

BSc (Hons) Professional Police Practice

LEVEL 6 - 40 Credits

**Workbook title: Competency Based
Workbook 3 (PCDA)
8000 Words**

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

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FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMME

Module title: Professional Police Practice 3 (PCDA) BMPP6000D

Workbook Guidance

Please read these notes carefully; they provide essential information.

What is the workbook for?

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

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

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

How should the workbook be presented?

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

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

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

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

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

How is the workbook assessed?

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

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

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

Once submitted your workbook will be assessed and marked independently.

Confidentiality

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

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

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

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

NOTE

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

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

Dyslexia and other special circumstances

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

Guidance:

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

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	Total	8000

Task 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

2000 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

ANSWER:

This essay will reflect upon how the College of Policing is professionalising policing in the UK. By reflecting on this topic, the essay will explore what professionalisation means and how it can be achieved. Furthermore, the essay will reflect upon my own position within the police in my final year of probation, including how my role has changed over the course of the probation period as well as reflecting upon how I have sought to fulfil the role of a professional police officer. This essay will structure itself into three main themes based on Borton's model of reflection, which are 'what', 'so what', 'now what' (Mulryan-Kyne, 2020). 'What' will refer to what professionalisation is, 'so what' will refer to why professionalisation has been important for police in the UK, how it has been achieved, and how it has impacted on my role as a police officer, and 'now what' will reflect upon how my role has changed and what I will utilise from knowledge gained as part of this reflection.

Firstly, before one can understand how policing in the UK has been professionalised, an understanding of what is meant by professionalisation is needed. Wilensky (1964) suggests that a profession is a role which is technical, specialised, based on a standardised body of knowledge that can only be obtained through training, and a role that follows a set of rules or professional normalities. Furthermore, it could be argued that professionalisation can refer to the obtainment of licencing or certification in order to ensure standards are met upon completion of training and thereby allow the professional to act autonomously based on the knowledge they have gained through obtaining accreditation (Reed, et al., 2019). Moreover, the skills and knowledge the professional has learned are then transferable to the same role within a different organisation due to the training and accreditation being standardised for the profession, such as a medical practitioner transferring to a different hospital within the UK (Wilensky, 1964). However, it could be argued that professionalisation is a somewhat contradictory concept. While professionalisation seeks to establish professionals who have become experts in their field, with the ability to act autonomously in the best interest of the service user, client, or output (Neal & Morgan, 2000), often bureaucratisation can occur as a result of professionalisation, inhibiting autonomy, having a non-complementary effect on each other (Hall, 1968).

In regard to the professionalisation of the police service in the UK, one could argue that the College of Policing has played a significant role. The College of Policing was established in 2012 in order to set standards, support professional development and share knowledge (College of Policing, 2023). These three principles underpin the College of Policing's strategic ambition which it lists as building trust and a fair culture, transforming leadership in the police, career long professional development, enhancing core skills, and strengthening innovation (College of Policing, 2023). Of note in the strategic ambition is the priority placed upon knowledge, which suggests that the College of Policing has overseen the professionalisation of the police service in England and Wales by creating a standardised body of knowledge. Furthermore, it could be argued that one way the College of Policing has sought to do this is through

the establishment of the Police Education Qualification Framework (PEQF) which sets out a standardised educational framework for recruit police officers in England and Wales (Strong, 2019). The standardised approach is consistent with the definition set out in this essay for professionalisation in particular due to the transferability of knowledge between forces. All of the aims set out in the strategic ambition, in particular education, knowledge and innovation suggest that the College of Policing is endeavouring to modernise the police and make the service more resilient to strategic challenges such as reduced public confidence, funding and resource issues (College of Policing , 2020). However, it could be suggested that due to the complexities and dynamic nature of the role of a police officer that much of the knowledge needed is learned through practical application not through classroom based learning. Nevertheless, it could be argued that a blended approach utilising both elements helps to modernise police within England and Wales. Further to these points noted, modernisation of the police through professionalisation perhaps can improve public confidence, which could be argued is essential to rebuild trust in policing.

The role of a modern police officer is multifaceted with the inclusion of community engagement, the investigation of crime, the apprehension of offenders, adapting to evolving patterns of crime, understanding new technology used in crime, increased accountability, increased demand with limited resources, and adapting to societal changes including the deterioration of public confidence and trust in policing (Aliverti, 2020; Murphy, et al., 2017; Roycroft, 2017). Now being in my final year of probation, I am working towards this new modernised role of policing through my professional development. This has included initial training where I have learned the core pieces of legislation needed to undertake the role and initial tutorship where I have learned the practical knowledge needed to undertake the role. Further to this, my educational journey has continued through the educational requirements set by the PEQF Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) programme which includes both academic assignments to enhance critical thinking as well as evidencing professional competence through the completion of the Occupational Competency

Portfolio (OCP) which sets out certain taskings that need to be completed such as undertaking investigative and evidential evaluation throughout an investigation.

In line with this requirement, a recent and ongoing investigation I am conducting is a case that relates to fraud by abuse of position. This case involved a person employed as a secretary for an amateur sports club for children. It was alleged that the treasurer of the club had moved money that they had received from a grant into a personal account after the grant had been paid twice in error. The club became aware after the club's committee received an email requesting repayment. The club then asked the treasurer on multiple occasions to send the money back to no avail with the treasurer making excuses and delaying the process of repayment. The treasurer was the sole signatory of the club's bank account so when the club appointed a new treasurer they had to set up a new account. The new treasurer then started to review the clubs' finances and noticed that funds received did not match their expenditures or funds left in the clubs' account, and it became apparent that this was not an isolated incident and that the previous treasurer had siphoned money from funds such as grants they had applied for, sponsorship money, and club fees paid by parents, amounting to £25,000. It was also alleged that the previous treasurer had falsified applications in the name of another person to apply for grant money. The previous treasurer has then moved out of the country. However, due to the previous treasurer being the sole signatory on all previous bank accounts, and no bookkeeping to accurately show how much money had been received or spent by the club, when it was received and how much was used for its intended purpose, the club struggled to provide evidential material.

I then spoke to the economic crime team to seek advice. Applications were then made to the court to access the accounts for which the previous treasurer was the sole signatory. I then spoke to the relevant organisations that the club had applied for grants from and requested any information that they held regarding the allegation. I have then reviewed and compiled this information in order to assess whether the threshold had been met to suspect that the offence of Section 4 of the Fraud Act

(2006) had been committed whereby the previous treasurer occupied a position in which they were expected to safeguard and abused that position to make a financial gain for themselves. If the threshold is met, upon the subject's return to the UK relevant devices can be seized and sent for digital forensic examination to gather more evidence which will eventually be presented to the Crown Prosecution Service. While this investigation is still under way, upon reflection it is apt in relation to modern day investigations, whereby, technology has been used to make financial gains and the complexities that can arise in gathering evidence. These complexities have been highlighted in the NPCC's Policing Vision 2025 (NPCC, 2024) which aims to train and equip police officers to investigate internet facilitated crimes (NPCC, 2024).

Furthermore, I feel that my role as a police officer has changed in my final year of probation. Since joining the police I have undertaken a number of courses, from operational courses to knowledge-based courses as well as attending attachments with the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Public Protection Unit (PPU) which investigate complex crime and work towards safeguarding vulnerable children and adults. All of these learning experiences have enhanced my knowledge of policing incidents. While I still have much to learn, with every new incident attended being a learning experience, where feedback and advice from supervisors and colleagues enhance professional development and competence, there is an expectance to become more autonomous in actions, which falls in line with the definition set out in this essay for professionalisation. With new students and officers younger in service than me joining the team that I work on, I am now expected to utilise what I have learned and take the lead when attending policing incidents and or conducting investigations. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, I feel that no matter how long you have been in a role, there is room to learn, and advice and support is always there if needed.

In conclusion, this essay has considered what is meant by professionalisation, suggesting that it means a role where specialised standardised training takes place. Furthermore, the essay has suggested that specialised and standardised training

allows the professional to act autonomously utilising the specialist knowledge they have gained to act in the best interest of the service user or public and follows a set of principles that sometimes set themselves in the form of accreditation or licencing. The essay has also considered the role that the College of Policing has played in professionalising the police service in England and Wales through the form of professional development and training. The essay has also considered what the role of a modern-day police officer is, highlighting the increasing complexities of investigations, though the development of digital platforms and technology. The essay has also reflected upon my professional development and how it has continued through the PCDA programme and OCP. Moreover, the essay has considered how through the professionalisation of the police service increased knowledge has enhanced my professional development, allowing me to become more autonomous, particularly in my final year of probation.

Word count: 1801

Task 2

Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum: Communication Skills, social media, Communication Strategy

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

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

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

What social media platforms are used by policing?

What are the benefits and risks of using social media?

2000 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

This essay will critically evaluate the use of social media in the police. Through this evaluation, the essay will explore how social media is used by the police, including community engagement. Furthermore, the essay will examine the benefits as well as the risks of using social media within the police, as well as reflect upon my own experiences of social media use in South Wales Police. The essay will utilise Borton's model of reflection to structure the essay into three main parts, 'what', 'so what', and 'now what' (Mulryan-Kyne, 2020). The first part 'what' will discuss the police's use of social media. The second part, 'so what' will explore why the use of social media in the police is important, however, will also include the negative aspects of its use. The second part of the essay will also consider my own experience of social media since joining the police. Finally, the third section 'now what', will reflect upon these experiences, in order to provide an overview of what I have learned as part of this reflection.

Firstly, before understanding how social media is used by the police, one should understand what social media is and its context in current society. Social media could be described as user-driven content generation, distribution, and communication

amongst internet-based communities (Zeng, et al., 2010). This encapsulates different platforms such as social networking, blogging, and content generation and sharing applications, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, Wikipedia, and YouTube to name a few (Meta, 2025; YouTube, 2025; Zeng, et al., 2010). Kapoor, *et al.* (2018) state that social media platforms are thoroughly ingrained within people's everyday lives with people's utilisation of social media platforms ranging from seeking updates on news, current events, and critical incidents to communication with friends and family, workplace management, and product and recruitment advertisement. However, due to the amount of information and content generated on social media platforms, as well as the recent proliferation in the use of AI (artificial intelligence), it could be argued that credible information can become difficult to find or identify in an increasing era of misinformation and disinformation (Hajli, et al., 2021; Kapoor, et al., 2018).

Social media has been increasingly used by police in the UK for the purposes of enhanced community engagement, crime reduction, and public support and transparency (Bullock, et al., 2020; Cartwright & Shaw, 2020; Crump, 2011). Bullock, *et al.* (2020) argue that social media gives the police the opportunity to increase police visibility, target and change areas of improvement from community-led information, and increase association between the police and wider community, in particular hard-to-reach groups. However, Bullock *et al.* (2020) also state that these potential areas that can be positively exploited have not yet been achieved, with risks associated with the police's use of social media, such as damaged reputation and image in certain circumstances, inhibiting progression. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the use of social media by the police is one-sided, with the police circulating information to the public, but not fully engaging in community-based discussion (Crump, 2011). Nevertheless, it has been argued that the public generally supports the police's use of social media. A study conducted by Cartwright and Shaw (2020) sought to understand public opinion of police's social media use by administering a cross-sectional survey to a population covered by a single constabulary in England & Wales. A total of 294 respondents completed the survey,

with a large support for the police's use of social media. 70% of respondents stated that they actively follow their local force on Facebook, and 86% stated that it had a positive effect on their perception of the police (Cartwright & Shaw, 2020). However, it should be noted that these results were taken from a cross-sectional study of one police force in England and Wales at a single point in time, so results should be considered with caution and cannot be generalised throughout the UK.

A significant proportion of social media use by the police includes the distribution of immediate information regarding safety alerts such as ongoing critical incidents or road traffic collisions, as well as distributing safety advice about crime (Crump, 2011). It could be argued that the increased capability of AI has opened new avenues for criminals to exploit and utilise in criminal activities. It has been argued that deepfakes are increasingly being used to impersonate individuals and facilitate blackmail and financial fraud (Verdoliva, 2020). It could therefore be suggested that the police have an important role to play in releasing up-to-date information on trending crime, to reduce its impact through public awareness. A study conducted by Nikolovska, *et al.* (2020) analysed the content of messages posted on social media by UK police during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study found that during the first five months of the pandemic, there was a significant increase in the number of posts distributing information about fraud, domestic abuse and cyber crime (Nikolovska, *et al.*, 2020). Nikolovska, *et al.* (2020) suggest that this increase was in part due to the increase in types of crime during the pandemic, due to lockdown policies increasing the opportunity for these crimes to arise, with an increased frequency in the use of the internet and increased time spent in a domestic setting. Furthermore, Nikolovska, *et al.* (2020) argue that the police now have a responsibility to raise awareness about new trends in criminal activity that will inevitably be changed by technology including advancements in AI and biotechnology, and societal changes, including changes to business models. It should be noted, however, that there can be significant repercussions if the information and messaging that the police post on social media are not considered thoroughly.

A review into the response by Lancashire Police to reported missing person Nicola Bulley highlighted some errors in the use of social media. The case of the missing person generated significant media coverage, with 6,500 news articles generated in a single day at the peak of the investigation (College of Policing, 2023). The report found that while the actual operational response to the missing person investigation was very professional and of a high standard the communication strategy was poor. It was found that the lack of information released initially resulted in the police losing control of the media narrative. In an attempt to regain control of the narrative, Lancashire police released sensitive personal information about Nicola Bulley that was deemed to be unnecessary and received a significant amount of criticism and a loss of public confidence (College of Policing, 2023). The case study reflects the difficulty in the use of social media by the police, highlighting the need for speed of information to be released following critical incidents, however, ensuring that the information is accurate and appropriate to avoid reputational damage.

In my personal experience since joining South Wales police, I have witnessed the benefits of the use of social media. While there is not a specific personal application in the use of social media while working as a response police officer, there is still involvement through the request of social media's use to specialist departments. This can range between a number of scenarios, however, in my personal experience has predominantly involved requests for information, surrounding suspects, missing people, or witnesses. In regards to suspects, this can include the release of information and a picture of the wanted person if their identity is known. However, even if the identity is not known, media appeals are a valuable source of information. If there is CCTV of a crime or images of the suspect, the local community can help to identify the offender. Furthermore, appeals give members of the public an opportunity to come forward if they have witnessed the incident and have not yet been identified by police. However, a possible downside to this use of social media is disinformation, and the ability to verify what information is credible.

I have also found the use of social media particularly important for people who have been reported missing. Due to the potential vulnerability and risk that a missing person may be exposed to, timely information from the public can generate valuable leads or areas to focus on, such as eyewitness sightings. A missing person case that I have been previously involved in, had a substantial social media footprint. A male who had no fixed abode was found unconscious by a member of the public and reported the incident to the ambulance service. The male was then admitted to the hospital, however, managed to leave a secure ward prior to discharge which resulted in the male being reported missing. Due to the circumstances following his hospital admission, the male was assessed as a high-risk missing person which meant that the risk of serious harm to the subject was likely (College of Policing, 2025). While I was not involved in the initial attendance, the male subsequently was missing for the following year. This meant that many days were spent investigating the male's whereabouts, including speaking to extended family, conducting enquiries with partner agencies, and area searches. This case utilised a significant footprint on social media which identified family members, potential sightings, areas where the male frequented, where he had been known to sleep at night, as well as an appeal directly to the subject from his family, asking him to come home. Information from the family suggested that similar incidents had occurred in the past, where the male would disappear for a few years before returning. The male was eventually found in a remote area outside north of Cardiff, sleeping rough, by officers conducting an enquiry for a separate matter. While the use of social media in this incident did not lead directly to his sighting, it helped to build a picture of his routines, and associations and narrowed down the search parameters. The location where the male was eventually sighted was not far from areas identified from social media appeals, however, due to the extent and remoteness of the area, specialist search teams that were utilised initially in the area did not find any signs of the male.

Reflecting upon this missing person case, as well as the information researched in preparation for this essay has highlighted the importance of using social media within the police. In a society with increasing dependence on the use of social media, it can

be used as a vital tool in community engagement, particularly in communities that do not normally engage with the police. The reflection has also shown me that if utilised correctly it can have benefits for both the police and the public. The police can gain vital leads and information for ongoing investigations and increase public trust through transparency of actions targeted messaging, and community engagement. The public can also benefit from increased awareness of new or emerging trends in crime, up-to-date information on critical incidents, and offering a platform to engage directly with police. However, I have also noted upon reflection that the use of social media can have drastic consequences for the police if not utilised correctly such as a diminished reputation, which affects everyday operations and physical interactions with the public.

In conclusion, this essay has critically evaluated the use of social media within the police. Through this evaluation, the essay has considered what social media is and how it is used. This highlighted how social media has become ingrained in everyday society, and given the amount of content and information generated, risks associated with misinformation and disinformation can arise. In the context of the police, the essay has considered how the police use social media for the purpose of community engagement as well as crime reduction through awareness, and endeavours to increase visibility and transparency and in turn, boost public confidence. However, the essay has also highlighted the potential risks associated with the use of social media by the police, including reduced public confidence if the timing and content of the communication strategy are not correct. The essay has also considered my personal experience of social media with the police and a missing person case that I was involved in. Finally, the essay has considered how the use of social media can be beneficial for both the police service and the public if it is utilised correctly.

Word count: 2039

Task 3

Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum: Leadership and Teamworking

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

Critically evaluate and **evidence** your flexibility in leadership style.

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

Consider leadership models commonly used in policing.

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

2000 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

ANSWER:

It could be argued that given the dynamic nature of policing, and its direct impact on the public, leadership is a particularly important aspect of the police service. This essay will critically evaluate the different styles of leadership, discussing the positive and negative attributes they have, and how there is an importance to be flexible in one's approach to leadership, combined with a strong ethical ethos to maximise operational performance. The essay will also discuss leadership models or styles that are commonly used in policing. Furthermore, the essay will reflect upon my own experience within the police thus far and discuss policing incidents that I played a role in to understand what leadership styles were utilised. The essay will utilise Borton's model of reflection, which structures the essay into the following sections: what, so what, now what (Mulryan-Kyne, 2020). 'What' will define leadership, outlining the different styles. 'So what' will discuss why leadership is important, reflecting upon my own experience, and finally 'now what' will reflect upon my outlook going forward, concluding what I have learned.

It could be argued that leadership is a difficult concept to clearly define as it can have many meanings dependant on the situation or context it is used in (Yammarino, 2013). This essay will utilise the definition by Northouse (2018) who suggests that leadership is a process where a person influences another person or group of people to undertake a common objective. However, to fully understand what leadership is, one should consider the different styles of leadership which include transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership, autocratic leadership, and democratic leadership.

Transformational leadership refers to a person sharing a vision with an organisation and endeavouring to inspire colleagues to partake in this vision and go beyond the norm to achieve the shared vision (Yukl , 1999). It has been suggested that the ability to motivate colleagues to share the same goal can achieved through cognitive stimulation, charisma, or incorporating their emotional desires and needs into the vision to promote psychological empowerment (Khan, et al., 2021). However, it should be noted that transformational leadership has been linked with charismatic leadership which can have some negative traits such as narcissism. While charismatic leaders have the ability to inspire and motivate, their intentions can be biased towards themselves or shareholders at the expense of employee wellbeing (Yukl , 1999). Transformational leadership differs in its approach to transactional leadership, as instead of enhancing employee uptake through personal motivation, transactional leadership relies on external influences based on a system of rewards and punishment (Young, et al., 2021). While this is perhaps the most common style of leadership and can have benefits such as increased leader and employee social exchange increasing performance, it can have flaws with negative effects on performance through reduced empowerment and reduced resilience (Young, et al., 2021).

Laissez-faire leadership is a passive style of leadership which involves delegating duties to subordinates (Breevaart & Zacher, 2019). Laissez-faire leadership has received negative views with Robert and Vandenberghe (2021) stating that it is

associated with reduced job satisfaction and performance with the leader being associated with decision avoidance, delays and an abdication of their duties. This leadership style has also been linked to a deterioration in employee well-being at work (Desgourdes, et al., 2024). However, it has also been argued that this style of leadership has its place in a highly motivated workforce, giving more authority to subordinates to make decisions, with trust being placed on them to fulfil the organisational vision, improving employee satisfaction and increasing speed in decisions as bureaucratic red tape is removed (Islam, et al., 2018; Yang, 2015).

Autocratic leadership involves a centralised form of decision making, authority and power where subordinates have little say as to how problems are tackled or organisational goals are achieved (Caillier, 2007). This style of leadership is in stark contrast to democratic leadership which refers to empowering subordinates, involving them in decision making processes and distributing responsibility (Caillier, 2007). While autocratic leadership has been heavily criticised due to its negative effect on morale and performance (De Hoogh, et al., 2015), it has been argued that it has its place when a situation presents itself where there is a need to make a decision or decisions quickly (Briker, et al., 2021). Alternatively, democratic leadership has been praised for its effect on job satisfaction, employee empowerment, and its ability to consider more points of view, minimising the risk that something may be missed (Dyczkowska & Dyczkowski, 2018). However, it has been argued that this style has its drawbacks, as it can take longer to make decisions and come to a consensus, which is increased the larger the team or workforce (Dyczkowska & Dyczkowski, 2018).

As has been discussed there are strengths and weaknesses to all approaches of leadership styles which would suggest there is a benefit to a blended flexible approach, selecting the optimal style dependant on the situation. Moein, et al. (2017) argues that to be an effective leader, one must be flexible and adapt their style to the situation or people involved. Situational leadership theory, originally coined by Hersey and Blanchard (1972) suggests that leadership style is dependent on subordinate maturity, defined as commitment and competence (Thompson &

Vecchio, 2009) and that the style used can be measured on two axes, directive and supportive leadership (Irgens, 1995). This theory suggests that there are four main styles of leadership which are directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating which are measured on the axes (Irgens, 1995) as shown in figure 1. The theory states that when subordinates have a low level of maturity, leaders should use a higher level of directiveness and support, and as maturity increases, directiveness should decrease and that for the highest levels of maturity, support can be reduced (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009).

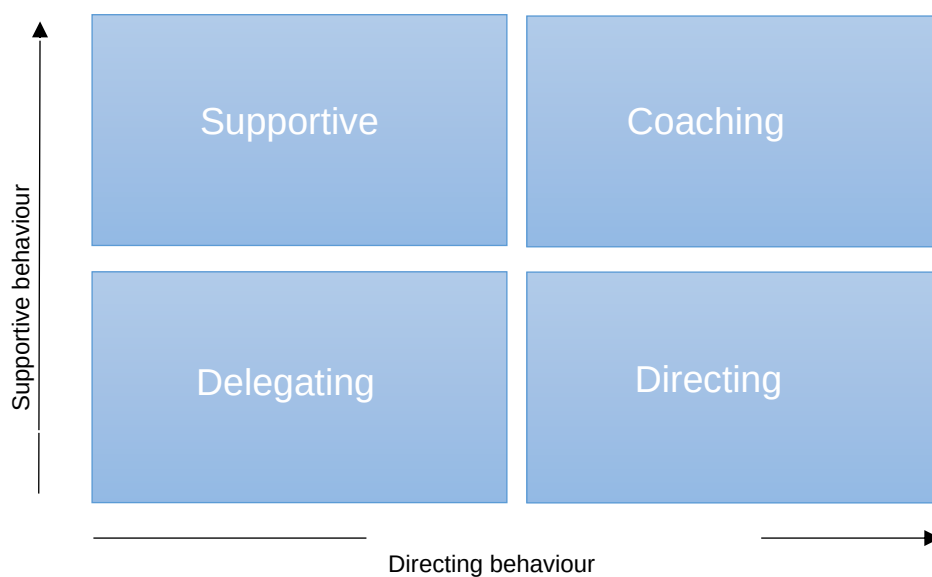


Figure 1. Situational leadership (Adapted from Irgens 1995, p.38)

Irgens (1995) also suggests that the style of leadership is also affected by time constraints, organisational culture, and risk consequences.

Upon reflection of the leadership styles discussed, it is apparent that I have used most styles throughout my service. The autocratic style is primarily used in fast paced dynamic policing incidents in combination with delegation. For example, at a police incident that I recently deployed to with a colleague and another double crewed unit, initial information given by the public service centre (PSC) stated that they had a third-party report of an ongoing disturbance at a particular address. The address had a critical marker which stated that the female resident was a high risk repeat domestic

abuse victim from their partner. Here I discussed with my colleague actions that we would take upon arrival such as going to the scene initially to ensure safeguarding, stop and account all parties there and deal with any offences as they present themselves, however, to keep an open mind as incidents can sometimes be different than reported or there is vital information missing such as people involved. Upon arrival at the address, I have gained entry through the front door and was presented by a male in the living room. I have then contained the male, and sent my colleague and another officer to speak to the female who I could hear crying upstairs. I have then asked for an update from officers speaking to the female and they have informed me that she had been strangled by the male and had made threats to kill her. I have then immediately made the decision to arrest the male and conducted the initial procedures and placed the male in the back of a marked police vehicle. From here a colleague has waited with the vehicle and the male and I have spoken to other colleagues via the radio to reduce any cross contamination. I have then informed the colleagues that we had arrested the male and asked if they could conduct initial actions with the victim such as obtaining statement, forensics, and house to house enquiries as well as contacting the initial reporting person and that we would convey the male to custody.

Alternatively, other policing incidents, particularly those graded at a lower response due to an assessment by call management utilising the THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability, engagement) framework (Traynor, 2024), or when conducting arrest enquiries for an outstanding suspect a democratic approach is generally utilised. For example, recent arrest enquiries I conducted were for a male wanted on recall to prison. I have reviewed his Niche profile and noticed he had markers for assaulting police upon arrest. Due to this I have asked other members of the team to assist. Initially, this involved researching the individual, obtaining details of their home address, addresses they frequent, locations and addresses they have been arrested at previously, their acquaintances, and their acquaintances' addresses and markers. As there was a lot to research I have asked my colleagues to look for recent associated people and I would look through linked addresses and previous

locations they had been arrested which utilised the delegation style of leadership. Following this I have made a list of all potential locations to conduct the enquiries. However, as there was time to do so, we have had a discussion as colleagues on the priority of locations that should be attended. This allowed for a democratic approach and valuable insight into previous experiences of colleagues, as well as considering details such as when certain addresses are attended, if the suspect was not at the location and other associates were, there was a chance that they could notify the suspect, making it more difficult to locate them. Other considerations were the time of day as certain addresses were more likely to be frequented dependant on the day of the week or time of day. Once we had discussed these matters we agreed upon an order of attendance. We also discussed the actions to be taken upon arrival. Each address was observed on google maps to see if there was access to the property via back gardens or streets and what the best method of containment was. Again, we then came to a consensus on how to contain the property, and who would go inside as well as notifying the PSC of our location should the need arise for further units due to extra people on scene becoming violent or obstructive.

While operational incidents can dictate the leadership style used, from autocratic to democratic and delegative, each approach is underpinned by the national decision model which is a framework utilised by police to make informed decisions, and more importantly is based upon the code of ethics (College of Policing, 2023). It could be argued that one of the most important aspects of leadership, no matter the approach is having a strong ethical ethos. While operational incidents dictate short term leadership styles dependant on situation, and perhaps experience of one's colleagues, long term goals and objectives are also utilised at a senior management level which would incorporate transformational and transactional leadership styles. It could be argued that there is a case for senior leaders in the police to endeavour to adopt a transformational approach in combination with ethical leadership. Ethical leadership can be defined as the advocacy of appropriate conduct through actions and relationships underpinned by sound decision making, bilateral communication, and reinforcement (Brown, et al., 2005). This approach garnering a shared vision

embedded with a strong ethical ethos could potentially improve organisational performance through a happier workforce and improved reputation amongst the public.

In conclusion, this essay has discussed leadership styles, considering their strengths and weaknesses. It has proposed that a situational approach is potentially the most effective for operational policing as it can be tailored to specific incidents or people involved. However, it has discussed how transformational leadership may be the most effective style when utilised at senior management level, particularly when combined with ethical leadership. Finally, the essay has reflected upon my own experiences in the police, and how I have utilised different methods depending on the operational scenario. Furthermore, through this reflection, it has helped me to consider what is truly meant by leadership, and perhaps through active awareness, seek to develop and strengthen leadership styles as my career progresses.

Word count: 2030

Task 4

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

Critically reflect upon your three-year probation:

How have you benefited from mentoring and coaching?

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

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

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

How do you provide and receive feedback?

2000 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

ANSWER:

This essay will critically reflect upon my three-year probation and explore topics such as the impact that mentoring and coaching has had on me, the impact it has had upon professional and organisational goals as well as how it has impacted on my development and performance in the workplace. The essay will consider mentoring in policing through the lens of social learning theory and explore whether this has been utilised and also discuss Kolb's experiential learning cycle. This essay will also use Borton's model of reflection which will provide structure by reflecting on three questions, what is mentoring, why this was important for my professional development and what I have learned in the process (Mulryan-Kyne, 2020). Firstly, in order to explore the topic of mentoring, it could be argued that one should have a robust working definition of what mentoring is.

Mentoring is a concept that has changed over time with the more traditional definitions suggesting that it is a relationship between a senior and junior employee in a bid to guide the junior employee or mentee through career progression (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2019). However, over time this concept has evolved and increased in scope, to include both psychological development and informal mentoring whereby

the mentee and mentor meet in a natural environment in the workplace and can include junior colleagues learning from senior colleagues in an informal basis (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2019) or vis versa where the junior colleague imparts knowledge upon their senior counterpart (Murphy, 2012). For the purpose of this essay mentoring will consider both classical and modern aspects of mentoring and will define it as the relationship between colleagues in both a formal and informal capacity to impart knowledge (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2019).

Within my career thus far in the police the most obvious example of mentoring is the tutorship period which lasts for the first three months after initial training. During this period, you are paired with a tutor who you observe and learn from both by observation and practice. The tutor is a substantive constable that has volunteered to impart their knowledge on new student constables. It could be suggested that this form of mentoring fits within the formal category of the definition of mentoring and also could be aligned with social learning theory. Social learning theory initially coined by Bandura, proposes that most behaviour is learned through observation and that this process can be understood by four actions that underpin the process which are attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Hall, 2020).

When tutorship is observed through the lens of social learning theory it suggests that the student observes behaviours from the tutor when dealing with incidents, through repeated observation retains the information in how to deal with a variety of incidents that are specified in the student's portfolio, and then reproduces these behaviours while the tutor offers advice and support. Upon reflection I have found that this was the case and that, while initial training provided some theoretical knowledge needed such as legislation, it was only during tutorship and observing and attending emergency calls with my tutor that I began to develop an understanding of what was expected to perform the role of a response officer, which I was then able to put into practice with my tutor offering advice when needed. I also found that having a single point of contact that I could ask questions about the police was helpful, and through doing the job practically allowed me to understand what I needed to learn and

improve on in a realistic sense as opposed to theoretical classroom-based lessons in initial training.

Following tutorship, it could be argued that one moves into another form of mentorship, in a team environment. Once I finished tutorship, I responded to incidents with different colleagues, all with their own strengths and weaknesses, which allowed me to learn further through observation. In particular, immediately after tutorship I had two case files that needed to be submitted, however, I did not have any experience in how to do these, especially one that was related to domestic violence which required a lot more documentation, such as full summaries of all previous incidents between the parties and additional documents such as the domestic violence checklist. One colleague on the team was particularly knowledgeable in how to complete these files and helped me to learn a lot by providing templates, examples of completed documents and was patient whenever I asked questions. This extended beyond these initial files, and the colleague has been a helpful point of contact to ask questions or confirm processes within relation to case files throughout the last two years.

Further to this I have had the opportunity to go on attachments to departments such as the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), the Public Protection Unit (PPU) and perform a three month secondment to an operation that dealt with proactively locating and arresting high priority suspects. The attachment to CID was for one week and during this time I was able to observe the initial attendance of a CID officer to a robbery, a dwelling burglary, a suspicious sudden death, and conduct an interview with the Rape Investigation Team (RIT). This attachment was quite helpful as it allowed me to gain insight into methods used by officers trained in investigations. While many techniques were the same, I noticed that due to CID officers having more time to attend and deal with incidents when required, they were able to conduct a more thorough approach to initial enquiries, which in turn taught me what areas of information of particular investigations are important to observe and gather upon initial attendance. Furthermore, I observed and learned new techniques during the interview with RIT, who have extra training in conducting interviews. This included

highlighting themes and topics which were used to categorise questions to gather information which could refer to different areas of the incident timeline in a non-linear manner. This was slightly different to the method mainly used on response which would ask questions to gather information predominantly in a manner linear to the timeline of the offence being investigated. My attachment to PPU was also helpful as it allowed me to observe Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) meetings which provided insight into what discussions took place following on from Public Protection Notifications (PPN) that are submitted. MASH meeting included the police, but also people from partner agencies such as social services in order to improve information sharing implement a holistic approach to safeguarding through joint decision making (College of Policing, 2018). By listening to the meetings and noting the areas of discussion, I realised how important it is to link all relevant people involved to the incident and relevant family members to the PPN as well as providing a thorough outline of the incident that has taken place and what safeguarding measures are in place currently, so that the people in the MASH meeting are informed and best placed to produce a safeguarding strategy.

The secondment to the arrest team also provided insight into further techniques including the use of electronic communications to locate individuals as well as operating throughout Cardiff and the Vale which allowed me to observe and conduct policing activities in different communities from rural settings to urbanised communities as well as operating in areas that were particularly anti-police. Through experience this has taught me better situational awareness to allow me to safeguard my colleagues and myself when responding to incidents. All these experiences reiterate the process of social learning theory, however, can possibly also be observed through Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984) which outlines four stages to the learning process which include experience, reflection, conceptualisation, and experimentation. In other words, this process suggests that learning is a transformational process whereby the learner actively experiences something, such as attending a policing incident or process such as an interview, reflects upon what they observed during the experience, such as questions based on themes,

conceptualises these observations, categorising the themes into questions based on a non linear approach tackling information sought from different angles, and finally practicing what was experienced and learned and fine tuning the learned skill.

These experiences have helped me meet professional and organisational goals. Organisational goals could be interpreted as South Wales Police having a fully substantial and trained officer by the end of probation. This process can be measured against successful completion of the probation period and is dependant upon the successful completion of Occupational Competency Portfolios (OCPs) which outline certain incidents and competencies that a student officer has to meet and be proficient in in order to progress through the probation period. An OCP is initially completed at the end of tutorship, and then at the end of year two and year 3. The experiences and mentorship mechanisms discussed throughout this essay have allowed me to learn the skills needed to complete the OCPs and become a trained resource for the organisation. In relation to professional goals, these were similar to the organisational goals in terms of becoming fully trained and substantive, however, differ in terms of what follows. While all the experience and learning has helped me to move towards becoming a substantive constable, it also allows me to progress in my career. Inevitably the more you learn, the better you can do the job, which potentially can present future opportunities down the line, such as different roles within the organisation. Already the role within my team has changed, as new officers join the team, they have sought advice from me when we attend incidents together, or they are completing administrative tasks. Reflecting upon this has shown me the importance of the mentorship and the learning process, where all officers are constantly experiencing, reflecting, conceptualising, and practicing as there is always room for improvement and to learn from each other symbiotically.

In conclusion this essay has reflected upon my three-year probation period. The essay provided a working definition for mentorship in order to reflect upon its influence throughout the probation period which stated that the process could be conducted both formally and informally and learning can be bidirectional. This understanding

of mentorship suggested that it has taken many forms throughout my probation which helped to reflect upon its impact on my progression and how it has helped me meet professional and organisational goals. Furthermore, the essay has considered the learning process, by reflecting upon experiences and observing them through the lens of social learning theory and Kolb's experiential learning cycle. By considering social learning theory and Kolb's experiential cycle, it reinforced what I have learned through this reflection, that the mentorship is a transformational process based upon observation and action and is a mutual beneficial relationship. Finally, the essay has considered the ever evolving process of learning within the police as your role with the organisation changes and the need to constantly be open to new experiences and learning.

Words count: 1816

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