

BSc (Hons) Professional Police Practice

LEVEL 6 - 40 Credits

**Workbook title: Competency Based
Workbook 5 (PCDA)
12 elements 10000 Words - BMPF 6000D**

**(SOUTH WALES POLICE, GWENT POLICE AND
UWTSD)**

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FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMME

Module title: Professional Police Practice 3 (PCDA) BMPF 6000D

Workbook Guidance

Please read these notes carefully; they provide essential information.

What is the workbook for?

The purpose of this workbook is to enable learners to demonstrate and provide evidence of how they meet the learning outcomes set by the College of Policing, for the BSc programme. Essentially, you are being asked to outline your experiential learning based upon your theoretical understanding in a range of operational situations.

- Understanding the Police Officer role
- Modern Professional Police Officer
- Strategic Role of the College of Policing
- Communication Skills
- Social Media
- Leadership and Team Working
- Leadership style
- Flexibility and Leadership Strategy
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Professional and Organisational goals
- Assessment

You may wish to use the same incidents as you've outlined in the Occupational Competence Portfolio.

How should the workbook be presented?

Blank electronic copies can be found on Moodle of this workbook. You must submit this document electronically therefore it is important that you save your work regularly and upload the final typed version through Turnitin on Moodle.

Word count policy can be found in chapter 7 of the Academic Quality under section 7.7 (this applies to presenting work above and under the specified word count).

https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/uwtsd-website/content-assets/documents/academic-office/aqh-chapters/chapters---en/Chapter_07_Assessment-Taught_Programmes_Pages_72-79-UPDATED-05-11-2019.pdf

Reflective practice is a core aspect for your workbooks and although there is a variety of useful resources on Moodle, there is one particular book, that is specifically based on reflective practice in policing, here is a link to one chapter from Selina Copley's Reflective Practice for Policing Students:

https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/298870/mod_resource/content/1/Reflective%20Practice%20for%20Policing%20Students%20-%20Selina%20Copley%20Chapter5.pdf

How is the workbook assessed?

Advice and support about the completion of this workbook was provided by university staff as part of your initial training day and further help and advice is available on Moodle.

Your tutor constable and in-force training staff will not be involved in assessing or marking your workbook after it has been submitted.

Dates of workbook submission will be made available and posted on Moodle.

Once submitted your workbook will be assessed and marked independently.

Confidentiality

It is important that no individual can be identified either directly or indirectly from the information in the workbook. Therefore, you must:

- adhere to guidance in the Student Handbook about unfair practice and plagiarism.
- not identify individuals including witnesses, victims or offenders by name.
- not write information that enables any individual to be identified indirectly through the description you provide. This includes references to names, colleagues, places (including hospitals, schools, town, villages, streets) specific incidents which were high profile and could be identified due to past publicity, other professionals or any other personal information including medical or other conditions;
- take personal responsibility for adhering to confidentiality rules.
- not include any dates of any incidents or anything that specifically identifies an actual incident.

Please be aware that any content that is deemed to be inappropriate, disrespectful, or abusive will not be tolerated. Following review of any content of this nature the information will be shared with the employer of the student responsible.

Should any health and wellbeing concerns be raised because of disclosures made by the student within this workbook, the employer of the student will be informed.

NOTE

Your workbook will be submitted electronically via Turnitin on Moodle. Guidance on this is in the Student Handbook.

Remember that the workbook is YOUR responsibility you must not rely on the assessor or anyone else to pick up any confidentiality breaches as this is your work and you must accept full responsibility for confidentiality. Meeting all the confidentiality requirements is very important.

Dyslexia and other special circumstances

If you have any condition that you feel may affect your ability to deal with any part of the programme, please see the Student Handbook for further guidance. The University has a Student Services Unit that may be able to help but ***it is the learner's individual responsibility to contact them.***

Guidance:

- *Your workbook must contain the items specified in the table below (clearly identified and in the order given).*
- *You should use this document (electronically on Moodle) - insert your text / answer within each section of this workbook.*
- *You should upload your completed document as a saved pdf file of this workbook; if this is not possible then a Word Doc file is acceptable. Do not send a scanned file from a photocopier, an apple.dot file, or a Microsoft publisher file as Turnitin will not be able to assess them despite you being able to upload them.*

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Workbook	Area of Professional Practice	Word count
Task 1	Understanding the Police Officer Role	2500
Task 2	Communication Skills – Social Media	2500
Task 3	Leadership and Team Working	2500
Task 4	Coaching, Mentoring, Assessment	2500
	Bibliography	
	Total	10000

Task 1

Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum: Understanding the Police Officer Role.

You must choose a policing incident in which you played a significant role with an offender/service user/victim and reflect on what happened.

Critically evaluate the strategic role of the College of Police in professionalising policing in the U.K.

Evidence how you are working to fulfil the role of a modern professional police officer now that you are in your final year of probation.

Critically reflect upon how your final year of probation has seen your role as a police officer change.

Consider the strategic Policing requirement, Policing Vision 2025, the Workforce Transformation 2018 and the College of Policing's 5 Year Strategy.

2500 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

ANSWER:

For this entry I will be covering several topics and documenting how now I am in my final year of probation I have been able to adapt and progress as an officer and highlighting the skills I have obtained throughout my three-year probation. I will critically be analysing the role of the College of policing and how the organisation is crucial for upholding the standards of modern policing, in addition I will evidence what I am doing on a personal level to ensure I am meeting the goals and expectations placed upon me as a modern police officer and finally reflecting on the transformation I have experienced now that I am in my final year of probation. To strengthen my views and opinions I will be utilising the CARL framework of reflection to do so The University of Edinburgh. (2018).

The role of a police officer in today's modern times is constantly changing to coincide with the times. Modern policing is constantly having to adapt and react to changes that occur to ensure that the basic principles of the police are being achieved and that the public are provided with

an adequate service that they deserve. The modern police officer is faced with a multitude of challenges and adversities that were unimaginable upon the inception of what we define as the standard of modern policing.

Modern policing is a terminology that was developed in the 1800's when Sir Robert Peel established what is considered to be the first professional modern police force in 1829, Blackstone's (2020). P19 states "*If there is one key date in modern-day policing it is probably 1829, when Sir Robert Peel, then Home secretary, introduced a Bill in Parliament for the establishment of a 'Metropolitan Police Force' for London*". Peel understood that the world was changing and the need for a professional police force with clear objectives was vital and as a result implemented the nine principles of policing that are still adhered too in this day and age.

The term policing is far too broad to categorise, as society is ever adapting so must the police, but the basic principles and role of the police has not deviated a great deal since the days of Robert Peel within the UK and the concept of policing by consent is still very much at the heart of modern policing. The college of policing (2015) have said "*The principle of policing by consent relies on the trust and confidence that the public has in the police service and the wider law enforcement community*".

Although many concepts are still adhered to from the days of Peel it was clear that a new direction was needed to build upon what had already been achieved thus far.

As such in 2012 the College of Policing (CoP) was established with the aim to act as the official professional body for policing and has since been able to cement itself as the standard for modern day policing within the UK after replacing the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA). Blackstone's (2020). P26 will say "*The college of policing was established in 2012 as the official professional body for policing. It has assumed many of the standards and training responsibilities of its predecessor, the NPIA*".

Taken from the Collage of Policing website (ND), they define themselves as "*The College of Policing is a professional body for everyone working across policing. It is an operationally independent arm's-length body of the Home Office.*" Since 2012 CoP have been responsible for the overseeing of several key aspects which directly affect modern policing such as professional development for police officers, setting the standard for training and development

and ensures that forces within the UK are given the correct tools to enable them to act accordingly and achieve their desired result, College of Policing (ND) go on to say *“We set requirements, accredit, quality assure and deliver learning and professional development, promote diversity and wellbeing and help to nurture and select leaders at all levels”*.

In light of this the CoP have implemented several strategies for the continued improved of UK police forces, a key example of this would be the Policing Vision of 2025, the National police Chiefs Council (NPCC) (No Date) said *“The mission is to make communities safer by upholding the law fairly and firmly; preventing crime and antisocial behaviour; keeping the peace; protecting and reassuring communities; investigating crime and bringing offenders to justice”*.

This was an ambitious undertaking by the CoP and the NPCC but showed a long term goal and commitment that they strived towards to ensure the continued improvement and growth of officers and gave themselves a timescale of 10 years to do so.

The programme was devised after it became apparent that the demand placed upon modern forces was again increasing and there were new challenges in place such as an increase in crimes being carried out digitally and the increase of serious crime within communities, NPCC (ND) claim *“The recent rapid development of technology means it plays a significant and central part in almost everything we do. Policing must embrace this new world and adapt to the new threats and opportunities it presents for 21st century policing”*.

The CoP were able to identify this early on and understood the need to adapt to the ever-changing world of which we police to improve public safety. The NPCC (ND) have also said *“The communities we serve are increasingly diverse and complex, necessitating a more sophisticated response to the challenges we face now and in the future”*.

The Policing Vision of 2025 sets out clear expectations of itself and states that the code of ethics will be at the forefront of all decisions and results of the programme, as such the NPCC (ND) stated *“The use of evidence based practice and the Code of Ethics will be embedded and inform day to day policing practice”*.

The overall goal of the Policing Vision 2025 does not deviate far from the original principles set out by Peel in the 1800's. What is particularly effective and innovative of this programme is that it has taken the time and consideration to identify the inadequacies of the police over recent years and has taken the challenge to rectify the issues addressed. Although the styles and challenges of policing has drastically changed since the 1800's the core values are still very much at the forefront and will continue to be of the utmost importance, as such the NPCC (ND) state the goal is to *"to make communities safer by upholding the law fairly and firmly; preventing crime and antisocial behaviour; keeping the peace; protecting and reassuring communities; investigating crime and bringing offenders to justice"*.

The Policing Vision 2025 was able to identify several aspects that required change to allow a more professional public image. One such aspect was the introduction of the Police Education qualifications Framework (PEQF), The CoP (2020) state *"This is a professional training framework for police officers and staff. It's based on a modern curriculum of dynamic operational training, underpinned by sound theoretical education"*.

The introduction of the PEQF addressed the requirement for standardised recruitment as up until its introduction the criteria for entry into forces differed greatly and highlighted the need for change to ensure the highest calibre of candidate were being chosen. CoP (2020) go on to say *"For a long time forces have recruited differently, without standard entry requirements, learning provision and support. The service recognised the need to standardise these areas as a priority"*.

As previously mentioned, the Policing Vision of 2025 does a tremendous job at providing a framework for continued improvement that is necessary to bring policing firmly into the 21st century and remedy the shortcomings of days gone. As the programme has highlighted several times policing is now more complex than ever with new challenges that officers will face, in light of this the Policing vision 2025 understood that with criminality constantly changing the need for the police to adapt was crucial to combat this. With this in mind the CoP (2020) claim *"There is increasing demand on the police to do more than just solve crime and 'catch the bad guys'. It's understood that learning and support for new recruits will help them to start well and stay in a job that recognises their level of expertise and values their contribution"*.

As such the PEQF programme requires officers to become degree holders which not only encompasses the aim of the policing Vision of 2025 by presenting as a more professional body it also has the added benefit of providing new officers with the skills and theoretical knowledge to be able to achieve the goals of the programme. Cop (2020) say *“By 2025 policing will be a profession with a more representative workforce that will align the right skills, powers and experience to meet challenging requirements”*.

Although there are several positives of the PEQF programme it is not without its criticisms. Many believe that the added pressure of the academia is detrimental to officer's mental health and may discourage candidates from joining due to the added pressure of undertaking a complex new role such as policing and having to complete a degree alongside this. For this matter I can speak from personal experience and can say that the three years have been mentally challenging and at times I have found myself experience levels of stress due to PEQF deadlines.

The role of the CoP is imperative for the continued improvement of police forces within the UK ensuring that the police are viewed as a professional body by holding each officer to a higher standard. A key example of this is the implementation of the Code of Ethics which were first introduced in 2014 by the College of Policing and is at the heart of the objective to present the police as a professional establishment, the code of ethics must be adhered to by all members of the force at all times. Blackstones (2020). P75.

The role of the CoP is more than implementing training and setting standards for officers behaviour. The CoP are actively searching for ways to improve UK police forces by constantly addressing the current issues they face. What is crucial about the CoP is they not only are employing changes for the here and now they are aware adding contingencies for the future as they realise the landscape of the world will be constantly adapting with more crimes being committed digitally. Although the Police Vision 2025 does a great job of changing with the times the CoP have again looked towards the future and developed a further plan up to 2040 in the form of the Future Operating Environment 2040 report to ensure they are equipped to give officers the best opportunity to deal with the changes. The CoP (2020) claim *“To meet the challenges and demands of the future, we need to prepare for them today. We'll need to get better at anticipating emerging issues, think more innovatively about the best policies and interventions for addressing them and act quickly to maximise our chances of success”*.

The CoP makes a valiant effort to provide officers with all the tools, support and knowledge to be an effective modern police officer, but I would argue what exactly is the role of a modern police officer? In today's age we are seeing issues that were not so commonplace ten years ago such as a dramatic increase in the digitisation of crimes, NPCC (ND) have said *“Online crime has also grown dramatically. The internet has provided the opportunity to commit new types of crime, enabled some crime types to be committed on an industrial scale and facilitated many forms of “traditional” crime”*.

In addition to this the ever increasing issue of mental health within the communities we serve is another added challenge. Lane (2019) best says *“Despite estimates suggesting that around fifteen percent of UK police incidents involve people with a mental health concern, officers receive very little mental health training. The police have faced high-profile criticisms over their handling of mental health-related incidents, whilst the under-funding and fragmentation of UK mental health services has led to concerns that police officers are being forced to undertake a primary role in mental health care”*.

Society is changing at an alarming pace and so with it must the police. Although I may disagree with the added stress and work that is placed upon new officers on the PEQF programme I have been able to experience countless positives that have emerged from my further studies.

The communities and complex challenges we are facing as officers in modern times is continuously changing. An aspect that the PEQF programme that has been a great source of help to me is the research of past failures with black and ethnic minorities. Society has changed dramatically over the past twenty years and as such communities have become far more ethnically diverse, so it is vital that the police are aware of this and change with the times. This is where the modernisation of the police through the PEQF programme has been instrumental for me personally and understanding that what has occurred in the past cannot continue if the police are going to be viewed as professional and held in high public regards and to do so we must adapt with the times.

With being from a very rural village my experience with different cultures was virtually non-existent, but through extensive research of past failings such as the Stephen Lawrence incident this has allowed me to gain a deeper understanding and ensure that I do not make the same mistakes of the past. Roycroft et al (2007) collectively claim *“In locating the shortcomings*

of the police investigation into the Lawrence murder as ‘institutional racism’, there was a failure to appreciate that the observed errors, omissions and mistakes related to inadequacies of the systems and processes that are part of the standard operating procedures of police homicide investigations”. This is a crucial aspect for me as I believe if the police are to progress then the modern day police officer needs to be a proponent for change and progression.

Another important aspect for me in being an effective modern police officer is to develop my personal skills and I do this by enrolling myself on as many courses as possible to gain a greater knowledge base which will allow me to put theoretical knowledge into practise and thus far have been very effective.

A particular weakness of mine is knowledge of cultural issues which is extremely prevalent in the area I police, as result I have ensured that I liaise with the relevant departments to obtain as much knowledge as possible in areas where I am lacking knowledge, which I feel is crucial if I am going to be effective as a modern day police officer. An example of this was when dealing a vulnerable female who was experience honour based violence from her family, two years ago this concept would have been alien to me but from the research I have conducted I was able to ask the relevant questions and ensure that she was safeguard with the aid of the appropriate departments which gave me a great sense of pride as I feel if I had not had a good understanding of the issue she may have been reluctant to share details with me.

Reflecting to where I began three years ago to now it is clear to see that I have developed professionally and personally immensely. I began my journey at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic which of course were unprecedented times. At the start of my career I was extremely apprehensive about what laid ahead for me as I was the second PEQF cohort I did not have the luxury as others do now of a surplus of officers to help prepare me for what was expected of me as it was still a very new experience.

Whereas when I first joined the police I was looking to others for help and support I have now found myself assuming that position and have found myself to be a mentor to the newer cohorts, a responsibility I did not foresee three years ago but one I have fully embraced. Through the use of the PEQF framework my knowledge base has exponentially increased, and I have been

able to capitalise on this by implementing the theoretical knowledge into to practical situations which has greatly served me in my day to day activities.

As I have progressed and obtained new skills the environment of which I police has constantly changed also. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic I am now seeing a dramatic increase in mental health related incidents and due to the ever increasing demand on the NHS the police in many cases are the first and sole point of contact. When I began my career, it did not occur to me that so much of time would be dealing with mental health incident such as suicidal people, self-harm and concerns for safety.

But undoubtedly this is a big aspect of modern day policing and as such on countless occasions I have assumed the role of mental health practitioner, albeit with very limited training. As a result in addition to learning copious amounts of case law I am finding myself researching more legislation regarding mental health to best equip me with the situations I routinely face.

In summarisation it is evident throughout this entry that the CoP are taking every step possible to enhance the current strength that are present within the police forces and more importantly are willing to address the negatives and provide a strategy to deal with these head on in an effort to ensure that the police are viewed as a professional organisation. Moreover with the implemental of the Police Vison 2025 and the Future Operating Environment 2040 report this shows that a clear commitment to improvement long term.

As I now approach the end of my PEQF journey I am the first to admit that the demand placed upon new officers can be daunting, coupled with the added stress and anxiety of the assignments it has at times seemed an insurmountable task and one that has caused myself countless worries. However with that being said I am able to look past the short term issues and identify the long term benefits of the PEQF programme. The programme has given me a wealth of knowledge that I would not have encountered in many daily duties as a police officer, most importantly it has allowed me to research various topics and reconsider the failings and triumphs of previous police interactions that I can adapt into my practical working.

The PEQF framework, although difficult is pivotal to the success of becoming a modern police officer in 2022 and the coming years. In order for the police force to be considered professional it is up to the new officers who are quickly becoming the single point of contact for more

experienced officers on certain matters due to the knowledge base they have accumulated from completing the Programme.

As for myself my role has changed dramatically within the last three years, due to the PEQF programme and through ensuring my knowledge base is up to date by completing courses and speaking with the relevant departments I am no longer viewed as the student officer but now I am source of information for both new and experienced officers, a position I did not imagine myself to be in within such a short timescale. I am fully aware that I still have a vast amount of learning to do but with the positive steps that the CoP are taking, along with implementing long term improvement strategies I am confident I will be able to fulfil my role as a modern police officer to the fullest of my abilities.

Word Count – 2704.

**Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum:
Communication Skills, Social Media, Communication Strategy**

You must choose a policing incident in which you played a significant role with an offender/service user/victim and reflect on what happened.

Critically evaluate your experience of the use of social media as a means of informing and engaging with the community and promoting policy initiatives.

Consider the force policy on using social media for professional information and engagement purposes.

What social media platforms are used by policing?

What are the benefits and risks of using social media?

2500 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

ANSWER:

Over the course of this entry my objective shall be to critically evaluate my own personal experiences of using various social media platforms, within a professional capacity and explaining how this has aided my investigation. I will also be outlining the impact that social media can play when used as a tool to enable effective engagement with the public and stating the policy initiatives of Gwent Police Force.

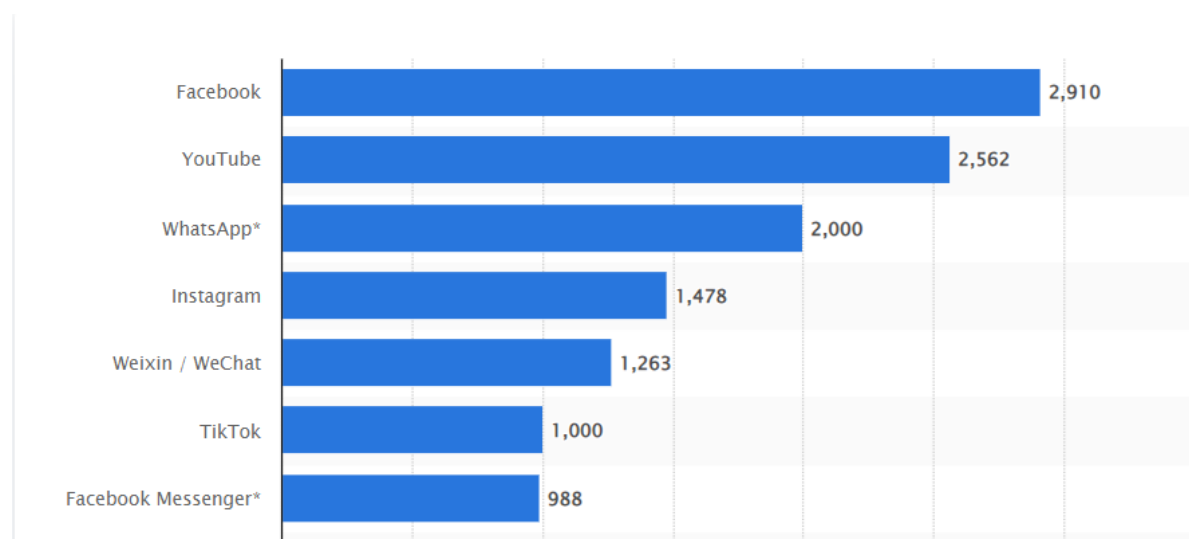
The use of social media has, for many people become an important part of everyday life and as such its possibilities are ever increasing with the demand of modern life. With the public's increased use of social media, businesses globally have realised its potential for engagement with customers. The police force is no different and have been able to identify this and amass a huge social media following across the UK, The police foundation (2014) claim "*Police force pages in the UK have a total of 1,567,759 followers on Twitter and 825,243 'likes' on Facebook*".

Social media is used for both personal and professional reasons, such as to maintain contact with others and as a means to promote business values, promotional opportunities and as a forum for customer contact, Lutkevich and Wigmore (2021)

According to a recent statistic by Stephens and Baily (No Date) they have stated “Over 27,000 followers of police Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts across 43 forces, gave their feedback on the their experience and expectations of police use of social media”. This study can be used to greatly widen the audience and allow exposure to more members of the public than previously in the past where social media platforms were not being utilised by forces, in conducting the study this highlights the police’s clear intentions to make social media an ongoing aspect of modern day policing by addressing the publics concerns and looking to rectify the issues raised.

The term social media is rather broad as it encompasses countless applications and websites solely dedicated to social media, all varying in popularity. McCormick (2022) has said “The top five most popular social media platforms in the world are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook Messenger”. In its most basic terms Lutkevich and Wigmore (2021) define social media as “Social media is a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration”.

The number of users on each platform is staggering and is only increasing yearly. A recent study conducted by Statista (2022) illustrates the sheer number of users on each platform worldwide which reaches into the millions.



This highlights the immense reach that social media can have on the public when used correctly and accordingly. Unfortunately although this can certainly be argued as a positive attribute, it can also have a negative impact if used incorrectly which will be later explained.

Police forces have been able to capitalise by adapting to the times and have begun to utilise various social media platforms. As such social media has become a powerful tool within modern day policing. Police forces have recognised the benefits of using social media as a means of promoting their actions and effectively engaging with the communities they serve, they are able to do this by actively using several forms of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and in a bid to reach as many users as possible, The police foundation (2014).

They do this by uploading posts showing the results of proactive police operations, this has several benefits as it is able to highlight the results to create a positive public perception which aids the public's trust and confidence towards the police. Another plus that arises from this is that with the results widely shared on various platforms, not only do the public supporters of the police see this but also offenders who may possibly be deterred from carrying out criminal activity as they know the police are proactively policing.

Through social media forces are able to engage with communities on a mass scale that was not possible ten plus years ago before the implementation of social media, the police foundation (2014) have said "UK police forces began experimenting with social media in 2008". Police forces are aware now more than ever of the importance of engaging with the communities they serve and how both the police and the public can aid each other by working in partnership.

This has been at the forefront of British policing since Robert Peel developed the 9 policing principles on partnership working between the police and the public. Gov.Uk (2012) will say *"To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police"*.

In light of this forces regularly hold question and answer sessions over social media stories to get the public to engage. The benefits of this method are twofold as the police are able to publicise their actions and achievements and the same time are allowing the public to share an involvement which enables the public to hold a better understanding of what modern day policing is and feel a sense of involvement. The Police foundation (2014) state *"Posting interactive content such as polls and videos sparks dialogue, while innovative use of social media broadens the conversation on policing"*.

Police forces are aware of the importance of maintaining and developing a strong social media presence and as such they have implemented ways to ensure they are operating to the best of their abilities. A key example of this is the Policing Vision 2025 which has been established by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and the Association of Police Chiefs Council (APCC), the plan addresses the need for forces to change with the times and is aware that the public's demands towards digital policing now require a different level of service from days past. They have achieved this by understanding that for many social media platforms are the primary source of communication, NPCC (No Date) will say *"The internet is changing the way the public are using technology; the ways they want to engage with policing and their expectations of the services they wish to receive"*. An example of this is the increase of crimes being reported digitally.

With this in mind forces have been able to reap the benefits of having a strong social media presence that. Forces have been able to utilise social media to engage with the communities they serve on a mass scale. Social media appeals are a key source of information and have been instrumental in many scenarios such as appeals for missing persons or to assist in identifying offenders. Hansen and Weber (2015) will say *"Driven by 'a self-destructive combination of ignorance, narcissism, and generation-specific disregard for their own privacy,' social-media (un-)savvy crooks are making life much easier for cops"*. A key example of this method at work was utilised in identifying offender of the 2011 riots, the police foundation (2014) say *"For example, in order to identify suspects in the wake of the summer riots the police posted CCTV footage and photos of suspects on the website Flickr as part of Operation Withern"*.

Social media is not just critical for sharing and gathering information but it has now become a primary source of contact for the public to report crimes via online forms, this method is mutually beneficial as it allows members of the public to report non-emergency crimes anonymously without fear of reprisals and with such ease. The Police foundation (2014) will say *"Social media sites, unlike traditional forms of engagement, provide a means for the public to raise concerns while remaining anonymous"*. It also aids the police as they can gather information through crime reports more efficiently than the traditional method of contacting

101.

Gwent Police has introduced force policy on the implementation of social media as they are aware of the importance it plays in modern life. To ensure that they are acting accordingly

Gwent has adopted the principles of the National Social Media Policy (NSMP) which was created by the Nation Police Chiefs Council (NPCC). NPCC (2019) state *“the creation and adoption of a TOM will help to drive consistency and maturity in the national delivery of these services - helping to standardise forces’ approach to contact and engagement via social media. The TOM provides a common framework for forces to operate and draws on best practice to ensure that it delivers an effective contact and engagement operation”*.

This policy ensures that when utilising Gwent’s social media channels officers exhibit professionalism innkeeping with the code of ethics to promote Gwent’s force values which at all times must be adhered to College of Policing (No Date) will say *“The Code of Ethics was produced by the College of Policing in 2014 in its role as the professional body for policing. It sets and defines the exemplary standards of behaviour for everyone who works in policing”*. Moreover, any interaction though the means of the forces social media must be for a policing purpose.

As previously stated in the Policing Vison 2025 forces across the UK are committed to providing a service online and are striving to improve the way they interact with the public to ensure public confidence and trust. Gwent is no different and by implementing the guidance from the NSMP it will ensure that these standards are consistently met, NPCC (2019) claim *“Taking a collaborative approach will ensure that the organisation is meeting the needs of the public through social media as a contact and engagement channel. Each account should retain its own ‘localised’ style, but the underlying messaging and user journey will be clear and consistent”*.

Within my own experience I have seen social media used to assist within investigations when assisting in locating missing persons. One incident I was personally involved in relates to an elderly male who had not been seen for over 24 hours. As this was completely out of character for the male and rising concerns, they were deemed to be a high risk missing person. Due to being high risk I have then asked for a media appeal to be conducted to increase the chances to find the missing male, this was carried out by contacting Gwent Police social media coordinator who ensured the missing persons image was circulated via Gwent Police’s Facebook page, as per Gwent police’s missing person protocol.

The key to finding the male was down to the social media appeal as due to the reach social media posts can have this appeal was then shared by third parties within the community at a

rapid pace. With hundreds of concerned members of the public engaging and providing information I was able to locate the male as he had been seen in a local park. I believe that the use of social media on this occasion to a positive outcome, as if not for the media appeal valuable time could have been wasted and the likelihood of serious harm coming to the male would surely have increased.

The impact of a simple media appeal was crucial in this situation as it allowed me to reach a vast amount of people from all over the local area in such a short space of time, as the photo was able to reach a wider audience to view and enabled me to circulate images which otherwise would not be seen. This is not the only time this method has been successful, the police foundation (2014) have said *“Social media can assist the police in intelligence-gathering, with its speed providing a crucial advantage when appealing for witnesses or information or looking for missing persons. It can be used during ongoing incidents; for example in the case of Joanna Yeates, who went missing in December 2010, Avon and Somerset Police used Facebook to call for anyone with information to come forward. Footage from CCTV cameras was also posted on YouTube”*.

Another instance whereby social media has been instrumental in the success of an investigation is when I have been able to utilise the location settings within social media platforms such as snap chat, which has been beneficial in supporting officers locating missing young persons. I have had first hand experience using this platform when locating a young male who had gone missing stating he wished to kill himself. Fortunately a third party was able to provide myself with the snapchat username of the male, with this information I was able to pass the information to our digital service team who were able to determine the male position. This was then used to task officers to patrol the location leading to locating the missing person efficiently and effectively. This meant that the missing person was found very quickly and again highlights the effectiveness in social media not only as a means of engaging with the public but as an investigative tool which has many capabilities.

With the world becoming more reliant on digitalisation the use of social media in a policing context is undoubtably a valuable research that will provide ease of access and aid both the public and the police going forward. Tankovska (2015) has said *“The use of social media platforms continues to increase in the United Kingdom (UK) and is predicted to do so for the*

foreseeable future. As of December 2021, there were a total of 60.37 million social network users in the UK, this is an increase of over nine million since 2017.” This statistic shows the growth of social media platforms. This widens the audience those police can utilise. This is only set to rise in further years with more with the continued appeal of social media and is supported by the Police Vision 2025.

Although the positives of using social media as a policing tool has numerous applications, there are also negative aspects that are present. Despite the majority of the public having access to some form of social media there are those who do not wish to access any social media sites. As a result it must be considered that the sharing of information can not be solely done via social media as this will exclude a section of the public unwillingly, as such it is imperative that although social media plays an important part in modern policing, forces do not forget that face to face interactions and being visible in the community will always be more greatly appreciated than that of a Facebook post.

Moreover there is also negatives with regards to posting on social media, examples include hate speech and malicious comments on posts shared by the police particularly when seeking the identify of the offender, the comment section on these types of posts are designed to seek information from the public to aid investigations. Unfortunately, as a rule these become forums for slanderous comments and insults which can in many ways dilute the seriousness of the intention of the post.

Despite social media being used by police as a positive means of communication and engagement there are those who use the platform to attack the police and place them in a negative light. Examples of this regularly include officers routinely carrying out their lawful duties who have been filmed and the footage uploaded to social media with no context or a false report which is extremely detrimental to the image of the police and can harm public perception severely. The police foundation (2014) have stated *“Thus for example in April 2014, the New York Police Department asked the public to tweet pictures of themselves with police officers using a specified hash tag. The response was dominated by pictures that showed the police in a negative light”*.

In conclusion it is evident that the use of social media as an aid to policing is a vital part of the modern police force. Its ability to reach communities and promote the hard work and efforts of

its officers is paramount if forces are to continue increasing the positive public perception they strive towards. It can be argued that there are certain drawbacks and limitations to the use of social media that have been identified, however the benefits are apparent and if the police are to be viewed as a modern day professional body then then having a strong social media presence is paramount.

The NPCC has been able to identify the importance of social media and is aware that the public expect a level of service innkeeping with the world of today, they are able to acknowledge that many of the public that they serve use social media as they primary means of communication and as such have developed plans and policy's for the future. Methods such as the policing vision 2025 aids forces to adapt to the digitisation of policing. The police foundation (2014) claim *"In a consent-based policing system engagement is crucial in building public trust and confidence; social media enables the police to engage better and to build relationships, as well as to gather information and intelligence"*.

There are however those who do not agree with this method, Bullock (2017) stated *"chief officers struggle to see a role for social media within the organisation, perhaps because they are unfamiliar with the relatively new and ever-evolving technology"*. This addresses a fundamental concern that is present with older generations and officers alike.

The most important take away from this is that social media should be viewed and used as platform to assist and enable a line of communication between the public and police. Bullock (2017) has also claimed *"It has been hoped that social media will provide an efficient technological response to an enduring conundrum in public policing – that of how to stimulate communication between officers and citizens"*.

Forces should be posting as much information as possible to inform the public of their actions and as a means of support, additionally social media is a tremendous source of information and positive engagement with the public will allow the police to gather information that can be analysed to assist in safeguarding the communities they serve. The purpose of community policing is engage and interact through social media with the residents, to ensure that their views and options are being heard and provide a response and action in turn, Bullock (2017).

Word Count -2400.

Task 3

Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum: Leadership and Teamworking

You must choose a policing incident in which you played a significant role with an offender/service user/victim and reflect on what happened.

Critically evaluate and evidence your flexibility in leadership style.

Critically analyse leadership strategies that you have developed to manage a range of different operational situations.

Consider leadership models commonly used in policing.

How were you able to apply a change in leadership style/strategy to reflect changing circumstances?

2500 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

ANSWER:

Over the course of this entry I will be critically evaluating and evidencing one particular incident whereby I was able to utilise the leadership qualities I have gained over the last two years of my police career and highlight how I was able to remain flexible and adapt to the situation ahead of me as it developed. I will also go on to analyse critically the core leadership strategies I have developed in my career thus far to allow myself to assess and manage situations where I find myself to be in a leadership capacity. For the following points I will be using the CARL framework of reflection to strengthen my views and to allow me to document my strengths and weaknesses. The University of Edinburgh. (2018).

Since becoming an independent officer some two years ago I have found myself in many stressful situations where I have heavily relied on the knowledge, experience and leadership qualities of more senior officers and looked towards them for guidance and instructions as to what my actions should be in a chaotic environment. Now due to many of the officers I relied on in past experiences moving on to specialist departments and the vast majority of my shift being younger in service, I have found myself thrust into this senior position by default and as a result I have had to drastically adapt and be a leader to those who look to myself for support as I have looked to those before me. Antonakis and House (2014) state *“Leadership is important for motivating followers and mobilizing resources towards the fulfilment of the organization's mission; it is also essential for organizational innovation, adaptation, and performance”*.

One such incident that sticks in my mind for many reasons, both good and bad was when recently attending a family Christmas party that challenged myself immensely as I was thrust into a leadership capacity that I felt ill equipped to deal with, as I was for the first time not only responsible for my own actions and decisions but for those around me also. Ciulla (2009) has said *“The job of a leader includes caring for others, or taking responsibility for them. All leaders face the challenge of how to be both ethical and effective in their work”*.

Upon attending the address, I initially arrived with my colleague to a report of a house party that had been progressively getting more out of hand before moving into the street. When arriving at the scene I instantly came to the realisation that the two of us were not in a position to deal with this alone as we were met with twenty plus males fighting in the street. As the colleague I was with had only just achieved independent status I understood that she would be looking towards me for support and guidance, a position I had found myself in many times before so I could sympathise with how she was feeling and knew that I had to show leadership and confidence towards her so that she would feel confident in herself.

In situations in the past when paired with a more experienced officer I have always been reluctant to ask for additional officers purely down to the fact I did not wish to be perceived as weak by asking for support. In hindsight I have come to realise is incorrect, but in this situation I knew that I was not only responsible for my own safety but of that of my colleague and knew I had to step up and manage the situation. I stepped out of my comfort zone and promptly asked for more officers to assist and proceeded to end the fight as quickly as possible by arresting

multiple offenders and safeguarding the victim. Page (2021) states *“The comfort zone is a behavioural state within which a person operates in an anxiety-neutral condition, using a limited set of behaviours to deliver a steady level of performance, usually without a sense of risk.”*

Within minutes several officers arrived to offer support and were looking to me to instruct them of their next steps and I had to adapt to the situation. This was an unfamiliar situation for me as I found myself being the most experienced officer at scene and did not have the luxury of looking to others to take the lead, I knew communication skills would be vital and due to there being such a loud and tense atmosphere I knew I had to be precise with what I required from these officers. Wilding (2020) claims *“People get impatient when they have to work mental overtime to grasp what you’re saying. Long-windedness can be perceived as indecisiveness and quickly cost you trust and respect as a leader. Concise communication is clearly an essential part of executive presence and projecting confidence”*.

It was clear to see that the officers arriving due to their lack of experience were looking to me for clear instructions as to what I expected them to do, this feeling was not unfamiliar to me as a year ago I was in their position so I felt empathetic towards them. Cherry (2020) claims *“Empathy is the ability to emotionally understand what other people feel, see things from their point of view, and imagine yourself in their place. Essentially, it is putting yourself in someone else’s position and feeling what they must be feeling”*. As such I approached them with confidence and stated exactly what I required from each officer so there was no ambiguity amongst them. At first, I was worried about coming across as pretentious and arrogant but had the self-awareness to realise that I needed to be assertive in that moment which I strongly believe they appreciated as each had a clear understanding of what was required. I was able to implement this into my leadership style as in the past I have been tasked by another officer to carry out an instruction and had no idea what was expected of me, a feeling I did not wish others to have.

As the situation had somewhat calmed, I took this as an opportunity to compose myself and reflect on what my next steps. If the past two years has taught me anything it is that teamwork is instrumental in successful policing and I was confident that with clear instruction from myself we could handle the situation at hand and bring our collective strengths together to achieve the overall goal. Bright HR (No Date) have said *“For any task or problem, there are usually countless solutions. When one employee tackles a project, they might be able to*

think of a few different ideas given time. But when a team tackles a problem, the project benefits from multiple perspectives, skillsets, and experiences all at once. A team approach can therefore lead to faster, deeper innovation ”.

A weakness of mine in the past has been the unwillingness to accept help from others and try to single handily deal with situations, I quickly realised that in this incident without the support from others nothing would be resolved. As I was still yet to establish the facts of what had led up to the fight, I decided that I would place trust in others around me and decided to delegate responsibilities to others and tasked them with carrying out golden hour enquires which would allow me to be able to carry out first aid on a male who was completely saturated in blood. College of policing (2022) will say *“The golden hour is the term used for the period immediately after an offence has been committed, when material is readily available in high volumes to the police. Positive action in the period immediately after the report of a crime minimises the amount of material that could be lost to the investigation, and maximises the chance of securing the material that will be admissible in court”.*

As I made my way to the male, he became verbally aggressive and erupted into a rage. I had previously assumed that the male was the victim due to the injuries he had sustained but quickly came to realise that all was not what it seemed.

Without warning the injured male attempted to attack my colleague and had to be physically restrained in handcuffs. As I applied the handcuffs, I was able to see deep lacerations to both wrists of the male. Due to the nature of these cuts and the first-hand experience I have had from dealing with countless incidents where an individual has self-harmed, I was able to determine quickly that this was also the case here. As a result of this I had to adapt my approach to establish what had occurred before police arrival.

Upon my initial arrival I had taken what I had seen as face value and failed to look beyond the ongoing fight which was a fundamental error on my behalf. I had an instance sense of realisation and knew I would have to be adaptable going forward to remain effective and support others. Wheatley (2021) said *“When a leader is under a high level of pressure, they can become ‘rigid’ in their reactions. They can respond to challenges in ways that have become ingrained or habitual. This can be problematic when those habitual responses are no longer*

appropriate for the situation; which is increasingly likely in our complex, turbulent and rapidly changing world. As such, adaptability is an increasingly important and valuable skill for leaders to develop”.

The family involved in this incident spoke limited English which presented a further hurdle when attempting to establish the facts, but the mother of the injured male spoke enough to allow us to ask questions. Understandably the mother was extremely upset over the event and was not very forthcoming with providing details as she was in fear of getting her son in any trouble, I knew that due to the fact I was covered in her sons blood I would not in the best position to speak with the mother. From working closely with the rest of my shift I know each officers strengths and weaknesses and I knew first hand that the female colleague I was with was extremely empathetic and would be best suited in speaking with the mother to allow us to gather knowledge of the event.

Eventually the mother disclosed that her son had taken a vast amount of drink and drugs which has reacted badly with his mental health, this has led to the male cutting his wrists in a drug induced state and the initial fight we attended was as a result of his family desperately trying to restrain the male to prevent further harm to himself. This was a crucial disclosure and one that would not have been discovered if not for the mother feeling comfortable with the officer I had tasked. I was aware of the importance of choosing the correct person to delegate this task as I knew it would be our main line of enquiry going forward.

In the past I would have taken it upon myself to speak with the mother as I felt as if I had to take responsibility for everything, but in this situation, I knew from a leadership standpoint that this would not be suitable. *Bosworth (2021) stated “Delegating shouldn’t be used as a tool to get work off your plate, it should be used as a tool to help develop and explore the skills of each of your team members”.*

I was able to recognise the importance of delegation and realised that instead of choosing any officer at scene to free and take some pressure from myself, due to having a close personal relationship and trust in others I was able to choose the correct officer for the task which enabled us to gather the correct information. More importantly this allowed that officer to act with confidence as she knew I had placed my trust in her and gave her the opportunity to develop her personable skills. Kester (2020) stated *“Motivation is a powerful tool that can be harnessed by trust. When an employee feels that their manager trusts them to accomplish a*

task, they are more likely to rise to the challenge so that they don't let their superior – or themselves – down”.

As a result of achieving the information I then had to adapt and support colleagues around me who were looking towards myself for guidance as to what the next steps were. Through effective teamwork and guidance where were able to determine that this was no longer an assault but a mental health episode. As a result, I instructed my team to de arrest the individuals we had initially arrested and detain the injured male under S136 of the Mental health Act.

Ultimately the outcome achieved was indeed the desired result but the journey there was not one I foreseen, as a rule I have always been the one to involve myself as much as possibly but in this scenario I found myself having to take a step back, asses not only my options but those around me and implement a working strategy.

I could sense some confusion amongst the team but to their credit they acted on instruction and carried out their duties. I knew that this would be a pivotal moment in being a leader on that evening and as soon as possible I took those aside and explained the powers and policy's that had led to me making that decisions and my though process behind it.

I was conscious that in the past when I have been in their position, I have carried out an instruction given to me and have not known why. As I always felt uncomfortable in that situation I decided that if I was going to develop myself as a leader I would take all the positive points I have received but more importantly take all the negative points that I experienced and turn them into a positive.

By nature I am not an empathic person but I had the self-awareness to know that of all the leadership qualities needed to be a strong leader it is one of the most important traits so I took the time and effort to praise everyone for their efforts and reassured them when needed which in turn allowed the respect to be mutually earned I believe. Corporate Communication Experts (2016) *“In the workplace, appreciation plays a key role in creating a positive organisational culture and strengthening employee-leader relationships”.*

This incident really did challenge me on a personal level but not for the reasons I initially thought. I learned a great deal from this incident that I feel will greatly benefit myself and others around me in future scenarios and not only was I able to display the skills I already

possessed but to earn valuable new ones that will assist me going forward within my career as an officer and leader.

Upon my initial arrival as with every scenario I find myself in I will always implement the National Decision Model (NDM) to guide me and develop a working strategy, this has been instrumental in all aspects of decision making I have made in my career so far but this was the first opportunity I had to take the model and apply the decision for not only myself but others in more of a leadership role. College of Policing (2021) state “*The National Decision Model (NDM) is a decision-making model used throughout the police service. It is designed to assist operational officers, planners, advisers and commanders to manage their response to a situation in a reasonable, proportionate, lawful and ethical way*”.

Most importantly I was able to transfer the leadership skills I have gathered over the past two years and put them into practise when required, at first I was very apprehensive and I have always been wary of stepping into that position but found when out of my comfort zone I thrived under pressure and exhibited the courage required to be an effective leader. Kiknadze and Leary (2021) say “*At their core, decisions whether to do something that lies outside one’s comfort zone involve an approach-avoidance conflict in which people weigh whether behaving in a manner that creates anxiety is worth the potential benefits*”.

Until I was thrust into this situation, I had placed any thought as to what my leadership strategy was or let alone how to develop it. Throughout my career the vast majority of leaders I have encountered have utilised an autocratic leadership approach which has been effective given the circumstances, however I have come to realise that although this style ensures results are met it does not allow for others to share their views and opinions which sometimes can be to detrimental to success. De Hoogh et al (2015) collectively claim “*Autocratic leadership is characterized by the centralization of decision-making and directive power in a single dominant leader and creates a clearly defined intrateam hierarchy. Scholars and consultants have often criticized autocratic leadership for the demoralizing effect that an autocratic leader’s centralization of power can have on the team climate and thereby on team performance*”.

When assessing the current strengths I possess it has been clear to me that my style naturally works well through a transformational leadership approach, this enables me to inspire and earn the respect of those around me as they can see that I am willing to be involved and not shy

away from the situation and set an example for others to follow. Diaz-Saenz (2011) stated *“Transformation leadership is the process by which a leader fosters group or organisational performance beyond expectation by virtue of the strong emotional attachment with his or her followers combined with the collective commitment to a higher moral cause”*.

This approach also allows an opportunity's for growth both for myself and others as by delegating tasks I am giving placing trust in to decide their own approach on how to achieve that given task and obtain the desired result. For me the most important aspect of this strategy is the ability to focus on each person needs and be able to remain empathetic to their needs and requirements as no two people are alike this method gives me the flexibility to change my approach on an individual basic, also it enables me to consider each person's strengths and weaknesses and how best to utilise their strengths and develop their weaknesses which is vital for development both for them as officers and for myself as a leader.

Word Count – 2464.

Task 4

Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum: Coaching, Mentoring, Assessment

Critically reflect upon your three-year probation:

How have you benefited from mentoring and coaching?

How has it helped you to meet personal, professional and organisational goals?

How has it aided you to learn, develop and perform in the workplace?

Consider relevant coaching and mentoring definitions along with current coaching and mentoring theories used in policing.

How do you provide and receive feedback?

2500 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

ANSWER:

Throughout the course of this entry I will be reflecting upon my three year probation as I now near the end and documenting how I have grown both personally and professionally through the aid of coaching and mentoring from colleagues. I will also state the benefits and how through coaching this has enabled myself to reach the goals I set for myself three years ago, finally I will highlight how this in turn has allowed me to perform within the police environment through learning and development. To support my views and opinions I will be utilising the Gibbs reflective cycle (2020) to so.

I first began my career as a police constable in September of 2019, this was an entirely new experience for me, and I knew if I was going to succeed I would have to heavily rely on the expertise and mentoring from others to do so.

Although it had been a goal of mine since childhood, I was completely unaware of what challenges lied ahead of me as I took my seat in the classroom where I received my initial training over the course of six months. Within this period the curriculum was focused on knowledge based lessons mixed in with several practical elements to prepare us of what was to

come once the six months were completed. Throughout my time within the classroom setting I was coached by several experienced officers who imparted their knowledge onto me.

After the completion of my classroom based period the next step of my journey was to be completed in the Professional Development Unit (PDU) for a period of three months where I would be assigned a tutor on a one to one basis who would coach me through the process of being a police officer in the community and with the goal of reaching independent patrol status (IPS) at the completion of the three months. Life coach directory (No Date) argue *“Coaching is a process where a coach supports you to make a change, learn something new or achieve your goals. The ultimate aim is to help you make progress in a certain area of your life, at work or to overcome a problem you're struggling with”*.

Upon arrival for my first shift within the PDU I was sat down with my tutor who explained to me what she expected of me and a brief overview of what the next 12 weeks would entail. I was asked to comprise a list of my strengths and weaknesses and the area's I wished to improve upon. My tutor then took this information and produced a development plan to enable her to document my results over the coming weeks in the form of a SMART plan, Udemy (2021) have said *“A SMART action plan incorporates 5 characteristics of a goal: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based”*.

This method was particularly beneficial for me as it allowed my tutor to set a series of professional goals to work towards. Once the plan was completed my tutor and I attended our first emergency call together, I was advised that I was to deal with the incident independently so that they could gauge where I was at.

After the completion of the call we returned to the station where we sat down to debrief the incident and discuss what went well and what aspects needed improvement. My tutor then discussed the results with me and asked if I had another opportunity to deal with the incident again what would I do differently to achieve the desired result.

The feedback was very constructive and highlighted countless areas for improvement but also contained some positive aspects that I could build upon. This continued over the course of my time within PDU until I had finally achieved the required criteria as was granted IPS. At this

point my tutor and I reviewed the initial SMART plan that I had completed on day to show how much experienced I had gained within the 12 weeks.

On joining the police I viewed this as a bitter sweet moment for me as it was always a lifelong goal for me to join the police and make a difference in the community. However, it was also a very daunting experience as it was a complete career change for me and I knew I would be starting from step one all over again, a situation I had not found myself in for many years and was unfamiliar to me as in my previous role I had achieved a managerial role and the idea of starting all over again left me with a sense of anxiety. Healthline (2020) claim *“Anxiety is your body’s natural response to stress. It’s a feeling of fear or apprehension about what’s to come”*.

Reflecting back on the classroom based side of my probation it humours me to think that at the time I did not think my professional life could get any more stressful due to the pressure of examinations, in hindsight the classroom aspect of my probationary period was without a doubt the least stressful time of the last three years.

My experience whilst in the PDU is one of mixed emotions. The first obstacle I faced was the unfamiliar feeling of being tutored as for many years in my previous role I was responsible for the supervising of training for new starters, although from experience I knew how vital having a tutor was to me achieving IPS. At the time I found the experience to be rather negative due to the fact my tutor was very matter of fact and there was no room for error in her coaching style. There were many occasions where I felt deflated due to the many mistakes I was making. I now realise this is inevitable when starting out and were unavoidable, but at the time I felt an enormous sense of shame questions and this weighed heavy upon me. Harteis et al (2008) collectively claim *“Dealing with mistakes is a particular strategic source of workplace learning for such organisations, because contemporary work often is so complex that mistakes cannot be avoided. A workplace culture of learning from mistakes stands to maximise them as effective learning experiences”*.

At the time I felt that the coaching method of my tutor was not beneficial to my progression at all and felt at times it was having the opposite of the desired effect and instead was hindering my progression. I have always been somewhat of a perfectionist and I found it difficult to accept the mistakes I was making. Scott (2022) says *“A perfectionist is someone who has a*

personality that strives for flawlessness. This is often accomplished through fixating on imperfections, trying to control situations, working hard, or being critical of the self or others”.

At times I took the feedback of my tutor personally and I felt it having an adverse effect to my self esteem, Scott (2022) goes on to say *“High achievers tend to have equally high esteem; not so with perfectionists. Perfectionists tend to be very self-critical and unhappy and suffer from low self-esteem. They can also be lonely or isolated as their critical nature and rigidity can push others away as well. This can lead to lower self-esteem”.*

Now that I am not in the PDU environment I am able to see that although my tutor was at times direct and even harsh, it was done to prepare me of what shift life would be like and it was done not to be malicious but for my own benefit.

However although it was the main objective of the PDU to provide me with a tutor to coach me it was not until I arrived on shift until I really learned the benefit of mentoring through colleagues which has since enabled me to learn how to effectively manage a workload and develop the basic skills I had obtained in the PDU and put them into practise to become a competent officer, a personal goal I set myself upon the commencement of my career. Indeed editorial team (2021) stated *“Setting personal goals is an effective way of making decisive progress in your personal and professional life. You can use personal development goals to establish plans to gain knowledge, up-skill, or improve your performance in your role”.*

When reflecting and evaluating my initial coaching within the PDU I would say that even though there were a vast number of negatives, there are some positives about the experience such as being able to have the time to speak with my tutor in reflection periods, this enabled me to voice my concerns of areas I felt needed improvement and being able to have steps in place to coach me moving forward. This is where the SMART model was of great importance as the weeks progressed, I was able to add elements on where I felt I was failing and it gave my tutor an opportunity to coach me through my shortcomings.

However, there are several negative points that I feel did not go so well. In the PDU the experience I had was not a realistic one due to the fact that you are a protected unit, meaning you are able to hand pick which incidents you attend on any given day, although I see the

benefit of this it did not prepare me for IPS at all as once achieved I no longer had the luxury of choosing which calls I attended. In addition to this once I dealt with the call, I was able to reattend the station and have the time to complete the necessary paperwork, which once completed was allocated to the relevant shift sergeant for allocation. As such I did not have my own workload to carry. This is where effective mentorship was invaluable for my professional progression upon leaving the PDU.

The experience was not conducive to the reality of life on shift and no matter how much coaching I received within the PDU it could not replicate the environment of shift life, to the credit of my tutor she done the best with the limited time she had and I have been able to take the skills coached instilled to me from my experience and utilise them whilst being department.

The aspects of coaching and mentoring is important for a new starter in any career to flourish but it is critical within the police to ensure development. CIPD (2021) claim *“Coaching and mentoring can be effective approaches to developing employees. Both have grown in popularity, with many employers using them to enhance the skills, knowledge and performance of their people around specific skills and goals”*.

Even though both are integral to allow growth both methods do have slight differences. Garvey et al (2010) stated *“Coaching is task focussed, it is for a specified duration and has a set agenda to reinforce or change skills and behaviours of individuals”*. This best reflects my time within the PDU and embodies the role of my tutor as there was a predetermined programme that I would have to complete to be successful and attain ISP. Coaching is a valuable tool that allows the recipient to work towards a set goal with support and guidance along the way.

There are numerous coaching methods that can be implemented to achieve the desired result of developing a person skillset , as previously mentioned whilst within the PDU the SMART model was utilised with me to allow my tutor and myself to visualise and work towards the requirements needed. This was my first experience of a coaching strategy, but I was able to see the importance of having a plan in place. With the SMART plan in place my tutor was able to identify an end result to work towards which provided myself with a clear mindset of what was expected of me throughout the agreed timescale, this method removed any ambiguities I may have faced as it was clear and concise and gave me opportunities to address my weaknesses and turn them into to strengths both personally and professionally. Young (2006) states *“If*

your deficiency is in lacking a certain skill or knowledge, then improving your ability in that area would be the easiest way to turn it into a strength, Often you can turn a weakness into a strength simply by changing your perception of that weakness. By viewing the weakness in a different light you may discover that it actually enhances your other strengths”.

Throughout my time within the PDU the benefits of having a coaching strategy and a competent coach to guide me was evident in the end results, in this case myself being granted IPS. Once I arrived on shift I was able to import the knowledge I had gained through my coaching bit it was evident that to continually improve I would need the aid of a mentor to guide me.

CIPD (2021) define mentoring as *“Mentoring in the workplace tends to describe a relationship in which a more experienced colleague shares their greater knowledge to support the development of an inexperienced member of staff. It calls on the skills of questioning, listening, clarifying and reframing that are also associated with coaching”.*

Upon leaving the PDU I was fortunate to be placed on a shift with a wealth of knowledge and as such had a surplus of officers, I could look toward to provide mentorship when required. As previously mentioned, although I had gained skills and knowledge from my time being coached within the PDU it was through effective mentoring where I was able to see substantial growth in both my personal and professional capabilities, it also had the added benefit of placing me at ease as there was no longer a hierarchy of probationer and PDU tutor. I was now viewed as an equal, this in addition to having a strong support network and access to knowledge far beyond my comprehension levels at the time dramatically improved my confidence levels. As such I was able to exude a confidence when dealing with situations that I had not possessed whilst within the PDU as my knowledge base had been greatly improved this enabled me to develop not only my interpersonal skills, but the quality of my work increased which was noted by the sergeant which gave me an enormous sense of pride. An element I had not achieved whilst being coached. Magee (2015) best says *“Job pride can be elicited by successful praiseworthy action, such as working to overcome obstacles to reach a desired work-related outcome”.*

Throughout my three years probationary period I have experienced exponential growth in both my personal and professional life that I almost certainly would not have achieved if not through the coaching and mentoring I have received thus far. Personally, I am much more confident person and I have found my communication skills greatly improved.

If not for the SMART plan and coaching I was given from my tutor I would not have made it to today as within the initial 12 weeks I was provided with the tools to enable me to achieve my first professional goal which was to reach independent status as due to having a strategy in place I was able to be held accountable for my progression as I knew what I had to achieve and when to do so. Riopel (2021) stated *“Clarity is important when it comes to goals. Setting goals that are clear and specific eliminate the confusion that occurs when a goal is set in a more generic manner”*.

In addition to this the mentoring I have received upon joining my shift and to this day, it has allowed me to obtain new skills and continually achieve professional goals I have set myself, such as being able to reach the organisational standard to become a specially trained taser officer which has given me a huge sense of self pride.

My three years up until this point has been a continuous learning curve and I am still faced with challenges each day, but due to the work ethic instilled to me through effective coaching and mentoring it allows me to constantly adapt and improve in a professional capacity. As such this has not gone unnoticed by my sergeant who has requested that I go through the process of being a tutor so I can impart the qualities and skills I have learned throughout my probation and pass these onto new starters. This responsibility further reiterates to me the importance of effective coaching as if done correctly will provide qualities that will continue throughout your career, in turn I have been able to integrate the positive aspects from my experience into my style and eradicate the negatives so the new officers I tutor do not feel inadequate as I once felt and understand the usefulness of communication and setting clear goals.

Reflecting on my time in the PDU I was extremely critical of myself to my detriment, I have come to realise that being a perfectionist is not always attainable and mistakes are a vital part of professional progression. At first, I took the criticism personally and let it affect my personal life as it left me with a sense of shame and anxiety. But through my development I have

comprehended that this was an incorrect approach and criticism should be viewed as a learning opportunity not a negative.

If I had to relive my experience within the PDU there are aspects I would change. Mainly the realisation that I was expected to make mistakes and it should not have affected my personal life as much as it did, fortunately I had developed the resilience to not let this adversely affect me. I am by no means the completed article, but I have come to realise that if I am going to develop and further my existing skills then naturally mistakes may occur. To continue to develop my skills and obtain new ones I will continue to draw from the knowledge of experienced colleagues and enrol myself on courses to receive further coaching.

As I further develop my own qualities, I am now conscious of the fact I have been tasked with providing coaching myself to new officers who will be looking towards me for guidance as I once did. From personal experience I understand the situation they are in and will look at this as an opportunity to develop my own style of coaching and take what works from my experience and instead of discounting the negatives, find alternatives to ensure my own style is constantly being crafted to achieve the best results through the implementation of coaching strategies.

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Bibliography

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