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Trinity Saint David

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/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 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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Task 4	**Decision making and discretion, Conducting Investigations and Criminal Justice (Managing offenders)**	**1500**
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Task 5	**Development Plan**	**500**
	Total	**6000**
	Confirmation of Confidentiality and Plagiarism ***This is confirmed by submitting through Turnitin***	

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:

As a learner with little higher education experience my participation of the initial six months learning was extremely stressful, however in this essay I will be outlining the mechanisms I employed to mitigate the stress I endured and how they contributed to my increased resilience to stress in the higher education setting. I will be using Gibbs Model of Reflection to reflect on my experiences in the workplace (Resources for reflective practice, 2020) and will be referencing other research throughout.

During the first six months of learning my shift pattern consisted of working Monday to Friday, eight until four. In my previous job, I was used to working shifts, half of which being nights, and thus I found the adjustment challenging as working shifts seriously effects ones sleep schedule (Sallinen and Kecklund 2010), as you are sleeping at different times of the day and so the body struggles to maintain a healthy sleep cycle leaving you feeling tired. This meant my body had to adjust to a fixed sleeping schedule alongside the stress from training school. I managed this by taking 150 milligrams of magnesium daily which improves sleep quality and quantity, this can be supported by research done by Zhang et al (2022). I could definitely feel an improved quality of sleep from a combination of a stable sleep pattern and daily magnesium intake, this reduced my stress overall during my six months initial learning.

Reflecting on my consistent sleep schedule during my training school experience, I feel as though it was very effective, and although I felt benefits, I feel that there are still ways in which I would improve this. After conducting research on sleep and how it is negatively affected, I am continuously finding articles and academic studies focusing on screen exposure and sleep quality. Christensen et al (2016) explain in their article 'Direct Measurements of Smartphone Screen-Time: Relationships with Demographics and Sleep', that exposure to a smartphone screen, particularly around bedtime, is associated with a lower quality of sleep. Reflecting on this article I will utilise this research and ensure that my eyes are not exposed to blue light before sleep, and so I have purchased blue light glasses which minimise light from devices such as smart phones or television screens and will use these before I sleep to ensure I am optimising my sleep to achieve the best quality.

As well as improving my sleep, another coping strategy I employed was daily physical exercise. As well as the physical benefits of exercise such as weight loss (Katzmarzyk, et al, 2023), I also felt a reduction in the amount of stress I felt during my 6 months in the learning environment. As Joe Wicks (2023) states "I always see exercise as like a stress relief valve, like a pressure cooker." I relate to Joe Wicks with the experience I had with my initial six months learning as although the lessons and topics were difficult, especially when nearing an exam, the familiarity and routine of completing strenuous physical activity was grounding and a good method to exert stress. Exercise increases serotonergic and adrenergic levels in the brain which Mikkelsen et al (2017) explains act in the same way as 'SSRI antidepressants' and naturally reduce anxiety and depression. This has a direct effect on stress and by going to the force gym every morning before work I was able to naturally alleviate the stress from the exams which I faced in the six-month learning environment.

Reflecting upon daily physical exercise, I feel that I could have improved the balance of cardiovascular exercise and weighted resistance training, as during my exercise I primarily focused on resistance training. Research conducted points out that aerobic based cardiovascular exercise increases heart rate recovery over resistance based weight training therefore improving cardiovascular health (Chovanec L & Gropel P, 2020). I believe due to the nature of aerobic exercise such as running or jogging, whereby the heart rate increases, I felt more uncomfortable than with resistance training where the heart rate stays relatively low and creates a less stressful experience, however this must be weighed against the cardiovascular benefits of aerobic exercise. Going forward I have developed an improved physical activity plan where the balance of weight training and cardiovascular aerobic exercise is more equal. I have also implemented aerobic exercise outdoors as "natural environments facilitate attention restoration during acute exercise" (Boere et al, 2023) meaning exercising outdoors allows you to concentrate more on the physical activity and not distractions (such as other people or commercial gym music) that you would be faced with performing physical activity indoors.

Another coping strategy I adopted whilst in training school was healthy eating and pre preparing my meals for the week ahead so I could ensure that I would eat healthily and not consume too much fat or sugar. In an article for Health Psychology, Gan (2023) explains that work stress poses a barrier for people with the intention to eat healthy as convenient options will more often be picked which are usually less healthy and high in fat. In training school by cooking meals at home I was able to avoid purchasing expensive unhealthy food from the force canteen which would have increased my stress levels as I would have been worried about the financial implications of buying a meal every day as well as the health drawbacks from buying food high in saturated fat.

In conclusion, I feel that due to the strategies I have applied and developed to suit my personal life during my initial training, I am able to start working on shift with a good amount of stress resilience and I have the ability to acknowledge which methods to combat stress work for me personally and the alterations I have made in my routine such as purchasing blue light glasses and performing aerobic physical activity outdoors instead of inside in a gym. I have also developed a strong physical exercise and diet plan that I can bring across to shift work and, due to my efforts in training school, have a good level of physical strength and fitness that I will utilise whilst working in my community.

Word count = 1026

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:

Conflict is unfortunately an everyday experience in the police, in the year ending March 2022 there were 608,164 incidents where officers used force (Home Office 2022). Although it's always preferable to avoid the use of force, often it must be used to de-escalate or end conflict situations. Fortunately, in the UK the police and members of the public have powers established in law to use reasonable force to prevent crime and affect an arrest such as section 3 of the criminal law act 1967 (Legislation.gov 2011) which allow reasonable force in prevention of crime. In my previous role before joining the police I worked as a door supervisor in busy nightclubs where conflict was an everyday occurrence, however since joining the police I am far more aware of legislation and case law surrounding use of force as we are far more

accountable. In this reflection I will again be using the Gibbs model of reflection (Resources for reflective practice, 2020) and will be referencing others research throughout.

The specific incident I will be reflecting upon will be a call I attended with my tutor whereby I arrested a male who spoke very little English for common assault and affray. A security guard had rung the control room stating that a male had spat on him and was threatening to hit him with a skateboard. The call itself was graded as an emergency and the threat, harm and risk factors were high as the caller had stated the male had consumed drugs and was living in prison leaver accommodation and the other residents in the house of multiple occupancy were vulnerable drug users. As we arrived at the address the male had barricaded himself in his room and was screaming and smashing his own possessions up with his skateboard. I shouted through the door and called the males name (which we had received on route from the control room). The male refused to open the door and the security guard handed me the keys. I entered the room under section 17 of the police and criminal evidence act 1984 which allows me to enter a premise to arrest the male for an either way or indictable offence (Legislation.gov 2020). I then arrested and cautioned the male for affray and common assault and booked him into custody.

The male himself was a Polish national and could only understand very basic English. After telling the male he was under arrest and placing him in the home office approved rear stack handcuff technique, (Home Office, 2014) I made sure that the male understood he was being taken to custody and was not free to leave. I did this by asking closed questions very slowly such as “Do you understand you are under arrest for assault?” which is an interviewing technique used to clarify detail the College of Policing explains in their 2020 article on

‘Investigative interviewing’. Although the male kept nodding his head to my questions, he was extremely irate and I don’t believe that he understood the situation other than the fact we were police officers. The area I police is extremely multicultural and diverse, according to the last census in 2021 the area the police station I am attached to is based only 54.2% of residents were born in the UK. This means there is a large portion of the population where English is not a first language or will not be spoken at all creating massive barriers in communication and effecting how we deliver an efficient service to our communities.

After conveying the male to custody, it was important to show that we were not a threat and to display neutral body language by relaxing our shoulders and having open palms to attempt to calm down the irate male as “body language constitutes 55% proportion of human communication” (Aziz et al, 2021). This meant that although the male could not understand us or our prompts for him to leave the police van and head to custody, he understood we were not aggressive and gave him no reason to be aggressive with us. I built a slight rapport with the male after arresting him as it was a 40-minute drive to custody, and he was placed in the rear of a van I was sat in a seat observing him. In the article ‘Revenge versus Rapport’ authors Alison L & Alison E (2017) write the benefits of rapport are “(a) it enhances cooperation and (b) elicits more accurate information.” Focusing on enhancing cooperation it meant that whilst in transport with the male I told and showed him that by holding under his seat in the rear of the cage in the van, the ride is more comfortable and less bumpy. This calmed him down significantly and made our journey to custody less stressful, so the male was more compliant when we arrived.

The male I arrested for violence offences had previous convictions for similar incidents therefore there was a marker on our intelligence systems that notified us he would likely to be

violent or aggressive. When my tutor and I made our way into his room he was stood in a bladed stance which is where an individual is getting ready for a fight (Hayes & Niehaus, 2016). This immediately alerted me that the male is getting ready to have a physical altercation and potentially resist arrest. After saying the words “You are under arrest to the male” I immediately walked up to him and used my arms to turn him away from me so that I was outside of his fighting arc (Home Office 2014) and I could feel him tense up and try to pull away but before he could I was able to retrieve my handcuffs from my molle vest and apply them in the rear stack position as mentioned before. Looking at Betari’s Box model (Changing minds, 2010), it shows that my behaviour and attitude directly affects the detained male’s behaviour and attitude. Reflecting on the arrest it shows that although I was quick to place the male in handcuffs before he could become physically aggressive, I believe I did so in a calm and collected manor and did not shout at him. This means my attitude and behaviour which was calm affected his attitude and then his behaviour. The model also shows that the male’s behaviour and attitude where he started to stand in his bladed stance affected my attitude and behaviour making it more necessary to apply hand cuffs in a timely manner.

Applying the College of Policing’s conflict management approach (College of Policing, 2020) there is a scale of officer use of force levels to deal with conflict. Level 1 starts with simple officer presence, and it ends with level 5 which is deadly force for the most serious of incidents. Reflecting on my specific conflict incident as I used force to apply handcuffs and turned the male away this would be level 3 which is soft techniques such as wrist locks and handcuff application. Section 117 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 allows an officer to use reasonable force to exercise powers under the act (Gov.uk 2017) in which an arrest falls under section 24, therefore applying factors such as the males previous history for violence, the fact that he had assaulted a security guard and that he was stood in a bladed stance ready for conflict

I definitely feel that I was right to use force immediately and go straight to a level 3 officer technique as I feel if I had attempted to reason with the male for a period of time he would have become more irate and potentially assault myself and my tutor.

Reflecting upon the decision to arrest the male I feel that it was the correct option, I received no constructive criticism or feedback from the custody sergeant. Applying the national decision-making model (NDM) (College of policing, 2013), to this dynamic incident I first received all the information from my airwave handset that I could on route to the incident which is the first stage of the NDM and asked the control room to perform checks on the male and the address. As the control room passed information with the males' previous convictions for violence offences and the fact that in the year ending January 2022 28.9% of adult perpetrators reoffend with violence (Ministry of Justice, 2024), I believed that the male would be violent on arrival and if we left the property without taking positive action and arresting the male then there was a risk he would assault the security guard or other residents at the property therefore I believe that PACE code G (Department of Justice 2015), was fully met and justified.

My overall reflection of this incident is that I did well in a challenging environment and as I took the lead my tutor gave me praise and explained that he would have done very little differently. The only area I would change is that I would have called language line to translate to the male whilst he was in the van however, I believe that the wait for an interpreter would have agitated the male, and he would have preferred to be transported straight to custody where language line was rung to explain to him his detention. Dealing with language and communication barriers is incredibly difficult and a challenge for modern policing however I feel in this situation I handled these barriers with respect and dignity and the male was dealt with in line with the Police and criminal evidence act 1984.

Word count: 1600.

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:

Domestic abuse incidents are one of if not the most common calls we attend as response officers, and a force priority is to end violence against woman and girls (Gwent Police Crime Commissioner, 2020). In the year ending March 2022 the crime survey for England and Wales estimated that 6.9% of all women aged 16 years or over experienced domestic abuse (Office for National Statistics, 2022). It is clear from the statistics and the fact it is a force priority that domestic abuse is a serious issue that UK policing faces. I will be reflecting upon an incident where I supported a female victim of domestic abuse from culturally sensitive background and pursued a conviction for her ex-partner ensuring he was not able to abuse the woman again. During this reflection I will be using the Gibbs model of reflection (Resources for reflective practice, 2020) and will be referencing others research throughout.

Before starting my shifts on response, I naively believed that domestic abuse was always going to be in black and white and be a strong masculine male who physically assaulted his small female partner, however 90% of the time this is not the case. I have dealt with incidents during my tutorship where six-foot men have been the clear victims of domestic abuse from their partners and have received serious injury hospitalising them, I have also seen many incidents where at face value there does not seem to be any domestic abuse only a couple having a verbal argument then once an investigation has begun it is clear that the perpetrator has coerced and controlled the victim mentally and financially leaving them a shell of their former self. The fact that domestic abuse does not always have to have a physical violence element is being recognised by the government as they announced in February 2023 that "offenders sentenced to a year or more for controlling and coercive behaviour are recorded on the violent and sex offender register, so that they don't fall through the cracks." (Gov.uk 2023). This shows the government has recognised how the mentally abusive and controlling side of domestic abuse has become more prevalent and more must be done to combat this.

The specific incident I attended and will reflect upon was my response with my tutor to an emergency call where a female had rung stating her ex-partner was stood outside her property refusing to leave and she was in fear that he may attempt to enter. My tutor and I arrived at the incident shortly after two other officers. The two other officers were speaking to the male outside the property allowing us to go and speak to the female inside. The female was at first hesitant to open the door to us, but we explained that her ex-partner is being spoken to away from the property and won't be allowed to come here, I utilised passive body language (Omenogor, 2021) this made her more relaxed, and she allowed us in to speak to her. The female disclosed to us immediately that her ex-partner had grabbed her arm the previous night, this allowed us to arrest the male for the common assault and our necessity to comply with

PACE was to protect a vulnerable person and prevent her suffering injury (Legislation.gov 2020).

I immediately felt a duty to protect the woman in any way possible and safeguard her from her partner. My first feelings were fear and nerves as the male had previously been violent towards officers on other occasions where he had been arrested and I did not want the situation to escalate with him being arrested outside the victim's address. Before speaking to the victim my tutor disclosed to me privately that she herself has warning markers for violence towards police officers and when he had delt with her before she did not engage with officers and refused to make any statement. I felt that because I had not had any involvement with her before that she would possibly engage with me and make a statement, this also made me feel very nervous whilst talking to the victim, but I utilised taking deep regular cleansing breaths which is technique utilised by public speakers to overcome nerves (May.T, 2016).

A study in 2022 looked at how people perceive police officers and concluded that officers who wore full uniform and had a clean appearance received more favourable ratings in competencies such as trust and respect (Thielgen M et al, 2020). As a new officer I always ensure my appearance and uniform is the highest standard, due to this I feel the victim engaged more with me and disclosed offences in more detail. After speaking to the victim, she disclosed that her ex-partner would control and coerce her in ways such as what clothes she wore and tried to isolate her from her friends and family. This again made me feel empathetic to the victim and I captured what she disclosed in a public protection notification report which would be reviewed by police domestic abuse safeguarding teams and social services.

Understandably the female victim wanted to know what would happen to her partner and if he was going to prison or if he would be allowed back at the property. Whilst the female victim was disclosing offences to myself it was clear the males behaviour had recently become more fixated, this increased the risk to herself and due to the fact that more than double of all stalking offences committed in the year ending March 2023 were committed by men (Office for National Statistics, 2023) I was increasingly worried that his behaviour could escalate and pose more of a threat towards the female victim. Under the codes of practice and in line with the victim's code we are obliged to provide victims with information when they have reported a crime (Ministry of Justice, 2005). In line with the victim's code, I informed the victim that although I cannot guarantee they are granted, I would seek (with her support) bail conditions which would prevent the perpetrator entering the victims home address area or contacting her, she was very pleased with me informing her of this and said she would fully support bail conditions.

Another responsibility we are designated under the victim's code is for victims to be referred to services which are tailored to the victim's needs (Ministry of Justice, 2005). Due to the nature of this incident, I made referrals to women's aid and other domestic abuse partner agencies and charities. In the north of England in 2023, a trial was completed where domestic abuse victims were given window and door alarms to comfort them and prevent their abusers coming back to their property unannounced and unexpected (BBC, 2023). This trial was a success and due to this I was able to apply to my forces domestic abuse team for alarms to be fitted which were done. I felt this was a great way to safeguard the victim of a crime and ensure she was able to feel and stay safe in her own home setting. This also complies with the victim's code of practice ensuring our compliance and shows great collaborative working with police

forces and partner agencies for domestic abuse, it shows victims that we take domestic abuse seriously and want to proactively protect out victims to ensure their safety.

After applying the core policing values (College of policing, 2014) to this domestic situation and looking at the ‘public service’ value I feel that I safeguarded the victim by taking positive action and arresting her partner but also by ensuring referrals were made to the relevant departments. One of the core values in policing is ‘We are collaborative’ and I believe that I demonstrated this by working with other departments such as our forces domestic abuse safeguarding team and by completing a MARAC referral which is a joint meeting between police and safeguarding services such as social services and NHS (Safe Lives, 2014).

Overall I felt that I dealt with this domestic incident well, I was very glad to have my tutor on hand if I felt I needed to ask any questions, however police training school education covered the gold standard response to domestics and I feel that because I had only recently left training school that the theoretical knowledge was still fresh in my mind and I knew of all the relevant actions to take and safeguarding agencies to contact as that knowledge had not faded as is explained in the Psychological Science Journal (Bailey, et al. 2020). Although I do feel this domestic incident was near gold standard there are always ways to improve and I believe that going forward I will be more confident and calm with the victim as I believe my nerves showed whilst taking a statement from her, this however will come in time, I also feel that going forward only one officer should take the statement from the victim as I feel that victims could feel oppressed by having two officers in full stab vest and uniform in their home talking to them about a personal incident. This all being said I am very pleased at how I dealt with this incident and although no two incidents are the same, I will attempt to bring forward the best practice to ensure that victims are safeguarded, and perpetrators behaviour is addressed.

Word count: 1566.

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:

Mental health calls are again one of the most common calls we receive as response officers. In recent years Mental health calls have skyrocketed, from 2017 to 2023 Merseyside Police had a 313% increase in the amount of mental health incidents they attended (BBC, 2023). During my first set of 6 shifts on response I attended the local psychiatric hospital 3 times for different mental health incidents. Many forces including my own have introduced 'Right Care Right Person' which as the policy paper explains (GOV.UK, 2023) aims to ensure that people suffering from poor mental health receive the right treatment and not police officers. Although at first glance this policy would appear to be extremely beneficial, which in many cases it is, recently in Norwich a male had rang police stating he was having a mental health crises, officers did not attend as it was graded as a pure mental health, the morning after the male and his 2 children and wife were all found dead in the property from stab wounds suspected to be

from the male (BBC, 2023). Managing risk especially with factors such as mental health is one of the most challenging aspects of being a response officer and the incident I will reflect on will be one I attended in the last weeks of my tutorship where a male had a mental health crises with a knife, during this reflection I will be using the Gibbs model of reflection (Mindtools, 2016) and I will be referencing other work throughout.

The incident I attended was a call from a support worker saying that she had been threatened by a 17-year-old male who was living in supported living with his boyfriend. The call was graded as an emergency and as my tutor carried a taser we were allocated the call. Whilst travelling to the call my tutor and I discussed potential offences and possession of a bladed article (CPS, 2022) was considered and also potentially the offence of affray (Legislation.gov, 2011). Due to the nature of the call and a weapon being threatened my adrenaline had increased, which (McAllister, et al, 2020) show in their academic journal looking at how adrenaline affects police officers in active shooter situations in North America, creates mass anxiety and increased blood pressure. I believe due to this I had not even considered mental health as a factor and had purely entered a fight response instead of a flight response (McCarthy, 2016) to this dangerous situation.

As we arrived at the scene, I could see two young males stood on the pavement outside a property and a woman who appeared to be the care worker stood on the opposite pavement over the road. The care worker shouted as soon as we exited the car, “he’s got a knife” and pointed in the direction of the males. My tutor drew his taser and I shouted to the males to raise their hand with palms facing us which they both did. One of the males then stated he had a knife, and he was going to stab himself or his support worker. Because of the threat he made I subtlety told my tutor that I was going to put him in cuffs and my tutor said he would cover me

as I approached with his taser. Before the male had a chance to reach for anything that he may have concealed such as the knife I grabbed both of his arms and cuffed him in the rear stack position, utilising section 3 of the criminal law act 1967 (legislation.gov 2011) which allows anyone to use proportionate and reasonable force to prevent crime. The other male who was stood next to him stated he was his boyfriend and said he was having a mental health crisis and wanted to take his own life. Because of this I told the male he was detained under section 136 of the mental health act 1983, I then searched him under PACE section 32 (legislation.GOV, 2020) which is covered by the mental health act and located a large kitchen knife tucked in his waistband. I then conveyed him to the mental health hospital, and he was handed over to staff there.

I have chosen this incident to reflect upon as I had to decide whilst investigating this incident and my attempt to separate the criminal elements from the mental health elements. The Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 has the definition of a police investigation as "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." (Ministry of Justice, 2016). As the male had in fact threatened his care worker with the knife by waving it at her and had made out the offence of possessing a bladed article in public it would be my responsibility to investigate these offences impartially. One consideration I had from the beginning of the investigation was whether the offence would be in the public interest as the college of policing states when dealing with youth offenders that "careful consideration should be given to the public interest test". This meaning that it may not be in the public's interest to fund a prosecution for the offence if it is not proportionate or required.

I felt very unsure about this incident and the investigation that followed and although I was nearing the end of my tutorship I was feeling very out of my depth as although I had detained people under the mental health act and they had committed offences they had all been minor offences such as public order offences or very low level criminal damage which my sergeant told me to close down as they were definitely not in the public interest. On this occasion I asked my sergeant for advice and consulted with the CPS's guide for criminal investigations where a mental disorder is a contributing factor (CPS, 2023). The CPS sates that the investigator must make the prosecution aware by adding a mental health flag to the file which I did, and my sergeant tasked me with actions such as investigating what medications the subject had been prescribed and if he had been taking them and also if he was currently undergoing mental health treatment or was at the time of the offence.

Utilising the national decision-making model (College of Policing, 2013) I first gathered all the intelligence and information I could on the male's medication status and his current treatment I did this by requesting medical records which I promptly received, which showed he was engaging with his mental health support team and taking his required medication. I then accessed the threat and risk linked to the male, he had been released from the mental health hospital and was being managed by professionals there which subsequently meant I graded it as medium risk due to the fact he had threatened himself and others with a knife but he was currently engaging with the mental health professionals and was also being managed by them, he was also being visited by support staff and they would report any concerns about his behaviour. Looking at the policies and procedures it would be policy to offer the male an out of court disposal such as a community resolution (Bindmans, LLP, 2021) however he had already received one less than 6 months before making him ineligible for another.

The action I took was I contacted the CPS and asked to speak to a prosecutor regarding this investigation, I was then put in contact with the local supervising prosecutor. I explained the investigation and actions taken and received feedback from the prosecutor. I then addressed my own unconscious bias (York, Un 2021) as I believe in the police, we purely see a positive result as a successful conviction and I believe my own bias was that because the evidential threshold test was met (CPS, 2018) that I could have secured a conviction and boosted my positive outcome stats. Taking this into account and the fact that the support worker did not want to complete a statement or make a complaint I decided, after speaking to my sergeant to utilise my discretion and to no further action the investigation on the grounds of public interest as although the male had committed a serious offence he was then admitted to mental health services and had been engaging with them, it is also very likely that the court would not have proceeded due to the mental health grounds.

During this incident and investigation, I believe I chose the best course of action. Discretion allows police officers to make their own individual judgements and research conducted has shown that police officers overwhelmingly support having the ability to use discretion and the most common reason is “to do the right thing” (Maine A, et al, 2023). This was not an easy or simple incident to investigate and going forward I believe that I will utilise the ability to contact the CPS directly more often and ask for advice or if a prosecution would be in the public interest as this will save time and resources as it will avoid unnecessary large case file builds for the CPS to refuse and state that it is far from public interest. Mental health remains one of the moat complicated incidents we attend, and I believe as police officers we require more training as we are still frequently sent to mental health incidents and expected to make major decisions regarding someone’s welfare.

Word count: 1600

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
Improve confidence whilst conducting interviews.	I will volunteer for more handover interviews from the previous shift and where possible sit in as note taker in interview my colleagues are conducting.	My sergeant and my colleagues.	I will aim to become more confident in interviews and take the lead by June.
Improve knowledge and ability to issue community resolutions.	I will ask my colleagues for support and ask to review their occurrences when they have issued a community resolution and what offences are suitable.	My experienced colleagues and my tutor.	I will aim to do this by the end of my tutorship in 5 weeks.
Increase my understanding of the property system.	I will complete all the digital training in relation to my forces new property system to ensure I am confident when dealing with property.	My sergeant by giving me time to complete the learning packages.	I will aim to do this soon when resources allow in the next few weeks.

Increase my confidence and natural ability to give GOWISELY during searches.	I will attempt to complete more stop searches, currently I feel I can identify grounds correctly however whilst conducting stop searches with my tutor I feel that I give GOWISELY robotically and on one occasion my tutor had to step in as I forgot to give the power used.	My tutor and sergeant when she reviews the stop searches she will be able to give feedback.	In the next month which will be the end of May I aim to complete gold standard stop searches.
Improve my knowledge and understanding surrounding case files and the relevant documents to include.	I have spoken to my tutor surrounding this and he has stated he is currently investigating simple crimes where a postal charge requisition will be suitable and will allow me to complete the casefile which he will read over before the end of my tutorship.	My tutor will be able to by review the case files, I will be able to observe colleagues completing more complex files and we currently have a file team where I aim to do an attachment.	In the next 2 months I will do a day's attachment with the case file team to improve my understanding and ability to complete them.
Increase my confidence talking over the airwaves.	I currently feel very nervous whilst talking over the air as my policing area is extremely wide and I get nervous about making mistakes whilst transmitting information over the air. The only way to improve this is to do it more often and gradually it will become second nature.	My tutor has begun to step back and only wants me transmitting over the air, this forces me to go out of my comfort zone and pass messages and updates.	At the end of my tutorship in 4 weeks I am to feel natural over the air and not get nervous.

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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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