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BSc (Hons) Professional Police Practice

LEVEL 6 - 40 Credits

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

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

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FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMME

Module title: Professional Police Practice 3 (PCDA) BMPP6000D

Workbook Guidance

Please read these notes carefully; they provide essential information.

What is the workbook for?

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

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

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

How should the workbook be presented?

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

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

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

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

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

How is the workbook assessed?

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

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

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

Once submitted your workbook will be assessed and marked independently.

Confidentiality

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

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

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

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

NOTE

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

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

Dyslexia and other special circumstances

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

Guidance:

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

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	Total	8000

Task 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ANSWER:

During my final year of probation, I have been working diligently to fulfil my role as a modern professional police officer. An important aspect of this professional development is an ongoing awareness of changes to the challenges we face in the profession, and identifying strategies to facing them through personal experience and guidance from the College of Policing.

In this task, I will outline a policing incident in which I played a significant role, reflect on what happened, and identify where any aspects of the incident intersect with recent strategic guidance and policy from the College of Policing.

Although cyber-enabled crimes were very much a common occurrence at the start of my role as a police officer, I feel that these types of crimes have been becoming even more prevalent in my final year of probation. My personal experiences and inferences are actually backed up by recent statistics (Office for Statistics Regulation, 2025) which showed a general rising trend in fraud and computer

misuses offences in England and Wales recorded by Action Fraud in the last 10 years. These offences fell somewhat from 2021 to 2023 and began to rise again from 2023 onwards.

I feel that child safeguarding concerns are particularly on the rise as well, with widespread use by children of apps such as Snapchat to share explicit images of themselves and be extremely vulnerable to grooming and revenge pornography. NSPCC (2024) reported an 89% increase in online grooming crimes against children in the space of six years when the offence of Sexual Communication with a Child first came into force. Where means of communication were disclosed, Snapchat was by far the most commonly used platform by perpetrators, being utilised in 48% of such crimes, with the second most commonly used platform being WhatsApp at 12%.

While I fully acknowledge the importance and severity of current challenges in relation to child safeguarding, in this task I would like to focus on another aspect of cyber-enabled crime which Gwent Police has been particularly impacted by and which I have played a significant role.

In Gwent, we have two individuals, a male and female who are in a relationship, who are repeat offenders for making hoax calls to the police over the course of several years. While they have been investigated numerous times in the past, there was only one occasion which resulted in an admission and a disposal in the form of a community resolution for the female. The most significant challenge in dealing with these repeat offenders was securing evidence with or without an admission.

Leading up to the event in question, the perpetrators had ramped up their hoax activities. There was a high volume of hoax calls being made to the police control room in the space of a couple of weeks. The severity of hoax crimes being reported appeared to be increasing as well. Examples of reported issues during this time were “my brother is being held against his will”, “my husband beats me and my children” and other domestic violence reports. As the severity of reports increased, they began to include reference to weapons being present and this led to armed responses on a few occasions.

Unfortunately, none of the reports were traceable as the perpetrators used VPNs and spoofing software. This meant that the numbers used for the incidents were unregistered and non-functioning numbers.

Despite it being impossible to trace the actual numbers being used, police had very strong suspicions that the perpetrators were the aforementioned couple. The reports received would either lead officers to places in their immediate vicinity or to people they knew. There appeared to be an element of gratification for the couple in being close to and observing the police response.

For the incident in question, the police control room received another untraceable report from an individual claiming to have a knife and that he was going to use it to kill his wife and children. He claimed he would stab them and shoot any police who tried to approach. A local address was given.

Gwent Police naturally launched a large-scale armed response to the report. This involved surrounding the house, forcing entry through the front door, deploying a flashbang grenade and armed officers entering the house. As this was another hoax call, the house was not at risk of the reported crime and there was only a vulnerable woman with learning difficulties resident there. She was terrified at the armed response.

Suspicions of the couple's involvement was sufficiently high to meet the threshold for Section 24 of PACE (*Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984*) to arrest them and seize a number of electronic items under Section 19. Following their arrest, I performed a Section 32 search of the address to recover the items.

Unfortunately, no evidence was recovered from the seized devices which could lead to charges against the couple.

I believe the events leading up to the incident, the incident itself, and the ongoing issues related to this faced by Gwent Police are a stark reminder of the ever-changing modern challenges faced by police.

On reflection, I believe the events demonstrate a unique challenge in relation to cyber-enabled crime. Policing cyberspace and obtaining evidence of crimes committed in this environment is incredibly difficult and easily evaded by perpetrators

who are technically literate and have tools at their disposal for concealing their identity online and any evidence of them such tools.

I believe the events demonstrate a real lack of knowledge of the issue in Gwent Police. Throughout all of these hoax reports, other officers assumed that there was an error in taking the numbers through the calls, which is usually an automated system anyway. I personally identified the use of number spoofing applications, websites, and software which brought it to the attention of everybody else. It was not until I spoke up about the possibility of spoofing that it was acknowledged and factored into our approach to these calls. I think my modern technology-driven mindset in this regard and imparting of such knowledge to my peers shows that I more than fulfil the role of a modern professional police officer and this forms an important part of my professional development.

I believe that these events have raised safeguarding issues that are likely relevant nationwide rather than limited to Gwent Police. It appears that, at the moment, there are no ways to safeguard against the kind of untraceable hoax calls that we have been experiencing.

My reflections and concerns around safeguarding and the ever-changing and rising challenges of cyber-enabled crimes correlate with those of the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) as demonstrated in their Policing Vision (2025). I particularly like how they reference the rising threat of cybercrime and highlighting the need for policing to focus on protecting people from crimes such as fraud, data theft, grooming, exploitation of children and so on through developing new tactics and capabilities. The NPCC made specific reference to future challenges we may face such as driverless cars, virtual reality, and implant technology. I am very interested in future technologies, so I am very pleased to see such a forward-thinking and pre-emptive approach to policing within the Policing Vision.

The Policing Vision, however, makes no reference to the rising use of AI (artificial intelligence) which I believe is a very modern phenomenon that current policing should be aware of, particularly in its potential for current or future exploitation in crime. Police forces should work with other institutions such as the AI Security Institute (under the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology) to develop policing strategies in this regard. Rapidly improving technology is creating

unbelievably sophisticated AI software which has the potential to create synthetic content for deception and impersonation with vulnerable and young people at particular risk of being exploited (AISI, 2025). It is a huge concern of mine how individuals like those mentioned in my incident will use new technology like advanced AI to commit more sophisticated crimes and evade police even more effectively.

This forward-thinking modern approach to policing which I try to foster in my own work and encourage in those around me echoes the corporate strategy of the College of Policing (2023). One of the challenges when facing modern policing issues is that they tend to emerge and develop faster than police forces can develop strategies against them. I am pleased to note in the College of Policing's corporate strategy for 2022 to 2026 they made a commitment to working with partners to "provide a route for local innovation and practice to be identified, shared, tested and scaled more rapidly" to effectively "prepare and respond to perennial and emerging challenges". I think this is exactly the bold and collaborative attitude we need to fulfil our roles effectively in modern policing. However, while the strategy sets out a clear vision, in practice there can be delays in disseminating learning to frontline officers or turning innovation into actual operational guidance. Despite some obstacles, I think ultimately such an approach could lead to better, more evidence-driven strategies which Gwent Police would certainly benefit from, on reflection of my own experiences already outlined.

Actively seeking an understanding of future demands that a police force might face is essential to modern police culture. As demonstrated in the College of Policing's Transformation Framework (2022), having a deeper and clearer understanding of these future demands enables more efficient and effective planning and operations. This will also enable police forces to undertake a better use of its resources and skills of its people to deliver services required of it.

In conclusion, the incident outlined, and the reflections drawn from it highlight the profound and constantly evolving challenges posed by cyber-enabled crime. This incident demonstrates that while traditional methods of policing remain essential, they are often insufficient when faced with those who exploit advanced technologies to conceal their identities and actions. The rise in untraceable hoax calls within

Gwent Police is emblematic of a wider national concern, revealing significant gaps in safeguarding measures, evidential strategies, and the tools to effectively combat offenders. My own contribution, in identifying spoofing technology as the root of the problem, illustrates how professional development as a modern police officer requires not only operational competence but also technological awareness and adaptability.

The strategic guidance from the College of Policing and other agencies reinforces the need for innovation and collaboration in addressing these issues. It is increasingly clear that policing cannot operate in isolation when confronted with crimes facilitated by complex and rapidly advancing technologies. Partnerships with specialist organisations, such as the AI Security Institute, are crucial in anticipating new threats, particularly as artificial intelligence becomes more sophisticated in generating deceptive or exploitative content and is readily available to assist those who want to use it for unlawful purposes. It is essential that these emerging risks are met with proactive and evidence-based strategies, which will require both foresight and responsiveness from agencies to ensure they are capable of meeting future demands.

One of the risks I have identified is the gap between this strategic ambition and frontline capability, particularly in forces with limited budgets or specialist expertise. Bridging this gap will be key to consistently translating national guidance into local practice.

Ultimately, the experience has highlighted to me the importance of cultivating a forward-looking professional mindset. The modern police officer must be more than a reactive participant; they must be an informed, adaptable, and innovative professional capable of bridging the gap between established policing methods and the demands of an increasingly digital society. By engaging with national strategies and embedding a culture of continuous learning, police forces can strengthen their capacity to protect the public effectively. My role in this process, both in practice and in reflection, demonstrates a commitment to fulfilling these expectations and contributing to a resilient and adaptive future for modern policing.

Word Count: 1970

Task 2

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

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

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

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

What social media platforms are used by policing?

What are the benefits and risks of using social media?

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

ANSWER:

Social media plays a vital role in modern policing and has become a very influential tool in developing the way police officers engage with the community and share important information. Over the course of my probation, I have become increasingly aware of both the positives and the negatives that come with the police using platforms such as Facebook and X. While the platforms allow the police force to reach communities in real time and in some ways develop better relationships or reputations with the public, they also carry certain challenges such as misinformation (by the way the public interact with such posts), and safeguarding concerns.

In this essay, I intend to reflect on a specific policing incident involving a missing person in which I played a significant role and where social media was a key element of the circumstances as they developed and this was instigated by me. By drawing on my own experiences, I will also evaluate how social media can be used to engage with the community and support police forces in their initiatives. The aim is to not only assess the benefits or challenges of social media within the policing role, but also to explore how my own development as a modern professional police officer

has been influenced by the increasing emergence of social media as a common and useful policing practice.

The policing incident I want to reflect on involved a high-risk missing person. This was a young female (a minor) who was under the care of the local authority.

Notwithstanding her age, she was also categorised as vulnerable due to previous incidents and history suggestive of her being at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Sadly, she also had an extensive history of regularly going missing, so she was well-known to me and my colleagues from previous reports and interactions with the police. She would go missing at least once or twice a week and would usually be back home within 24 hours of being reported missing.

On the occasion that I wish to reflect on, she had been missing for a more prolonged period of time. After a few days of her being missing, I was concerned that she had still not been located and I suggested re-grading her from medium to high-risk in light of the extended period of her being missing and her vulnerability. The re-grading was implemented upon my request and we invoked a social media appeal on Facebook and other platforms. The decision was guided by the principles defined in the College of Policing's Code of Ethics (College of Policing, 2024), particularly the duty to protect the public and safeguard the vulnerable. By increasing the risk grading, I ensured that sufficient resources were allocated in line with the National Decision Model (College of Policing, 2013), balancing the risk to the individual against the demand on resources.

To our surprise, she commented on the Facebook appeal as she did not like the photograph of her that we had used. Members of the public were actively engaging with her in the comments section and urging her to return home and make contact. Shortly after, she returned home of her own accord. This was an unusual circumstance but a good example of a positive use of social media and active community engagement.

Although the social media appeal was not directly published by me, it was due to my assessment of risk and subsequent recommendation to re-grade that led to the appeal being put out.

Police use of social media does come with occasional issues. Ralph and Robinson (2023) identified some lessons to be learned through their broad assessment of police social media practices. While social media is understood as an important tool which contributes to the idea of democratic policing, there is often a focus towards safeguarding the police force's reputation rather than using social media as a tool for enhancing delivery of police services. They identified that forces were beginning to impose tighter controls on their social media which was in contradiction to the ideas of police accountability and transparency. They recommended granting police officers (particularly frontline officers such as I am) more power within the organisation to use social media as part of their efforts to engage with the community. While the incident that I outlined was an example of an apt use of social media by the police with a positive outcome, it is important to reflect that it is not a perfect tool and can be subject to a certain degree of spin or reputational filtering.

I echo the sentiments of Ralph and Robinson to some extent in that, reflecting on my own experiences as a police officer, the use of social media sometimes feels like an instrument that is separate from my work rather than being a process which I am involved in and that I can utilise to develop my community ties or to help prevent crime.

Gwent Police have their own social media policy (2022). This governs the usage of social media by anyone who uses it in an official capacity. For reasons of operational security, I will not quote directly from this policy, however I have had sight of the document and will refer to it in a general sense. Social media is used by Gwent Police through the corporate communications team, although there is occasionally scope for officers to be trained in the applicable guidelines for posting on social media. This might be for examples such as seized vehicles or community engagement. Reflecting on my probation so far, this is something I would be interested in pursuing to further my ability to engage with the community and it would be a skill that is attractive and transferable to other roles within Gwent Police.

It is worth noting from sight of Gwent's social media policy that there is a particular emphasis on complying with the Welsh Language Standards to ensure the Welsh-

speaking general public has the same access to important information through social media as the English-speaking public.

The policy was also informed by the National Social Media Project (NSMP) established by the NPCC. This has helped to generate a more uniform approach to social media across many of the police forces. I would suggest an update to Gwent's policy to incorporate recent developments such as the National Policing Digital Strategy for 2025 to 2030 (NPCC, 2025).

Although Gwent Police's policy is geared towards a cohesive and risk-managed approach, I think there is scope for more involvement or collaboration with frontline officers as well as more creative uses of the official social media accounts.

There are many benefits to the use of social media by police in an official capacity. Social media is an immediate and far-reaching form of communication. As already demonstrated with my example incident, it can help to locate vulnerable people quickly. The display of transparency through social media communications also builds public confidence and reassurance. Hanway and Hambly (2023) found that there was a benefit to the police use of social media even if the released information was ignored by the majority; it helped to present an open and approachable image and facilitated better contact with the wider community. Hanway and Hambly, however, found that there was very limited research on the effects of police use of social media, particularly any geographical variations.

McIntee's thesis (2016) on police public relations in the age of social media provided some detailed insights. In particular, the 2011 London Riots constituted a useful case study, about which McIntee noted both a demonstration of potential (such as allowing for direct communication and countering misinformation) and risks (such as slow response rates due to a high volume of posts, poor use of hashtags, and lack of engagement). McIntee also identified that pressure on resources can be a limiting factor, with budget cuts meaning that communication teams are prone to struggle to be as effective as they have the potential to be.

As a side note, police use of social media has a knock-on effect on the pool of available applicants for recruitment of new officers. Cross and Fine (2022) found that young people's exposure to police and their social media content related strongly to how they perceived the police in general, and also whether they desired to become a police officer or not. This has the potential to be impactful in both positive and negative ways, depending on whether the content they are exposed to is showing police in a positive or negative light.

An Australian study (Wood, 2020), looked at the New South Wales Police Force's interesting new engagement protocol – their self-titled “meme strategy” – which employed the use of “weaponised cute content” to ramp up community engagement with its social media platforms. Many of their posts drew attention to the police force's dogs captioned with “Doggo Lingo” – the Internet language style which uses intentional mispronunciations or misspellings to elicit the impression of cuteness (such as “bork” instead of “bark”, or “blep” to indicate a dog sticking out its tongue). The study found that employing this method could achieve short-term increases in engagement, although it had the potential to be less effective over the long-term as the novelty of such humorous posts has a tendency to wane. Short to medium-length episodes of weaponised cute content to piggyback on social media algorithms could be an effective strategy for Gwent Police, particularly if they wish to draw attention to their crime prevention campaigns and engage with young people in particular.

In conclusion, social media has become an integral part of modern policing, offering both opportunities to engage and challenges that come along with it. My experience with the missing person showed the benefits of police use of social media. This was a vulnerable young person who engaged directly with our Facebook appeal, leading to community members engaging and encouraging her safe return. This highlights how social media can turn public audiences into active participants and provide quick and effective outcomes that may not have been possible through more traditional methods.

At the same time, my example also showed the risks. Online comments are unpredictable and difficult to control in large volumes and misinformation can spread easily. Luckily, that was not a factor in the example I gave. Police forces have to

strike a balance between the benefits of openness and careful management of their public image.

As demonstrated by the research of Ralph and Robinson (2023), this dual nature is a difficult balance to strike, which has a tendency to fall down on the side of reputational protection rather than transparency, which naturally limits accountability and leaves frontline officers such as myself being somewhat excluded from the process of social media engagement. Applying the National Decision Model (College of Policing, 2013) throughout this process allowed me to follow a structured and defensible decision-making process. By gathering information, assessing threat and risk, considering powers and policy, and then taking proportionate action, I ensured that my actions were consistent with national policing standards and were able to withstand scrutiny.

McIntee's study (2016) and her conclusions on police use of social media during the 2011 London Riots showed, even at that relatively early stage in the lifetime of social media, that it can have immense value at disseminating information to the public but that it can be rendered less effective by poor training or limited budgets.

I have established that Gwent Police already has a solid foundation with their social media policy, and this is in line with national guidance. However, there is scope for improvement or more creative uses of its platforms, such as a "meme strategy" or maybe some other bold and innovative use that may not have even been tried by other forces yet.

Social media has shifted police communication from more traditional methods to an interactive and immediate tool. When used effectively under appropriate circumstances, it can improve public perceptions, enhance community engagement, and get important information to places where it would have been more challenging to reach. The difficulty is in achieving a balance that keeps the police visible, open, and accountable to the public they serve.

Word count: 2019

Task 3

Relevant areas of the National Policing Curriculum: Leadership and Teamworking

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

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

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

Consider leadership models commonly used in policing.

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

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

ANSWER:

It is essential in today's police service that officers demonstrate effective leadership skills. This assists with key aspects such as building public trust and legitimacy, increasing performance and effectiveness, and fostering a positive organisational culture which promotes fairness and accountability.

In this essay, I will discuss an incident of a road traffic collision where dangerous driving resulted in damage to school property and injuries to the vehicle occupants. This required me to utilise different leadership styles and tones, and in which I interacted with junior colleagues, members of the public and partner agencies.

Within this essay, I will analyse the strategies I used to maintain the situation and critically evaluate my flexibility in leadership styles.

During a late shift, I was tutoring a student constable who had been with us for a few weeks. We were asked to attend an emergency call where a vehicle had been seen driving dangerously before crashing into the gates of a nearby secondary school causing significant damage to the property and the vehicle. The reporting person, who was in close proximity at the time of the crash, stated that one of the four occupants appeared to have been badly injured, all four left the scene of the

accident with the injured person being physically assisted by the others. Upon arrival, I was the most experienced officer present. The vehicle was leaking fluids and smoking, and members of the public had started to gather to watch what was happening.

My initial priority was the safety of those present. I instructed my tutee to confirm the occupants were not in the vehicle, move members of the public to a safe distance and to obtain initial accounts from witnesses, and relay information to the control room while I contacted the fire service. When I had ensured that there was no further immediate risk at the scene, I directed other attending officers to create a cordon and await the fire service. It was essential that I balanced giving instructions to my colleagues, with respecting their autonomy, although the officers present were junior to me, they were still independent, and we all held the rank of Police Constable. I was the only officer at the scene who was trained in the use of emergency lighting on police vehicles and so I utilised this skill to conduct an urgent area search for the vehicle occupants who could have required emergency treatment. I instructed my tutee to accompany me due to the reported number of occupants.

While conducting the search, intelligence came through that the vehicle occupants might be in possession of a firearm. This information significantly changed the risk assessment and using the National Decision Model (NDM) (College of Policing, 2013), I reviewed my options and decided to disengage from the search and return to the scene. Shortly after my return, the fire service arrived and they made the vehicle safe and confirmed the immediate area of the accident was also safe. I then liaised with vehicle recovery and the local council to have the vehicle removed, the gates made safe, and debris cleared.

Throughout this incident, I ensured that my tutee was fully involved. I explained my decision-making where possible and allowed him to take ownership of tasks, tested his current knowledge and prompted him to explore the next steps at each stage. When I spoke with witnesses, I engaged with them in a calm and reassuring manner. I used the opportunity to explain what the police were doing and why. This encouraged cooperation and helped improve community relations and confidence in policing.

The incident required me to take responsibility for the coordination of multiple people, tasks, and agencies while ensuring my tutee had a valuable learning experience.

Upon reflection, I can see that I applied a situational leadership approach, which saw me move between directive, coaching and supportive styles as the situation unfolded. Upon initial attendance, I utilised a directive and transactional style, giving clear and concise instructions in order to safeguard the public and secure the scene. This was necessary given the fire risk and the need for urgent action at that time. When the immediate risk was under control, and the situation allowed, I deliberately changed my style to a more coaching and transformational approach for my tutee. I took time to explain why decisions had been made and encouraged him to identify further tasks and take them on independently. By involving him in meaningful decision-making and encouraging him to think through the next steps, it supported the development of professional judgement, aligning with the most recent Policing Vision 2030 (NPCC, 2023) and its commitment to developing a skilled, reflective and empowered workforce. When further units arrived and I was afforded the opportunity to search for the occupants, my style became more directive again due to the urgency of the new task and when I felt it had become unsafe to continue the search, I discussed the situation with my tutee to ensure he understood my reasoning and seek his views on the situation. In conjunction with these changing styles, there was also a foundation of servant leadership philosophy which is pervasive throughout.

I used an approach similar to Goleman's emotional intelligence model (2020), when engaging with members of the public, which focuses on empathy and relationship management. By explaining our actions, giving reassurance and maintaining clear and calm communication, their anxiety was reduced and they continued to cooperate. This leadership style fits policing incredibly well as it is optimal for engaging victims, and encouraging calm among the public in general.

When engaging with fire, recovery and council services, I adopted a more collaborative and task focused approach, which helped ensure that agencies worked efficiently as a team to help make the scene safe.

Following this incident, I reflected on my own task allocation. Although the incident was effectively managed, I recognise that I could have delegated more responsibility

to my other colleagues that were present, rather than taking on too much myself. By allowing them to do more, it would have given them more development opportunities and allowed me to focus more on strategic oversight.

I also reflected on the decision of disengaging from the search, weighing the possibility of a severely injured occupant against officer safety and that of the wider public. The facts were that the occupants fled the scene, most likely to evade police, they were potentially armed, and the injured party was accompanied by other able-bodied accomplices who could obtain medical treatment if urgently required. There was a possibility that should they have been located and challenged, that officers and members of the public that were nearby, would be at risk of harm. This risk I decided to not be proportionate, and I prioritised team safety and public risk over task completion, reflecting the 'task-team-individual' balance established by John Adair (1979) in his concept of action-centred leadership.

Separate from this specific event, day-to-day I am inspired by various works on problem-oriented models of policing such as those established by Herman Goldstein (1979, 1990). This is a widely used framework of leadership which focuses on the underlying causes of crime rather than being reactive to individual events. Once causes are better understood, it becomes easier for police to come up with tailored solutions for crime prevention. Problem-orientated policing (POP) has been proven as an effective leadership strategy that can lead to a significant reduction in certain crimes (notably acquisitive crimes) and improved forecasts (Mazerolle et al, 2013). Goldstein (2018) revisited his POP concept in a lecture he gave on accepting the 2018 Stockholm Prize for Criminology, during which he reflected on the success of POP since he first outlined the concept in 1979. He concluded that four major features of POP had emerged over time: POP is principled (equal treatment, dignity for citizens, and minimum use of force), POP is holistic (he described that "no single thrust alone" can meet the needs of policing), POP is informed (emphasis is on solid information), and POP is a continuing process (it continues to evolve and spread).

There is a particular conclusion in the research of Howieson and Hodges (2014) on leadership in the public sector which resonates with my experiences. It was established by them that good leadership in the public sector should be about making it possible for everyone in the organisation (or network of organisations) to

contribute, moving away from a “heroic individual” model to a more collaborative one. I believe this is a model which I demonstrated well in my example as I involved my tutee heavily in my decision-making process, and collaborated successfully with partner agencies.

There was an interesting study conducted recently in Kuwait (Al-Sabah, 2025) which examined three leadership styles within policing: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. A particular element that was considered was that of *wasta* (favouritism) which is the use of connections to obtain preferential treatment, and naturally anathema to the policing principle of integrity. The study concluded that transactional leaders were less likely to attempt to combat *wasta* or consider it a problem, and further to that were less likely to emphasise honesty and integrity in general. Al-Sabah noted that the transactional leadership style emphasises singular exchanges. As such, it appears to be best utilised in circumstances where direction needs to be clear and concise, such as at one moment in my example where I was under time-sensitive pressure to safeguard the public and needed to give clear and direct instructions to mitigate risk.

In engaging with my tutee, however, a transformational or integrated leadership style was more appropriate. This was akin to a student-teacher type relationship and therefore called for a less transactional approach. The more holistic integrated leadership style offers much more scope for flexibility which is suited to the ever-changing situations in police work and is bolstered further by research which shows better outcomes for students where leadership styles are most flexible rather than fixed in one style (Kwan, 2019). Even when my tutee has attained a certain point of competence and independence, it is not my preference to transition to a laissez-faire leadership style; it is evident that this could lead to perceptions of passivity which can be detrimental to professional relationships (Wong and Giessner, 2016).

Another leadership style relevant and frequently adopted in policing is servant leadership. Gardner and Reece (2012) describe this as “internalising leadership as a calling to serve others before self”. Naturally, it is aligned perfectly with the ethical police principle of public service, particularly selflessness (College of Policing, 2024). A study by Russell et al (2018) provided further insight into the benefits of a systemic servant leadership philosophy within an American police department. They found a

correlation between servant leadership and positive influences on the wellbeing of police officers, as well as the organisation itself and wider community. They recommended the infusing of such a philosophy into all uniformed professions as it had a clear potential for reducing PTSD and other negative psychological effects of police work, which then bled into benefiting the community as officers were coming to work with a desire to serve rather than more controlling or commanding motivations.

In my example, servant leadership played a significant part of my approach, with safeguarding and public reassurance being an integral element for how I demonstrate my desire and duty to serve. The servant philosophy is something instilled in me since the beginning of my probation and continues to be a core value that influences my day-to-day actions as a police officer.

In conclusion, as shown by my example, in any given situation a variety of leadership styles can and should be adopted, sometimes in parallel. I have shown that it is possible to be both servile and transactional in leadership styles at the same time, in order to safeguard the public.

It is important for the police to be flexible in their approach, as no single leadership style can cover the number of “hats” that have to be worn in modern policing.

By being aware of the need to adapt my leadership approach, as shown in my example, I was able to not only manage the immediate and time-sensitive risks but also to provide effective tutorship to my tutee and act appropriately in the situation through use of the NDM and tailoring my leadership style effectively. This is something that I will seek to continue and develop professionally as I hope to undertake more leadership roles in the future.

Word Count: 2074

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 on how coaching, mentoring and feedback have helped shape me throughout my probationary period as an officer. Coaching is generally short-term, goal focused and designed to unlock a person's potential (Whitmore, 2017), while mentoring is a longer-term relationship that provides guidance, advice and support that is based on a mentor's experience (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2005). These approaches are very relevant to policing, with the College of Policing promoting coaching and mentoring as part of workforce development and probationer growth (College of Policing, 2024).

My journey through probation has been quite a unique one. An injury on duty meant that I was placed on restricted duties for a year and unable to be public facing, limiting my work to 'station bound' activities. This impacted on my progression and ultimately prolonged my probationary period. Although it was frustrating at first, it gave me time to reflect on my learning and focus on other areas of policing that I had limited previous experience with. It also allowed me to observe and assist colleagues and appreciate coaching and mentoring from a different perspective. Although still a probationer, I sometimes had more experience and longer service than colleagues who had already completed their probation, this provided me with opportunities to share my knowledge and help support others.

Throughout my probation, my operational learning and skill development have been well supported by coaching and mentoring. During my initial year, the mentoring from experienced officers helped me understand the essentials of being a response officer, including conducting enquiries, making arrests and managing prisoners. As I have progressed and my experience has grown, coaching sessions have allowed me to focus on more goal orientated development such as improving decision making while under pressure and dealing with difficult and dynamic incidents. These interactions have reinforced not just the practical skills, but also confidence, which were essential as I progressed through my probation. An invaluable aspect of coaching and mentoring I found shortly after my injury and medical restrictions was the support I received during a period of uncertainty about my future as a police officer. I found that the coaching and mentoring from my colleagues, sergeant and my assessor, helped a great deal with my personal development and in coping with the circumstances as they were. This highlights how coaching and mentoring is not solely concerned with developing and improving technical skills, but they also cover emotional support, resilience building, and guidance through uncertainty or setbacks. The support I received allowed me to maintain my focus on my professional development and continue reflecting on how I was performing, despite the challenging situation I was in. This period also helped me develop greater emotional intelligence, particularly in recognising and managing my own emotions under stress, and in appreciating the empathy shown by others. Goleman (2020) recognises emotional intelligence as a key leadership skill, and I feel that this experience strengthened my ability to remain resilient and support colleagues who might face similar challenges and setbacks in the future.

One major benefit of mentoring has been the opportunity for reflection. Regular discussions with mentors such as my sergeant and particularly my Professional Development Unit assessor, have required me to review actions I have taken during incidents, consider alternatives that I could have taken, and identify strengths and weaknesses. As an example, after dealing with a hoax call incident, mentoring sessions with my assessor helped me reflect on and analyse my response, consider the effectiveness of the investigation and understand how our technological knowledge and awareness can assist in dealing with incidents. This reflection reinforced my decision making and situational awareness, aligning with the College

of Policing's stance on developing professional judgement during probation through their Authorised Professional Practice guidance (College of Policing, 2025).

Coaching and mentoring have also assisted in my personal development and aligning me with organisational goals. The guidance from more experienced officers helped me to set realistic personal and professional objectives, while also showing how these objectives contribute to the wider force priorities. I have also been able to share best practice and personal learning with my colleagues which has contributed to team learning and effectiveness. This mutual aspect of mentoring and coaching demonstrates the vital benefits not only to the individual, but to the organisation as a whole in supporting a culture of continuous improvement.

During my final year of probation, I have had the opportunity to tutor several new officers. This was a significant point in my developmental journey as it meant I was stepping into a coaching and mentoring role myself. I found that I was naturally drawn towards the techniques that I had experienced, such as using open questioning in order to guide my tutee's decision-making process, rather than simply telling them what to do. This is in line with Whitmore's (2017) approach to coaching, focusing on unlocking their potential instead of giving them the answer. One example of this was with a tutee who was unsure about making their first arrest. Rather than simply instructing them to do so, I broke down the situation and asked structured questions to make them consider the options, such as "What has happened?", "Has an offence been committed?", "What are the available options?", and "What are the benefits of the different options?". By requiring my tutee to think like this, it encouraged them to analyse the situation and the decision to arrest came almost immediately and without hesitation. On reflection I have discovered that this is consistent with Whitmore's (2017) GROW model (Goal, Reality, Options, and Way): the Goal being for my tutee to decide a correct course of action; the Reality being to assess what had happened and establish the facts; the Options being to explore the potential courses of action; and the Way forward being them committing to the way forward that they identified. This method empowered my tutee to make their own decision and helped build their confidence. It also allowed me to realise the importance of coaching as a developmental tool and encouraged me to continue using this approach for other mentoring and coaching relationships.

This is just one of many models out there. Another learning theory I would like to explore further with my tutees is the learning style theory of Honey and Mumford (1986) who developed the Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ) to determine whether a student is an Activist, Reflector, Theorist, or Pragmatist. This built on the work of David Kolb (2015) who outlined learning styles and developed the concept of the experiential learning cycle; essentially that learning is a continuous process which cycles through four stages (doing, reviewing, concluding, and trying). Understanding one's own learning style and that one's tutees which may be very different is important to get the most out of the teacher-student dynamic. However, Zwaneberg et al (2000) found that beyond understanding the student's preferences, it did not have much additional value, such as in predicting future academic performance.

There are other learning style models, such as VARK which was first outlined by Fleming and Mills (1992). This describes individuals as: Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, or Kinaesthetic type learners. In the same vein as Honey and Mumford's LSQ, it is likely to serve the individual well in understanding their dominant or preferential learning style, however many academics argue against putting people into such rigid categories. Melhem and Al-Zoubi (2025), however, found that it can have great predictive value and is particularly applicable in the education of students with learning difficulties.

I found that while tutoring other officers, I had to take a step away from 'doing the job' myself and focus on encouraging and enabling my tutees to take ownership of tasks. This fits with the concept of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978), which suggests that learners progress most efficiently when given opportunities to perform tasks just beyond their current ability but with the support of a more knowledgeable other. As time went on and tutees became more knowledgeable and confident, I would reduce my involvement allowing them to act with more autonomy until their independence.

A key area of growth during my probation has been learning to both give and receive feedback constructively and effectively. I have come to learn that the approach to feedback should be a two-way process: receiving guidance with an open mind and using it to inform my thoughts and actions, while providing feedback in a structured, constructive and supportive manner to my peers and tutees. This falls in line with the

College of Policing's expectations for reflective practice, continuous improvement, and a culture of empowerment on receipt of feedback (College of Policing, 2023).

I would like to explore various models of feedback further as I develop as a tutor. Probably the longest established model of feedback is known as Pendleton's Rules – this follows a structured approach, with student and tutor in turn stating what went well and what could be improved – which creates a better learning and working environment (van de Ridder and Wijnen-Meijer, 2023). I always find this a helpful model for receiving feedback as it allows me to identify areas to work on while ensuring there are still elements to reflect on positively.

Much like Pendleton's Rules, the key to effective feedback appears to be simplicity and reproducibility, which is also demonstrated in "The Feedback Sandwich". This involves "sandwiching" constructive criticism between two statements of praise (Salama, 2025). While I prefer to give and receive feedback in such a way, I understand the model's critics such as Bergen et al (2014), who explain that the feedback sandwich technique has a propensity to become a crutch for managers. They also found that employees would begin to anticipate a reproach if the method is frequently used, and this tactic would essentially negate the value of the positive feedback as it was perceived as a dishonest way to be critical. Positive qualities also had a tendency to remain consistent while the middle of the sandwich would change, weakening the effect of the positive feedback.

One study (Henley and Reed, 2015) also found that corrective-positive-positive feedback was more effective than the positive-corrective-positive order of feedback as recommended by proponents of the sandwich method. I am in favour of any feedback model which includes at least some element of positivity.

In conclusion, coaching, mentoring and feedback have been fundamental to my development as a police officer and guiding me throughout my probationary period. Coaching has allowed me to create and achieve goals, especially in areas such as decision-making while under pressure and dealing with challenging incidents. Mentoring has given me the benefit of a more long-term guidance, helping me to build confidence, reflect on my thoughts and actions and align myself with organisational standards and force priorities.

More significantly for me, the transition from being a less experienced officer receiving mentoring to becoming a mentor and coach myself has allowed me to consolidate my own knowledge and experiences, explore leadership styles, and contribute to the learning of my colleagues and tutees. This element has been the most rewarding of my probation, it has highlighted the importance of cultivating a supportive learning environment for new officers.

These experiences have reinforced the value of reflective practice, open communication and adaptability within policing. I have been inspired to continue developing my skills as a coach and mentor even beyond my probation and am now attracted towards a role as a dedicated Professional Development Unit tutor for an opportunity to help build an engaged, competent and resilient workforce.

Word count: 1916

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