

Moon, J (1999) *Reflection in learning and professional development*. Oxford: RoutledgeFalmer.

Schön, D (1983) *The reflective practitioner*. San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass.

USEFUL
WEBSITES

www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/teachingandlearning/pdp

www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/resource_guides/foundation_degree_students_in_reflective_learning.pdf

The Higher Education Academy provides details of the development and use of PDP for Students in Higher Education.

5 The first steps: relating theory to practice

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter you will have:

- explored some of the challenges of modern policing;
- understood why it is necessary to apply theory to practice;
- reflected upon a selection of policing case scenarios;
- practised applying a range of theories from your learning to your understanding of practical policing situations.

LINKS TO STANDARDS

This chapter provides opportunities for links with the following Skills for Justice, National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Policing and Law Enforcement 2008.

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|------|---|
| AE1 | Maintain and develop your own knowledge, skills and competence. |
| CD1 | Provide an initial response to incidents. |
| GC10 | Manage conflict. |
| AA1 | Promote equality and value diversity. |
| AB1 | Communicate effectively with people. |

Introduction

This chapter provides you with an opportunity to begin using your reflective skills in order to relate theory to practice. It starts by considering the complexity of modern policing and the reasons why reflective skills are necessary. The requirement that police officers understand the communities that they serve and inspire public confidence is considered. The chapter then provides a range of case scenarios. You will be invited to use Borton's reflective model in order to consider how some of the theories that you have learned throughout your studies may inform your understanding of practical policing situations in the future. Three areas will be considered: neighbourhood policing and community issues;

equality and diversity; and the needs of victims of crime. The key feature of this chapter is that it demonstrates the importance of developing thinking skills for day-to-day police practice.

The primary focus of this chapter is the use of reflection 'on' action. This is so that you may consider how some of the theories that you have learned during your studies can be applied to your understanding of real-life policing situations in the future. We start with a knowledge check – a series of questions designed to assess your current understanding of how your academic learning may aid your future policing practice. You will be invited to revisit these questions at the end of the chapter so that you can assess your learning.

REFLECTIVE TASK

Knowledge check

Write down your answers to the following questions.

- What do I know about modern policing?
- What types of knowledge and theory have I learned during my studies?
- Why are these theories important for policing?

Relating theory to policing practice

Previous chapters have introduced you to the importance of reflection for adult learning. Now that you have had the opportunity to start practising your reflective skills, we begin to place them in the context of modern policing in order to explore the ways that reflection may assist you in applying your theoretical knowledge to practical situations. It is useful to start by considering the varied and complex role of the modern police officer and the reasons why being a reflective, knowledgeable practitioner are considered necessary.

The modern police officer

Throughout your studies you will have been introduced to the broad range of tasks that police officers undertake during the course of their duties. There is no doubt that law enforcement is a key responsibility for the police, and it may be that this is one of the main reasons for choosing to pursue a future career as a police officer. Many commentators have suggested that policing is not restricted simply to fighting crime but involves a whole range of activities that are often community rather than crime related.

REFLECTIVE TASK

Think about any encounters that you or someone you know has experienced with the police service. Write down your answers to the following questions.

- 1 How many of these situations involved a criminal offence?
- 2 What other types of event have involved the police?
- 3 What types of activity were the police engaged in?

The range of policing activities

Coleman and Norris (2000, p122) describe a range of activities that police officers may undertake during the course of their duties. Some are listed here.

- Searching for a lost child.
- Settling a dispute between two neighbours about a parking space.
- Attending a sudden death.
- Securing entry to a house in order to check the safety of an elderly relative.
- Informing a local resident of the death of a relative.
- Dispersing a crowd of young people who are congregating on a street corner.
- Helping a bus driver remove a disruptive passenger.
- Attending a neighbourhood watch meeting.
- Taking a report at the scene of a burglary at which the home owner was absent.

These examples demonstrate only a small number of the situations that the police face, and many of them have little or no direct relationship to crime or law enforcement. Waddington and Wright (2010) suggest that at the heart of policing is the need to intervene in situations that members of the public feel unable to control themselves. The role of the police officer is therefore diverse, and requires a range of skills and knowledge in order to adapt quickly to a multitude of situations.

While the role of the police officer is not the main focus of this book, in this chapter it is important to consider the link between reflective skills and policing work. This is because the underpinning knowledge that you will no doubt develop throughout the course of your studies, combined with the ability to be reflective, will assist you in making sense of very complicated social situations in the future. This will allow you not only to adapt quickly to a variety of different events but also to make competent practice decisions based upon your understanding of *why* a particular course of action may be the most appropriate.

REFLECTIVE TASK

Consider an example from the list of police activities given above, provided by Coleman and Norris (2000). Jot down some of the theories that you have been introduced to during your studies. Think about whether any of these could be used to help you understand and respond to your chosen situation. Here we use Borton's (1970) reflective model as a guide. An example is provided to help you start.

Attending the scene of a sudden death

- What?
 - What theories might help me understand this situation?
 - What are the effects of grief?
 - What about culture?
 - What about gender?
- So what?
 - So what do I know about the ways that people behave when they have suffered a bereavement?
 - So what cultural issues might need to be considered, depending upon the religion of the person that has died?
 - So what are the gender differences in the way that women and men may respond to the death of a relative (if any)?
- Now what?
 - Now what could I do in order to help a grieving relative?
 - Now what special cultural or religious arrangements might need to be made for the person that has died?
 - Now what type of interpersonal skills might I need to use while assisting different members of the public?

Using the example above to help you, consider your answers to the What? So what? Now what? questions.

The need to improve public confidence

Not only is policing a diverse role but it is one that is constantly evolving and changing. We saw in Chapter 1 that the training and education that student police officers receive have been radically transformed since the publication of *Training matters* (Home Office, 2002), the first inspection of the initial police training programme. This was largely in response to the changing nature of policing and the desire for a learning programme that

reflected the needs of a modernised service. A key component of this was the recognition that public confidence in the police needed to improve.

Here, we briefly consider some of the historical events that have influenced the development of the modern police service and contributed to the need for police officers who are socially knowledgeable and reflective. A fuller understanding of the role of the police can be obtained by reading *What is policing?* (Waddington and Wright, 2010). The full reference for this book and similar texts are listed at the end of the chapter.

PRACTICAL TASK

Watch any fictional British television programme that describes the culture and practice of the police in the 1970s or 1980s. It may be useful to consider an episode of *Life on Mars*, *Ashes to Ashes* or *The Sweeney*. If you are unable to access a full episode of this type of programme, it may be possible to view a short section from a website such as YouTube. As you watch the programme, make some notes in relation to the following.

1 The language used to describe the following groups.

- Offenders or suspects.
- Women.
- Individuals from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

2 The general manner and style used when communicating with the public.

3 The types of task that the police characters engaged in.

Assuming that this is an accurate representation of the attitudes and behaviour of the police during this period, consider the following questions.

- 1 How might the police have viewed the public?
- 2 How might the public have viewed the police?
- 3 To what extent did the police engage with communities?
- 4 Are there any particular social groups that may have found it difficult to engage with or trust the police?

Historical tensions

Many criminologists and social theorists have commented upon the historical tensions between the public and the police. Crawford (1998), for example, refers to a series of social incidents and miscarriages of justice during the 1970s and 1980s that resulted in a growing sense of injustice regarding police behaviour. The Brixton riots in London and the Toxteth riots in Liverpool, both in 1981, resulted in large numbers of public and police casualties. The riots were brought about by a combination of social factors, including high levels of unemployment and poverty in inner-city areas, and a dissatisfaction with the ways that some members of the police force behaved towards

minority ethnic groups. What followed, largely as a result of the Brixton riots, was a report by Lord Scarman (1981). Lord Scarman concluded that the public's confidence in the police had to a large extent been lost. Police forces, he suggested, should seek to find better ways of engaging with the community. This can be considered in keeping with the original vision of Robert Peel, the founder of the modern police force. In this, the 'bobby on the beat' was a visible presence who worked closely with the community. As we shall see, this belief re-emerged as the basis for what was much later to become community policing.

The police and victims of crime

Mawby (2007) suggests that there are three key reasons why the police should be mindful of the needs of victims.

- The police rely upon victims to report crime.
- The police are the main agency dealing with the victims of crime.
- Historically, the police have a poor record when supporting the victims of crime, especially victims of rape and domestic violence.

Institutional racism

A series of incidents since the 1990s also appeared to confirm the suspicion that the police force did not fully understand or cater for the needs of a diverse society. As we saw in Chapter 1, the police mismanagement of the Stephen Lawrence murder brought the issue of institutional racism in some areas of the police service to the attention of the government and the public, despite the recommendations of the Scarman Report several years earlier. A more detailed understanding of the importance of the Scarman Report, the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and broader equality and diversity issues can be obtained by referring to *Equality and diversity in policing* (Stout, 2010), another title in this series. The full reference for this text is provided at the end of the chapter.

Reiner (2010) also refers to two examples of undercover journalism that highlighted similar issues. *The secret policeman* (2003) was a documentary in which a reporter secretly joined the police force. Several incidents of institutional and overt racism were identified. *The undercover copper* (2006) followed and identified similar problems, this time in relation to sexist attitudes displayed by individual police officers.

The desire to restore confidence

It is possible to see from the history of community relationships with the public why public confidence is such an important issue for modern policing. Rix et al. (2009) suggest in their government research report that public confidence is now the single most important policing priority. They also identify four key areas that are effective in restoring the public's faith in the police. These are listed below.

- Community policing – including officers engaged with the public on foot patrol, identifying local priorities with their community through consultation and problem solving.

- Good quality community engagement – involving contact with local residents while based within the community, and responding to requests for help from the public in a respectful and polite way.
- Local communication by newsletter – including clear information about local services, community priorities and planned courses of action.
- Restorative justice – involving a process in which the victim and the offender are brought together in order to seek a resolution of their conflict.

PRACTICAL TASK

Visit the Customer Care Guide at the National Police Improvement Agency website. This can be found at the following web address.

www.npia.police.uk/en/docs/NPIA_customer_guide.pdf

Write a list of the things contained within it that may assist in improving public confidence.

For the reasons highlighted, community policing is now regarded as the most effective form of policing. It is to this that we now briefly turn.

A modern service – community policing

The principles of community policing are far from new; in fact, they are at the heart of what Robert Peel intended the police officer to be – a responsive member of the public who understands the community that they serve, and works closely within it in order to maintain public order. As we saw earlier, this was identified as one of the solutions to public dissatisfaction by Lord Scarman as long ago as 1981. Reiner and Newburn (2007) suggest that community policing emerged not only from the recognition that public confidence had deteriorated but also from the specific desire to engage with what are often referred to as 'hard to reach' groups. These are particular communities that may include black and minority ethnic groups, travellers and the gay community, for example. Traditionally these groups may have been suspicious of the police service.

Reiner and Newburn (2007) further suggest that there is not a particular model or template for community policing; rather, the policing styles and tactics employed should be appropriate to the specific needs of the particular community. These may be very different for a rural area of North Yorkshire and a multicultural inner-city area. The consistent theme is that the approach is based upon an understanding of the diverse needs of particular community groups, and is locally agreed upon.

PRACTICAL TASK

If you are able to, contact a police officer via the website Twitter and ask them about their role. The website address is <http://twitter.com/police1ists/uk-police-on-twitter>.

You may wish to ask what the local priorities are and if there are any particular social issues that relate to their particular community.

Improving confidence – the importance of reflection

We now return to the main focus of this book, which is reflective practice. The developments in policing outlined above will require you to be a very different type of officer than you might have been during the 1970s or 1980s, for example. Although it is still the case that police officers respond to crime and deal with emergency situations, the emphasis is placed upon proactive, preventative policing rather than simply reacting to the consequences of crime after it has taken place. Policing is therefore as complex as it has ever been, if not more so. It requires an understanding of diversity and community issues and the needs of the victims of crime. It is very likely that this is the type of learning that you are engaged in during your current studies.

One of the reasons why reflective skills are an essential tool for a future police officer is that they enable you to apply your theoretical knowledge to real-world situations. The difference here is that instead of simply being trained to react to situations, modern police officers are also educated in order that they may learn to think independently. They are therefore able to make informed judgements based upon their reflective skills. We consider the importance of judgement and discretion in the next section of this chapter.

Inspiring confidence – a personal responsibility

The ability to gain the confidence of the public can be regarded as both a service-wide and a personal responsibility. While the structures for community policing are now firmly embedded, the ability to form good relationships with your community in the future will be largely dependent upon your use of police discretion and the general manner and style in which you present yourself as a professional. Waddington and Wright (2010) point out the very public nature of policing work. They suggest that, regardless of the mode of transport, be it car, bicycle or on foot, the streets are the stage on which the police officer performs. The performance is therefore one in which the mere presence of the officer provides reassurance to the public.

Although we focus upon the ability to make reflective practical decisions in the latter section of this chapter, it is useful to start by considering the interpersonal skills that you bring to your future policing role (and, indeed, to your current learning). These are the skills and abilities that you already possess in communicating effectively with others. Many of these will have been developed throughout your life and during your current studies, and can therefore be regarded as transferable skills. In Chapter 2 we considered how these can be identified using reflection. We explore these in further detail in the final chapter of the book when examining your skills for employability. Here, we use Borton's model in

order to assess the communication skills that you already have and those that you may need to develop in order to build trusting relationships with the public in the future.

REFLECTIVE TASK

Think about the skills that you possess as an effective communicator. It may be useful to consider a range of situations that you have previously been involved in. These may have included comforting a distressed relative or explaining a task to a small child, for example. Using Borton's model, answer the following questions.

- *What?*
 - *What are my strengths as a communicator and do they relate to written or verbal communication?*
 - *What particular situations am I good at dealing with?*
 - *What roles and situations did I learn these skills from?*
- *So what?*
 - *So what situations might my skills be useful for in my role as a police officer?*
 - *So what might the benefits be of having these skills?*
- *Now what?*
 - *Now what can I do to enhance and maintain these skills?*

This exercise is particularly useful because listing the strengths and abilities that you have will also help you identify the deficits – or gaps – in your communication skills. Consider the reflective cycle again, and this time list the skills that you would like to improve.

- *What?*
 - *What situations am I not as effective in dealing with as a communicator?*
 - *What skills would I like to improve?*
- *So what?*
 - *So what might the consequences of not possessing these skills be for me?*
 - *So what might the consequences be for others?*
- *Now what?*
 - *Now what skills would I like to strengthen and develop?*
 - *Now what can I do in order to develop these skills?*

Finally, having identified your strengths and weaknesses, write a short action plan containing the following two sections.

- *What can I do to maintain and improve the skills that I have?*
- *What can I do to develop the skills that I do not yet possess?*

Reflection and individual interpretation

A final point regarding the role of the modern police officer is the use of reflection for the interpretation of events. Within the policing role, as with most others, there are few situations that are entirely straightforward. Most events will require the police officer to form a judgement and act accordingly. Although there are undoubtedly situations in which an offence has clearly taken place, Coleman and Norris (2000) suggest that even the decision to make an arrest carries with it a degree of discretionary power.

REFLECTIVE TASK

Consider the following situation.

Coleman and Norris (2000) provide an example of two men who are fighting on a street corner. When the police arrive the men are still fighting. List the possible courses of action that you think could be taken.

Coleman and Norris suggest that there are, in fact, five ways that this situation may be resolved. These are listed below.

- 1 Stop the men from fighting and take no further action.
- 2 After breaking up the fight, find out the causes of it and help the men resolve them.
- 3 Caution one or both men.
- 4 Attempt to find out who has caused the fight and make an arrest.
- 5 Arrest both men.

Here we see that even in a relatively simple situation there are a number of legitimate actions that could be taken. In fact, any one of these responses could be the right answer. A police officer will therefore need to use reflective skills in order to arrive at an appropriate response. This becomes even more significant when we consider the increasingly diverse role of the modern police officer. In the future, you may often be formulating your own theory as to what the problem is and what the intervention should be. It therefore becomes vital to be able to make thoughtful, educated decisions based upon your understanding of what motivates particular behaviours. It is the ability to use reflective practice in order to link theory to practice that we now turn. We considered the additional role that our values and beliefs play in decision making in Chapter 3.

Some practical examples

Some practical examples of possible policing situations are provided so that you can begin to reflect upon some of the theories that you have learned during your studies, and consider how they may help you to understand practical and sometimes very complicated situations. The areas for consideration have been designed to fit with the priorities of

modern policing, so examples relating to community policing, equality and diversity issues, and the needs of victims of crime will be considered. Borton's reflective model is again used as a guide. We start by considering a diversity and community issue.

Diversity and equality example

CASE STUDY

A police officer visited a school in order to provide a teaching session for a group of children. Suddenly she was called to the playground where two boys appeared to be fighting. As she approached she saw that both of the boys were Asian and approximately ten years old. One boy had fallen to the ground and the other was about to hit him. A crowd of children had gathered.

REFLECTIVE TASK

Consider the following questions according to Borton's model.

What?

- *What do you think may have been happening here?*
- *What else might the real cause of this problem have been?*
- *What theories have you learned that might help you understand what was happening?*

The immediate reaction to this situation would usually be simply to stop the boys from fighting. By doing this the situation may be easily resolved. Although the prevention of harm is the upmost priority, it is also important to understand some of the factors that may have caused this situation. These may be far less obvious. Consider some of your recent learning. You may have an awareness of some of the factors that motivate aggression or bullying, for example, but what about the ethnicity of the boys? Have you also considered their ages or their backgrounds? Far from being a simple situation, these factors may lead you to believe that there was something much more complicated taking place.

REFLECTIVE TASK

So what?

- *So what might these issues mean when explaining the situation?*
- *So what were the options for dealing with this situation?*
- *So what might have happened if the situation had not been resolved?*

Here we start to apply our knowledge so that the situation makes sense. It therefore becomes more than simply a procedural issue – ‘the boys were fighting so we needed to split them up’. Instead, we understand why they were fighting and what the underlying problem was. This way, we can think about resolving the problem and, most importantly, prevent it from occurring in the future.

REFLECTIVE TASK

Now what?

- Now what can be done to resolve this situation?

Here, we may be able to think creatively about a solution to this problem. The strategy employed may not have been identified without the background knowledge that you have considered. This example demonstrates that reflection can be used to understand situations and respond to them in a thoughtful way, rather than simply reacting to what is seen.

The following case study expands upon the exercise above. It describes a real-life example of a similar situation that involved a newly qualified police officer who had also undertaken a police studies course.

CASE STUDY

Sarah had been a qualified police officer for six months when she started working at a local school. This was as part of a ‘Safer Schools Project’, an initiative designed to engage hard-to-reach groups with the police and ensure that children attended their local school. Sarah intervened in the fight between the two boys and spoke to both of them about the incident. She discovered that the fight itself was a relatively minor incident; however, it was a symptom of a much larger problem. Both of the boys were Muslim, one from a Sunni community, and the other from a Shia community. Tension between these groups had been slowly building within the school, but this had gone unnoticed.

Sarah knew from both her studies and her experience that there had been a history of difficult relationships between these particular groups in her community. She was also aware that young people are often difficult to reach by the police, and are more likely to be dealt with as offenders rather than victims of crime. She therefore felt that her choice of action was important because it could prevent the tensions from escalating further. She also wished to resolve the situation as informally as possible so that the boys were not introduced to the criminal justice system unnecessarily.

Sarah reflected upon the situation and found a creative solution. She liaised with the headteacher, and a meeting between parents, teachers, community leaders and the local policing team was called in order to assist the community in identifying solutions to this

CASE STUDY continued

problem. The group decided to apply for some local funding, which had been made available from the Proceeds of Crime Fund in the local area. Children from both communities were invited to attend a supervised fishing trip together. During this excursion the children were encouraged to learn more about each other and to develop friendly relationships.

This process can be summarised as follows.

What?

A fight had broken out in the playground; however the real problem related to cultural tensions within the school.

So what?

Sarah’s knowledge about cultural issues informed her of the potential for community relationships to deteriorate, and for the boys involved to be punished unnecessarily. This might have damaged relationships between the police and young people within the area, and Sarah was keen to avoid this. It was therefore considered important to intervene in a positive and constructive way.

Now what?

A creative solution was decided upon by the community, which aimed to repair community relationships.

Community policing example

We consider a further example of a community issue. You are invited to start to consider some of the theories that you may have learned about the possible causes of crime. By reflecting upon them, it may be possible to identify some solutions to the social problems that are identified.

CASE STUDY

In a busy inner-city area the local police force identified that there had been an increase in the number of reported burglaries. Unemployment within the area was higher than the national average. A number of the housing estates had deteriorated in condition and drug-related incidents had increased.

REFLECTIVE TASK

Consider a police officer working within a community policing team. How might they have assisted the community in reducing the number of burglaries and drug offences?

What?

- *What do you think the main issues were?*
- *What theories do you think could be applied in order to understand the increased level of crime in this area?*

Think carefully about the main social issues. What do you think the effects of unemployment may have been, for example? Are there any other potential causes of the problems? Then think about any theories about the causes of crime that you may know. An example to help you start is social exclusion – what do you think this may be?

REFLECTIVE TASK

So what?

- *So what action could the officer have taken?*
- *So what might the benefits or consequences of these actions be?*

By reflecting upon the things that may have caused the increase in burglaries and drug offences, it is possible to start to consider some solutions. You may consider the social and criminological theories that you have applied. Again, it might have been possible simply to react to offences after they have taken place – policing the area and making arrests. Although there is no doubt that the police do respond to crime, it is important to consider whether this alone could address the underlying causes. Are there any other proactive measures that could have been taken in order to help the community reduce their crime rate?

REFLECTIVE TASK

Now what?

- *Now what might the most effective course of action be?*

Think about some of the things that the officer might have done in order to assist the community. Again, by using this reflective process, we see how an understanding of theory can be used in order to resolve problems rather than merely react to the consequences of them.

We can examine the above example in more detail. There are several issues that may have caused the increase in burglaries, and you may have identified some of these. You might have considered the levels of unemployment and potential poverty, for example. You may have thought about the influence of drug problems. There are also theories from criminology that could be applied. You may have been introduced to ideas such as social exclusion or 'broken windows' theory (Wilson and Kelling, 2005), for example. This promotes the policing of minor crimes in order to prevent more serious crimes occurring. You may consider how these theories could add to your understanding of the problems within the area.

Leaving these issues unresolved may result in the levels of crime continuing to rise. It may, indeed, be possible to respond to any further incidents by dealing with the consequences and not the causes, but this will not get to the heart of the problem. Here, we see why it is far more effective to understand the causes of crime and identify solutions that prevent it from occurring.

There are several things that the officer may have considered in order to help the community reduce the crime rate. For some real examples of the measures that the police take, you may wish to visit the website for your own police service where the range of crime prevention measures in your area will be outlined. In this example, the officer may have considered the following.

- Become a more visible presence within the areas. As we discussed earlier in the chapter, this may simply involve being the 'bobby on the beat' and providing reassurance to the local community.
- Building confidence with the community and developing trusting relationships. This may involve employing the types of interpersonal skills that you identified earlier.
- Working with individual members of the community in order to provide them with information about security, and helping them make their homes safer.
- Consulting with the community policing team, other social agencies and the community in order to identify solutions to problems such as unemployment and social exclusion.

Again, we may summarise the above example using Borton's reflective model.

What?

There was an increase in crime in the local area, including drug-related incidents and burglaries. Unemployment and poverty had contributed to the problem and some groups of individuals felt excluded from the wider community.

So what?

The problems may have escalated, resulting in more frequent arrests. Members of the community may have become increasingly socially excluded and resentful of the police.

Now what?

Having reflected upon the situation, the officer has applied his knowledge of some of the causes of crime. He has been able to use this in order to help him change his practice. He

has worked more closely with the community in order to prevent crime in the future, and has engaged the policing team and other agencies in addressing some of the social problems.

'Needs of the victim' example

We now consider a final example that may help you to practise the art of relating theory to practice. Earlier we discussed the emphasis placed upon meeting the needs of the victims of crime in modern policing, and it is to this that we now turn. What follows is an imaginary example of a community policing situation.

CASE STUDY

Tom was a community support officer. He had been called on several occasions to a 'nuisance caller' in his community. The caller was an elderly resident who claimed that there were trespassers in his garden. No evidence has been found to support this. The man lived alone and did not leave the house very often. According to police records he had been a victim of robbery in the past.

REFLECTIVE TASK

- *What do you think the real issues may have been? There are several things within the example that you may wish to consider. Do you think the age of the man may have been significant? Might the fact that he had been a victim of crime in the past be a factor?*
- *So what might Tom have done? Should he have warned the man not to waste police time, for example? Are there any other courses of action that he might have considered?*
- *Now what? From your understanding of the underlying issues, consider what the best solutions may have been.*

We can consider the above example in more detail.

CASE STUDY

Tom spoke to the resident and found out more about him. He discovered that the main problem was, in fact, the fear of crime. Tom was aware that this was a common concern within the community. He was also conscious that the man did not leave his home very often because of this. He learned from his studies that this could result in feelings of isolation and exclusion.

CASE STUDY continued

Tom therefore took the following action. He used his listening skills in order to understand the key problems. He reassured the man about the levels of crime in the area and assured him that he would receive a local newsletter. He also helped to secure the house and garden. Finally, he liaised with Age UK and social services, in order to address some of the underlying problems.

This example relates to an issue raised at the beginning of the chapter: that modern policing is concerned with much more than simply apprehending criminals. Your future policing role may often involve providing a service to the community by offering support, guidance and reassurance.

Finally, we may summarise this reflection.

What?

Several calls have been made to the police by an elderly resident. The real problem is an underlying fear of crime.

So what?

The community support officer recognised that the man is isolated from the community and wished to help him become more included.

Now what?

The solution involved reassuring the resident and helping him secure his home. Efforts were also made to help him become more engaged in the community.

REFLECTIVE TASK

Knowledge check review

Answer the following questions and compare your answers with the ones you gave to the same questions at the beginning of the chapter so that you may assess your learning.

- *What do I know about modern policing?*
- *What types of knowledge and theory have I learned during my studies?*
- *Why are these theories important for policing?*

C H A P T E R S U M M A R Y

This chapter has considered the role of the modern police officer and the importance of improving public confidence. It has explored the reasons why underpinning knowledge is important for policing. The chapter then provided a range of exercises designed to allow you to practise relating theory to practice. You should now have a better understanding of how reflective practice can be used in order to help you make effective competent practice decisions in your future policing role.

FURTHER
READING

Stout (2010) *Equality and diversity in policing* provides students with a detailed understanding of the importance of equality and diversity issues for modern policing.

Waddington and Wright (2010) in *What is policing?* introduce students to the range of roles and responsibilities undertaken by individuals who perform a policing role. This book describes the complexity of modern policing practice, and students may therefore gain a fuller understanding of why the ability to be reflective may also be valuable.

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www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/ (the police section of the Home Office website)