



Enhancing Operational Policing:

Analysing The Impact of Protected Learning Time on Officer Resilience within the Police Education Qualifications Framework

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Declarations

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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STATEMENT 1

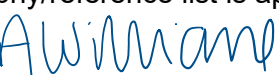
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Acknowledgements

I would like to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported and assisted me over the past fifteen months. The last two years have presented their challenges, including the heartbreaking losses of my mother and both my in-laws, which have made the process of completing my assignments particularly difficult. I am especially thankful to my husband, Emyr for his unwavering support, belief in me, and for being my anchor during some of my darkest moments. I appreciate his understanding when many evenings and weekends were spent on my laptop and with books instead of him.

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Abstract

This research examines the impact of staff abstraction due to protected learning on operational demands within policing, with a particular emphasis on new police recruit student officers who are required to complete academic qualifications during their probationary period. Utilising a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative analysis, the study explores the extent to which the temporary removal of officers for educational purposes affects the resources and operational effectiveness of police departments.

The findings reveal that while the educational requirements are designed to enhance the skills and competencies of new officers, they concurrently introduce significant challenges to the operational framework of police services. The study highlights how the absence of these officers during training periods can lead to increased workloads for remaining staff, ultimately influencing team morale, performance, and overall service delivery. Respondents expressed concerns regarding the strain on available resources, suggesting that the current model of integrating protected learning into the training regimen may not adequately account for the resulting operational demands.

Furthermore, the research identifies a disconnect between the educational aspirations of the policing framework and the practical realities faced by officers on the ground. By addressing these issues, the study provides actionable recommendations aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of abstraction on operational capacity. These recommendations emphasise the importance of strategic resource management, including improved scheduling of protected learning sessions, enhanced support systems for remaining staff, and the potential for more flexible educational arrangements that consider the realities of police work.

Overall, this research contributes to the ongoing dialogue surrounding police education and operational efficiency, advocating for a balanced approach that prioritises both the professional development of officers and the need for effective community policing.

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1. Appendix A: Survey Information Sheet

Description: This document provides details about the purpose of the survey, the confidentiality of responses, and the informed consent process for participants.

2. Appendix B: Questionnaire

Description: This appendix includes the full questionnaire used in the survey, detailing all questions posed to the respondents.

List of abbreviations

COP – College of Policing

DHEP – Degree Holder Entry Programme

PCDA – Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship

PCSO – Police Community Support Officer

PEQF – Police Education and Qualifications Framework

PPD – Professional Policing Degree

ZPD – Zone of Proximal Development

Chapters

Introduction

In recent years, police forces across the nation have undergone significant transformations, including the implementation of degree-entry requirements for newly recruited police officers. The rationale behind this policy shift is to professionalise policing, improve accountability, and enhance the overall competency of officers. Student officers, during their probationary period, are mandated to study toward a degree or a postgraduate diploma, which involves substantial time commitments alongside their practical training. This educational obligation can necessitate temporary abstraction from frontline duties for various activities, including training sessions, lectures, or examinations.

While the educational development of student officers is essential for enhancing the professionalism of police work, it raises concerns about the operational demands placed on remaining officers. The temporary removal of officers can lead to increased workloads and heightened stress among officers who remain on duty. This dynamic presents a pressing issue in the context of modern policing, where the demand for police services continues to grow amid rising crime rates and complex societal challenges.

This study aims to explore how the abstraction of new recruits for educational purposes affects the operational workload and resilience of the remaining police staff. It seeks to assess whether the benefits of educational development for new officers are balanced by the challenges posed to overall team performance and morale. Specifically, it examines the following aspects:

The impact of increased workload on remaining staff during the absence of student officers.

The implications of these operational demands on staff resilience, job satisfaction, and performance.

Strategies that can be implemented to mitigate negative impacts while still supporting the educational development of new recruits.

Research Questions:

- How does the abstraction of student officers for educational purposes impact the operational demands on remaining staff?
- What effects does the increased workload have on the resilience and job satisfaction of the remaining officers?
- How can police departments balance the educational requirements of recruits with the operational demands of frontline duties?

Literature Review

Literature Search Strategy:

To identify relevant research on policing and protected learning, various websites and databases were utilised. The College of Policing website provided access to policy and process documentation, while the Home Office site offered insights into directives related to policing. Additionally, Google Scholar, Google Books, and the electronic library at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David were used to source a broader range of literature. These resources allowed access to numerous journal articles and books pertinent to the topic.

Keywords such as 'police training,' 'police qualifications,' 'protected learning time for study,' and 'abstraction rates for study and demand' were applied to locate relevant sources. Inclusion and exclusion filters were implemented to ensure that the literature was current and applicable, with a focus on publications after 2015, UK-based resources, and English-language sources. Abstracts were reviewed to assess their relevance to the literature review. The search continued until a sufficient collection of articles and book chapters had been gathered to support this undergraduate dissertation. A comprehensive list of all publications cited in the research is available in the bibliography.

Reviewing Existing Evidence

Policing in the UK is currently adapting its approach to training and qualifications for entry-level officers, with the College of Policing introducing three new entry routes. Among these is a graduate conversion course specifically for new police officer recruits holding at least a Bachelor degree. To support the development of this programme, a rapid evidence assessment was conducted, synthesising literature on conversion courses from other fields. From the 51 studies reviewed, four core themes emerged as essential: learning styles, translating theory into practice, teaching methods, and assessment. These themes were further enriched by the sub-themes of collaborative learning and reflective practice. Findings from the assessment offer key policy and practical insights for designing a policing conversion course that aligns with contemporary training and educational needs. (Belur J, Agnew-Pauley W, Tompson L (2018).

The Police Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) has fundamentally transformed the approach to training and education within policing. This initiative mandates that police student officers receive a more rigorous and academically grounded education, aligning with the needs of modern law enforcement and community expectations. As policing evolves, the PEQF emphasises the necessity for student officers to not only acquire knowledge but also to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills essential for effective policing in diverse environments. At the core of this educational transformation lies the principle of student-centred learning. This pedagogical approach shifts the focus from the instructor to the learner, recognising that students come with unique experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives that shape their understanding of the world. In the context of the PEQF, this means that training programmes must engage students actively, encouraging them to take ownership of their learning processes. Over the past two decades successive British

governments, both Conservative and Labour, have attempted to implement reforms within the English and Welsh police service. (College of Policing. (2018)

In his 2011 review of police leadership and training, Neyroud outlined a vision for modern policing, emphasising the need for policing to be democratically accountable, evidence-based, and coherent at both national and international levels. He highlighted the importance of creating a more professional and capable police force, with a strong focus on cost-effectiveness and competency. (Neyroud, P. W. (2011)

The College of Policing has taken these recommendations forward, particularly with the introduction of the Police Education and Qualifications Framework (PEQF). The PEQF was developed to standardise educational requirements across policing, ensuring that student officers have the qualifications and skills needed for today's policing demands. It now requires all new officers to either hold or achieve a degree-level qualification, recognising that the complexities of policing today require officers to think critically, make independent decisions, and contribute to an evolving evidence base. This approach reflects a shift toward professionalism within the police force, equipping student officers with the tools to handle the challenges of modern-day policing (College of Policing, 2018).

Hough and Stanko (2019) argue that effective collaboration between police practitioners and academic researchers is essential for enhancing the practical application of evidence-based research within policing. They suggest that co-production (a process where both police professionals and academics work together to generate knowledge) allows research insights to be more closely aligned with real-world policing needs. Furthermore, fostering cooperation between these groups facilitates a continuous exchange of ideas and practical skills, ultimately helping to bridge the gap between theoretical research and everyday policing practice. This collaboration not only enriches the skill set of police personnel but also ensures that research findings are relevant, actionable, and beneficial to policing outcomes.

This approach aligns with the ideas of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, whose theories on social learning and cognitive development underscore the importance of social interaction and cultural context in education. (Vygotsky, L. (2003)

Vygotsky posited that learning is inherently a social process, facilitated through interactions with peers, mentors and the broader community. He introduced the concept of the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD), which refers to the difference between what a learner can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance and encouragement from more knowledgeable others. For police student officers, this means that while they may enter training with foundational knowledge and skills, their development is enhanced through collaborative learning experiences, mentorship, and practical applications of theoretical concepts.

Incorporating Vygotsky's principles into the PEQF and police training requires a paradigm shift not only in the classroom but also in operational settings. Student officers must be encouraged to engage in real-world problem-solving scenarios that reflect the complexities of policing. For instance, scenario-based training that simulates community interactions or crisis situations can bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical application. Such immersive experiences allow students to apply their knowledge in a supportive environment, fostering critical thinking and adaptability.

Additionally, the operational world presents unique challenges that necessitate an understanding of social dynamics and community relationships. Police officers often operate within diverse communities, where cultural competencies and interpersonal skills are crucial. Training programmes must, therefore, incorporate community engagement activities, allowing student officers to learn from community members and understand the social context of their work. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on the cultural and social dimensions of learning, highlighting the importance of context in shaping student officer experiences.

In the classroom, police educators must adopt pedagogical strategies that reflect a student-centred approach. This includes fostering a collaborative learning environment where students can share experiences and perspectives. Implementing group discussions, peer-to-peer learning, and reflective practices can enhance understanding and retention of knowledge. Moreover, educators should provide ongoing feedback and mentorship, guiding students through their ZPD and facilitating their growth as learners and future law enforcement professionals.

The first few months of operational policing are a crucial time for new student officers as they transition from the structured environment of training school to the realities of the job. Charman (2017) emphasises how significant this period is, particularly during the tutorship phase where student officers are paired with more experienced officers. It is during this time that student officers begin to form their professional identity, learning not only the practical aspects of policing but also absorbing the culture, attitudes, and behaviours of their colleagues. Much of this learning happens informally, shaped by the example of peers and tutors, which can sometimes challenge the formal training they received in the classroom. This early experience is key to helping student officers feel like they belong within the force, but it can also foster more hardened or cynical views as they adjust to the pressures of frontline policing. The influence of this initial operational phase has lasting effects on student officers, shaping their resilience and overall approach to the profession. As such, it's important to recognise how formative this period is, both in terms of skill development and identity formation, when considering how best to support student officers in those early months.

The integration of theoretical knowledge with practical skills is a key challenge in police student officer training, and the role of academic and operational tutors is central to this process. Belur et al. (2020) highlight that while classroom-based learning provides student officers with the essential theories, policies, and procedural knowledge, it is the application of this knowledge in real-life situations that truly solidifies their learning. Tutors serve as the

bridge between these two components, ensuring that student officers can translate theoretical understanding into effective practice in dynamic and often unpredictable operational environments.

The systematic review by Belur et al. underscores the importance of tutors in both academic and operational settings, as they not only offer instruction but also act as mentors and role models for new student officers. Academic tutors focus on grounding student officers in the necessary concepts and laws that underpin policing, but it is the operational tutors who provide the hands-on, practical experience that is vital to embedding this knowledge. Operational tutors, in particular, play a crucial role in exposing student officers to real-world policing challenges, offering direct feedback, and helping them develop critical decision-making skills in high-pressure situations.

The combination of academic and operational support is therefore essential for student officers to become competent and resilient, fully equipped to handle the complexities of modern policing. Without this crucial tutorship, student officers may struggle to fully integrate their classroom learning with the demands of day-to-day operational duties. This emphasises the need for structured, protected learning time and consistent, high-quality tutorship throughout the early stages of policing to ensure student officers are not only skilled but also confident in their ability to apply their training effectively.

The dynamic and high-pressure environment of policing necessitates effective teamwork and adequate staffing levels. Research indicates that police officers face various challenges, including managing incidents of violence, responding to emergency calls, and engaging with community policing efforts. Increased operational demands during staff abstraction can lead to stress and performance issues among remaining officers. Studies highlight that policing is one of the most stressful professions, often characterised by long hours, unpredictable workloads, and emotional labour. (Kappeler, V.E., Gaines, L.K., & Schaefer, B.P. (2020).

The theoretical framework for this research will be grounded in the concepts of organisational socialisation and social identity theory. According to Ashworth and Mael (1989), organisational socialisation and identity are intricately linked, positing that an individual's sense of self is influenced by their environment and the expectations placed upon them. This framework suggests that individuals do not merely adapt to their roles; instead, their identities are shaped by their interactions with the organisational culture and the various groups within it.

In the context of policing, this is particularly pertinent given the diverse roles and subgroups that exist within the police force, each characterised by unique values, norms, and beliefs. As new recruits navigate their way through the organisational landscape, they are exposed to various identities and social roles, which can influence their understanding of what it means to be a police officer. This ongoing process of socialisation is crucial, as it not only affects the individual's professional identity but also impacts the overall dynamics and effectiveness of the police organisation. Understanding these theoretical underpinnings will provide valuable insights into the challenges and experiences faced by student officers as they transition into their roles within law enforcement.

Elliot-Davies' article, *Getting a Battering: The Perceived Impact of Demand and Capacity Imbalance within the Police Service*, explores the significant consequences of a demand and capacity imbalance on police officers' wellbeing and performance. The study reveals that the increasing public demand for police services, coupled with limited resources, places considerable strain on officers. High workloads and persistent understaffing contribute to issues such as burnout, fatigue, and a sense of frustration among officers, which can ultimately impact their physical and mental health. Elliot-Davies highlights that these conditions have a cumulative effect, often leading to diminished job satisfaction, lower morale, and impaired operational effectiveness. This analysis provides valuable insight into how demand pressures influence resilience and functionality within the police force, aligning with wider research on the impact of staffing challenges in high-stress public sector roles.

While the abstraction of officers for educational purposes can enhance their knowledge and skills, it may disrupt team dynamics and operational effectiveness. Studies in other high-demand fields, such as healthcare and emergency services, suggest that while professional development is vital, excessive abstraction without appropriate staffing can result in increased stress levels, decreased morale, and burnout among remaining personnel. The absence of officers not only increases the workload for those on duty but also can diminish the sense of team cohesion, leading to potential friction and dissatisfaction within the ranks.

Utilising the Conservation of Resources Theory, this study examines how the temporary removal of personnel impacts available resources for remaining staff and their ability to manage stress effectively. The COR theory posits that individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect valuable resources, such as personal resilience, social support, and job satisfaction. In high-stress environments like policing, the depletion of resources due to increased workloads can lead to negative outcomes, including diminished performance and well-being. (Hobfoll, S. 2001)

To introduce a comparative perspective on how other professions incorporate qualifications into practical training there are a number of services that undertake this element of training.

Unlike the framework introduced to police forces in England and Wales, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) collaborated with Ulster University (UU) to launch its own Probationary Officer Development Programme in 2020, as PSNI operates outside the jurisdiction of the College of Policing. This programme is designed to support and enhance the two-year probationary period, offering a Level 6 qualification. Co-developed and delivered by both PSNI and UU staff, it centres on real-life case studies and addresses themes such as problem-solving, procedural justice, vulnerability, victim needs, and ethical practice.

Preliminary data indicates a positive impact on knowledge transfer and reflective practice. However, operational demands and resource constraints on front-line response officers may limit their ability to fully integrate all aspects of the training into daily practice. ([The Probationary Officer Development Programme: A partnership for policing in Northern Ireland - Policing Insight](#))

Within nursing and midwifery pre-registration training, students are regarded as “supernumerary,” meaning they are not included in the staffing numbers required for maintaining safe and effective patient care. This status allows nursing students to focus on developing their practical skills without the pressure of filling essential staffing roles. For those in apprenticeship pathways, this “supernumerary” designation applies during placements, except when they are fulfilling their regular job roles.

These placements emphasise active learning and direct contribution to patient care, moving beyond passive observation. As students’ progress in skill and confidence, their participation gradually intensifies, with ongoing support and constructive feedback. Supervisors play a key role in assessing each student’s competency level, adapting the level of direct oversight based on factors such as risk, the student’s knowledge, and demonstrated abilities. This approach allows nursing students to gain practical experience in a supportive environment while preserving patient safety. ([Supernumerary and protected learning time - The Nursing and Midwifery Council \(nmc.org.uk\)](https://www.nmc.org.uk/learning-and-development/supernumerary-and-protected-learning-time/))

Methodology

*Primary research is information that is collected by the researcher. The data collected in primary research is being collected for the **first** time and is specific to the researcher's objective or purpose* ([Primary research - Planning and organisation - WBQ National: Foundation KS4 Revision - BBC Bitesize](#))

Secondary research is research that has already been collected. ([Secondary research - Planning and organisation - WBQ National: Foundation KS4 Revision - BBC Bitesize](#))

In this study, both primary and secondary research methods are employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Primary research entails the direct collection of data through techniques such as surveys and questionnaires, enabling the researcher to obtain firsthand insights tailored to the specific research questions. This approach is particularly valuable for capturing current trends and perspectives of individuals directly affected by the issues at hand. In contrast, secondary research involves analysing existing data previously collected by others, including academic articles, government reports, and statistical databases. While secondary research provides a broader context and background for the study, it may be limited by reliance on data that could be outdated or not entirely aligned with the specific focus of the current research. Together, these methods complement each other, with primary research offering fresh insights while secondary research establishes a foundation of established knowledge, ultimately enhancing the overall findings of the study.

This chapter outlines the research design and methodological approaches employed in this study. To effectively navigate the complexities of research, the framework known as "The Research Onion," as articulated by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016), is utilised. This model provides a structured approach to understanding the layers of research design, guiding researchers in the development of their methodologies from the outer layers of philosophy to the inner layers of data collection.

At the outermost layer of the research onion lies the research philosophy, which reflects the researcher's beliefs about the nature of knowledge and the way in which it can be acquired. For this study, a pragmatic approach is adopted, acknowledging that both qualitative and quantitative methods can yield valuable insights into the experiences of police recruits. This philosophy is particularly relevant in understanding complex social phenomena, such as the dynamics of police training and the impact of protected learning time.

The next layer concerns the approach to theory development. This research employs a deductive approach, starting with existing theories and literature surrounding police training and mentorship, and then exploring how these theories manifest in the real-world experiences of recruits. This allows for the examination of whether current practices align with theoretical expectations.

Following this, the methodological choice is discussed. A qualitative method is chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the recruits' perspectives. Specifically, questionnaires will be employed to gather rich, descriptive data on their experiences, challenges, and the perceived value of protected learning time. The research methodology for this study will primarily employ qualitative approaches, focusing on understanding the experiences of recruits enrolled in the Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP) or the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) to assess the effects of staff abstraction for educational purposes on operational demands and resilience. To select participants, non-probability sampling will be used, facilitated by the researcher's role within policing. A gatekeeper is utilised to reach out to recruits, ensuring that any potential conflict of interest is avoided, and that ethical integrity and transparency are maintained throughout the recruitment process.

The layer of time horizon is also essential in this study. A cross-sectional design will be utilised, focusing on a specific point in time during the recruits' training journey. This design is beneficial for capturing the immediate impact of training practices on recruits' learning experiences. Initial participant engagement proved slow, but following the first few attempts, it became clear that using questionnaires was more effective than the original invitation letters. This approach has allowed the study to gather a diverse pool of participants while encouraging broader engagement. Participants include police personnel from various departments across different regions, including newly recruited student officers currently enrolled in educational programs and experienced officers who remain on duty during abstraction periods. The diverse backgrounds of participants allow for a comprehensive understanding of the impact of abstraction across various contexts within policing.

Finally, the innermost layer of the research onion addresses the data collection techniques. Questionnaires will be administered at various stages of the recruits' training, allowing for the collection of diverse perspectives while ensuring ethical compliance and transparency. Data collection will take place through a series of questionnaires administered at different points along the recruits' learning journeys. A structured questionnaire was developed to measure perceived workload, job satisfaction, and resilience levels during times of abstraction. The survey included Likert-scale questions and open-ended prompts to capture both quantitative and qualitative data. All aspects of the research follow the ethical guidelines and governance standards of the University of Wales Trinity St David, ensuring adherence to professional and academic ethical standards.

By following the structure of the research onion, this methodology chapter aims to clearly articulate the rationale behind the selected research methods and how they align with the objectives of the study. The data collection methods employed in this study may not effectively capture the necessary information to bolster the arguments or decisions being made. Secondary data can often be incomplete or inaccurate, influenced by various factors such as research design, sampling methods, data collection techniques, inconsistencies among data sources, researcher bias—including possible omissions—and the specific focus of the data being analysed. In this study, much of the data has been sourced from several external secondary data repositories, including published articles that provide statistics related to the recruitment of police officers through the Home Office-funded 'Operation Uplift.' Additionally, a significant amount of data has been collected from government sources, which adds depth to the analysis.

In the context of quantitative research, methods such as experiments and surveys are commonly utilised (Balnaves and Caputi, 2001). Conversely, qualitative research typically employs interviews and focus groups (Thomas, 2017). Qualitative methods offer researchers the advantage of obtaining more nuanced responses and allow for greater flexibility in exploring various themes (Bryman, 2016). Experiments, which often aim to investigate the relationships between variables, are generally conducted in controlled environments like laboratories to effectively manage extraneous factors (Walliman, 2018). This approach, as noted by McQueen and Knussen (2002), focuses primarily on psychological and physical variables, such as social behaviour, learning, and memory, which makes it less suitable for the current research. [Supernumerary and protected learning time - The Nursing and Midwifery Council \(nmc.org.uk\)](https://www.nmc.org.uk/learning-time)

Given the time constraints faced by the researcher, utilising surveys proves advantageous as they allow for efficient data collection, particularly when administered online (Bryman, 2016). Online surveys offer the benefit of eliminating geographical barriers, enabling participants to respond at their convenience (Bryman, 2016). Additionally, the anonymity of survey responses encourages honesty among participants, fostering a more open dialogue. However, a notable drawback of this method is the challenge of controlling respondent identity, especially when surveys are distributed publicly via social media.

For this study, the researcher has opted to employ paper-based surveys during the protected learning time sessions allocated to student police officers. This strategy not only increases the likelihood of a higher response rate but also accommodates the participants' time limitations, ensuring the surveys are completed effectively.

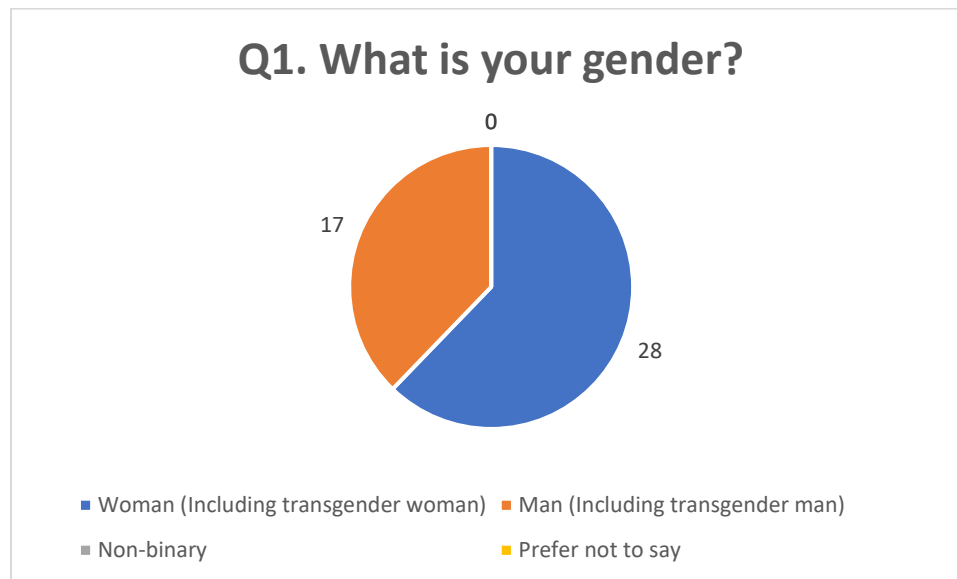
Analysis

Qualitative content analysis has been defined as:

“a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1933)

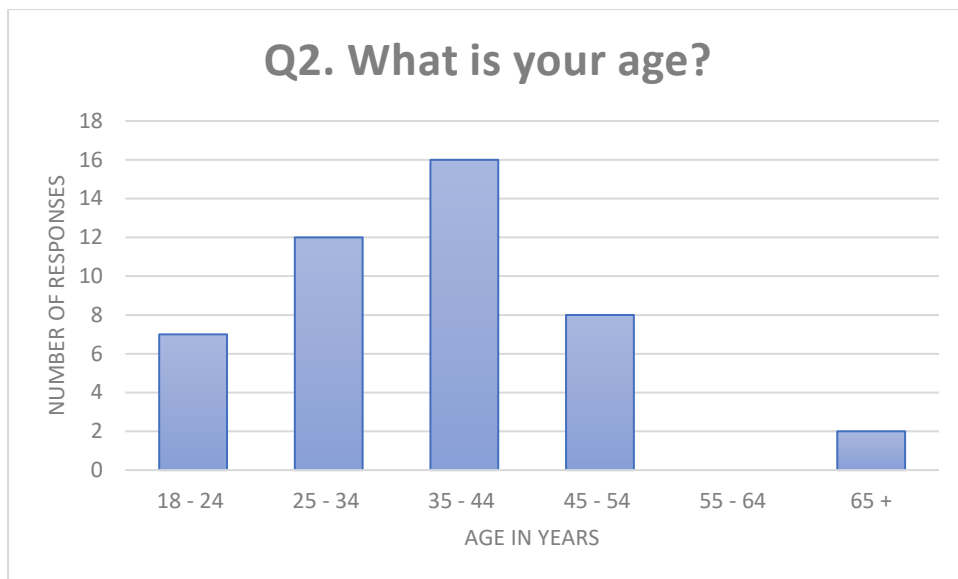
Thematic analysis was utilised to identify common challenges, impacts on team dynamics, and coping strategies reported by remaining staff. Codes were developed based on recurring themes, and excerpts were categorised to provide a rich understanding of participants' experiences.

Survey results:



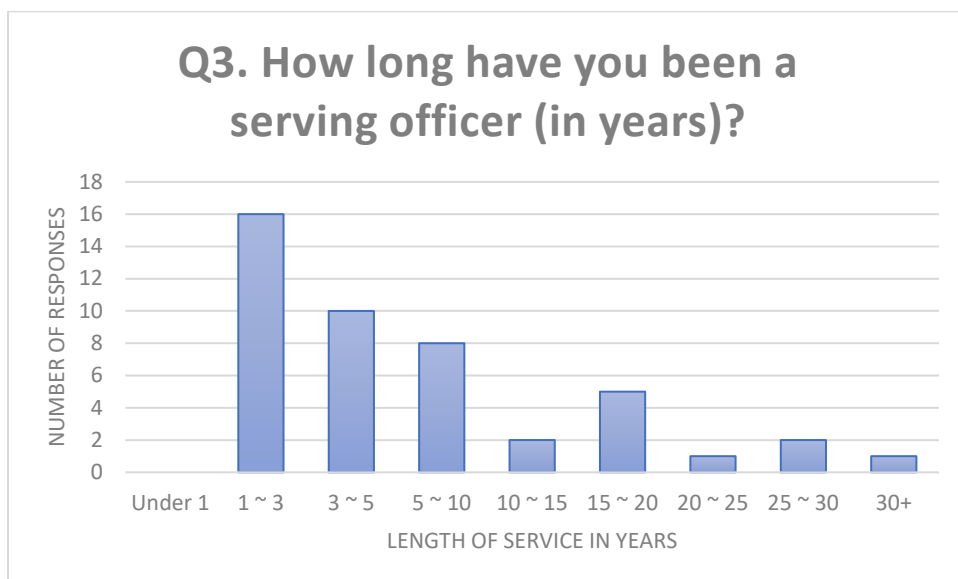
(Figure 1)

Gender Distribution: There is a higher proportion of female respondents (28) compared to male respondents (17). The gender distribution of respondents (17 males and 28 females) can be examined through Gender Role Theory, which suggests that societal expectations shape behaviours and perceptions in professional contexts. Understanding these dynamics can provide insight into how gender influences experiences and interactions within the police force. (Eagly, A. H., & Wood, W. (1999)).



(Figure 2)

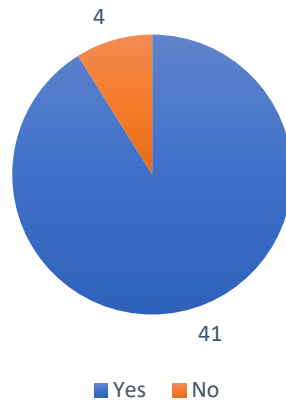
Age Range: Most respondents are between the ages of 35 and 44 (16), followed by 25 to 34 (12). The oldest group (55-64) has no respondents, indicating a younger workforce. The age demographics (with the majority falling between 25 and 44) relate to Life Course Theory, which posits that individuals' experiences are influenced by their age and the social contexts they inhabit. This demographic information helps to contextualise the perspectives and priorities of officers at different stages in their careers. (Elder, G. H., Johnson, M. K., & Crosnoe, R. (2003).



(Figure 3)

Years of Service: The majority of respondents (16) have been serving officers for 1-3 years, suggesting a relatively new cohort in the police force. Responses regarding years of service highlight a predominantly younger workforce, which can be analysed through Organizational Socialisation Theory. This theory emphasises how new recruits assimilate into organisational culture and how their limited experience may impact their perceptions of training and resource needs. (Bauer, T. N., & Erdogan, B. (2011).

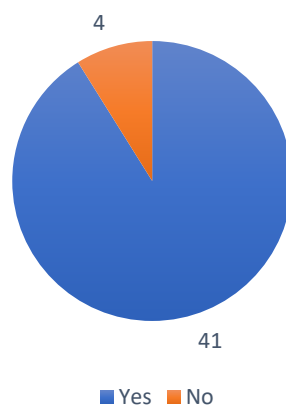
Q4. Are you aware of the Police Education and Qualifications Framework?



(Figure 4)

Awareness and Requirements: A significant majority (41 out of 45) are aware of the Police Education and Qualifications Framework and have been required to undertake study during their probation. The high level of awareness (41 out of 45) regarding the Police Education and Qualifications Framework underscores the importance of Knowledge Management Theory. This theory emphasises the necessity for organisations to cultivate and disseminate knowledge effectively, which is crucial for implementing educational initiatives within the police force. (Nonaka, I., & Takeuchi, H. (1995).

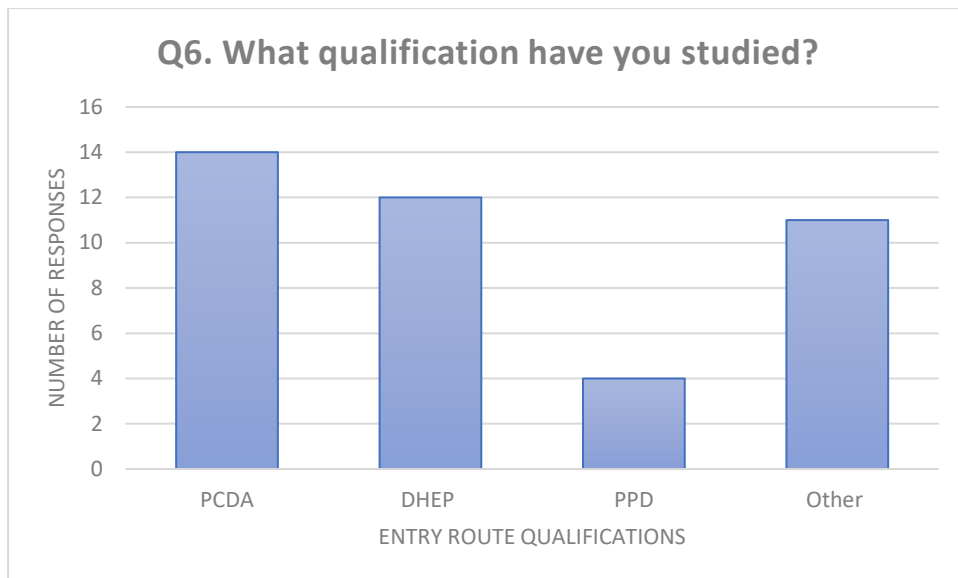
Q5. Have you been required to undertake study as part of your probation?



(Figure 5)

The requirement for study during probation (41 yes responses) aligns with Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy), which asserts that adult learners are motivated by practical applications

of knowledge. This finding suggests that officers may appreciate educational opportunities that directly enhance their job performance and service delivery. (Knowles, M. S. (1980).

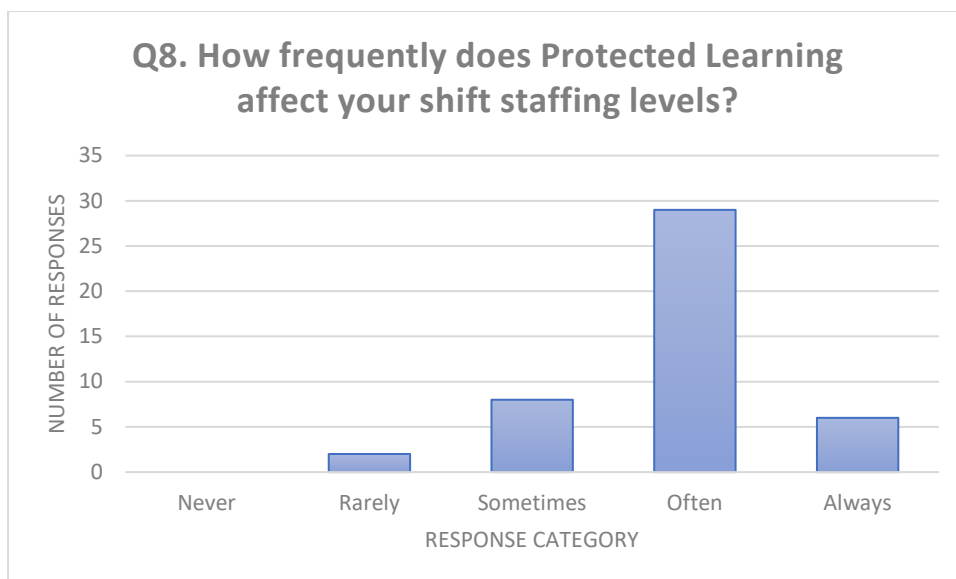


(Figure 6)



(Figure 7)

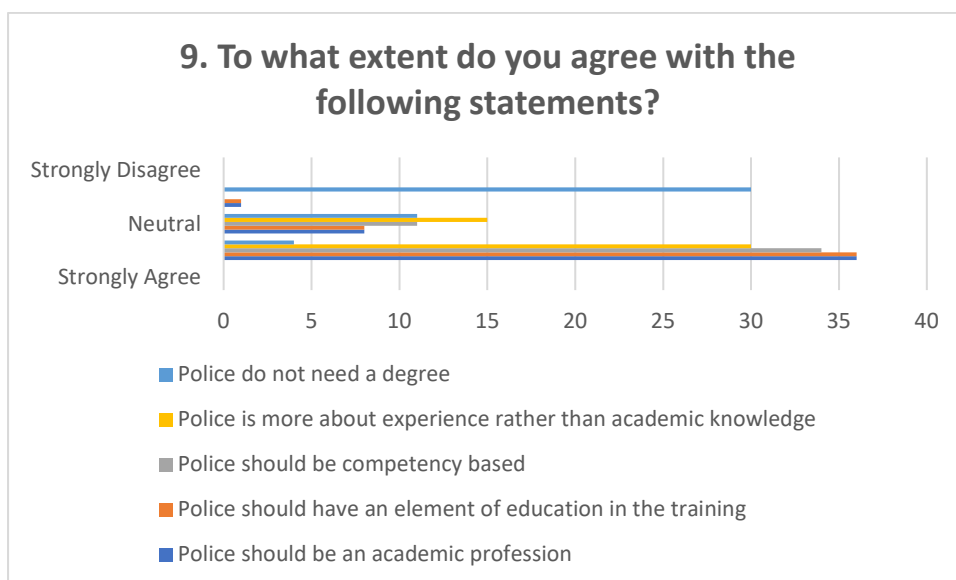
A large portion (34) expressed interest in pursuing further studies for external qualifications, highlighting a desire for professional development. The strong interest (34 respondents) in pursuing further external qualifications can be linked to Human Capital Theory, which argues that investing in education increases individuals' value and capabilities within their professions. This reflects a recognition among officers that further study can enhance their career advancement and operational effectiveness. (Becker, G. S. (1993).



(Figure 8)

Impact of Protected Learning on Staffing

The majority (29) feel that Protected Learning often affects staffing levels, indicating a perceived strain on resources and potentially affecting service delivery. The perception that protected learning often affects staffing levels (29 responses) illustrates the strain on resources, which can be examined through Resource Dependence Theory. This theory suggests that organisations must navigate external pressures and resource limitations, impacting their operational capabilities. (Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. R. (1978).



(Figure 9)

Perceptions of Police Education

There is strong agreement (36) that policing should incorporate education in training, with most respondents believing in a competency-based approach. Conversely, a minority (30) disagreed that police do not need a degree, suggesting a divide in opinion regarding the necessity of academic qualifications. The responses indicating a strong agreement that

policing should be an academic profession reflect Professionalisation Theory. This theory highlights the trend toward viewing policing as a specialised profession requiring formal education and training, impacting recruitment and retention strategies. (Abbott, A. (1988).



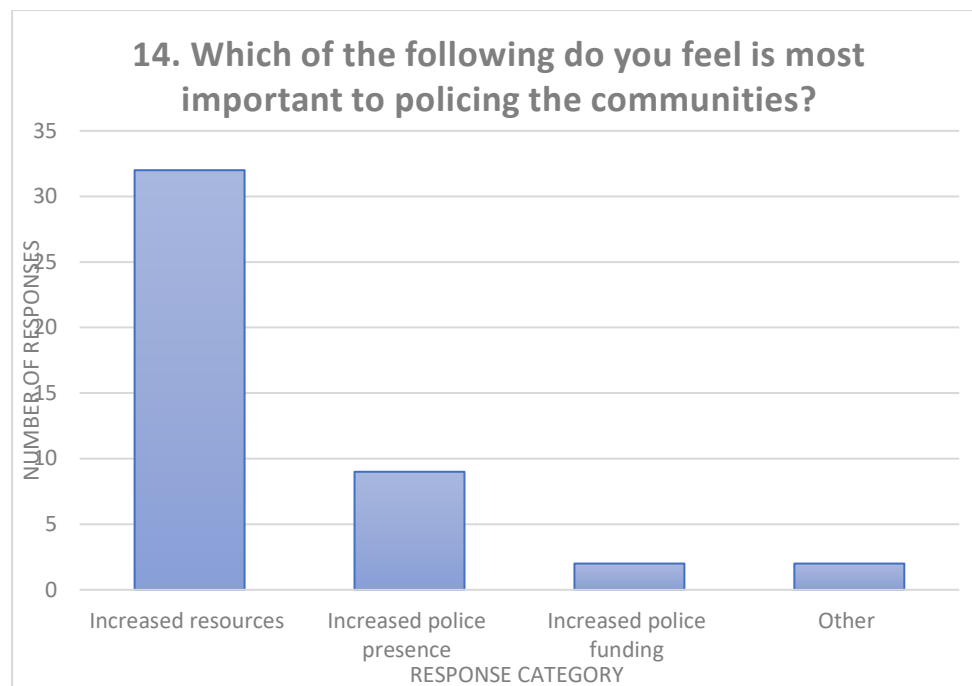
(Figure 10)

Most respondents (32) worry to some extent about staff resources in their area, reflecting concerns about operational effectiveness and community service. Concerns regarding staffing resources (32 responses indicating worry) can be contextualised using Crisis Management Theory, which suggests that organisations must proactively manage resource shortages to maintain effectiveness. This insight speaks to the need for strategic planning in addressing staffing challenges. (Coombs, W. T. (2007).



(Figure 11)

A majority (34) reported being personally affected by abstraction rates due to Protected Learning, indicating that training programs impact their daily responsibilities and workload. The high number of respondents personally affected by abstraction rates (34 yes responses) can be interpreted through the lens of Job Demands-Resources Model. This model highlights how job demands, such as increased workload due to staff shortages, can affect employee well-being and organisational performance. (Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001).



(Figure 12)

Increased resources are seen as the most critical factor for effective policing (32), suggesting that respondents prioritise the availability of personnel and tools over mere presence or funding. The emphasis on increased resources (32 responses) as essential for effective community policing aligns with Community Policing Theory. This theory underscores the necessity for adequate staffing and resources to foster positive community relationships and enhance public safety. (Kelling, G. L., & Moore, M. H. (1988). The responses indicating the need for more officers on the street resonate with Cost-Benefit Analysis in Public Sector Management, suggesting that investment in personnel directly correlates with enhanced service delivery and public safety outcomes. (Boardman, A. E., Greenberg, D. H., Vining, A. R., & Weimer, D. L. (2017).

Survey Findings

Key themes included:

Demographics: The workforce is primarily younger and predominantly female, which may influence departmental culture and dynamics.

Education and Training: There is a strong desire among officers for further educational opportunities, which aligns with a recognition of the importance of training and qualifications in policing.

Resource Concerns: Significant concerns about the impact of Protected Learning on staffing highlight a potential area for organisational improvement, as these concerns could affect morale and service quality.

Divergent Views on Education: While there is a consensus on the importance of education in policing, the debate over the necessity of degrees indicates a need for ongoing dialogue about professional standards and requirements.

Community Policing Needs: Respondents prioritize increasing resources over other factors, emphasising the importance of personnel levels in maintaining effective community policing.

Interpretation of Results

The findings highlight a complex relationship between officer abstraction for educational purposes and operational demands. While the educational development of recruits is essential for professional growth, it simultaneously imposes significant challenges on the remaining staff, impacting their resilience and overall job satisfaction. This study underscores the need for police departments to critically assess the balance between educational requirements and operational readiness.

Implications for Police Departments - To address these challenges, police departments should consider strategies that balance educational requirements with operational needs. Suggested approaches include:

Staggered Abstraction: Implementing a staggered schedule for student officer abstraction can help maintain adequate staffing levels and reduce strain on remaining personnel. By carefully planning educational commitments, departments can ensure that sufficient officers are available to meet operational demands.

Support Systems: Providing additional support, such as mental health resources, training for stress management, or temporary reinforcements during abstraction periods, can help mitigate stress and promote resilience among remaining officers. Departments may also benefit from fostering a culture of open communication, where officers feel comfortable discussing their challenges and seeking support.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Regular assessments of officer workload and well-being during and after periods of abstraction can help identify potential issues early and inform ongoing resource management strategies. By tracking these metrics, police departments can adapt their approaches to better support staff resilience.

Limitations: This study is limited by its sample size and a focus on short-term impacts, suggesting the need for further research into the long-term effects of staff abstraction on operational efficiency and officer well-being. Future studies could explore the relationship between educational outcomes and job performance, as well as the impact of various management strategies on staff morale and resilience.

Sample Composition: The study was conducted exclusively with serving police officers, which may not fully represent the perspectives of other key roles within the Organisation as a whole, such as Special Constables, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), and Investigative Officers. The inclusion of these groups could provide a broader understanding of the educational and resource needs across different positions within the police service.

Limited Geographic Scope: If the questionnaire was administered within a specific region or department, the findings may not be generalisable to all police forces. Variations in policies, community needs, and available resources could lead to different experiences and perceptions in other areas.

Response Bias: Participants may have been motivated to provide responses that reflect positively on their roles or the police service, potentially skewing the results. This self-selection bias could influence the authenticity of the answers, particularly in sensitive topics such as staffing concerns and educational requirements.

Non-Response Considerations: Although a majority of respondents completed the questionnaire, those who chose not to participate might have had significantly different views or experiences. This non-response could lead to an underrepresentation of certain opinions, particularly those critical of current practices.

Quantitative Focus: The research primarily relies on quantitative data, which may not capture the nuanced perspectives and experiences of officers. Qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could enrich the understanding of the issues identified and provide deeper insights into the challenges faced by officers.

Temporal Factors: The timing of the survey may influence responses. For example, if the questionnaire was administered during a period of heightened scrutiny or operational challenges, it might affect how respondents perceive their workload, training requirements, and resource availability.

By acknowledging these limitations, future research can be better designed to address gaps and ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the needs and perspectives of those across the whole of policing.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

The integration of student-centred learning within the Police Education and Qualifications Framework (PEQF) marks a pivotal development in police education. By applying Vygotsky's insights into social learning and the significance of contextual factors, police training programs can more effectively prepare recruits for the complexities and nuances of modern policing. This holistic approach not only enriches the classroom learning experience but also equips future officers with the essential skills and knowledge to adeptly navigate the dynamic challenges present in the operational landscape. Ultimately, this leads to more effective, community-oriented policing that can respond to the unique needs of the communities served.

Summary of Key Findings:

This study highlights that while the abstraction of new recruits for educational purposes fosters individual professional growth, it simultaneously presents considerable operational challenges for remaining personnel. These challenges significantly affect resilience and job satisfaction among existing officers. The findings underscore the necessity for strategic planning and resource management to effectively balance these competing demands within police departments. It is clear that while educational advancement is crucial, it must be approached with a mindful consideration of its implications on operational capacity and team dynamics.

Future Research Directions:

Future research endeavours should explore the long-term ramifications of officer abstraction on team dynamics, performance metrics, and the development of strategies aimed at enhancing resilience among police staff amid ongoing educational commitments. Furthermore, delving into the perspectives of recruits concerning their educational experiences and its relevance to their operational roles could yield valuable insights. Such an investigation may inform improvements to police training programmes, ensuring they are closely aligned with the real-world demands faced by officers.

Recommendations:

- 1. Enhance Educational Opportunities:** It is imperative to create more accessible pathways for further education and qualifications, potentially by incorporating flexible study options that accommodate the varied shift patterns of officers. This could include online learning modules, evening classes, or part-time programmes designed to minimise disruption to operational duties.
- 2. Address Staffing Challenges:** Police departments should thoroughly investigate how Protected Learning sessions can be better integrated into shift patterns. Developing strategies that reduce disruptions will enhance resource allocation and ensure that operational needs are met without compromising the educational advancement of recruits.
- 3. Facilitate Open Discussions:** Hosting discussions or forums that address the differing views on educational requirements within the force is essential. Such initiatives can foster an environment conducive to shared understanding and consensus-building, allowing all members to express their concerns and insights regarding educational demands.

4. Increase Resources: Advocacy for increased staffing and resources is vital to addressing the primary concern expressed by respondents: the ability of policing to effectively meet community needs. Ensuring adequate staffing not only helps in managing operational demands but also supports the well-being of existing officers who may feel overwhelmed by increased workloads.

Final Thoughts:

Understanding the operational implications of staff abstraction is crucial for police departments aiming to cultivate a resilient and effective workforce. By proactively addressing the challenges associated with educational requirements, police forces can create a supportive environment that benefits individual officers while enhancing overall service delivery to the community. The successful integration of educational commitments with operational needs not only bolsters the capabilities of new recruits but also fortifies the resilience and effectiveness of the entire police organisation. Through strategic management and a commitment to both education and operational excellence, police departments can navigate the complexities of modern policing while maintaining a strong connection to the communities they serve.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Survey Information Sheet

My name is Angela WILLIAMS and this research forms part of my BSc (Hons) Operational Policing which I am studying at University of Wales Trinity St David. This information leaflet is about a study I am carrying out which explores the impact of protected learning time on officer resilience within the Police Education Qualifications Framework.

What is the research about?

The purpose of the study is to gather information about protected learning time as part of the mandated entry routes into policing through the PEQF. As part of the study, I am asking people to complete a short survey taking no longer than 10 minutes.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is your choice whether you take part. If you do wish to take part, please continue reading and answer the questions that follow. If you do not wish to take part, please leave your questionnaire blank.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Your responses will remain anonymous. All information collected during this study will be kept strictly confidential and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

What will happen to the results?

I will be writing them up as part of a research degree. You will not be identified or named in any of the reports.

What do I do if I want to make a complaint?

If anything about this research concerns you either before, during or after your involvement, please contact my research supervisor Alison COOKE:

EMAIL: alison.cooke@uwtsd.ac.uk

Final comment

This survey is entirely voluntary. You are under no obligation to answer any of the questions. Please note that your completion and submission of the survey will be taken as evidence of your consent to participate in the study.

Appendix B – Survey Questions

Q1. What is your gender?

Woman (Including transgender woman)

Man (Including transgender man)

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

Q2. What is your age?

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 +

Q3. How long have you been a serving officer (in years)?

Under 1

1-3

3-5

5-10

10-15

15-20

20-25

25-30

30+

Q4. Are you aware of the Police Education and Qualifications Framework?

Yes

No

Q5. Have you been required to undertake study as part of your probation? (If you answer no, please go to Q7)

Yes

No

Q6. What qualification have you studied?

PCDA

DHEP

PPD

Other – (please specify)

Q7. Would you be interested in further study for external qualifications?

Yes

No

Q8. How frequently does Protected Learning affect your shift staffing levels?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

9. To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree)

Police should be an academic profession

Police should have an element of education in the training

Police should be competency based

Police is more about experience rather than academic knowledge

Police do not need a degree

Q10. To what extent do you worry about staff resources in your area?

A lot

To some extent

A little

Not at all

11. Please explain your answer to the question above.

12. Are you personally affected by the abstraction rates due to Protected Learning? (If you answered NO please skip to question 14).

Yes

No

13. Please explain your answer for the question above.

14. Which of the following do you feel is most important to policing the communities?

Increased resources

Increased police presence

Increased police funding

Other

15. If you answered 'Other' to the above question, please explain.