

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) BMPF 6000D

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.*

Contents

Workbook	Area of Professional Practice	Word count
Task 1	Understanding the Police Officer Role	2000
Task 2	Communication Skills – social media	2000
Task 3	Leadership and Team Working	2000
Task 4	Coaching, Mentoring, Assessment	2000
	Bibliography	
	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:

To further understand the role of a police officer, this essay will evaluate the role of the College of Policing within the UK policing context. I will also use a policing incident I was involved in to reflect on how my final year of probation has seen my role as a police officer change and will discuss how I am fulfilling the role of a modern professional police officer.

To effectively evaluate the role of the College of Policing, I will first give context as to what the College of Police is. The College of Policing defines itself as the national professional public body that oversees both the consistency and standardisation of police training and education (The College of Policing, 2023). By supporting professional development through learning and career progression, setting standards through their authorised professional practice, and sharing knowledge the College of Policing states they help not only police officers and staff, but researchers, academics and also the public (The College of Policing, 2023).

The College of Policing has a focus on evidence-based policing and takes credit for moving the practice from academic theory into operational reality in police forces in the UK, according to their corporate strategy for 2022-2026 (The College of Policing, 2022). Evidenced-based policing is described as a reflection of modern policing, whereby the approach requires the implementation of new policies, tactics or actions

should be connected to a desired outcome using research, analysis and empirical information that can evidence the new action will or will be likely to work (Mears, 2023, p. 251). In the College's corporate strategy, the College gave self-reflection of their performance since their last release of the corporate strategy as well as setting out their plans for the next steps of the College. Reflecting on their use of evidence-based policing, they state that the strategy of evidence-based policing aided in providing swift support during the pandemic and supported senior leadership in their development.

In Blackstone's handbook for policing students, the authors describe the College of Policing in more simple terms (Bryant & Bryant, 2021, p. 26). Set up in 2012, the authors outline the College of Policing focuses on knowledge, education and standards for both forces and individuals. They complement the College of Policing with its new code of ethics, and the new authorised professional practice, and refer to the new qualification's framework for policing whereby new students undertake higher education level study. The handbook also references evidence-based policing (Bryant & Bryant, 2021, p. 150). The practice is praised in the handbook, stating the method is often used in favour of less effective techniques in modern policing and acknowledges many academic journals and authorities alike encourage the implementation of the approach for successful modern policing.

So, if the College of Policing is stating they are and will be using the evidenced-based approach, and authors such as Bryant & Bryant and Mears solidify the approach in modern policing, then should it be just to define the College of Policing as effective? In short, no, whilst that would be a logical statement, deeper thinking is required.

There are shortfalls found in the College's communication approach. Bryant & Bryant reference the fact that whilst the College of Policing is open to police staff as well as officers, the awareness of the College appears to be low in police staff due to communication problems the College faces in information dissemination, following a Home Office Affairs Select Committee review in 2015 (Bryant & Bryant, 2021, p. 26). This is also acknowledged by the College themselves, suggesting an awareness of the issue in their recent corporate strategy document (The College of Policing, 2022). In their own words, the College states that their inaccessibility and communication issues, highlighted by Bryant & Bryant, meant they were insufficiently useful and that hindered their ambition to deliver their goals for policing. However, they state this shortfall has informed their current strategy in the hope of delivering their goals, namely an evidence-based approach to inform police forces in the UK.

In addition to evidence-based policing, the College of Policing has implemented the Police Education Qualification Framework. Academic journal authors Williams et al. say the implementation by the College is closely linked with the drive for officers to understand evidence-based policing and will require new police officers to complete higher education study upon joining a new police force (Williams, et al., 2019). In a study of student police officers, findings showed there was an element of disconnect between the knowledge students gained in their higher education study and applying that in an operational context in their role as police officers. Some of the officers referred to the fact that the knowledge they received from their degree, was

not well received in their police force by middle and higher management. Their ability to pass evidence upwards was hindered, and one student believes this is due to the scheme being new and not understood by their colleagues with longer service, who were used to viewing students as inexperienced creating a culture of imbalance between students and senior ranking police officers. The article does acknowledge that the students interviewed were not on a College of Policing approved scheme, but one similar, so linking the arguments made in an evaluation of the College of Policing will be limited. However, the common theme in the article shows that the surveyed police force highlights significant hurdles in younger officers bringing in evidence to enact change.

This essay has already established what evidence-based policing is, and therefore the findings in the article by Williams et al. contradict both the College of Policing's reflection of their aims before 2022 and their strategy as a body going forward. If the opinions of the students interviewed are echoed by students across other UK forces, then there is a large gap between what the College of Policing recommend and what is being done. If correct, then not only is the effectiveness of the College of Policing questioned, but also their purpose as a whole.

The College of Policing has stated, as have Bryant & Bryant that they lacked reach in recent years and thus their usefulness was questioned. Further research will be needed at the end of the current corporate strategy period, in 2026, to see what, if any change has taken place. The College states they provide support and encouragement for police leaders in the UK (The College of Policing, 2023) but the article by Williams et al. questions if this is at all effective. Whether the College of Policing is effective or not is difficult to determine, but certainly, the evaluation can be made that they are not as effective as they could be, which they acknowledge.

Now I am in my final year of probation, there are many key differences in how my role as a police officer has changed. One change, in particular, saw me being open to conducted energy device, also known as taser, training. In my force, the minimum service time and course waiting list meant I acquired the accreditation of a specially trained officer (The College of Policing, 2022).

As a taser officer, I am asked to deploy to incidents where there may be a higher risk to public safety. On one occasion, I was asked to deploy to such an incident where the male subject, who I will call James, had allegedly used a hammer to cause damage to his girlfriend's belongings. I attended with another non-taser colleague, and we entered the address after hearing shouting outside. James was shouting and swearing but was not initially violent towards me or my colleague. I told James that he was going to be placed under arrest due to the damage and he started to walk away from me towards another room. I took hold of his arm and James and I then entered a physical struggle and we both fell to the floor. My colleague tried to help but James being of strong physique, was able to keep me pinned to the floor whilst he kicked my colleague away. After a short period of struggle, I was able to wriggle free, and for the first time since being a specially trained taser officer, I drew my taser and pointed it at James, which is when he became compliant. James was arrested for the original damage offence and then two further offences of assaulting an emergency worker.

Immediately after the incident, I was left feeling overwhelmed. I consider myself relatively young in service but have had exposure to incidents involving conflict. However, this was by far the most serious, and I remember I immediately felt the urge to analyse what had happened as I felt there may have been a way to deal with that incident better. As the weeks went on, my feelings around the incident began to shift to one of pride. I know that when I initially became operational, I would not have performed as well in that incident as I initially struggled with incidents of conflict. I strongly believe that I have used this incident as a mark of my progress in my policing career and feel a sense of pride when I reflect on it.

As previously mentioned, I immediately started to reflect on my performance in this incident following my taser drawing. Whilst I initially was trying to critique this performance, I have since come to the belief I performed well in this incident. Immediately trying to review what had happened felt like a natural step, and now on reflection, I was putting to use the national decision-making model, which police officers are taught in almost every aspect of policing, especially with the use of force (The College of Policing, 2014). I commend myself for using the NDM throughout this incident and even more so without realising it, as I can say it has now become second nature for my conflict management skills.

Taser is taught in a way that it should not replace the existing use of force options officers have at their disposal. This incident, whilst improving my confidence in taser, has not meant I rely on it. A study into an unknown UK police force found taser firing made up just 1% of all use of force incidents, with taser being drawn and not fired being even lower (Dymond, 2020). This marries up with my own experience of taser since being issued, with the above incident being the only time I have ever felt the justification to remove it from its holster at an incident.

As my final year in probation progresses, I am required to evidence of how I am meeting the standards to be confirmed in rank in the summer of 2024. One such way I am doing this is completing my operational competency portfolio. In this portfolio, there are several competencies I am required to meet. I use incidents like the one with James, to show I am fit to be confirmed in rank. The competencies required include dealing with victims, suspects, and witnesses professionally, handling situations of conflict and conducting complex volume crime investigations. I am confident I will be completing this portfolio on time.

Another way I am evidencing I meet the modern police officer standard is through the completion of essays such as this, as part of the police education qualification framework as outlined by the College of Policing. Through the research I have conducted for my university assignments, I believe I am well-equipped to apply academic theory to operational practice to improve my policing career.

Word Count: 1922

**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)

ANSWER:

By reflecting on an incident using the Gibbs reflective model (The University of Edinburgh, 2020) where I utilised social media to issue crime prevention advice. I will evaluate my experience in the use of social media as a means of informing and engaging with the community. Consideration will be given to what social media is used by my police force and published research into police use of social media as a policing tool will be explored. Any names and locations involved in this incident have been intentionally removed and kept vague, so I comply with the Data Protection Act (The College of Policing, 2023).

Whilst working my normal duties as a response officer, my supervisor allocated a crime for me to add to my workload and investigate. The crime was a theft from a motor vehicle, whereby at night someone smashed a window of a parked vehicle and stole a laptop bag that was left on the seat. This crime had a similar modus operandi to a crime I had investigated a week prior, as these two crimes both happened at night, targeted seemingly high-value goods and were within 2 miles of each other. I decided to speak about this with my team at the next team briefing, as I had not identified a suspect for either offence. I was surprised to learn that two other members of my team also had theft from vehicle offences on their workload, which were within 3 miles of my offences and had been committed within 3 weeks.

In addition to the crime investigation methods I usually undertake, I decided I would use social media in a bid to inform the community of this emerging pattern and to use it as a quick way to spread advice. I spoke with a colleague from the neighbour policing team and with their assistance, constructed a post for what was then Twitter,

now X, and Facebook informing residents the area where these offences were taking place. The post not only informed them that these offences were increasing, but also issued advice for members of the community to ensure that valuables are not left on display when they park their vehicles overnight. The post was shared by members of the community.

Unfortunately, I completed all investigatory enquiries but was unable to identify the offender. However, whilst updating the victim, she told me that her neighbours had informed her of the advice I posted online, as they were unaware the victim had her vehicle broken into. She thanked me for posting online and was hopeful that the post would stop others from becoming potential victims of this crime. This caused me to feel a great sense of pride in my decision to use social media. Even though my primary objective of apprehending the offender was not met, I still felt that I delivered good victim service through my use of social media in this incident. I created the post with the hope that I could help reduce the pattern of crime for the residents of the community where the offences took place.

Since using social media, no one on my team, me included, has noted any theft from motor vehicle offences with such similar *modi operandi*. The reason for this would be impossible to determine, given the offender was not identified. Whilst it could be due to residents utilising the target hardening advice, it could also be the offender simply deciding to target a different area, or these crimes were committed whilst another team were on duty, or the offender was apprehended for a different crime, to name a few. It would therefore be improper for me to conclude that my use of social media in this incident has resulted in the decrease of crime and at the time of posting on social media I knew its effect would not be easily measured. That being said, it is rare for a member of the community to feedback positively in my use of social media. I have since continued to use social media when I can and will explore the reasons why later in this essay, but this incident remains the only use where I have had an expression of gratitude from a member of the public issued directly to me, following the use of social media.

Considering how effective this use of social media was, there are two conflicting arguments for its use that I can easily draw. Firstly, the potential decrease in offending can largely and easily be argued as positive. If I assume that just one resident saw the social media post, and then removed a valuable item from their car which would have otherwise been stolen, then its use can be concluded as effective. This is largely due to the cost of social media. A post, similar to the one I utilised in this incident, would typically take less than 5 minutes to construct and post. It must be emphasised that this is a significantly large assumption and would be difficult to ever determine accurately. Additionally, this essay will explore research on public perception of social media. In this case, it was received positively by the victim. One argument I can make against social media is concerning the apprehension of the offender. Hypothetically, if a crime prevented by the use of social media, was committed due to not using social media, and on that occasion, the offender was identified, it may have been possible to link that offender to previous crimes they have committed. Again, this may be an oversimplification of the relationship between offending and offender knowledge, but if the social media post was seen by the offender of the offence, then that would at the very least, alert them to the fact an investigation into their offence is ongoing.

To better reflect on my use of social media, I have explored the police guidance on social media use. The College of Policing gives 4 broad principles to guide police forces in their successful use of social media. They are to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, reduce crime and the fear of crime, bring offenders to justice and lastly, to deliver a service that the police and those who serve it can be proud of that keeps communities safe (The College of Policing, 2023). When considering my use of social media in the incident I reflect upon, it is clear that I have attempted to meet some of the aims outlined by the College of Policing.

The College of Policing makes the argument that there is evidence to suggest the positive feedback I received from social media use is not in isolation, but a common feeling from the public. They say that good communication with the community, including through social media, improves the public trust in the police and increases the likelihood of voluntary public cooperation in assisting police with the prevention, detection, and prosecution of crime (The College of Policing, 2023).

My police force, South Wales Police, states online that their social media is used as an additional means to engage with the community. It is also stated that South Wales Police aim to keep their followers both informed about what is happening in the area and to provide their followers with crime prevention advice (South Wales Police, 2023). Linking this back to my deployment of social media, I strongly feel that my social media post falls well in line with the aims of my force with social media use. South Wales Police have many social media accounts. Including LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. Additionally, there are several Facebook and Twitter accounts for both specialist departments, and by local areas within the force (South Wales Police, 2023).

UK police forces began experimenting with social media as early as 2008. An article by Jeremy Crump, written in 2011, found that there was an ambitious national police agenda to promote the use of social media to engage groups in the community in discussions of local policing that would otherwise be disconnected from any debate. Crump analysed the following of several police Twitter accounts and determined that the majority of followers across the majority of police Twitter accounts were businesses and individuals, rather than other police accounts or media organisations, for example (Crump, 2011).

Whilst the publication is now well over 10 years old, it paints the picture that the use of social media, which can be argued is a modern technology, is not a new tool in a police force's arsenal, and the push for social media use by what is now the National Police Chiefs' Council in the early 2010s has impacted social media use significantly today.

This can be evidenced in another journal published in 2020, which explores community perception of the use of social media by UK police forces. In the article, just under 300 participants completed a survey relating to their police force's use of social media. In terms of reach, only 70% of participants were following their police force on Facebook, but 95% stated they had seen posts on social media by their police force. The study found the majority of participants agreed that social media is an effective method of communication and also that it assures them the police are doing both productive and relevant work. Furthermore, the survey showed that the

majority of participants are in favour of posts where crime prevention advice is provided, but the post the public are most attracted to are ongoing updates for live incidents (Cartwright & Shaw, 2020).

The study, does, however, create some risks if the aforementioned statistics are drawn without a careful reading of those sampled. The authors Cartwright and Shaw openly acknowledge that in their study 84% of those sampled were women, but more concerning, 95% were of a white British background. The study overwhelmingly paints social media use as one that is positive at first glance. However, given the disproportionality in the race of those sampled, and given that Baroness Casey found the Metropolitan Police Service to be institutionally racist (Dodd, 2023), care must be given to whether or not there is enough published research to accurately conclude the public perception of police social media. The argument can be made that until a wide enough demographic of people has been asked about police social media, it would be improper to definitively say social media is well perceived by the British public as a whole.

When comparing the data by Cartwright and Shaw with my personal experience of social media in this incident, I would conclude that my use of social media was statistically likely to get the positive reaction it did. However, my Chief Constable determined that using Baroness Casey's report into the Metropolitan Police Service, the term 'institutionally racist' applied to South Wales Police (South Wales Police, 2023). Therefore, whilst I plan to continue to use and develop my use of social media as a response policing officer, I will aim to meet the college of policing aims of the technology whilst also considering that the true public perception of social media use in the UK by police forces may not be fully known until further research is conducted.

Word Count: 1861

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:

In this essay I will evaluate a policing incident I was involved in and make sense of the leadership style that I used within the incident. I will then analyse the leadership strategies I used in both a policing and broad context. To comply with data protection laws (The College of Policing, 2023), any names and places referenced in the incident I evaluate will have been changed.

As outlined by The College of Policing, all police officers regardless of rank are expected to have some degree of leadership skills (The College of Policing, 2023). The College of Policing outlines they have five levels of leadership skills, with the highest being for executive leaders such as chief constables, and the lowest, stage one, which they call leadership foundations, for all police constables and staff. Stage one is what is required of me. The College of Policing states at stage one, officers are expected to work effectively as part of a team and should demonstrate good leadership and role-modelling skills. The College of Policing appear to have a vast number of resources broken down into the various leadership stages, however, as of December 2023, the online curriculum relating to my leadership stage, stage one, is not available and the online website generates an error. This was frustrating as it would have provided a solid framework to evaluate my leadership style against the national education body for police officers' requirements. Reflection and evaluation when the online curriculum is available in the future will likely be beneficial to me.

There are many incidents where I feel I have used leadership skills as part of the solution to a problem. One such incident was a domestic assault I attended which two less experienced colleagues than me. One colleague, whom I will call PC Smith, had around 1 year of service, but the other colleague, whom I will call PC Jones, had only 7 months of service. PC Jones was in his tutorship period, where he would spend most days with his tutor constable, but as their tutor was not in, our supervisor asked PC Smith and I to crew up with him for the day. We attended a call where a resident had heard two people in the neighbouring property argue. Working with PC Smith I knew she often looked to me for direction due to me being more experienced, and I expected the same from PC Jones given his experience. We arrived at the address where the argument had taken place, and a male and female were present but were already in separate rooms. I asked PC Jones to speak with the neighbour to get their account of events. I did this as I wanted to ensure that if either of the people inside the address were a victim, they received good service from a relatively experienced police officer. PC Jones left, and I asked PC Smith if she would prefer to speak with the male or the female present. PC Smith suggested she speak with the female as she thought someone of the same gender may encourage her to open up about what had happened. I agreed with PC Smith's rationale, so I spoke with the male in the other room. From speaking with all parties present, PC Smith and I would conclude that whilst the female had started a verbal argument, the male had pushed the female to the floor, causing her to feel pain as she hit her head. I then decided to arrest the male, and I then took him to the police van we had arrived in. PC Jones came to me as he saw me by the van and summarised what the neighbour had told him. PC Jones then asked me how we decided that the male was to be arrested, as the neighbour he spoke with could only hear shouting and he was unaware of the assault. I brought him up to speed with the information I knew, and PC Smith, PC Jones and I would later take the male to police custody. As we travelled to custody, PC Jones sat with me in the front of the police van, and I asked if he had ever booked someone into custody before. He said he hadn't, so I asked him if he would like to book this person in with the custody sergeant. He told me that he felt nervous about doing it, and on this occasion, asked if it was ok if he watched me book in. Usually, officers on my team pair up in twos, so unit this opportunity is not available as one person has to watch the detainee. However, as we were a crew of three, I thought that PC Jones' suggestion was sensible, so agreed he could watch me book the detainee in.

I felt the incident went well as a whole. It is not often I am paired up with someone of less experience than I, much less two officers of less experience. I felt that I stepped into the role of leading the call somewhat, and on the whole, felt that others respected my guidance. Later speaking with PC Jones after the incident, he told me that he appreciated me allowing him to observe the booking process, as he said, which I agree with, new officers feel a lot of anxiety about presenting a detainee to a custody sergeant for the first time. I felt a lot of pride from this small interaction with PC Jones, as I rarely have another officer voice their appreciation for an action, I have taken concerning their learning.

In trying to evaluate my leadership style, I have undertaken some research on various leadership styles. During this incident with PC Jones and PC Smith, and in the months that followed up until writing this essay, my knowledge of leadership styles was not great, and I would not have been able to identify what styles I used.

That is not to say that I did not implement such styles. From research, I know that when I asked PC Jones to get an account from the neighbour, this is part of the delegative leadership style. This, sometimes referred to as “laissez-faire” focuses on delegating tasks and roles to team members based on their skills (International Institute for Management Development, 2023). On reflection, I delegated this role to PC Jones as I thought this was the easiest of tasks for us to complete, as the neighbour had already given some information to the call taker, and PC Jones would have been able to see that information and use that as a starting point to take a full account from them. My rationale for giving PC Jones this task in this manner was to ultimately to save time by playing to everyone’s strengths, not necessarily for me or my colleagues’ benefit, but more to avoid prolonging the experience for both the victim and the offender. Whilst I do not feel there was anything about the incident that went wrong per se, I feel that it would have been good learning for PC Jones to deal with either the victim or offender directly, even if it was under mine or PC Smith’s supervision, to increase their experience in these incidents. Additionally, through research, I know deciding for PC Smith to speak to the female is most likened to democratic leadership. As the name suggests, this style of leadership considers the opinions of others to come to a mutually agreeable decision (Laoyan, 2023). I commend my decision to listen to PC Jones’ thoughts and opinions whilst travelling to custody and agree that moving away from the delegation style of leadership with PC Jones led to a better decision being made regarding him observing me in custody.

Following this incident, when I am required to implement leadership skills, I use the delegative style more often than not but still incorporate an element of the democratic method so that those I am leading feel listened to. There are many pros and cons to the delegative style of leadership I have found through research. Recruitment websites such as Indeed (indeed, 2023) and Sidekicks (Sidekicks, 2023) claim some of the benefits of the leadership style are it saves time and also increases the likelihood an employee’s strengths are utilised, as they say in this leadership style, part of the delegation decision-making process is considering what the employee is good at. Additionally, indeed states that the delegative style of leadership requires supervisors to trust their employees (indeed, 2023), as the leadership style requires the delegator to allow the employee to carry out a task without direct supervision (International Institute for Management Development, 2023). I certainly feel that part of my delegation thought process in the incident I reflected on included trusting my colleagues to carry out their tasks and was based on my perceived thoughts on their skills.

A study into leadership styles in the police and security sector provides for further interesting reading. The study was conducted in Abu Dhabi and aimed to explore different leadership styles and organisational performance within a government organisation in the policing sector (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016). Before referring to the article, it is important to note that this study, which collected primary data in the form of a questionnaire, does not specifically name the organisation, which is surveyed, so it is unknown if this organisation was a police force or other security entity. Secondly, the study was not conducted in the UK so direct comparisons will be limited. In the study, the authors found that the vast majority of leaders surveyed (77.1%) stated they either ‘often’ or ‘always’ use this form of leadership. In the study, the authors go on to state that delegating leadership is not very useful when group

members lack the skills or knowledge to complete their tasks. This aligns with my decision-making in my incident with PC Jones, as I can see how their lack of experience within the police service guided me to delegate a role to him that required little skill but also provided little benefit to their learning. Additionally, in the study, 2 other leadership styles are mentioned: situational, and authoritarian. I will not explore those leadership styles in this essay; however, the study shows that almost all leaders surveyed use an assortment of the four leadership styles. Further research shows other leadership styles are established, named transactional and transformational (International Institute for Management Development, 2023), and both in the study by Bhargavi and Yaseen, and through online research (International Institute for Management Development, 2023), recommendations are that leaders both know their leadership style and good leadership requires using a multitude of different leadership styles. Therefore, as my career progresses and I aim to go through The College of Policing leadership stages (The College of Policing, 2023), it would be beneficial for me to research and understand the benefits of a variety of leadership styles so that I can maximise my leadership skills in a variety of situations.

In conclusion, I have found that I rely predominantly on delegative-styled leadership in the majority of situations, but I have evidenced where I can change my style when the need arises to come to the best outcome for a situation. I have also explored some of the benefits of the delegative style, as well as understanding that there is a multitude of leadership styles and further research would benefit my understanding of such styles, so my leadership skills increase with time.

Word count: 1917

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:

In this essay I will reflect upon my three-year probation as I come to the end of my probation. I will use the Gibbs reflective cycle to structure the reflection (The University of Edinburgh, 2020). I will talk about the progress I have made and how I have benefited from mentoring and coaching at various stages of my probation. I will also explore what mentoring and coaching programmes are encouraged within policing.

Firstly, coaching and mentoring as terms must be defined. There are many definitions for both coaching and mentoring available through research (The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2023). The best definition found given this essay is embedded within a policing context, is from Gloucestershire Constabulary. They define mentoring as a process whereby more experienced colleagues use their knowledge and understanding of the organisation to help support the learning of a more junior colleague. They define coaching as a process that develops people's skills and knowledge so their job performance increases in line with organisational objectives (Moore, 2017). The definitions of both mentoring and coaching from reading are intertwined and on behalf of Gloucestershire Constabulary, the author Moore admits that coaching and mentoring are similar. Whilst similar, coaching appears to take the form of shorter and dedicated sessions with pre-determined specific learning outcomes, whereas mentoring is more focused on the longer term, and allows the mentor to tailor their approach to improve a wider skillset for the mentee (Moore, 2017); (The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2023).

Upon reflection of my probationary period, I can see where I was open to both coaching and mentoring. During my initial 6 months within my organisation, I was in

initial police learning informally referred to classroom learning. Using Gloucestershire's definitions, this was clearly coaching. Throughout the initial learning period, qualified police trainers, who were also police officers themselves, delivered a carefully planned and laid out policing curriculum. This laid the foundation skillset I would require, from both classroom teaching to role-playing scenarios. The coaching I received during initial training in hindsight, was essential to equipping me with the skill set to continue my progression and development in the operational world. I was also taught the fundamental legislation police officers are required to know, understand, and implement daily such as elements from the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

Moving on from initial police training saw me undertake the tutorship phase of my probation. This 3-month period saw me being mentored by my tutor officer for 3 months. Reflecting on this stage of probation, on the whole I believe I progressed well. I listened to my mentor's advice and was able to develop my foundation skillset to meet the organisational requirements of me, leading me to be signed off for independent patrol at the end of probation period. Whilst I still had further development needed throughout my probationary period, I understood that the mentorship period was a key time in my career and believe that the excellent communication skills and skill to maximise my potential that my tutor demonstrated were integral to me passing this period for which I will be forever grateful. I had a well-suited tutor, as Gloucestershire Police also advised that mentors should have the aforementioned skills (Moore, 2017). One point I did take away from my tutorship period, is I felt that there was a significant learning curve between the classroom phase and the tutorship phase of my probation. Reflecting on this period, I recall at the end of classroom training I felt that the role-playing exercises we did would have adequately equipped me to deal with most incidents in an operational context. Reflecting later on, I know now this was a naïve thought, and certainly noted as my tutorship period progressed, that learning operationally was the only way to significantly increase my skillset as a police officer. A thesis published by Dr Mario Staller found similar results. One of the studies in the thesis found that German police recruits, whilst they valued their police training, felt there were gaps in their knowledge of how to deal with common and broader situations. The results showed the recruits felt they were well-equipped to deal with extreme threats, but felt they would have benefitted from more dynamic and natural situations in initial training to further their skills when they became operational (Staller, 2021, p. 116). Whilst it is important to note this study was conducted on German police recruits, I certainly relate to the findings in the study, and a similar study on police officers in the UK would provide interesting reading.

Following on from tutorship, I became certified for independent patrol, but whilst I had still reached this significant milestone, my learning curve continued. I often found myself being crewed with more experienced officers who were not necessarily trained tutors but still took opportunities to learn from their experiences. The more experienced officers, despite me being signed off as independent, would often take charge in incidents we attended. As the months progressed, I often felt that I was sometimes a passive observer in incidents rather than an active participant in solving the problem we were presented with. As my confidence within my team grew, I started to ask colleagues if I could lead calls we attended. This enabled me to grow my skill set as a police officer, specifically my problem-solving skills. Over

the following 15 months following my tutorship, my skillset grew, and as new, less experienced officers came through the organisation, I found myself being paired up with those officers as they left their tutorship period. Whilst I am still in probation, being trusted by my supervisor to share the knowledge I have learned thus far was extremely rewarding. I was able to share the experience and knowledge that other colleagues had shared with me. I thoroughly enjoy this type of working, where every day is different, and I may be paired up with a colleague of either more or less experience than me. This aligns with The College of Policing collaborative value as outlined in their competency and value framework. The College states that officers should aim to work effectively by sharing their skills knowledge and insights with others so that the best possible results in a situation are achieved (The College of Policing, 2023).

Reflecting on my probation period to date in a broad sense, there are certainly positives and negatives to take away and make sense of. Firstly, whilst I found the tutoring aspect of training engaging and fitting with the definition outlined by Gloucestershire Constabulary, I found that some elements of the training did not adequately equip me for operational duties. Specifically, I thought that the training provided was extremely broad in nature, and there were several topics whilst good for me to know, I have not had to use the knowledge taught since. Topics such as female genital mutilation, and penalty notice for disorders, took several days to teach. However, now I am operational, I am aware female genital mutilation is often handled by specialist investigation departments, and penalty notices for disorders have since been phased out. Whilst useful information, I felt that I certainly would have benefited from in-depth training on incidents I typically deal with on a day-to-day basis such as domestic disturbances. Throughout the probationary period, the mentorship I received from colleagues and supervisors I can categorically state were vital to meeting my organisation's requirements. Their guidance has enabled me to learn from both their knowledge and the mistakes they have made and will hopefully mean the skills I have developed will enable me to pass the final stage of my probation. Not only did I receive guidance from colleagues and supervisors on my shift, but I also had an area training officer, who was responsible for ensuring I was meeting the organisation's requirements of me as I progressed through the probationary period. One of the organisation's requirements for me is to complete my operational competency portfolio. This is a portfolio where I have evidenced that I have dealt with certain types of incidents, ensuring I have had sufficient exposure to a variety of calls. My area training officer has provided guidance and support to me in helping me complete this portfolio and so far, have completed two portfolios and I am currently working on my third and last.

The probationary period, in my opinion, has gone well over all and I feel whilst I mention some areas for improvement, I speak from personal experience, and I am conscious that others may hold a different view. Whilst the thesis by Staller echoes my thoughts, there are significant limitations in using the study to make comparisons to UK policing. I have found the mentoring and coaching received by the police to be effective, however, I have not found recent academic publications that explore the theories used in policing for probationary officers, so its overall effectiveness would be difficult to assess.

Developing an action plan as per the Gibbs reflective cycle (The University of Edinburgh, 2020) will not aid in my reflection on my probationary period. This is largely due to the fact that, if all goes well, I will never have to repeat my probationary period once I have been signed off. I do however, endeavour to be open to mentoring and coaching, as I recognise the benefits it has afforded me. In the police, mentoring and coaching are not exclusive to those joining the service. From my own experience, I have seen police constables be mentored by those of higher ranks so that they may get promotion themselves. Coaching and mentoring are well encouraged by The College of Policing. One course identified through research, is a three-day workshop designed to improve delegates coaching and mentoring skills (The College of Policing, 2023). The College state that with coaching and mentoring skills, delegates will then be able to play an active role in the career development and progression of officers they are line managing. Additionally, coaching and mentoring appear to be open to officers of all ranks, and The College of Policing offer mentoring to senior-ranking police officers, including chief constables (The College of Policing, 2023).

One method of mentoring I have identified through research is reverse mentoring. Whereas traditional mentoring schemes typically involve the mentor being more senior to the mentee, reverse mentoring reverses the roles (The College of Policing, 2023). The College of Policing claim this form of mentoring allowed senior leaders to increase their engagement with frontline professionals and also gives them a better appreciation of the issues affecting police officers and the wider community. My force is one of many police forces in the UK that employ reverse mentoring (The College of Policing, 2023). A report published by Manchester Metropolitan University evaluated the reverse mentoring pilot program in Greater Manchester Police (Westall, et al., 2021) They found that reverse mentoring aided participants in contributing to positive policy change within the force and created an open working environment by leaving rank at the door. Furthermore, they found that most of those participating in the pilot scheme wished to see reverse mentoring formally introduced into the force. From this report, it is clear that the benefits of reverse mentoring claimed by The College of Policing are echoed by this independent evaluation and are an effecting mentoring method to promote positive change in policing.

In summary, I am extremely pleased with how my three-year probationary period has gone. I reflect with fond memories and thanks to the mentors and colleagues that have provided their advice and guidance which I have no doubt, have played a key part in my successful progression throughout probation. The research I have conducted for this essay, has struck an interest in mentoring and coaching, and I hope in the future, I will be able to pass on the skills I have developed to others.

Word Count: 1980

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