



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
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BSc (Hons) Professional Police Practice

LEVEL 4 - 40 Credits

**Workbook title: Competency Based Workbook 1
(PCDA)**

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

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FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMME

Module title: Professional Police Practice 1 (PCDA)

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.

Area of Professional Practice covered, (called elements in your module descriptor):

- Wellbeing and Resilience
- Communication Skills
- Managing Conflict
- Valuing Difference and Inclusion
- Criminal Justice
- Decision making, discretion
- Conducting Investigations
- Criminal Justice (Managing offenders)

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/agh-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 will be provided by university staff as part of your initial training day. 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 during the initial training day 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.

The content of this workbook should be your own work. Do not allow anyone else to see your work or use your work for their own submissions.

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 particular document to insert your text / answer within each section of this workbook;*
- *You should upload your completed document as a saved pdf of this workbook; if this is not possible then a Worddoc 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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	Confirmation of Confidentiality and Plagiarism <i>This is confirmed by submitting through Turnitin</i>	

Task 1

Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum: Wellbeing and Resilience

Guidance:

Focussing on your initial 6 months of learning and since being attested as a Police Constable, outline the coping strategies you have applied to develop resilience and minimise stress.

1000 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

ANSWER:

Within this essay I will be reflecting upon my initial six month period since being attested as a Police Constable, and the methods that I used to manage stress and to build resilience. The approaches that I adopted during this time were the use of exercise and talking with friends and family. I will be using the Gibbs Reflective Cycle (The University of Edinburgh, 2020) in order to conduct this reflection.

Stress is the reaction within the human body to a threat or feeling under pressure. It can affect the mood and feelings of the individual and if prolonged can lead to severe exhaustion, frequently referred to as burnout (National Health Service, n.d.). Hurley (2022) states that resilience can be identified as having the means and capability to successfully adapt to internal and external demands.

The description element of my reflection outlines that during my initial six month training period, I found myself experiencing stress from an educational perspective on top of the stress of starting a new job and encountering new people. To deal with this stress, I would regularly attend the gym, play football and go for walks with the family dog. I also talked to my friends, family and colleagues when I could feel my stress level peaking.

With regards to my feelings, I can remember feeling positive about training for a role that I had worked so hard to obtain however this was contrasted by feelings of anxiety due to moving into a new and unfamiliar environment. Meadows (2016, p22-23) supports this feeling as being normal, by likening starting a new job to being in “threat mode”, whereby an urge to flee a situation emerges because of a fear of being identified as a fraud, due to unconscious incompetence. I also recall feeling nervous and stressed in the build up to written exams and practical exercises.

The evaluation stage of my reflection allows me to look objectively at what went well, and what did not, with my experience. Exercising daily helped to provide me with an alternative focus from work and the elements of it that were causing me stress. This had a positive impact on my overall mood. I found that exercise outdoors in particular, whether that be taking the dog for a walk or playing football, had the better overall benefit for me, leaving me in a better mood and helping to clear my head and thoughts. I did find however that time management became difficult on some days when trying to balance work, exercise and family life. As well as this, these two particular means of managing stress were not always practical in every circumstance, for example, immediately before sitting an exam.

When analysing my experiences, my research directed me towards Jackson (2013, p. 16) who states that being physically active affects the hormonal responses within the human body, in particular the

neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin, and that these are responsible for mood and behaviour changes within a person. This could explain why I reported feeling in a more positive mood personally, and less stressed, post exercise. In addition to this, it has been studied that performing exercise as a break or time-out from the stressor itself can be a contributing factor to overall stress and anxiety reduction within a person (Breus and O'Connor, 1998). I believe that this explains why even an action as simple as taking the dog for a walk was beneficial for me with regards to managing stress levels, as it provided a change of scenery and the removal of myself from the environment that was causing me stress.

Dreher (2019) was a useful source of reading for me when analysing my use of communication with friends, family, and colleagues, stating that "verbalizing our negative feelings to friends has been a source of relief for centuries". This confirmed to me that the benefits I had felt by voicing my concerns to friends and family were also shared by other people from all walks of life, who would have experienced stress from a varied number of sources. This research led me to Lieberman *et al.* (2007) who published their findings that putting your feelings into words, or "affect labelling", can have a negative effect on the activation of the amygdala, which is the part of the brain responsible for regulating emotions. Their research also identified that this practice did not necessarily need to be verbal, and that writing about one's feelings can also reap the same benefit. This would explain the calming effect that I found from speaking through my worries with trusted individuals and the overall reduction of the amount of stress that I was experiencing, as well as highlighting other mechanisms for me to trial moving forward.

In addition to this, I feel that this coping strategy was beneficial for my ability to build resilience as I now know that this process works for me, and I am aware of who I can turn to when I begin to feel stressed or anxious. Mind (2022) states that one of the key factors in building resilience is having a good support network, which supports this deduction.

My evaluation highlighted to me that exercising and talking with friends and family were not always appropriate, especially where time constraints existed. In response to this, I have explored other options for stress management that can be carried out in a shorter timeframe. Breathing exercises can help a person to relax in stressful situations and are less time consuming to conduct. Slow breathing is associated with being in a relaxed state, and so performing exercises to mimic this can result in an actual increase in relaxation (Harvard Health Publishing, 2020).

In conclusion I have learned that there are scientifically proved benefits to both of the coping mechanisms that I implemented in order to manage stress and build resilience. This has been reinforced by my own positive experiences and so moving forward I shall continue to use these strategies. An action plan for me in the future is to trial the use of breathing exercises in more dynamic or swiftly developing cases of stress, in order to better manage these emotions in these circumstances.

[Word Count: 1030]

Task 2

Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum: Communication Skills, Managing Conflict, Valuing Difference and Inclusion

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

Give a brief description of the incident including social and legislative contexts and any relevant cultural, ethnicity and language issues.

Review the fundamental elements of effective communication used (verbal, non-verbal, active listening skills, open and closed questions, building rapport and negotiation skills).

Describe the process for determining whether the use of force was necessary in a conflict situation (including any theories or models underpinning the causes of conflict within policing interventions – e.g. Betari's Box, The Drama triangle, Emotional versus rational brain) and provide a reflection on the outcome of the incident.

Your reflection must illustrate your understanding and application of core principles of ethics, equality, diversity and human rights, as well as any relevant Code of Practice considerations, culturally sensitive practice and language preference.

1500 words (+/- 10%: *include your actual word count at the end of each section*)

ANSWER:

Within this essay I will be reflecting upon an incident in which I have played a significant role as a Police Constable, and the methods that I used to communicate effectively with the persons involved. I will also be describing the process by which the necessity for the use of force was determined, whilst also considering the role of ethics and legislation with regards to this decision making. I will be using the Gibbs Reflective Cycle (The University of Edinburgh, 2020) in order to conduct this reflection.

Conflict management can be identified as “the practice of being able to identify and managing conflicts sensibly, fairly, and efficiently” (PeopleHum, n.d.). In a policing context, it is the ability of the police to resolve conflict with members of the public, which can arise from a varied range of encounters. It centres around the non-use of force where possible and when utilised effectively can lead to safer resolution, less assaults on officers and improved public safety (College of Policing, n.d.).

The incident I am reflecting on was in relation to a male that was required to be arrested due to an offence of assault against his female partner. I was requested by two female colleagues to accompany them whilst they carried out the arrest, due to the fact that the male had committed a violent offence and was also reported to be a bodybuilder. There was information to suggest that the male was currently situated at his gym. The male was subsequently arrested.

When attending this incident, I recall feeling nervous with my heart rate elevated, and a slight feeling of sickness in my stomach. These are natural responses to conflict situations as the “fight or flight” instinct within the human body kicks in, which increases adrenaline and blood flow, in order to provide a person with a burst of energy to effectively deal with the situation they are presented with (Cleveland Clinic, 2021).

I also recall feeling very conscious of each involved person’s safety and rights, including the male suspect. I was aware from my police training that every person deserves to be afforded the same treatment, regardless of their situation or circumstances. This is outlined within the Code of Ethics (College of Policing, 2014), which identifies a series of nine policing principles and ten standards of professional behaviour to be adhered to by police employees.

Through evaluating my experience, I can identify elements that went well. Firstly, the male remained calm, and his dignity was protected. I believe that this was achieved by initially introducing myself to the male in order to make the interaction more personal. I took the time to listen to what he had to say in relation to what was happening and relayed what he had told me back to him to demonstrate that I had a correct understanding of it. I maintained open palms when engaging with him and tried to adopt a relaxed posture, smiling where appropriate. I also explained to him step by step what was taking place as well as why it was taking place, which I believe enabled me to build a level of trust and understanding between us.

Secondly, no persons were injured, and the male was effectively arrested. This was a key part of the interaction as it was imperative that the necessity of the arrest was considered, as outlined in Code G of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (Home Office, 2012). The act of arresting a person violates their right to liberty (*Human Rights Act 1998*) and so the “necessity test” is an important consideration to make whilst conducting an arrest.

An element of the interaction that did not go well was that when originally encountering the male, my colleagues and I proceeded to “corner” him and begin to close down the space between us and him. This caused him to become defensive and ask for personal space, which in hindsight could have escalated the situation.

The analysis stage of my reflection allows me to review the incident and gain an understanding of what happened. Non-verbal communication and active listening, in particular the LEAPS model (Listen, Empathise, Ask Questions, Paraphrase, Summarise) are tactics endorsed by the Association of Chief Police Officers within the Personal Safety Manual (College of Policing, 2020). UK Essays (2018) notes that non-verbal signals can account for ninety three percent of overall communication and are inclusive of facial expressions, eye contact and gestures.

Further to this, non-verbal communication forms a part of the concept of active listening. Tyagi (2013) outlines that active listening is “listening in a way that demonstrates interest and encourages continued speaking”. They present that active listening is the “single most useful and important listening skill” due to the process of the listener actively verifying their understanding of what has been said. They summarise that active listening is important for showing support, resolving problems, and building rapport. Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990, p. 285) outline that the presence of good rapport allows for a high level of influence and responsiveness to occur between the persons involved.

My research in relation to these communication skills has highlighted to me how important they are within the larger picture of conflict management. Effective communication can assist in gaining a

degree of influence over a person, which in turn can be applied to persuade them to follow a course of action that they initially may have been opposed to, for example, being arrested. In addition to this, my research has shown me that as a large proportion of communication is carried through non-verbal actions, adopting the right approach when dealing with a person is key to attaining a successful outcome. I believe that my ability to employ these communication skills with the male in this incident helped me to achieve the desired outcome of the arrest of the male with little confrontation, and the male exhibiting compliance with being handcuffed.

Handcuffing is an example of the use of force, which is a highly monitored element of policing. The code of ethics (College of Policing, 2014) features the use of force as one of the ten standards of professional behaviour, dictating that force should only be used where necessary and proportionate. My employer manages the use of force by adopting a policy that a “use of force form” is submitted on every occasion in order to record what force was used and why it was justified.

When considering the use of force, my research directed me to two models of conflict management: Betari’s Box and The Drama Triangle. From analysing these models, I am able to identify how within this incident I was able to determine that only the minimum use of force was required when arresting the male, namely handcuffing.

Mind Tools (n.d.) explains that Betari’s Box illustrates how our attitudes influence the behaviour that we exhibit and that this in turn influences the attitudes and behaviours of others, following a cyclical path around to the behaviours of others influencing my attitude and so forth. Based upon this, I can deduce that non-verbal communication and active listening are closely linked with this model of conflict management. The subtle actions and signals used when implementing these concepts can impact on the response generated from the other person. I believe that my positive attitude towards the male within this incident allowed me to portray an approachable behaviour, which the male reciprocated, resulting in minimum force being required.

The Drama Triangle model features three roles: the victim, the rescuer and the persecutor. It explains that each of these roles are interchangeable and that at one point every person will fulfil each role. To escape the triangle, victims must become survivors, rescuers must become teachers and persecutors must become challengers (Kress, 2016). Within this reflection, I initially associated the male involved as being the “persecutor” as he was identifiable as an offender. However, after researching this model further and considering it from his point of view, I would revise this to assigning him to the victim role. He perceived himself to be under attack from my two female colleagues attempting to arrest him, and so I was able to fulfil the rescuer role by building a rapport with him and coaching him to comply with the arrest as it was in his best interests to do so. This has provided an important learning point for me, further demonstrating the close relationship between communication skills and conflict management, but also the relevance of perspective. I believe that my ability to fulfil this role within this model also contributed to the minimum amount of force being required.

Whilst analysing the element of this incident that did not go well, my research has led me to the Emotional versus Rational Brain model of conflict management. Kahneman (2011) describes this as the brain having two systems of thought – one that is instinctive and emotional, and one that is slow and logical. With regards to this incident, I believe that my “emotional brain” was responsible for approaching the male initially, instinctively reacting to the impact factors evident from the male’s physique and wanting to gain control of him, pre-empting an escalation in conflict. However, when he has reacted defensively to this, I believe that my “rational brain” has been able to take over, implementing the skills and models outlined above, allowing for a better result from the incident.

In conclusion, I can identify that I have developed my learning and understanding surrounding communication and conflict management, and the importance of developing these skills. As an action plan going forward, I will make conscious efforts to avoid making decisions using my “emotional brain” by taking time to implement the communication approaches that I have found to be effective whilst dealing with this incident.

[Word Count: 1627]

Task 3

Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum: Criminal Justice, Valuing difference and inclusion

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

Give a brief description of a relevant incident including social and legislative contexts and any relevant cultural, ethnicity and language issues.

Explain and reflect on your responsibilities and procedures in line with the relevant Codes of Practice to support victims and witnesses through the criminal justice system.

Illustrate how policing values were engaged, as well as any other considerations including culturally sensitive practice and language preference.

1500 words (+/- 10%: *include your actual word count at the end of each section*)

ANSWER:

Within this essay I will be reflecting upon an incident that I dealt with as a Police Constable, focussing on the responsibility that I had to effectively support victims through the criminal justice system (CJS), but also the role of policing values and other considerations whilst engaging with victims. This incident concerned two adults that live with learning disabilities and mental health conditions, and an abandoned emergency call from their address. I will be using the Gibbs Reflective Cycle (The University of Edinburgh, 2020) in order to conduct this reflection.

Police officers must adhere to the Victims Code of Practice (Ministry of Justice, 2020a). The code defines a victim as “a person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm, or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence”, and provides twelve rights that a victim is entitled to. This was one of my main considerations when attending this incident.

Learning disabilities are a series of conditions that can cause a person to experience difficulty in developing new skills. They can be diagnosed on a scale from mild to severe, and this affects the level of support that an individual requires. People that live with learning disabilities struggle with activities such as socialising and communicating and may need longer in order to understand and interact with others (Mencap, n.d.).

Mayoclinic (2019) explains that mental illness, or mental health disorders, are “a range of conditions that affect mood, thinking and behaviour”, with common symptoms of feeling sadness, confusion and displaying an inability to cope with stressful situations.

Both of these elements were important for me to manage when dealing with this incident, taking careful consideration around communicating and the language used to do so.

The incident that I am reflecting on was in relation to a call made to police where a disturbance could be heard in the background, and then the line was cleared. The phone number was linked to an address that I subsequently attended with a colleague. Upon arrival we were greeted by an emotional female who stated her male partner was in the bedroom. I spoke with the female and took steps to assist in calming her. I then proceeded to speak with the male and my colleague spoke with the female, separately. I had identified that they both had mild learning disabilities and suffered with anxiety and depression. It was eventually established that no offences had occurred and that the couple had been involved in an argument, taking place due to the female's declining mental health. The use of police powers was not required.

When attending this incident, I recall feeling relatively calm, which I believe was due to my previous policing experience, as I have liaised with people from a variety of backgrounds in this role. I also remember feeling a weight of pressure, however, as my police training had highlighted the importance of safeguarding and support for victims, and that there were a plethora of policies and legislation that may be applicable that I would need to implement or act upon.

My research identified to me that victim engagement and co-operation with a criminal investigation can be improved by developing a good relationship between them and the police at an early stage, and some victims may require extra support if they are deemed vulnerable. It is important for police officers to be aware of all the services available (Bryant and Bryant, 2020, p. 297). Due to this, I believe that the pressure I felt was justified, therefore a normal response to this situation. Being conscious of this, allowed me to be wider ranging in my considerations when dealing with this incident.

Through evaluating the incident, I can identify aspects of my response that I feel went well and areas to improve upon. I believe that being able to separate the parties to obtain uncontaminated versions of events was a successful point of my response, as when attending the address initially, it was not clear who, if anyone, was the victim. In order to conduct my role in supporting victims through the CJS I needed to identify the victim and ascertain what had happened. I also feel that effective communication was a positive element of my response as I was able to identify the additional needs that both parties may require moving forward, as well as ensure both parties felt listened to and understood.

An area that I could improve on moving forward would be in relation to the Public Protection Referral Form (PPN). Frontline staff submit these when attending incidents that involve vulnerable persons and they can trigger responses from other police departments (such as public protection unit) as well as outside partner agencies such as social services. They are also important in assessing the level of risk posed to a victim (HMIC, 2015). Whilst I was aware of my responsibility to complete a PPN, I initially neglected the domestic element, and needed to be reminded by my colleague that an argument between the couple had still taken place and so this section would also require completing.

The analysis stage of my reflection allows me to understand how I was able to achieve the positive outcomes as well as how I can improve. The Competency and Values Framework (College of Policing, 2017), as well as the Code of Ethics (College of Policing, 2014), provide the standards and qualities expected of Police Officers, when dealing with persons from all backgrounds and lifestyles. I believe that I was able to demonstrate the clusters "resolute, compassionate and committed" and "inclusive, enabling and visionary leadership" by showing emotional awareness towards the initially

distressed female and then afterwards providing support relating to both parties' needs, directing them to agencies such as their GP (as they had disclosed the female was no longer taking her medication) but also Victim Care, which is a service set up to provide support to victims. Providing this signposting to services is a Right outlined in the Victim's Code and so I believe my adherence to this contributed to the successful outcome.

The Victims Code also stipulates that every victim has the right to understand and to be understood. Whilst engaging with both parties, I believe that successful communication was achieved, and that I was able to advance this right, by speaking using language that they would understand and avoided using technical terms that may not have been suitable. I also considered whether an appropriate adult would be necessary in order to ensure that this understanding was achieved. An article published on the Police National Legal Database (PNLD, 2021) highlights that the term "appropriate adult" is used in CODE C of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, and so therefore does not apply to victims, only suspects. However, the article proceeds to remind the reader that there are still duties with regards to the care and treatment of victims and witnesses, which I believe is reference to the Right aforementioned in this paragraph, and so the use of an appropriate adult could be beneficial in achieving this.

In connection to this, whilst engaging with both parties I was able to consider the requirement of Special Measures, and if deemed appropriate, a Witness Interview Booklet (WIB). The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS, 2021) states that special measures were introduced by Government legislation (*Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999*) to support vulnerable witnesses in the and allow the facilitation of the gathering of best evidence, as well as reducing some of the stress that arises from attending court. The Victim's code provides that consideration of special measures should be made at the earliest opportunity and the use of a WIB allows police to achieve the gathering of best evidence and to assess the necessity of special measures. My research has shown me that consideration of both special measures and an appropriate adult are vital in supporting victims through the CJS as well as allowing for me to achieve success when responding to this incident. It would enable me to provide meaningful support for them, should they have required it.

In relation to the PPN, my analysis indicates that I was aware that the PPN was a key part of supporting the victim and safeguarding them, as well as contributing to the Right outlined in the Victim's Code to refer them to support services, however I did not initially consider the Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment element. I believe this was due to me becoming focussed on the mental health implications of the incident and developed a streamlined objective of completing the Adult at Risk section only. This was a developmental learning point for me and is an area that I will aim to improve going forward, taking a more holistic view of the incident.

Moving forward there are other considerations that I am aware that I could have made in relation to supporting a victim through the CJS. On this occasion, however, I did not need to implement them as there was ultimately no crime committed. The first of these is the offering of a Victim Personal statement. This is another Right stipulated in the Victim's Code and allows for the impact of the crime on the victim to be recorded. Additionally, I would consider the use of bail conditions or issuing a Domestic Violence Protection Notice. These would allow me to implement restrictions that could protect the victim whilst they are moving through the CJS, after the interview of the suspect.

In conclusion, I believe that through attending this incident, and my subsequent research, I have developed my understanding of the vast amount of tools that the police can use in order to effectively support a victim through the CJS. I have also identified an area for me to improve on when dealing with future incidents in my role.

[Word Count: 1637]

Task 4

Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum:

Decision making and discretion, Conducting Investigations and Criminal Justice (Managing offenders)

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

Give a brief description of the situation including social and legislative contexts and any relevant cultural, ethnicity and language issues. **Reflect** on how you applied the National Decision Model (NDM) to assist in resolving this incident. **Consider** the role of discretion in the decision-making process.

Explain your responsibilities with regards to the provision of the CPIA when conducting this investigation including when managing the offender and suspects and recording and retaining significant information.

Illustrate how policing values were engaged particularly through an **analysis** of the potential impact of bias on the decision-making process.

1500 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

ANSWER:

Within this essay I will be reflecting upon an incident that I dealt with as a Police Constable. I will be addressing the use of the National Decision Model (NDM), including the role of discretion, the responsibilities involved with conducting investigations and the impact of bias on decision-making. The incident that I am reflecting on involved a male offender suspected of offences of theft, assault and burglary. I will be using the Gibbs Reflective Cycle (The University of Edinburgh, 2020) in order to conduct this reflection.

The College of Policing (2013) outlines that police decision-making is often complex and can regularly be based on conflicting information. The police adopted the NDM in order to have a single model of decision making across all police forces and departments. It has the code of ethics at its centre (College of Policing, 2014) with five stages moving in a cyclical way around it: Gather information and intelligence, assess threat and risk and develop a working strategy, consider powers and policies, identify options and contingencies, take action and review. It encourages staff to act in line with the code of ethics, exercising discretion where appropriate, and provides a model for rationalising and evidencing decision making.

Police discretion is the freedom of choice that Police Officers have and the use of their professional judgement in resolving situations, by considering what is lawful and unlawful, and what is reasonable and unreasonable, whilst remaining inside the constraints of the law (Schubert, 2022).

The incident I am reflecting on relates to a fight that was reported to police taking place between a male and a member of security staff. The male was observed by colleagues, via live CCTV, leaving the

shop and then attending another shop and stealing an item of food. I attended the location of the male, who had been followed uninterruptedly on CCTV by colleagues, and arrested him for the offences of assault and theft. This male was also identified by colleagues as being responsible for a burglary the previous day. I obtained a statement from the victim as well as CCTV relating to all of the incidents outlined. I interviewed the male and further arrested him for the offence of burglary at the commencement of the interview. The male was subsequently given a conditional caution.

I recall feeling an adrenaline rush when attending this incident due to the unknown of what I would be greeted with upon arrival. I was also experiencing anticipation in relation to the investigation that would follow the arrest, and nervous of ensuring that I followed all of the correct procedures involved.

When evaluating my actions at this incident I can identify elements that I believe went well. I believe that I was able to use the NDM effectively, using all stages of the model appropriately. I was also pleased with the prompt and effective investigation that I was able to conduct after the arrest which I believe is another positive for me to take from the incident.

In the analysis stage of my reflection, I can seek to understand why the elements outlined above went well. I believe that I was able to use the NDM appropriately as throughout the decision-making I made conscious efforts to minimise the effects of bias.

Bias is a series of cognitive shortcuts that the brain has, often created in childhood, and results in a person having tendencies or prejudice, for or against, a particular subject or person. It is caused by past experiences often based around people that are “like” or “unlike” the individual. They can be harmful and are often derived from stereotypes, resulting in discriminatory practices. Types of bias include: “unconscious bias” where persons are unaware of their prejudice, “anchoring bias” where persons make decisions based on the first piece of information they receive, “confirmation bias” where persons only seek information to support what they already believe, “attribution bias” where persons make assumptions about others’ actions based on what they already know (Psychology Today, n.d.).

In relation to this incident, I believe I was at risk of being influenced by “anchoring bias” – as the first information I had received about this male was that he had assaulted someone – and “attribution bias” – as during the encounter he disclosed to me that he was homeless, so there was a risk of assuming that he had committed the offences in order to feed himself or to fund a substance addiction. To counter this, I consciously implemented the principles outlined in the Code of Ethics (College of Policing, 2014) by treating the male fairly and with respect, maintaining the integrity of my decision-making process.

Another factor that I considered when implementing the NDM was the role of discretion. My research has indicated to me that there is much debate surrounding discretion. Reiner (quoted in Poyser, 2004, p.7) surmises that without the Police’s use of discretion, the legal system would become overburdened and collapse due to the lack of resources. Bronnitt and Stenning (2011) state that discretion has had its in place within the Police since its inception by Robert Peel. They report that discretion is beneficial as in some circumstances a caution or warning may be more appropriate than an arrest or formal punishment. An offence may have been committed through ignorance rather than with intent, and so a discretionary approach could help to build trust and confidence between the police and the community. Conversely, Crotty (2016) identifies that discretion opens the door to promoting discrimination, unpredictability and injustice within the Police, allowing officers to apply their own prejudices.

Discretion inevitably played a part in my decision-making, particularly in the “take action and review” stage of the NDM. At this point I had identified what options were available to me and it was now my choice which course of action was to be pursued to resolve the incident. I recall feeling pressure in this moment to make the correct decision and to avoid criticism or accusations of discrimination. In my opinion, I feel that if discretion was removed from the equation, and there was a “zero tolerance” approach adopted by police, it would remove this pressure which could subsequently reduce some of the stress experienced by officers. Nonetheless, I cannot ignore the relevance of the benefits outlined above from my research and ultimately, I feel leaving a degree of control with the officer at the scene leads to better decision-making. It can minimise the “hands tied” scenario where the choice has been removed however a less authoritarian approach may be more suitable.

An area that I feel I can improve on when dealing with future incidents is to undertake a more detailed gathering of information, as I initially arrested the male for an assault however he was later charged more appropriately with a public order offence. I could achieve this by asking colleagues to assist in detaining the male, while I liaised with the victim to gather further details of the alleged offence.

Through analysing the investigation that I conducted, I believe that I was able to conduct a successful investigation as I ensured that I conducted a fair and legal investigation. Government legislation (*Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996*) stipulates that a criminal investigation is “an investigation conducted by police officers with a view to it being ascertained whether a person should be charged with an offence, or whether a person charged with an offence is guilty of it”. I was aware that I had responsibilities to uphold under the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act (CPIA) Code of Practice (Ministry of Justice, 2020b) and so it was important that I adhered to it.

The code of practice outlines that during an investigation, all lines of enquiry must be pursued even if these enquiries point away from the suspect. I achieved this by ensuring that when attending the scene of the incident, I sought details of other witnesses that may be able to confirm or negate the male’s involvement. I also sought formal identification, from colleagues, of the male captured on CCTV committing the offences. In interview, I gave him the opportunity to provide an alibi or explanation to negate his involvement in the offences.

It is also outlined in the code that material relevant to the investigation must be retained in a suitable format (such as digitally if the original is perishable) until a decision is made to pursue criminal proceedings, and in that case, retained at least until they are acquitted or convicted. If they are convicted, relevant material must be retained until at least six months from the conviction date. I ensured that I achieved this by storing the CCTV obtained through the investigation on the secure police database, as well as copies of the statements obtained, and the suspects recorded interview. These will remain there until the relevant date.

The code of practice also addresses the procedure of disclosure. It stipulates that all material involved in, or generated from, the investigation must be disclosed to the prosecutor whether it is relevant, used or unused. There are specific forms for these to be documented on respectively. The prosecutor must then decide if any of the material must be disclosed to the defence out of fairness as it may support their case. There was no material generated from the investigation that undermined the prosecution case for me to disclose, however this was an important consideration for me to make.

In conclusion, I have been able to dissect the process of decision-making and the influences that bias and discretion can have on it. My reflection and research have also furthered my knowledge and

understanding of the NDM as well as investigations and the importance of the relevant code of practice. I have been able to identify an action plan moving forward, in relation to gathering information, to allow me to become a better decision maker in the future.

[Word Count: 1644]

Task 5

Personal Development Plan (PDP) / Learning Plan.

As part of your reflective process, please use this table to aid you in identifying the next steps for development. This is equivalent to 500 words. Please note that this not the actual number of words you need to use, the wordcount reflects the thought and research you put into it.

Identified area for development	How it will be achieved	Who can provide support?	Timeline
Develop strategies for coping with short term stress	• Implementation of breathing exercises • Research other methods of coping mechanisms	• Colleagues • Friends and Family • Occupational Health	6 months
Develop restraint on using the “rational brain”	• Attend a wide range of incidents in order to gain experience of dealing with different types of person	• Colleagues • Learning and Development (Officer Safety)	6 months
Improve PPN awareness and develop a more holistic approach	• Attend incidents to develop professional judgement and awareness	• Colleagues • Specialist Units (PPU)	6 months
Seek as much information as possible	• Request support from colleagues when dealing with incidents	• Colleagues • Line managers	6 months

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The bibliography should only include sources referenced within the workbook using the Harvard referencing system. Information about referencing in written assignments and how to avoid plagiarism can be found on Moodle. It is important that you are aware of the importance of ensuring that the work submitted is your original work.

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