked"	8%
<b>What Works</b>	"Ensuring to check what has worked or not before"	5%
<b>Q3 – WHAT HELPED YOU DO A GOOD JOB?</b>		
<b>Force immersion / Field training</b>	"The immersion period back in force"	16%
<b>Experts / Guests</b>	"The advice and interaction with the guest speakers"	16%
<b>Colleagues / Leads</b>	"The belief from my syndicate lead that I was capable gave me belief in myself"	15%
<b>Personal</b>	"The academy allowed me to become more confident when speaking in public"	15%
<b>Practical / Role play</b>	"Role-playing stop and searches, booking into custody... were also really useful"	12%
<b>Law / Legislation / Theory</b>	"Understanding/being taught my powers and different ways to use them"	12%
<b>EBP / Problem solving</b>	"The encouragement to think critically and ask "why"	9%



## Impact presentations

Following the Summer Academy training event, the trainees join their designated force to start their operational role. Several months later, the trainees are asked to report on their progress by presenting a problem which they have been working on over the last 100 days. We observed several of the trainees' presentations and coded for the presence of key EBP concepts as outlined above in Figure 7.

We randomly selected 57 presentations for analysis (all occurring after EBP training). These covered a broad range of topics covered with anti-social behaviour and drugs problems being the most frequent. Problems were highly localised and were often triggered by residents or business people's complaints. Hot spot analyses and force wide statistic also drew attention to particular problem areas. Use of SARA and the problem analysis triangle to focus the problem was noticeable as were conscious attempts to consult the community and engage with multi-agency partners. Many of the problems were focused by default as they were problems caused by one offender or group of offenders, and often limited to single premises or street.

There was a creditable awareness of the need for sustainable solutions. This was often achieved by working in partnership with local authorities or voluntary sector organisations. The main weakness of the presentations was a general absence of use of existing research to design their interventions or relate their findings back to the original research, their use of a basic before-and-after design and the total absence of any tests of statistical

significance for any quantitative data reported; whether this is due to a need for more training, a lack of time or opportunity or both remains to be investigated further. As they stand, the outputs conform to what Anderson, Herriot and Hodkinson (2001) call the 'transfer of learning' model of evidence use. Studies of this type have high practice relevance but lack scientific rigour. This means that conclusions drawn from the data tended to be overstated, and the contribution that the presentations could make to building a corpus of reliable knowledge was minimal.

## Helping and Hindering EBP Application

We investigated trainee perceptions of factors which help or hinder the use of EBP on the job, firstly as a pilot with Cohort 2 (2016) and then again with Cohort 3 (2017). The trainees were asked their views about what helped or hindered the application of evidence-based policing during their working day. These factors included the trainees' own attitudes towards EBP effectiveness, the attitudes of those around them, and intrinsic factors such as time and resources to appropriately conduct EBP.

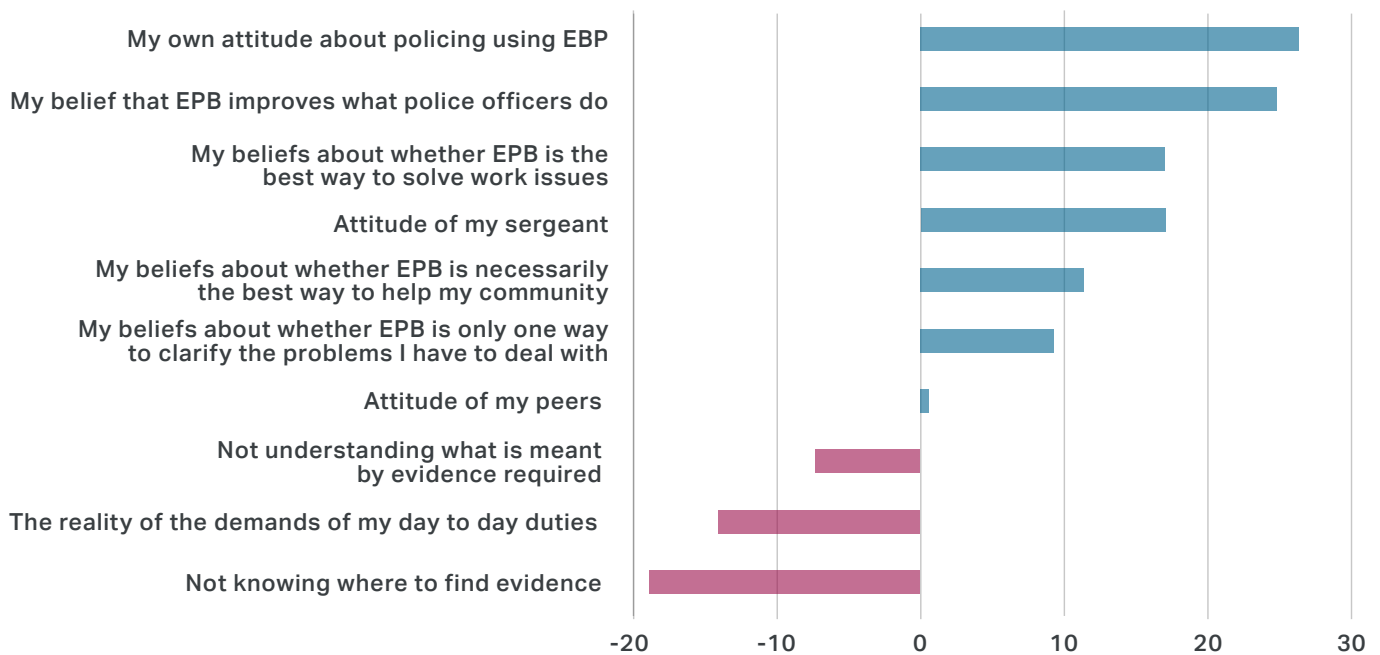
For each of the ten factors, a Net Helper Score was calculated by subtracting the number of trainees (total n = 45) who felt that the factor was a hindrance from the number of trainees who felt that the factor was a help. Therefore, positive scores indicate that the factor helps application of EBP, whilst a negative score indicates that the factor hinders application.

As shown in Figure 8, the biggest helpers for applying EBP in the workplace were the trainees' own attitudes, and their beliefs that EBP improves what police officers do. The attitude of the trainees' sergeants was also identified as a helper towards applying EBP by some but not all participants, perhaps reflecting variations in the sergeants' own attitudes.

The three largest hindrances to using EBP were not knowing where to find evidence, not understanding what is meant by evidence, and the demands of day-to-day duties. There also appeared to be a positive shift for the majority of the factors from 2016 to 2017.

Firstly, although three hindrances were identified, these were not reported to be as problematic. For example, in 2016, 50% of trainees reported that day to day demands "hindered a great deal", compared to a reduced 20% in 2017. Similarly, peer attitudes were seen as an overall hindrance in 2016, whereas in the current year, an increased percentage of trainees found that peer attitudes had helped them, resulting in the overall neutral net helper score above. However, the largest improvement was for trainee beliefs that EBP was necessarily the best way to help their communities. In 2016, this factor was perceived to be a hindrance to the application of EBP, whilst in 2017 this was perceived to help.

FIGURE 8: COHORT 3'S NET HELPER SCORES FOR THE APPLICATION OF EBP IN THE WORKPLACE.



## Conclusion

The key learning points from the analysis in this chapter are as follows. First, we offer an evaluation framework for understanding learner motivations, personal characteristics and transfer of learning into practice by drawing on Kirkpatrick's model (1967, 2018) of training evaluation. Our data shows that trainees are highly motivated and receptive which offers a significant opportunity and resource for forces taking in graduate trainees, provided receptivity and support in the work environment. Emotional intelligence may offer a useful framework for assessing future officers' capacity to engage in procedurally just policing principles and which aspects may require developing through education and continuous development on the job.

The data shows that more targeted inculcation of EBP reaps rewards by increasing knowledge of basic principles and increased likelihood of a more focused approach to addressing real-life policing scenarios. The latter are habitually highly localised and contextualised. Efforts were made to review in-force data and consult the affected community to define and limit the problem but these would benefit from more systematic approaches such as the problem analysis triangle.

Enabling trainees to frame stronger research designs together with a greater appreciation of some basic tests of statistical significance, or appropriate qualitative approaches, would allow them to draw stronger conclusions from their data. There was little evidence to suggest that having undertaken some more systematic problem solving these ideas were taken up elsewhere within force or the learning exploited for trialling elsewhere. This finding may be beyond the scope of PN itself but raises the broader question of embedding EBP in practice through a better understanding of how this is enacted, or not, by local officers once they have been trained to instigate a learning culture.

## Chapter 6

# View from the shop-floor: perspectives on the Police Now programme

Tiggey May and Gillian Hunter

## Introduction

Using Police Now as a test bed, we have explored the experiences of 45 graduate entrants to policing. We describe how they see the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, how they have coped with the learning and their neighbourhood placements and how they understand, value and apply research evidence to their practice. Our findings complement the findings from Chapter 5. We use our findings to draw out key learning points to help inform the development of the DHEP, focusing in particular on the integration of the learning and practice elements of a graduate programme. We address four questions:

- How do graduates experience the short intensive policing course?
- How do graduates learn the essential craft of policing?
- How do graduate police officers apply their critical skills, gleaned from both their university study and the summer academy, to the demands of their neighbourhood police work?
- And what is the role of evidence based policing in their work?

## Methods

The research was conducted in 2016/17. The main components were:

- 60 in-depth interviews with 45 PN participants, (30 from Cohort 2 and 15 from Cohort 3)
- Seven observations of PN training days and 100-day impact events;
- 13 interviews with police line managers of graduates;
- Eight interviews with PN staff;

- Two focus groups to examine perceptions and usefulness of training on evidence-based policing;
- And content review of 30 PN Graduate 100-day impact presentations.

**Cohort 2** interviewees comprised 15 female and 15 male graduates who were interviewed six months after the Summer Academy 2016 (n=30) and again at one year (n=15). They were aged between 21 and 32. Seven were from Black, Asian and Minority ethnic (BAME) groups; the remaining 23 were White British. They came from a range of academic disciplines, including: law, criminology, the natural, social and political sciences, music, foreign languages, engineering, war studies, history and geography. Six graduates had relatives currently or previously in police employment and five had previous policing experience themselves. Fourteen were subsequently employed by the MPS,<sup>19</sup> six by West Midlands Police, three by Lancashire, two respectively by Cheshire, Surrey and Thames Valley Police and one by Northamptonshire Police.

**Cohort 3** interviewees comprised six female and nine male graduates who were interviewed between six and 12 weeks after leaving the Summer Academy in 2017. They were aged between 21 and 26; 13 said they were White British, one was Asian, and one did not say. Like Cohort 2 they had degrees in a range of subjects including: law, geography, psychology, chemistry, politics, sports science and war studies. Five had family who were currently or had previously been in the police service.

A fuller report can be obtained from [t.may@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:t.may@bbk.ac.uk)

## Findings on experiences of the Intensive Learning

There are obvious expectations of graduates and the skills they bring to PN; their degrees imply ability for higher-level learning and critical thinking. They undertake a shorter six-week introductory course to policing in contrast to the average of twelve weeks for recruits coming in via the standard route and are expected to undertake some of that learning independently.

PN graduates are required to complete an on-line, pre-learning course, the content of which is predominantly on the law and on officers' legal powers. On the first day of the Summer Academy the graduates sit an exam, which they must pass to progress onto the six-week academy. Most of Cohort 2 and 3 passed the exam at the first attempt. None of the interviewees reported the pre-learn to be too difficult and all were happy to cover these basics independently - most had recently completed their final university exams, so were used to pressurised learning and exam conditions – and viewed the pre-learn as a good foundation for entering the policing profession and starting the Summer Academy. The few who failed the exam blamed too short a period of time between finishing their university exams and starting the Academy.

*As far as I can remember the majority of the learning was legislation. There were also modules about values and ethics, I think there was one about styles of neighbourhood policing. The vast majority was factual stuff that you could just learn by rote almost. Anything that was a bit more nuanced was stuff that we got taught in the classroom, as it were, when we got to the academy. [PNG 26]*

*The pre-learn was primarily preparation, for the exams. It was helpful, it meant when we went in we weren't completely dithering like, "What am I doing?" I thought it was good, it was reasonable. It certainly did what it was meant to do. [PNG 19]*

*I didn't do much prep work due to going away, exams and finishing essays, I failed the first exam, but passed the re-take 48 hours later [PNG 10]*

The Summer Academy comprised three distinct but complementary training strands: lectures and classroom-based activities; officer safety training; and field training. Lectures are delivered by both guest speakers and serving police officers and cover topics including: stop and search; roads and breath testing; values, legitimacy and ethics; female genital mutilation; fraud and cybercrime; humility, toxicity and communication; evidence-based policing; mental health; sex offences and domestic abuse. Lecture length varied from one to four hours. Graduates were placed in a syndicate for the duration of the Academy. A syndicate was comprised of a lead, who was an experienced operational police officer, and 10-12 graduates. Syndicates sat as a group for lectures, worked through exercises in the classroom, and completed their field training together.

In late 2017, MOPAC published their final evaluation report detailing the experiences of the first PN Cohort (Yesberg and Dawson, 2017). The views of Cohort 1 officers on their experience of the Summer Academy were similar to those of our Cohort 2 and 3 interviewees. Like Cohort 1, our interviewees spoke positively about the training they received at the Summer Academy, commenting positively on the fact that

most of the speakers were 'serving' police officers:

*The session organisation was great, I thought the depth was quite good, they got across the points they needed to and they brought in people who were still doing it... current serving officers, serving sergeants, serving inspectors, people who are top of their field who know everything that is current. That was the most important thing because it showed that what we were learning is the best working practice used by people who are still practising and working [PNG 05].*

However, like Cohort 1, many of the interviewees were dissatisfied with the craft/knowledge-based balance of the intensive learning.

A key theme in our interviews was the importance for the graduates of learning the craft of policing. They valued the sessions on practical or craft skills more than those which focused on the so called 'soft skills'<sup>20</sup> or theories of policing, often worrying that there was too much emphasis on the latter. (This is in contrast to the findings of this report, and may reflect more the lack of craft on the street and lack of credibility that formal knowledge has on the front line.)

Importantly, our first interviews with graduates, and therefore their reflection on the intensive learning, was done after they had been in force for several months. Their views about their own competency when starting in force were generally low (which is not unique to PN participants), in particular they stressed their lack of confidence in policing skills (see also Chapter 5; and Yesberg & Dawson 2017):

*They put a lot of emphasis on the soft skills, as it were. We had a four-hour lesson, I think, on resilience which I didn't really take a whole lot away from. Compare that to, say, a one-hour lesson on sexual offences, not that we're going to be dealing with a whole lot of that in our capacity as neighbourhood officers. I felt it was sometimes lacking in terms of giving us a rounded view. [PNG 32]*

*In terms of the content, there was a lot of debate amongst us that there wasn't enough time being spent on particular things, some things were being sacrificed for other things. So I think our input on traffic law was probably two or three hours, whereas we would talk about resilience and soft skills for days on end. And that would be a constant thing, but when you start the job, you think back and wish that the practical aspects and stuff such as traffic law and stop and search, you wish that had been covered more...I think they really pushed soft skills, you know, reflection, the management toolkit they call a 'resilience toolkit', they really pushed that...[PNG 28]*

Like Cohort 1 (Yesberg and Dawson, 2017), most interviewees found the six-week course intensive and exhausting, some noting that the days were too long, and the balance of learning biased towards lecture-style teaching rather than discussion and field training which they largely preferred:

*The days were so long; sometimes you were in one room for five hours with hardly any breaks. Your brain just can't concentrate for that long. A lot of stuff you don't even remember that you had a talk about it because there were just*

20. Officers tended to refer to sessions such as legitimacy, procedural justice, empathy, resilience as 'soft skills' sessions – presumably reflecting their focus on interpersonal skills.

*so many talks, so many lessons and so much sitting and listening that it just all kind of merges into one sometimes. We didn't get much reflection time at the Summer Academy. [PNG 09]*

*The field training was very good, which is the bit where you actually go out, in [police] cars. You learn things that you just can't learn in a classroom. The lectures were good, predominantly good, but long. The days were long and for my money eight weeks would be a more appropriate time just for making everything easier... It was a bit like death by PowerPoint for quite a lot of it to be honest with you. [PNG 16]*

*I would have rather had more classroom-based discussions, I thought the hall was really good as that's when you're getting the experts to come and talk to you, that's where you're getting the knowledge being passed to you. But for me, I think it's partly the way that I learn, it's not really hammered home until I get into a group and just... talk about it. So what I would have liked is to have slightly shorter hall sessions and slightly more classroom sessions. [PNG 18]*

Chapters 2 and 3 examined the relationship between theory and its application to practice and how best to integrate the two in conversion courses. Interviews with Higher Education Institution (HEI) professionals running courses for teaching, social work and law suggest that courses which neglect this relationship ultimately limit a student's professional development and in the long term compromise their professional trajectories (See Appendix A).

Some of our interviewees showed limited understanding about the rationale for including each element during the

Summer Academy and how the theoretical learning informs policing practice; and they frequently expressed a preference for more opportunities to discuss issues raised in lectures. Different learning styles – as well as the different perspectives on whether participants had enough time to reflect and to acquire craft skills – must be addressed through the collaborations of HEIs with police forces/Police Now when preparing for the DHEP.

### **From graduate to police officer – experiences within the home force**

After completing intensive learning, officers are deployed to their home force to start a 28-day immersion. Each force is expected to organise a force-specific training input (usually one week in length), to acclimatise graduates to local procedures, policies and ICT systems. For the remaining three weeks, graduates are expected to accompany a tutor/mentor to continue their professional development, including practical skills, and to learn about their local area and the priorities of their team. This transition is of particular interest in order to examine the coordination of learning and practice between PN and the host forces.

We sought feedback about:

- The information provided to local neighbourhood teams from PN and Force Learning and Development Departments;
- The arrangements put in place to ensure a smooth transition from the SA to neighbourhood policing teams; and
- The support provided by the host force, including the reception from police colleagues.



Interviewees from Cohort 2 and 3 had mixed experiences of transition. While most reported a relatively smooth transition, in that their new colleagues were aware they were arriving in force, others described their experience as poorly managed in force and their team and line managers as ill-informed about PN. Our interviews with police line managers supported this view, in that several complained of having very little knowledge or information about the graduate scheme or understanding about the skill-set their new colleague would arrive with:

*Yes, my team were aware, which is always a good thing; in fact most of the station was aware that a Police Now graduate was arriving, my colleagues were aware of what Police Now is but I think we might have been miss-sold to them slightly. They were expecting this all-singing all-dancing, ready-to-go, problem-solving, impressive, best human there is in the whole planet. We arrived, and we literally couldn't do anything in terms of policing, which is quite an essential part of the job; but I guess that's something you learn through experience and actually doing it. We weren't the all-singing all-dancing problem-solving extraordinaires they were expecting. [PNG 17]*

*Yes my team were aware. I was really lucky because I had had a previous conversation with the Inspector who organised my arrival, so that really helped. I got to know my Sergeant and the officer that would be tutoring me as well. It was all really, really helpful. I said to my own HR team here that, "I think it would be really good if future officers were given that experience as well." [PNG25]*

*Some of my team knew I was arriving some didn't, same with the senior management, some knew, some have only just come to terms with it, literally. [PNG 27]*

*I don't think anyone was aware I was arriving... My new sergeant is very anti Police Now. [PNG19]*

PN has made various efforts to improve communication with the host forces, for example by inviting line managers to the Summer Academy and introducing Leadership Development Officers to act as a point of contact between graduate and force and to troubleshoot problems. Police forces need to think about how to draw in the wider support systems for graduate recruits when the DHEP is operational.

### **Mentors**

Graduates are expected to be supported in neighbourhood teams in the first instance by a trained mentor/tutor selected and provided by their force. As Chapter 2 discussed, mentoring is an important element of graduate conversion courses. Unfortunately, not all graduates were assigned a mentor, and some reported only limited access to one; for example, available only on some shifts or for a limited number of shifts.

It was also unclear what training – if any – forces provide to mentors to undertake this important role. Line manager interviewees also raised this issue, noting that they were restricted by who they could ask to mentor the PN graduates because of limited staff availability and resources. Most mentors were neighbourhood colleagues.

Our interviewees' descriptions of mentoring varied. Some reported very positive experiences, often highlighting the support, pastoral care and neighbourhood knowledge which their mentor possessed. Others were less enthusiastic, complaining about their mentor's lack of interest in PN or understanding of their supporting role:

*My mentor was brilliant, she was really good. She just showed me the ropes of what we were doing. Youth engagement is very different from beat management so she took me out to the schools and she showed me how we operated, which was good. I know one of my friends had a really bad time because his mentor wasn't about for the entire induction period. I felt pleased that mine was, and she was so good.*  
[PNG 17]

*They were welcoming, but it would have been nice to have a mentor, or someone who pointed out what I was doing wrong, or spent a little bit more time with me explaining things. I felt quite frustrated in the first few weeks, because I didn't really know how to use any of the systems on the computer. Almost, you feel like a bit of a burden continuously asking questions. You don't want to ask the same person questions so many times, you are a bit useless or whatever. Yes, it would have been nice to have a bit more there.*  
[PNG 41]

*We came in and we said, "We're supposed to have this 28-day period. What do you want us to do in it?" they were like, "Oh, I'm happy for you to start in your roles." At the time we were like, "Okay, that's fine. We'll start in our roles as neighbourhood officers."*

*Probably in retrospect, it would have been more useful to me to request to be put on a different team for a bit, or maybe just be on response for a little bit.* [PNG 33]

### **Line managers' experience of the Police Now Programme**

A graduate's experience of policing, regardless of entry route, is inevitably shaped by the dominant culture of their team and immediate line manager. Line managers who had visited the Summer Academy and met their recruit beforehand, unsurprisingly, had a much better understanding of the skills and competency of their recruit and what additional support would be required. Line managers' accounts of supervising PN graduates tended to focus on the need to increase practice competency to achieve independent patrol status. Being abstracted from neighbourhood work to attend PN events or further training was sometimes perceived as an impediment to achieving these core policing skills and they were generally considered by line managers to be less practice-ready than other recruits.

However, line managers were also mainly of the view that PN graduates were quick learners and highly competent individuals who showed initiative. Our line manager interviewees were critical both of the PN team and their own force Learning and Development Departments for a lack of clarity or communication about how the transition and mentoring process should be managed and what was expected of them as line managers.<sup>21</sup> Most were also ill-informed about the focus and aims of abstraction days, highlighting disconnect between key parties involved in managing the programme.

## Integrating into the neighbourhood team

A key theme in our graduate interviews was how they integrated into neighbourhood policing teams. In some cases, they described how they sought to manage the perceived stigma of being a graduate entrant and to underplay any sense of difference between themselves and other colleagues:

*The stigma that comes with graduate is the idea that you think you know everything and you think you know how to be a police officer. I was so conscious that I didn't know how to be a police officer, I didn't want to give them any way of being able to say, "Oh well, she just comes in and thinks she knows everything. She can't even do a proper stop and search. [Participant, Focus Group, 1]*

*Yes, they knew they were getting someone from Police Now, but they didn't know what Police Now was, no-one had ever told them what it was. I think they were sceptical to start with, but they said I wasn't how they expected me to be, they expected someone who thought they knew everything, a typical graduate... Yes, just as I expected them to be really old men stuck in their ways. [PNG 21]*

Most were keen to emphasise and defer to colleagues' professional experience and to acknowledge the importance of that experience for informing their day-to-day work and their PN impact assessments (discussed below) of what interventions might be implemented and tested locally.

*[with] Police Now, we were taught, "You've got these ideas. Go and do it," but, equally, I think it's important to reflect on the fact that our colleagues have probably done that before or have experiences of [place], that problem or people. [PNG25]*

*They've got the experience of trying it in the field so if I read something and I'm having a think about something and then I chat to them about it, it's given me much more knowledge and understanding of how that could possibly work in practice. [PNG17]*

*Fundamentally, I might be better educated than anyone else in my office, but they're better police officers than I am right now, and it would be arrogant of me to think otherwise. [PNG04]*

*When you come out of university you know how to be a Uni student, not a police officer, not a community leader, you just know how to work efficiently; work, study and write things efficiently. [PNG 05]*

There were some who expressed more confidence in their ability to challenge or question colleagues, and of note was the autonomy that most interviewees had in responding to different neighbourhood issues – though sometimes this was thought to signal a lack of interest from line managers:

*I've probably got quite a lot of autonomy to be honest. I mean we normally, as a team, will discuss what's going on, what problems we've got. Therefore, you get the advice of your colleagues and their input and stuff. Generally, if it's something that I'm taking the lead on, as long as I can argue my case so to speak, my sergeant is very supportive with how I want to deal with that. [PNG 04]*

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21. Line managers who had not attended the SA had less knowledge about both the PN Programme and what needed to be put in place for the continued professional development of their graduate.

*Yes I do, I feel like I'm given the choice to tackle it however I want. To be honest, I've felt, maybe at times, I've felt like I had a bit too much. I felt a bit under-supervised, in terms of like, "Well go on then, solve the problem." You're like, "Oh, I don't know how." [PNG 26]*

*I've got a lot of autonomy in terms of how I want to approach problems. I could go to my sergeant with any kind of idea, as long as it's somewhat sensible they'd probably be happy for me to crack on with it. I do feel like I have autonomy, and my input is taken in. However, obviously, the more experienced neighbourhood officers do get the final say. But, as a team, I think we get a lot of autonomy. [PNG 41]*

Most graduates described neighbourhood colleagues as generous with their time, keen to explain processes and systems and happy to help. A minority described a more cynical and cautious reception from colleagues, which they worked hard to turn around. Further, there was little opportunity for critical reflection within teams either because this was not normal team practice or because work pressure meant time for reflection was difficult to achieve in any meaningful or routine way.

*No. I must say I've only spoken to my sergeant once or twice properly, because she's so busy. I feel like I'm almost being managed by this colleague of mine. Or not really being managed at all. Which is quite nice as well. So not really. [PNG 40]*

*Not really. Most of the time if I'm out with my colleague and we've dealt with something, or given out a warning or whatever, we come back, we speak to the sergeant and say, oh we did this*

*and that, and explain what happened, and that's it. There's not really a discussion with the team. Everybody does their own thing, so there is no kind of team discussion about anything. [PNG 33]*

*Unfortunately I'm mainly left to my own devices in my neighbourhood. So ultimately I've got to pull the strings and try and pull everything together, the problem is I don't always know what strings to pull. So I'm always feeling that I can only respond to certain situations with the tools that I've been given and I know there's a much wider range of tools out there that I could be applying to community engagement, it's just that I'm missing out on them and ultimately what I could achieve. [PNG 05]*

### **The role of evidence-based policing**

We examined how PN participants understand, value and apply research evidence to their practice during neighbourhood postings, through assessed impact presentations. The broader context of police professionalisation is pertinent. So too is the College of Policing's role in setting professional standards and promoting good practice based on evidence – including the aim to create a more autonomous workforce, who can exercise judgment and knowledge of what works (Neyroud, 2010; Tilley and Laycock, 2017; College of Policing, 2015). Police leaders are supportive of evidence-based practice and are expected to encourage reflective practice and engagement with research (National Police Chiefs Council, 2016; College of Policing, 2015).

The What Works Centre for Crime Reduction – hosted by the College of Policing – is developing and promoting the professional knowledge base and is a repository for quality research evidence on what works and of good professional practice. However, positive orientation to evidence informed policing is not yet evident at all levels of the service, despite support from senior staff (Hunter, May and Hough, 2018). This makes the quality of the practice 'learning environment' for graduates highly relevant to this research. Chapter 2 stressed how important it was for conversion courses to integrate theoretical elements with practice skills, with mentoring and supervision as a key part of that integration process.

The 100-day impact presentations<sup>22</sup> are intended to demonstrate graduates' problem-solving and critical thinking skills and are a means of applying evidence-based practice to address local neighbourhood issues. Each graduate is expected to complete up to five presentations over the course of the two-year programme in a variety of formats at 'impact' events. This is a core assessed element of PN and is used to demonstrate to host forces, the potential added value and 'impact' of a PN graduate to the neighbourhood team.

### **Perceptions of evidence-based practice**

The SA initially included only one half-day session on evidence-based practice, which was augmented in 2017 by a further full day of skills training, focusing on defining evidence, showing how research can inform practice and different evaluation methods. This also allowed graduates to discuss their impact presentations with an 'expert' panel and encouraged them to champion the use of evidence and evaluation amongst their colleagues.

As Chapter 5 shows, this extra training was found to deepen graduates' understanding of evidence-based practice, to make clearer how to identify problems and underlying causes, and where to find different sources of relevant research evidence to inform and test interventions. Our focus group interviews conducted after this training supported these findings, with participants showing good understanding of, and support for, evidence-based practice – one participant described the session as "preaching to the choir"- but they also reported various barriers they faced in promoting research in their force. The following quotes highlight competing priorities for their attention and the cynicism expressed by some colleagues and managers about research or new ideas for age-old neighbourhood problems:

*It's all very well saying, "you do have the time, make the time." Well actually, you can't make time, and when you've got your skipper going, "You're doing this, then this, then this," actually you can't make time unless you stay on after work. So, I thought that was a little bit glib and slightly pie in the sky. Not understanding the realities of modern policing. [Participant, Focus Group 2]*

*I think [EBP] is really important, because that's the only way that workplaces change. If everybody only goes by what our predecessors do, it does end up being quite a backwards organisation that doesn't really take on new things. I think, it is good to let new people have a say, from a fresh, outsider perspective of what needs to change, or what needs to be done. But, it is difficult being vocal in that sense, because you are new. [PNG 41]*

*I love evidence based policing. My whole Master's was pretty much that. So when we had the lecture on it, I was just loving life and everyone was like, "Okay." (Laughter) Yes, I just think there's not time for it. Like we were saying before, officers probably wouldn't have time to read and research, but I'm really keen on that, and learning [PNG 40]*

**Interviewees' perceptions of the value placed on evidence-based practice by their neighbourhood colleagues often underlined the disconnect between the learning and practice environments:**

*[EBP] is not something that's really, from what I can see, is used at a local level. And actually trying to do it involves time and resourcing commitment that's not easy to do. But it's something that I would like, or I can see that it would be beneficial to do. [PNG 08]*

*The feeling I got was that most people in policing don't know what it is [EBP]. That it is difficult in a day-to-day policing world to use it, because sometimes when we have our Police Now events, they are so far removed from everyday work. Yes. It is quite difficult to sometimes put it into practice in your everyday. [PNG 09]*

*No one – which amazes me – no one is particularly strongly subscribed to evidence based policing, which when I was at the Summer Academy and we were talking about evidence based policing I was like, "why are spending so much time on this? It's such an obvious concept. Obviously, we should be doing things that are proved to have worked. Why would we be doing anything else?" But when you come into [neighbourhood team], it's not like that. [PNG 18]*

However, our interview findings also suggested that in some force areas and with some police managers, the interest in evidence-based practice had taken root and was being supported both in practice and through additional training given to graduates, there was just no overall consistency in the PN graduates' experience in force:

*I know it's something that the force has moved a lot more in the direction of using. We've had training from the force using an evidence-based approach to solve problems. I think that's a cultural thing where, over time, it's going to take a while, for people, I suppose, to come round to that approach. It's certainly used a lot more than I had perhaps expected when I first started. [PNG 11]*

*A lot of people pooh-pooh it. Quite a few say, "It's more about experience than it is about academic research." [but] I think there is a wave of change coming in [PNG 02].*

## The impact presentations

The impact presentations are an important link between learning and practice in that these presentations are an assessed aspect of the graduate programme, but they are also informed by and developed during everyday practice. The participants had mixed views about the aims and usefulness of the impact presentations. On the whole, they were seen as a distraction from enhancing practical or core policing skills; a view that echoed some of the police line managers we interviewed.

Based on their experiences of undertaking presentations and some wider reflection on their purpose, interviewees offered some common suggestions for how these presentations could be more useful. This also raised questions for us about how the impact presentations could be better integrated with the wider aspirations of policing to develop the professional knowledge base. The current short-term focus on 100 days was thought by most interviewees to negate any impetus to review impact over the longer term or to use findings iteratively in order to develop and adapt interventions that may have worked elsewhere.

One focus group participant raised the issue of legacy and a lack of clarity about how the research undertaken for impact presentations will be useful in the longer-term, which may simply be a reflection of how PN might better communicate the purpose of the impact presentations, as well as the way forces use the example presentations of problem-solving locally.

*You know, if what they're encouraging us to do is to look for long-term solutions and not just look for a quick fix... If you try something, and it doesn't have any impact for your first 100 days, the temptation is to be like, "Right, I'll move onto a different project, then, because I need some impacts. I'll find something that I can fix quickly." That's completely the antithesis of what they're trying to teach us, in terms of long-term problem solving..., there's some paradox there [PNG 26]*

*Something that kind of demotivates me when I'm doing these projects is that I know that when I leave in July it will all revert back to normal, nothing will get carried on. So the legacy that we're creating now, no one's going to carry that on unless there's new [graduates] replacing us. [Participant, Focus Group 1]*

A potentially misleading emphasis on innovation in solving neighbourhood problems and a perception (not necessarily supported by PN) among interviewees that documenting the failure of an intervention to address a specific problem would result in lower marks for the presentation, may have reduced the value of the exercise in the eyes of our interviewees.

*I think one of the falling down marks for policing in general is the fact that we can't accept failure, and I think that we really need to do that. I think the NHS do that really well, and I think that we do that very badly, and I would love to see that change, because I think that my presentation would be great if I felt comfortable going up there and saying, "Here's what I did, here's why it didn't work." [PNG 18]*

The pressure to succeed was also commented on by one of the police line managers we interviewed, who described being unconvinced by some of the impacts reported by graduates - "little bit of artistic license there". However, he was also interested in their ability to be innovative and had high expectations of those he was supervising. Coming up with new ideas was perceived as difficult in the context of neighbourhood policing:

*These are people with no previous policing experience, who haven't been tarnished - perhaps that's the wrong word - but my hope was that they would look at [problem] with a complete fresh set of eyes and what I gave them were long-term issues. They weren't coming up with the new ideas I'd hoped for. [Line Manager 03]*

*It's a pressure to come up with something innovative and new, and sometimes it's to do with the job. There's not always something amazing that's going to come up. [Participant, Focus Group 2].*

In our view, too much stress on innovation diminishes the impact presentations' potential contribution to building professional knowledge, highlighting the need for greater coordination from either Police Now or the College of Policing about how graduate presentations like these might be better used to develop and refine the policing evidence base. For example, alongside new approaches and ideas generated through such assessments, there is huge potential for presentations to further test or adapt to 'local' conditions, interventions that have proved effective elsewhere. In the extract below, the perceived emphasis on innovation has actually served to reduce interest in What Works evidence:

*I think because Police Now is so focused on innovation and doing things differently, which is great, it's a good thing to encourage but there's such a heavy focus on it that it makes you feel quite reluctant to look to the College of Policing because obviously that's all the tried and tested things. I think there's so much pressure to try to do something different that it sort of counteracts all of the resources that are suggested in those lectures because they're sort of saying, "Oh don't do what everyone else has done". [PNG 14]*

As noted, some participants were assisted by line managers and colleagues in the design and implementation of their presentations and these were sometimes linked in to current neighbourhood operations or based on neighbourhood priorities; two of the line managers we interviewed, reported that they determined the focus of the impact presentations. Line managers also assisted in most cases, but not all, by allowing time away from other duties to focus on presentations. Additionally, some of the LDOs were credited with helping participants develop presentation ideas. Overall, based on interviewees' accounts, there was no standardised way in which participants were helped to complete their impact presentations:

*I think it is fair to say that [LDO] bounces questions to make us consider other options and make sure that we are considering evidence-based practice in what we are doing and that kind of thing. [PNG 11]*



*[LDO] is great to talk about what would be suitable for a 100-day impact event, where to look for the evidence base that I need to work on that sort of stuff. [PNG 19]*

Assessment and feedback are important elements of learning and development. A few of the interviewees mentioned the quality of feedback they received on their impact presentations. This centred on two issues –the transparency of the marking protocol - so understanding how the project was being assessed - and the usefulness of the feedback:<sup>23</sup>

*It was anonymous feedback and I had no sense of how the [project] was being assessed. [PNG 02]*

*I don't know who does the marking, but I think if you have a teaching background it would be a lot more of an effective marking strategy. [PNG 18]*

*It was useful to an extent but, this sounds awful, you know when you do well, and they don't give a huge amount of useful feedback because it's all mainly like, "Oh yes that was a good idea." It was useful in saying I'd done a good job but... [PNG 17]*

The above demonstrates that assessment criteria for the DHEP should be clear, and probably a collaborative assessment between the force and an HEI.

## **Content of impact presentations**

We reviewed the content of presentations conducted by our PN cohort 2 interviewees. The two most common topics for presentations were anti-social behaviour (e.g. street-drinking and drug use, noise, rough-sleeping) and improving community engagement to build confidence and improve police and community relationships. Other issues included the misuse of police time, reducing traffic offences, targeting street drug and sex markets and theft.

The rationale for selecting the topic ranged from neighbourhood priorities to trends in statistical data, current operations and the time and interest of the participant. Most, however, provided some rationale for why the problem tackled was important in the longer term, such as building positive relationships with young people, increasing public confidence and increasing the flow of intelligence. Participants used a range of evidence to assess and scope the problem – usually force statistics on crime, call-outs and complaints, but also local authority data. They sought advice from colleagues, line managers and sometimes other forces.

Some referenced national policies, including government and National Police Chief Council guidance. Less frequent were references to academic research in building the case for, or design of a project. The Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment model (SARA), for identifying issues, designing and assessing responses was mentioned regularly as were the concepts of hot-spot policing and target-hardening.

23. PN has since developed a more detailed marking scheme for the impact presentations but this had not been implemented at the time of our interviews.

Only three of the 30 graduates who discussed their impact presentation mentioned using the Crime Reduction Toolkit or other College of Policing resources in the development of their presentations.

The weakest element of the presentations, unsurprisingly, was the assessment of impact, which in part reflects the stage in the development of evidence based practice across the police forces today. Part of the reason for the lack of impact assessment was the shortage of time or resources to undertake any assessment of impact. In some cases, the presentations were works in progress, so may have reported impact measurement at a later stage.

Police call out statistics and incident reports, both before and after an intervention, were commonly used to show change. In some cases, verbal anecdotal feedback or testimonies from residents or colleagues were presented. We reviewed only one presentation that had attempted to compare data from the intervention site with a comparison site. However, most showed a good understanding of the difficulties of measuring impact and also the likely short-term nature of change and some consideration for how any positive impact might be sustained over the longer term.

## In summary

Our interviews with PN participants and their police line managers about their experiences of this programme, highlight some important learning points for developing the DHEP.

- While our interviewees could largely cope with learning over a condensed period of time and were happy to complete some of these elements independently, there was a general call for more discussion and reflection alongside lecture-style learning during intensive learning. This might also help reinforce connection between the more theoretical or 'soft-skills' aspects of the training curriculum and policing practice.
- Common concerns about a lack of practical knowledge or skill on completion of intensive learning will need to be addressed through good coordination between HEIs and forces about the immersion and mentoring period and clear plans for how graduates' practice will be developed in force and through top-up learning.
- More generally, communication between headquarters' learning and development staff and those front-line staff who provide graduate participants with support and management needs to be effective, with clear roles and responsibilities and two-way lines of communication.
- DHEP participants will be expected to apply and promote evidence-based practice. It is important to recognise that this research indicates that they may meet with various obstacles, including the lack of support for EBP in some local areas.
- The Police Now impact presentations aim to enhance graduates' problem-solving skills, to apply research to challenge 'received wisdom' and to test out innovative approaches to neighbourhood problems. There is clear scope for thinking further about how these presentations are done, improving their research elements and feeding the results into the police knowledge base.

# Chapter 7

## Insight from the research

The findings presented in this report are intended to support the College of Policing and the police service as they develop the PEQF Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP). The two-year programme will result in a Graduate Diploma in Professional Policing Practice, meaning that this route into the police service is compliant with the requirement that all police entrants are trained to degree level. DHEP is intended to 'go live' in 2020. Clearly these findings also have lessons for the other two police constable recruit entry routes – the apprenticeship degree and the pre-join police degree.

The project has drawn on the available literature on police training and that on graduate conversion courses for other professions, and it has also mounted original research into the experience of participants in the Police Now (PN) programme. Whilst this is not formally a conversion programme, it shares features with DHEP that make it a suitable 'test-bed' from which to develop practical lessons for the latter. We have also interviewed other key stakeholders in police recruitment training, notably those in Learning and Development Departments, as well as people with experience of conversion courses for recruitment into the social work, law and teaching professions. The six substantive chapters presenting results all contain summaries of findings.<sup>24</sup> In this final chapter we offer a synthesis of our findings, summarising in a few pages what lessons the project has for the DHEP.

It is clear that there are significant challenges in implementing the PEQF overall, as well as specific challenges for each of the three routes into the police service. These fall into three categories:

- Pedagogic or educational challenges in equipping entrants with the increased level of skills and professional judgement that is now expected of police officers.
- Logistical challenges in substantially overhauling the entire recruit training system over a two-year period, and establishing new partnerships with universities.
- Force-wide change programmes in the context of austerity which have the impact of pushing learning and development outside the heart of the police service.

The key findings of this project underscore the importance of striking the right balance of theory and practice in police learning. Therefore, finding the right approach to the pedagogic challenges is critically important to the entire 'professionalisation' enterprise. We shall consider these first, before turning to the logistic challenges and the impact of other contemporaneous change programmes. We urge learning and development leaders to keep these educational challenges to the forefront even though we see how the financial and logistical pressures too often take centre stage. These practical challenges are more immediate, but the pedagogic ones are probably more important, as the new training structures amount to a completely new way of working. We see a real risk that rushing to grasp what looks like a solution – commissioning an HEI provider and getting on with validating a curriculum – may bring more problems down the line without a firm grasp of the transformation necessary to meet the uplift in the educational approach.

Without a roadmap that includes the educational transformation, practical and process tasks often take precedence: validate a curriculum, recruit an entry cohort, and hope for the best. Whilst the academic and practical dimensions of DHEP training programmes might be in place, they could fall down in their delivery simply because policing theory and the practice remain largely unconnected with each other. As we very clearly found in the research, integrating formal evidence based knowledge and practice skills is one of the key pedagogic challenges facing DHEP and must be accomplished as a co-produced and cooperative venture.

### **Combining theory and practice: the pedagogic challenge for DHEP**

At the risk of oversimplification, the existing learning approach for police recruits, recognised to be at Level 3, aims to ensure that officers know what they need to do when confronted with a given situation, but are not expected to understand why this is the right course of action. Recruit police officers are expected to possess specified skills, but do not need to have any theoretical justification to drive their decision making and interventions. The underlying assumption of the PEQF – also articulated in the Policing Vision 2025 – is that in the 21st Century a police constable has to be able to operate with greater autonomy than hitherto, exercising more discretion, to develop the right solutions to novel problems as these arise and evolve over time. This requires a theoretical grasp of the nature of policing, victimisation, crime and offending and their context, a commitment to continuous learning and some engagement with the evidence about what constitutes good policing practice. An agreement between police forces and their partner HEIs on 'what

good practice looks like' cannot be taken for granted. Whilst 'a good officer' is envisioned in the Policing Vision 2025, each local force will have a view about what this means in their area. We recommend therefore that police force engagement with HEIs begins with explicit discussions about 'what a good police constable looks like' locally. Setting out a vision will enable the HEI to ground its theoretical input into the daily delivery expectations of the public and the force.

### **Stating learning outcomes**

If the aim of PEQF (including DHEP) is to ensure that officers are intellectually equipped to act in a more autonomous and professional way, any entry learning programme needs to articulate what sort of police officer it aims to produce. A striking finding of the systematic review on police training was that few courses actually stated with any clarity what a good police officer looks like. Indeed, what Police Now (our test bed research site) found is that this expectation of 'the good officer' differs in different police forces. Whilst the College of Policing sets out a high level vision in its curriculum, any precise formulation of the 'good police officer' will always be contested and contestable and should, we believe, be locally driven. Moreover, other bodies have a view of what constitutes the 'good officer'. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, for instance, leads force inspections taking a view whether forces as a whole are delivering efficient, legitimate and effective policing for local people. There is probably scope for a variety of such statements, but HEI/police partnerships need a clear shared understanding about this in order to provide a stated outcome for its co-operative and collaborative work.

To our minds, any such statements need to contain not only the attainment of cognitive or intellectual skills, but also the development of a values-based, ethical perspective that permits some empathy with all community members, including those who have enduring and extensive difficulties dealing with their lives.

### **Building the bridge between formal knowledge and practical skills**

It was clear from our research with PN participants that practical competence when out policing the streets did not feel like it had much connection with any more formal knowledge and the 'soft skills' to which they had been exposed. What really mattered was having enough basic competence to do the jobs that had to be done, without losing all credibility in the eyes of their more experienced colleagues. To us as police researchers the links may seem obvious between the practical skills in, say, stopping and searching suspects and the theoretical frameworks about policing, such as procedural justice theory.

However, PN participants made a clear distinction between the practical craft skills they valued and softer 'people skills' exemplified in the procedural justice perspective. This says less specifically about the PN programme, and more about the trickiness in blending craft with knowledge. In our judgement, one of the most important things to get right in the DHEP is to close this gap, so that recruits regard formal academic knowledge as relevant to practical policing skills and their practice as police officers.

Translating theory into practice is also a skill, that will require close collaboration between HEIs delivering academic content and the mentors, line-managers and in-force trainers and learning and

development staff equipping recruits with practice skills. It also will require an active socialisation of mentors to the importance of evidence-led practice, too. The academics need to appreciate the perspectives of the in-force staff, who in turn need to 'buy into' the academic perspectives that are being taught. If this doesn't happen, the DHEP runs the risk of replicating the existing system of (level 3) training, albeit with an academic 'bolt-on' component which can safely be discarded once recruits have found their feet in the realities of front-line policing. We cannot overestimate the kinds of effort this collaboration will take – in spirit as well as in creating cultures within both the academic and policing worlds to do so.

### **Evidence-based policing practice**

Part of the process of forging proper functioning links between formal knowledge and practical craft skills is arriving at a coherent specification of what is meant by 'evidence-based policing practice'. It is fairly clear what constitutes the academic knowledge base on policing. It is wide-ranging, embracing extensive research in disciplines of sociology, criminology, social and organisational psychological and socio-legal theory. Such academic perspectives enable a widened and influential narrative within which course learning content should be aligned in order to enable recruit officers to know what and why such practices are important.

Within this academic eclectic body of knowledge sits a small amount of experimental research addressing questions about effectiveness of particular tactics or approaches. It is probably important to be clear from the outset that evidence on policing practice

is drawn from a wider base of information than that informed through experimental research, and that many of the best insights into police working practices derive from non-experimental research. But equally, our research suggests that recruits do need to be clear about the role of empirical research in professionalising the service; they need to understand the research process, and to be open to challenge their own practices from research evidence.

### **Styles of learning: group work and reflection**

It is clear from the experience of conversion courses for other professions that graduates have specific learning styles and that skilled educators also need to take into account the well-established fact that there are wide individual variations in these learning styles. Graduates bring to their learning both the capacity to absorb rapidly large amounts of information and ideas, and a range of analytic and intellectual skills honed through their university studies. Many recruits may also bring additional life experience from other jobs. It may not be the best use of student contact time in HEIs simply to 'lecture at' these graduates. If the aim is to generate genuine thoughtfulness, critical judgement and learning about the role for which recruits are training, it may make more sense to ensure that a good part of this time is spent in group work, and in providing opportunities for articulating and testing ideas about what constitutes effective policing practice is about. It is also well-established good practice that in level 6 training of this sort, additional time for reflection is equally critical. HEI providers may find it difficult to move from traditional styles of undergraduate

teaching to adapt to the learning styles of this – unusual and potentially demanding – DHEP group. Learning and development staff have a role to play in requiring HEIs to consider how they will adapt their university based approach to learning to an approach that is about good practice and the continuous application of academic knowledge to consider new and better ways of policing.

### **Motivation and emotional intelligence**

It is clear that there is a pool of highly qualified graduates available for recruitment. Extrapolating from the PN participants, they are characterised by intrinsic (value-based) factors such as doing a fulfilling job and 'making a difference' rather than extrinsic (or instrumental) factors. The aggregate profile of emotional intelligence for the PN graduates also seems suited to the demands of police work. The cohort seemed suited to a relatively structured and 'top down' training environment. The trainees are lower than the benchmark group in decisiveness and influence than comparable professionals, yet high on empathy, emotional control, conscientiousness and structure.

### **Logistical challenges**

Interviews with key police stakeholders, as well as those with expertise in the provision of conversion courses for other professions, left no doubt that getting DHEP in place by 2020 will be challenging. There are several interlocking difficulties. The most pressing is the need to settle on HEIs that will serve as partners and providers – because progress on many subsequent issues needs a partner in place with whom to negotiate. Some forces, or



consortiums of forces, have pre-existing relationships with HEIs, and plenty of experience of joint working. Others may not have obvious HEI partners, and may lack experience in joint-working, and in negotiating the terms of any partnership. Procurement and contractual issues are inevitably complex – and may also carry implications for estates planning.

It is critically important for police leaders to bring the discussions about the choices of HEIs and the assessment of how well the collaborations are proceeding into the heart of their senior management decision-making. We found wide variations in our discussions with learning and development staff in the kinds of senior support and champion support they are receiving from leaders in their forces.

### **Divisions of labour between HEIs and L&D staff**

Once HEI providers are in place, there are choices to be made about the division of labour between HEI staff and in-force staff in the delivery of learning, and in the geographical location of these activities. These obviously mesh with the pedagogic challenges discussed above, especially in relation to ensuring full integration between HEI and in-force learning and development staff. There are additional issues to be addressed in some forces, to ensure that in-force staff are themselves equipped to operate at level 6 – which may require these staff to be qualified to Masters level – so that they are able to take an appropriate share of the delivery of level 6 material. Assistance with the uplift may be a legitimate part of the negotiations police forces have with HEIs as part of the design of the collaborative contract.

### **Communication**

Both the experts on other professions' conversion courses and our own research point to the need for effective communication between staff in HEIs, L&D staff in forces, front-line staff and their senior management, within the context of clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The way in which new recruits are supported by police forces and mentors when they first land 'on the street' is likely to continue to be variable. Some PN participants found their immersion in their home force a very positive experience, others had a much tougher experience, partly the result of mis-communication within forces. Some mentors and line managers were highly praised, whilst others had been poorly equipped to do their jobs and provide effective support for new recruits. Staff at all levels need to buy into the professionalisation agenda, including PEQF, and if they will not do so, they must at least be encouraged not to subvert it.

### **Time to learn: abstractions and the continuing demands of demand**

Beyond all these practical challenges, there is a need to take full account of the abstraction demands of DHEP training – when the assumption that will readily be made is that demands for 'boots on the ground' will take precedence over educational activities, especially when these involve self-directed learning and time for reflective learning. This means that new and creative ways of blending time on and off the job for learning and reflection is needed.

**And finally, some considerations for the College of Policing in developing the DHEP**

There are key findings that the College may wish to consider in the iterative development of the DHEP:

- To articulate clearly the desired outcomes of graduate entry education with explicit criteria for becoming a 'good police officer' and for achieving 'good policing'
- To articulate the aspired model of professionalism that underpins the PEQF by drawing on learning from other professions
- To review the published curriculum for the PCDA and concentrate on fusing theory and practice in the different modules including explicit consideration of applying EBP principles to practice
- To provide specific guidance for forces on working collaboratively with HEIs – especially in creating new ways of co-producing learning integrating HEIs' contributions to this new curriculum
- To give more consideration to the candidate (learner) perspective in policing education from their initial selection; including the consideration of personal motivation and other characteristics, and through ongoing support and monitoring
- To highlight the receptivity of the Service as a whole to the creation of a graduate profession of policing as an ongoing issue
- To support the undertaking of an on-going major evaluation of the DHEP, alongside its evaluation of the PCDA.



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# Appendix A

## Stakeholder interviews about graduate conversion courses

W. Agnew Pauley and J. Belur



The rapid evidence assessment reported in Chapter 2 identified specific gaps in knowledge about conversion courses. Unanswered or partially answered questions included:

1. What basic assumptions are made about graduates' abilities and skills that form the basis of the intensive and condensed curriculum design?
2. How are theory and practice integrated?
3. What is the rationale behind particular course structure and delivery method?
4. How are the assessments of the various theoretical/conceptual and practical components designed and distributed between organisations/employers and HEIs?
5. How much involvement and input should employers/end user organisations have in the course content, design, structure and assessment criteria for conversion courses?

To address these gaps we interviewed seven academics across a range of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) who oversee or coordinate graduate conversion programmes for social work, teaching and law. Methods and findings are described more fully in a full report (Agnew Pauley and Belur, 2018) and is available from [j.belur@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.belur@ucl.ac.uk) This appendix summarises findings.

## Description of graduate programmes

Table 8 below summarises the different routes into the three professions. Our interviewees provided additional material on the different programmes.

### 1. Teaching

The graduate conversion course discussed by Interviewee 3 was the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) which is a popular route into entry level teaching for graduates who hold a Bachelors degree. The PGCE combines university-based theoretical learning with practical training through placements in schools and leads to the attainment of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).<sup>25</sup> This course is one year (full time) in duration. There are a number of different routes into teaching which fit into two broad categories: university-led or School Direct route.

For the university-led route the student applies to the university directly and follows the "programme designed by the university, provided by the university in partnership with schools where the student does their training placement" (Interview 3). For the School Direct route, students apply for a position at a school (or a cluster of schools), who (often) are in an established partnership with a university. Once students are accepted by the school for a teaching position, they are then interviewed by the partner university. Both institutions must agree that the student is to be accepted. Students on the School Direct route then study along-side the university-led PGCE students to attain their PGCE and QTS. A slight variation in the Schools Direct route is a salaried route, where students apply to the school and are accepted for a salaried post, prior to being a qualified teacher.

The school provides most of the training in-house, however the student is released for 15 days a year to attend a partner university. Students on this route only qualify for QTS, and are not awarded the Level 7 PGCE, since it is perceived that 15 days in the HEI is “not enough input from ourselves [the university] to qualify for a PGCE”. According to our interviewee, this route supports the training provided by the school and also “provides our own quality assurance that they can be awarded a QTS at the end of the year”. However, the interviewee acknowledged that the quality assurance process of students through this route is not as rigorous or thorough as the university or other Schools Direct routes. This is partly driven by the fact these students are often hired by schools where there has been a shortage in the supply of teachers in key STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) for example, and therefore face difficulties in recruiting. Such schools are eager to fill posts and train teachers quickly, to meet the demand. Tuition fees can be covered either by the school, or through scholarships and bursaries available for particular subjects, or by the student (Interview 3).

## **2. Social work**

Graduates who wish to become social workers, and who hold a degree in a subject other than social work have two routes into the profession: they can either enrol with a university in a postgraduate qualification (either a Diploma or Masters degree), or train within a number of ‘fast-track’ social work programmes that operate in the UK. Courses discussed are two years in duration, with a national requirement of a minimum of 170 days in practice (Interview 1a; Interview 3).

Requirements for both routes specify a 2:1 or higher undergraduate degree (in a subject other than social work), Grade C or above in GCSE Maths and English and some relevant practical experience. Students must pass a selection process, which includes an interview, to be offered a place. The fast-track programmes are fully funded, and students receive a bursary for living expenses. For graduates pursuing the postgraduate route (i.e. not a fast-track programme) social work bursaries are available from the government.

## **3. Law**

For law, the graduate conversion course discussed in Interview 2 was the Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) or Common Professional Examination (CPE), which is the standard qualifying programme for law in the UK. The course duration is one-year full time or two years part time. Conversion courses in law differ to other professions examined in that they do not include a compulsory practical element. The GDL is an intensive, theoretical content based course, which provides students with a knowledge base of the law. Students complete the Legal Practice Course (LPC) which is a separate programme also run by a university for fulfilling the practical component. To qualify, students must then secure a two-year training contract in a law firm during which time they have no connection with a university. There is no bursary or Government funding available for those who wish to study the GDL, however it is possible to receive sponsorship from an employer to cover the costs if a student has secured a training contract with the employer prior to beginning the GDL. The law programme referred to in this report relates only to the GDL, not the LPC.

TABLE 8: ROUTES INTO TEACHING, SOCIAL WORK AND LAW IN THE UK

PROFESSION	ROUTES	LENGTH	FUNDING	ACCREDITATION	EMPLOYMENT
Teaching	Undergraduate degree	Three-four years	Funded by student or through bursary / scholarship	Bachelor of Education (Bed) or Bachelor of Arts/Science (BA or BSc) and QTS	Post-qualifying
	University-led/ PGCE	One year	Funded by student or through bursary / scholarship	PGCE and QTS	Post-qualifying
	Schools Direct Unsalariated	-	Funded by student or through bursary / scholarship	PGCE and QTS	Pre-qualifying
	Schools Direct Salaried	One year	Funded by the training school	QTS	Pre-qualifying
	Fast-track teaching programmes	Two years	Funded by the fast-track programme	PGCE (with available top up to Masters) and QTS	Pre-qualifying
Social Work	Undergraduate degree	Three years	Funded by student or through bursary / scholarship	BA or BSc (Hons)	Post-qualifying
	Postgraduate (Diploma or Masters)	Two years	Funded by student or through bursary / scholarship	Masters in Social Work (MSW) or Postgraduate diploma	Post-qualifying
	Fast-track scheme	Two years or 14 months	Funded by the fast-track programme	Masters in Social Work (MSW) and/or Postgraduate diploma	Pre-qualifying
Law	Undergraduate degree	Three years	Funded by student or through bursary / scholarship	Bachelor of Laws (LLB)	Post-qualifying
	Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) and Legal Practice Course (LPC)	9 months for GDL, followed by 9 months LPC	Self-funded or sponsorship from an employer	GDL and LPC	Post-qualifying

## Assumptions about graduates' abilities and skills

Interviewees were asked about the assumptions they think are made about graduates' abilities that underpin the design and length of the curriculum. According to the interviewees, graduates should be, by nature, more mature, with (potentially) more professional or life experience, and possess a general understanding of how a university programme operates. It is also assumed that their working habits are more organised and structured, compared to a typical undergraduate (Interview 1a; Interview 2b). Furthermore, according to one interviewee, attainment of an undergraduate degree indicates that they should possess:

*"critical analysis and independent analysis... they have to have strong academic literacy, as well as communication skills, both verbal and written... and resilience, patience to be able to cope with incredibly stressful work situations" (Interview 3).*

A key quality necessary for the profession identified in the teaching and social work interviews was resilience. For these professions, the assessment of an applicant's resilience was conducted at the recruitment stage and was considered a necessary criterion for being accepted on the programme. Resilience was referred to as the ability to cope with the demands of the course and the profession. Students in social work, for example, are asked to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and to give examples of how they can demonstrate being able to cope with a highly intensive course. Applicants are also expected to demonstrate high levels of motivation for joining the profession. They are expected to come to the course

with a detailed understanding of the profession and evidence behind their reasons for joining, according to Interviewees 2a, 3 and 4b. This is tested at the interview stage for teaching where, for example, they are asked to demonstrate a "real interest in working with young people and children, demonstrably so" (interviewee 3), or in social work, students will be asked why they want to join the profession, what they know about it, and what they might have done to prepare themselves for the degree (i.e. through relevant practical experience, or through what they have read about or seen in current affairs) to ascertain "how motivated they are" (Interviewee 4b).

The assumption that graduates were more familiar with the academic requirements of a degree programme had implications for curriculum design and length. Our interviewees admitted that the graduate conversion curriculum, delivered generally over one year, was virtually the same as that for a three-year undergraduate degree programme, just delivered in a more condensed form. As outlined by one interviewee:

*"The syllabus might look exactly the same [as the undergraduate programme]... but what you actually teach from that syllabus can be different... [for example] I tend to look at the same number of subjects but focus on one or two topics in much more detail [for the conversion course]" (Interview 2a).*

Notably, interviewees expressed an understanding that graduates had to be ready and able to work at a heightened level from the commencement of the course: "what they are presumed to bring with them is the ability to study at that heightened level" and "that they are capable of getting to Level 6 within 9

months" (Interview 2a). They have to be ready to work at a "faster pace and more intensely" (Interview 4a). This assumption was referred in some interviews as a justification of slightly front-loading a course with an intensive academic introductory period, as graduates can cope with more in-depth and academic work from commencement, ensuring they do not miss any time preparing for their first experience in practice. Additionally, graduates tend to be introduced into practice or placement earlier on in the course and at an intensive pace that "builds up over time", as compared to undergraduate students (Interview 3).

The graduate conversion courses discussed in these interviews had a rigorous and competitive selection process to ensure they attract graduates who are ready and able to work at this heightened level and who demonstrate the required qualities for the profession, namely critical thinking skills, problems solving skills and resilience (Interview 1a and 1b; Interview 3; Interview 4a).

### **Mechanisms for integrating theory and practice**

Interviewees were asked about the underpinning rationale for the delivery and structure of the course, particularly in relation to the balance between classroom and practical content, which identified a number of mechanisms for integrating theory and practice. The integration of theory and practice is a key component of any practice-oriented profession. As identified in the REA:

*"the integration of the practical elements of training and the theoretical elements are achieved in order to ensure that the practical element, as it is considered to be indicative of job worthiness, is not privileged over the theoretical elements, which underpin the ethos and conceptual*

*underpinnings of the profession relevant to the context in which it is practiced"* (Belur et al 2017).

Whilst the importance of this integration has been acknowledged in the academic literature on graduate conversion courses (see for example Tang, Wong and Cheng 2016; Pearson 2007; Wong et al 2012; Zhang 2004), specific mechanisms for achieving this are not always explicit. The three interviews relating to teaching and social work indicated that the integration of theory and practice was essential to ensure that training moves beyond acquiring technical skills necessary to fill a particular role, and leads to the development of a professional (Interview 1a; Interview 3; Interview 4a). For law, the distinction between theory and practice appears to be more distinct as theoretical and practical elements are taught as two discrete programmes. However, in the interview it was acknowledged that greater integration would be beneficial for the profession and there might be a move towards this in the future (Interview 2b).

The two main mechanisms for integrating theory and practice were course structure and the role of tutors, both of which require coordinated and collaborative partnership between the HEI and practice organisation. Interviewee 3 stated that integrating theory and practice begins with:

*"The design of the programme as a starting point and the resistance to the idea that there is a theory-practice divide... it's about the education of the tutors, it's about programme philosophy and it's about the way in which the programme is structured"*.

These collaborations were long standing in the teaching and social work professions and were constantly being reviewed and updated.

## Course structure

One of the key findings from the interviews was that the integration of theory and practice needed to be embedded in the design and structure of the course. Teaching and social work programmes for graduates are slightly frontloaded with an intensive, academic block of learning at the beginning of the course (Interview 1a; Interview 3; Interview 4a). Within this first block it is important that themes, or “threads” are made explicit so students understand the importance of why they are learning something at a particular time and how this will benefit them later in the course as well as providing a clear structure during this intensive, academic period (Interview 1b). This could be a key teaching or learning theory in Teaching or keeping client welfare foremost in Social Work. Following this initial block, most courses discussed introduced their students into their first placement early on in the course to maximise their time learning in the field. Courses are structured so that placement gradually increases over time, but days spent returning to the HEI to reflect and develop on their practical experience remain consistent throughout the programme (Interview 1a; Interview 3; Interview 4a). Thus, reflective practice played an important role in the courses in order to provide students with the space to reconcile experiences or problems faced in the ‘field’ with theoretical inputs provided in the classroom. Interviewee 3 explained how this is operationalised in a graduate teaching programme as follows:

*“we work at the beginning to help our trainee teachers understand that there is a theory of teaching that underpins what we do, but we don’t give them lectures on learning theory... what we do instead is every single lecture that we do... is*

*underpinned by theory, everything is practice that is then theorised – but most of our work is not through lectures”.*

An example then given of a typical day spent in the HEI for a trainee teacher might be a lecture in the morning, followed by practical individual and group workshops spent with tutors and peers, so that students have the opportunity to draw on practical experiences from placement and to look at the theory behind why they did this (Interview 3).

One interviewee explained that as a profession, social work education has grappled with the integration of theory and practice . As a result of a number of evaluations of social work education that identified a significant gap in graduates’ ability to apply what they had learnt to the practice environment, there have been a number of initiatives developed to introduce a new model of social work training to make the link between theory and practice more explicit (Interview 1b; Interview 4a). This forms the underpinning basis of the course:

*“We see the integration of theory and practice... as the line through the middle that we’re always trying to hold them together in a creative tension and we are committed to doing things in a relational or group way” (Interview 4a).*

This was understood to mean that theory and practice is embedded in the course design, and then further explored throughout the course through group discussion with peers or tutors. In this course there are distinct modules that are explicitly about, and even titled, theory and practice in social work. This module takes place while students are in placement and are returning to the HEI for one day a week, and time is specifically spent drawing examples from their practice environment and applying

and discussing theory with a tutor and other peers. Peer learning and collaboration through group work is vital here (Interview 4a). Another example used in social work is the Blended Learning Model, which is about “delivering the curriculum in the practice environment” (Interview 1a). Students are placed by their practice institution in units of four and spend most of their time in placement, with allocated teaching days at the HEI throughout the year. They also meet regularly with their tutors and practice specialists, both individually and with the rest of their unit. Each week there is a formal consultation group with four members of the unit and their consultant social worker, where cases are presented, linked to academic work and reflected upon: “A lot of the academic work is very much practice based, so they have to do a lot of reflective writing, for example” (Interview 1a). The teaching methodology is about “looking at the theories that are going to be relevant in that situation, sharing learning, peer support... reflective practice is core to social work” (Interview 1a). These two social work examples demonstrate the importance of building an integration of theory and practice into the design and structure of a course as well as the importance of collaboration and cooperation between the HEI and practice institution as both need to work together to deliver these models.

### **The role of tutor**

Key to each of the models described above is the role of the tutor/mentor in assisting students develop the link between their academic and practical learning and thus understanding the theory/practice cycle. This emerged as a key finding within both teaching and social work as students have a range of different tutors, each with a clearly

defined role. In both professions there is an academic tutor from the HEI who takes responsibility for assisting with the academic components of the course including coursework and assessments (Interview 3). As an example from social work:

*“in the academic context, the person who runs the [theory and practice] module is also their academic tutor... this is their first port of call in relation to anything related to the course whether it’s practice or academic” (Interview 4a).*

This tutor also visits them midway during the placement. There is also a practice tutor/mentor that is selected from the organisation within which the student conducts their placement to assist with guiding their practice development. Providing education, training and support to both academic and practice tutors/mentors so they are clear on their role in aiding students to link their practice to theory, and to develop professional practice, is crucial. Both social work programmes discussed had three tutor/mentor roles with an additional practice educator or practice specialist who performed an enhanced supervisory role within the placement institution to provide a further level of theoretical and conceptual support (Interview 1a; Interview 4a).

Having clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both types of tutors is imperative as emphasised by Interviewee 3 who gave an example of a graduate programme within teaching:

*“The role of the people who were supporting the development [practice mentors] was importantly different from the university tutor role... they will be mentoring [the] development of the practitioner, having conversations with them and professional dialogue”.*

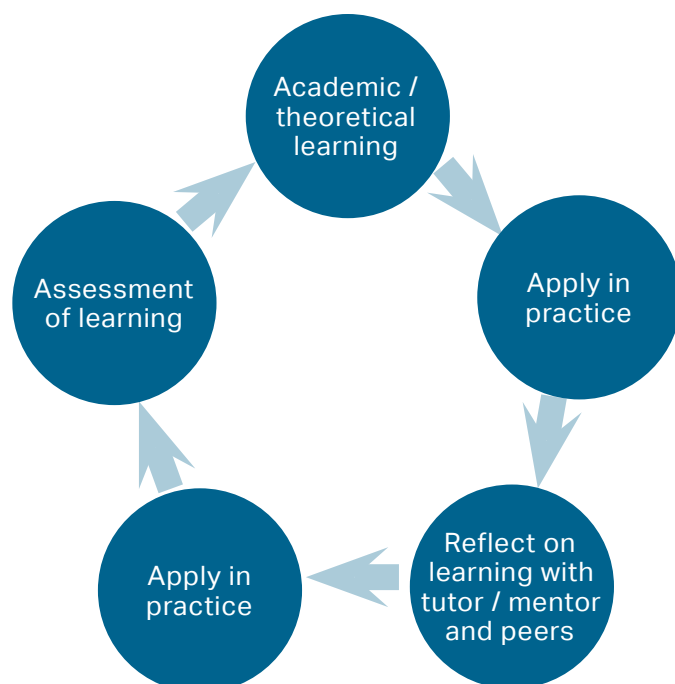
The practice tutor/mentor’s role was to support the practitioner to engage with the programme and oversee the student’s development as a practitioner, but not to deliver the academic workload. According to Interviewee 3 these tutors required specialised mentor training for the role, however this did not necessarily mean they needed to gain a higher qualification. It was felt more broadly that it is also very important that all tutors understand that they need to work collaboratively and coordinate through the partnership that exists between the HEI and practice institution (Interview 1a; Interview 3).

Additionally, central to the role of the tutor/mentor is their involvement in the assessment process. Assessments for graduate conversion courses essentially tie in the integration of theory and practice with the role of the tutor. Assessments also act as an important quality assurance mechanism to ensure that students are making the connection between theory and practice and are consistently developing throughout the programme (Interview 1a; Interview 3; Interview 4a). For example, in the teaching programme described, academic

assessments were assessed by academic tutors but also required the student to incorporate elements from their practice. For the practical components, students “had to be observed on at least five occasions per placement by the school mentor... plus one observation per placement by the institute [academic] tutor” (Interview 3). Similarly Interviewee 4a explained that in social work, students’ practical training had to be signed off by their practice tutor, in addition to which they had to pass a practice assessment panel consisting of both academic and practice tutors, and submit a portfolio of work that demonstrates their academic learning: “assessments are read by both academic tutors and practice educators so we get a quality assurance mechanism that the standard of practice education is consistent” (Interviewee 4a).

Common to these interviews was evidence of a theory/practice cycle whereby students throughout the course combine academic learning with practical experiences, and spend time reflecting on this with tutors and peers to ensure depth of learning. This cycle is demonstrated in Figure 9.

FIGURE 9 – THEORY / PRACTICE LEARNING CYCLE





### **Importance of strong partnerships**

An overarching finding that emerged across the teaching and social work interviews was that the mechanism that ensures the effectiveness and efficiency of a graduate course, including the delivery of integrated theory and practice, is a strong, working partnership between a HEI and practice organisation. For these courses, there needs to be mutual agreements and understandings that are formalised. Relationships need to be built so that there is coordination and cooperation during all stages of the programme from the course design, recruitment and selection of students, delivery of programme and assessment of the student: "from beginning to end of the process, from when students apply to when they graduate, we're working closely the whole time with our agency partners" (Interview 4a).

A number of different partnership models were described in the interviews, particularly for teaching and social work. Both teaching and social work in the UK have formalised teaching partnership models that set out the relationship and governance between HEIs and practice institutions. These partnership agreements outline the collaboration between both institutions at all stages of the course meaning that practice institutions can be involved in the admission process, contribute to teaching by having practitioners give guest lectures or workshops and provide opportunities for academics to re-integrate in practice to update their knowledge (Interview 1a; Interview 3; Interview 4a). An example of this was given in a social work programme where academics: "go out and immerse ourselves back in practice to make sure we are familiar with what practice looks and feels like" (Interview 4a).

These partnerships are maintained formally through memoranda of understanding and agreements, management boards and working groups, as well as informally through the relationships that are built between the institutions through regular consultation (Interview 1a; Interview 1b Interview 3; Interview 4a). This ensures that there is common understanding from both sides of the arrangement, and all parties are clear in terms of their respective responsibilities and mutual objectives. Problems arise between partnerships particularly when HEIs and practice institutions "do not have a shared understanding of professional learning" (Interview 3).

### **Quality assurance**

Quality assurance mechanisms are routinely built into these graduate programmes as part of the partnership agreement. These can take a number of forms. Within graduate courses, the HEI acts as an important quality assurance mechanism both for recruiting the right students on to the programme and as support for students who are out on placement. To ensure that the training being delivered within the practice institution is following the guidelines and does not become insular: "that's where the quality assurance and the recruitment process comes in" (Interview 3). Having an academic tutor visit students during placement as well as develop a supportive relationship with the student ensures that if any problems arise, such as poor support within the placement institution, inadequate mentoring, too much responsibility, or not enough time allocated to course requirements, the academic tutor can bring this to the attention of the HEI and address the issue through the partnership agreement (Interview 3).

*"Practice specialists have a really important quality assurance function... their job is to provide coaching and mentoring to the consultant social worker... oversee the unit and manage local relationships" (Interview 1a).*

HEIs also have existing student support systems in place that can be used by students (Interview 1b; Interview 3).

Formalised and transparent partnership agreements that involve a HEI also ensure some level of consistency across different contexts. Within teaching and social work, the role of the overseeing professional body is highly important. For example, the Health and Care Professional Council (HCPC) which validates social work programmes and the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) inspections ensure consistency across teaching programmes (Interview 1a; Interview 3; Interview 4a).

### **Maintaining professional standards**

The final key finding to emerge from the interviews was the importance of maintaining professional standards in training. Interviewees from all three professions – teaching, social work and law – articulated similar concerns surrounding the importance of the integrity of the profession. The justifications given for each of the above themes: acknowledging graduates' abilities, integrating theory and practice and maintaining strong partnerships was to address and maintain professional standards (Interview 1a; Interview 2a; Interview 3; Interview 4a).

One of the risks of neglecting the academic or theoretical side of any of these professions, particularly teaching and social work, and over-privileging the practical or technical sides, is that students become trained for a job rather than a profession. Training students to simply fill a gap, be it during a recruiting crisis or to "fit a mould" for a particular post is ultimately to the detriment of the

student as it limits their professional development in the long term and compromises their future professional trajectories (Interview 3). The importance of the qualification as a learning and development experience cannot be underestimated, and should not be viewed as a "tick-box" process (interview 2a; Interview 3). This was identified as particularly important within law, as a lot of the commercial graduate conversion course providers offer more of a "polytechnic course designed to get you a job" rather than focus on "the professional development of a lawyer" (Interview 2a). This has been a previous issue in teaching where it has been recognised that:

*"It is very important to emphasise that teaching is an intellectual profession as well as a practice and that the two go together... very important to us as a stance as there is such an anti-intellectual move in teaching at the moment" [as a result of the crisis in teacher recruitment] (Interview 3).*

This is a further reason for ensuring students keep returning to the HEI with their peers, so that they form a sense of being part of a professional community (Interview 3). Furthermore, it is important to build in a research component to graduate courses, for their professional development, to develop an understanding of evidence-informed practice and to also continue building the evidence base of the profession. It is recognised in some programmes that graduate conversion courses do not have the time to allocate to an empirical research project or dissertation.

One compromise provided by Interviewee 4a was that students complete a literature based dissertation (for example, over their summer term) in an area of the profession they are interested in to demonstrate a depth of understanding.

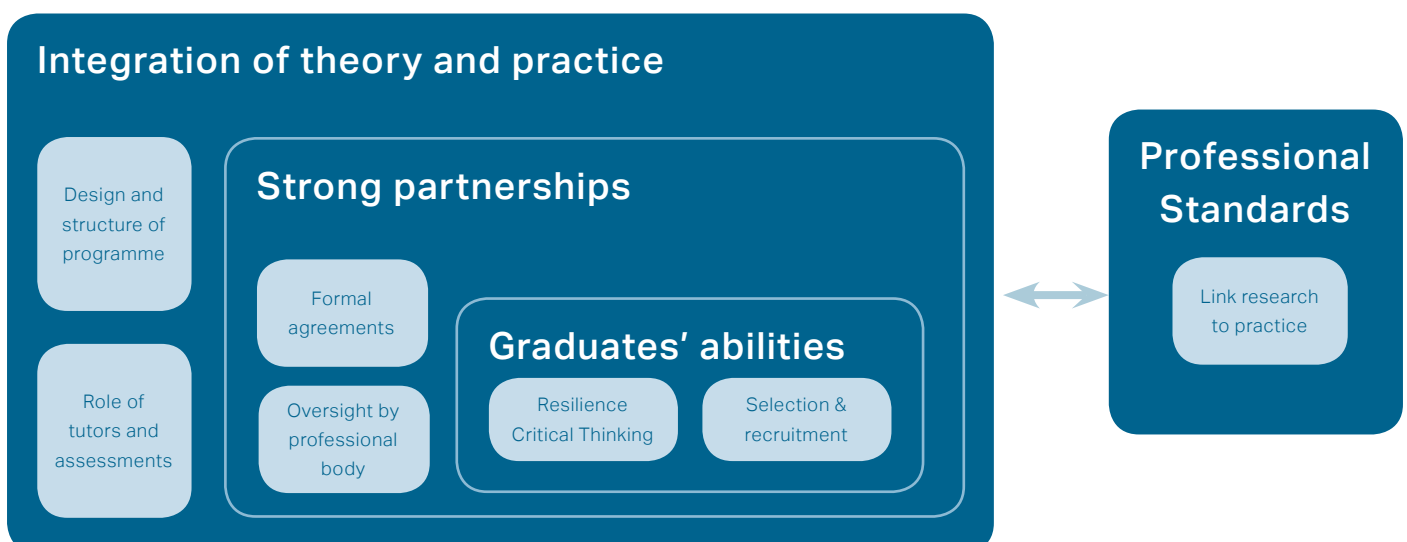
## Implications for the DHEP

Overall, the key components of an effective graduate programme are interrelated, and must have quality assurance mechanisms built in at all stages to ensure the course is achieving its intended outcomes. Beginning with capable and resilient graduates who have been accurately selected through a rigorous application process, ensures that any assumptions made in the course design and delivery are fairly met.

The design of a graduate course should be underpinned by the integration of theory and practice, achieved through the structure of the course, within regular built in days spent in the HEI as well as in the field. This integration is aided by both academic and practice tutors, who have adequate training to understand their role in supporting students to link practice to theory. Assessments act as a further quality assurance mechanism to ensure students are making this link.

Essential to effective tutoring and assessment processes, as well as the overall design and delivery of a programme, is a strong, working partnership between the HEI and the practice organisation that is maintained through formal agreements and governance, as well as informally through continual contact and collaboration at all stages of the programme. At all stages of this process the overall objective of developing professional practice and maintaining professional standards should be at the forefront of the programme, which means maintaining programme consistency across contexts, embedding research components for students and framing course design and delivery with evidence-based practice. Figure 10 indicates the relationship between core graduate abilities being harnessed by a programme that is designed and developed in partnership mode with the overall objective of integrating theory into practice to encourage the development of an evidence based and reflective professional police officer.

FIGURE 10 – RELATIONAL MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE GRADUATE PROGRAMMES



For policing, the development of a graduate-entry route into the profession forms a key part of the professionalisation process. Drawing on professions that have existing graduate entry routes and have been through a similar process, namely teaching, social work and law, it is important that this learning is drawn upon. With this in mind, the findings of this report come to a number of policy implications for the development of a graduate-entry programme for police recruits.

### **Initial selection and recruitment**

1. Graduates can be assumed to possess a number of key qualities, including critical thinking, problem solving, resilience and high levels of motivation to join the profession. Police forces should include and assess these qualities in recruitment and selection criteria, so that the programme is targeted to the right individuals, reducing the risk of student drop-out and improving retention within the profession.

2. For policing, although recruits apply to forces, involvement of the HEI at some stage of the recruitment or application process is likely to ensure that individuals possess the required qualities and abilities.

### **Integrating theory and practice**

3. Graduates' abilities and experiences should be integrated and built on in the design of the course.

4. Frequent opportunities for students to reflect upon and integrate their practical experiences with theoretical content need to be built into the course design. For policing, it is vital that days spent in the HEI remain an integral and integrated part of the course throughout its duration, despite the difficulties involved with abstraction of newly sworn officers. These days in the HEI provide the opportunity for students to discuss, reflect and theorise about their practice with their peers and tutors as well as form part of a professional community.

5. Regular time must be allocated with both academic and practice tutors/mentors, with clearly defined roles for what these tutors are responsible for. Their role in aiding students in linking their practice with theory should be made explicit. Tutor constables need to be willing and able to work with academic tutors and with the HEI. Similarly, academic tutors should be willing to be part of the field training and understand the context of operational policing. Despite being resource intensive, tutors need to be provided with adequate mentor training and ongoing support and be clear on their role in supporting the development of a professional police officer.

6. Assessments need to involve the integration of theory and practice as well as be assessed collaboratively by the HEI (academic tutor) and the tutor constable.

## **Strong partnerships**

7. For policing, it is vital that partnerships are formed, developed and maintained through formal agreements and memorandums with in-built quality assurance mechanisms. Collaboration and coordination between HEIs and police forces ought to be maintained at all stages of the process, from course design, student recruitment, delivery, and assessment, with clear ongoing governance arrangements.

8. Course consistency is a key concern for policing as a profession, given the varied contexts of policing, size and resources of police organisations, and quality of HEIs across the country. It is important that areas draw from their context to make the course relevant to the community, but at the same time are also broad enough to develop general skills to be able to work across contexts.

9. Any conflicts that arise between the HEI and the practice institution, in regard to professional standards, should be resolved and reconciled through the partnership.

10. The professional body, in this case the College of Policing, will play a key role in maintaining course consistency and professional standards.

# MAYOR OF LONDON

OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

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