

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:

Within this work I will be critically evaluating the strategic role of the College of Policing in professionalising policing in the UK, with reference to key national frame works which will include the Strategic Policing Requirements, the Policing Vision 2025, Workforce Transformation Program 2018, and the College of Policing's Five-Year Strategy.

Throughout this work I will be using Borton reflective model which is a structured framework that supports reflective practise by asking three questions. What? helps with description of the experience. So What? gives the opportunity for crucial analyst and Now What? outcomes and actions (McLeod, 2024)

Before beginning my role as a police officer, I had little understanding of what a modern officer's role involved or what would be required of me. To develop this understanding, I

referred to The College of Policing key accountabilities and will critically evaluate how I meet or at sometimes I do not meet, these professional standards.

As a frontline response officer, my primary responsibility is to attend incidents reported to the police. These can range from relatively minor matters such as highway obstruction, to complex and high-risk situations that pose an immediate threat to the public or myself. In this moment, I must apply the National Decision Model (NDM) to determine a proportionate and lawful response that aligns with Gwent Police's policies and procedures (Halford, 2024)

I have demonstrated my ability to manage varying levels of demand in daily policing, for example, I have attended an incident where a vehicle was parked across a school gateway, preventing children from leaving safely. After conducting a vehicle registration check I contacted the owner, who explained that they had to rush into the school due to their child's accident and promptly moved the car.

Conversely, I recently responded as the first officer to a scene to a male suspected damaging property with power tools, upon my arrival the suspect escalated the situation by throwing tools out the window towards me. I immediately requested support, and armed officers were deployed due to the individual's known warning markers and previous violent encounters with police. (Francis, 2002).

As a police officer, I regularly engage with victims of crime and individuals with vulnerability who require additional support and adaptive communication. Many of the people I encounter experience mental health challenges which often requires me to adjust my approach, taking extra time to listen explain and de-escalate effectively. (Pritchard, 2019)

According to the strategic policing requirements set out by the Home Secretary, modern policing demands a comprehensive approach that integrate proactive crime prevention, community engagement and the effective use of technology and data.

Policing is inherently multifaceted, requiring a careful balance between law enforcement, community protection, and maintaining public order, all while building and sustaining public trust. (Home Secretary 2023).

Strategic policing in the United Kingdom (UK) refers to high level planning, coordination, and resource management to address complex and evolving public safety challenges. It involves long term national and regional objectives rather than daily operational tasks, aiming to create a unified response to crime, terrorism, and community safety. Oversight is shared between the Home Office, the National Crime Agency (NCA), and local police force, working collaboratively with other government bodies and community organisation (National Crime Agency, 2028).

The governance and accountability of strategic policing are inherently complex, involving multiple agencies. The Home Office established overarching priorities through framework such as the Strategic Policing Requirements (SPR), focusing on areas including counterterrorism, organised crime, and cybercrime. Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) ensure local policing aligns with community needs while addressing national concerns, and the College of Policing provides professional standard, training, and research to support strategic decision making (Home Office, 2023).

There is an increasing emphasis on assessing threat that requires coordination and multi-agency response. Recent terror attacks within the United Kingdom have reinforced the importance of collaboration in counterterrorism effort. The NCA plays a key role in tackling organised crime such as drugs and human trafficking, as well as money laundering (Shnmugaesan, 2025). The rapid rise for cybercrime including online fraud and data breaches has created new demand for digital forensics and international cooperation, as these crimes often transcend national boundaries. Locally, there has also been a concerning rise in knife crime, gang-related violence, and domestic abuse which highlights the need for the joint efforts between police, school, social services, and community groups (National Police Chief's Council 2018).

Despite strong multi agency collaboration, several challenges continue to impact the effectiveness of strategic policing. Funding cuts have significantly reduced officer's numbers and specialist resources, leading to a loss of experience as many long serving officers have left the services. The resulting gap has not been fully replenished, leaving

younger less experienced officers to shoulder increasing responsibilities (Blockley, 2024). This combined with high-profile incidents of police misconduct and controversial tactics such as stop and search, risks undermining public trust (Marchment and Gill, 2025).

Experienced and skilled officers are essential to combating emerging crimes such as cybercrime and terrorism which have increased globally in nature. Policing strategies must therefore evolve emphasising advance training and upskilling to remain effective. However, the complexity of multi-agency partnership can sometimes lead to communication breakdown, conflicting priorities and unclear accountability which can hinder effective responses (Mazerolle et al., 2020).

To improve efficiency, police forces must strengthen collaboration and intelligence-sharing between agencies, including partnerships with private sector organisations that can provide technological expertise, particularly in combating cybercrime. Effective community engagement is equally vital, enabling local officers to better understand specific neighbourhood issues and implement prevention-focused initiatives (Gov.uk, 2023).

As cybercrime continues to grow, policing must expand its digital knowledge base and forensic capabilities, building trust within communities and maintaining accessibility across all demographics are crucial to early intervention and prevention strategies. Long-term efforts in youth engagement, education, and community outreach play a significant role in reducing violence and radicalisation (Das and Nayka, 2013).

The Policing Vision 2025 framework, developed by the UK Home Office, outlines the transformation of policing across England and Wales to meet modern challenges. It aims to create forward-thinking, adaptable police services aligned with technological advances and the evolving nature of crime. The vision seeks to build a force that is more effective, responsive, and resilient in an increasingly interconnected global environment (NPCC, 2024).

A key objective within Policing Vision 2025 that aligns with my personal goals is improving operation efficiency. Streamlining outdated processes allow officers to dedicate more time to frontline duties (Griffiths, Murphy, and Tatz. 2015). The vision also promotes

collaboration among law enforcement, local authorities, and community organisations to better address the root cause of crime. Stronger partnerships can foster safer communities and reduce demand on emergency response services (NPCC, 2024).

Another core component of the vision is improving community engagement. The police cannot achieve their mission without the trust, cooperation, and support of the public (Jackson, 2015). Building open communication channels with local authorities and residents fosters trust and transparency. When communities feel heard and see tangible action taken in response to their concerns, mutual respect and accountability are strengthened (College of Policing, 2024).

The College of Policing plays a critical role in professionalising policing by ensuring that officers have access to continuous professional development and leadership training. Its five-year strategy aims to enhance police effectiveness, efficiency, and public trust by embracing innovative and address emerging challenges (Brown, 2019).

The College of Policing central purpose is to establish national policing standards and provide training to ensure officers can meet the evolving demands of modern law enforcement. Continuous professional development is vital to maintaining a capable, accountable, and adaptive police service (College of Policing, 2020).

Furthermore, The College of Policing emphasises the importance of strong and ethical leadership. Leaders must be equipped to make informed decisions, manage challenges, and uphold integrity, transparency, and accountability throughout all levels of policing (Kamyshanskyi, 2024).

Aligned with Policing Vision 2025, the college also promotes collaboration with public services and community groups to understand and address root causes of crime. Factors such as poverty, mental health and substance misuse often contribute to criminal behaviour. By recognising these links, police forces can collaborate more effectively with partner agencies to implement long-term preventative solutions that promote safer communities (College of Policing, 2024).

At the beginning of my policing career there was so much new information to digest and such a demanding new role to navigate that any concern on fitting into the force's vision of a modern policing was not taken into consideration. There is such pressure to fit into the team and be independent that I was only able to focus on each victim I attended and find the action and outcome for them with little to no experience.

Throughout my final year of probation, I have been able to become confident with the experience I have gained and knowledge of offences and laws which takes away pressures I had experienced in my first year's policing. Police officers are never going to fully comply with force policies and vision, as humans are not the same and it is impossible to expect individuals to conform perfectly. The other main factor which has clearly been missed when building these visions is the nature of policing as a core, which is the dynamic nature police work within. Every single call to police is slightly different to all the other calls, even if many people are calling about the same incident each person has a different view or opinion on the same event. There is no style that can fix all within policing and trying to create such a vision will fail due to the rigid nature being applied to a fluid and ever-changing environment.

With this being said, I find simply having pride in my work and using common decency (treat people how you would like to be treated) I am already more than halfway to complying with Gwent Police's vision. Having policing curiosity and a desire to support my victims to the best of my ability and with the full understanding of the offence and law, following all lines of enquiry and establishing new lines of enquires also helps me to completely fulfil the force's vision of modern-day policing.

As I explored the college of policing 5-year strategy and identified the main recurring theme to be collaboration with police forces and their sister agencies such as local councils, social services and fostering a strong culture of continuous development and learning. I looked at how this applied to myself and I've been able to see a difference in my understanding where policing stops and where our sister agencies take over for long term and ongoing support for my communities, how to gain this support for my victim and families and the

importance of sharing information and making sure the right safeguarding and signposting happens.

I have also understood how each training day being provide by the force builds an opportunity to understand learning gaps and identify my strengths and weaknesses so I can focus on them and request more support or training.

I have had emails sent to my sergeant from victims I have supported with constructive feedback on outcomes of investigation from persons inside the police force and members of public which have allowed me an insight and an opportunity to build on past experiences and do better next time. Likewise, I have had emails from both professional and members of public explaining how I excelled in my policing and have helped them regardless of the policing outcome which supported the effort I had made in applying the legislation to the report and finding the appropriate outcome. This sometimes means having hard conversations with people as they have genuine belief that what they are reporting is a police matter however, applying the information to the legislation can sometimes highlight how their report is not a police matter and how our sister agencies or a civil court are the right places to signpost them to.

As part of probation there is a matrix which is also checked by an assessor, this assessor will watch Body Worn Video of my interaction and decision making at an incident. The matrix covers incidents of complex nature that need case files to be sent to The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as well as managing conflict where I have demonstrated my ability not only with my use of force, but how I have been able to use my communication skills to control a situation and be able to calm things down so everyone is safe.

In conclusion I was able to critically examine my development as a police officer within the context of modern policing set out by the College of Policing and Policing Vision 2025. Although no officer can fully conform to every aspect of strategic vision, by maintaining professional pride, my ethical values, and my commitment to learning, I am actively contributing to the delivery of modern policing.

Word Count 2143

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 has become a significant tool in modern policing, transforming how police are now communicating, sharing information, and engaging with their local communities and often nationwide. I will explore how social media is being used to support engagement with the public and understand the force guidance and policies. Equally I can explore the benefits and risks which come from using social media as a force.

During my time as a police officer, I have supported families and care workers involving missing persons. As part of the process, we gather detailed information about the individual's last known location and potential destinations. This includes asking family members or guardians whether they consent to a social media post being issued to request public assistance in locating the missing person. To date, I have not had any cases where consent was granted, normally because the individual person was found before the use of social media became necessary (College of Policing, 2017).

Although I have not personally needed to authorise or use social media in a missing person case, it is important to consider how these platforms can both support and challenge

policing practices. Social media has become a common and valuable tool in modern policing, to the extent that many forces have created dedicated roles to manage and monitor official accounts. Having trained personnel responsible for this ensures that posts are accurate, lawful, and appropriate as the benefits of social media come with significant risk (ACPO, 2013).

Most police forces use a range of social media platforms, including X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. This is to engage with the public. Each platform serves a different demographic allowing police forces to reach a wider audience. This broad engagement can assist in crime detection, suspect identification, and locating missing persons. Furthermore, social media enhances transparency and helps build trust between police and the communities they serve. However as with any communication tool, there are privacy, security and ethical considerations that must comply with force policies and procedures (Oglesby-Neal, Tiry and Kin, 2019).

Facebook remains one of the largest and most widely used social media platforms, making it a natural choice for police communication, due to its accessibility and broad use base. However, relying on a single platform would limit audience reach, as people use different platforms for different purposes, for example, Facebook for family connections and X for current affairs. Sharing content over all the platforms allow each demographic the same message however in their desired method of consumption. The younger generation tend to enjoy quick videos with little to no text to read, with this said, it is becoming more apparent that the community who would normally read posts or watch the news broadcasts, are also enjoying the short form videos and are engaging by sharing the posts. This is an unexpected byproduct of social media as the people sharing the posts with others gives a much wider audience, who would never have seen the post without a friend sharing it with them. This is important because if the person who was introduced to the posts, connected with the style and context of the post, they are likely to follow the page and they will have access to more content and information. (Love, 2015).

Since understanding user behaviour across platforms is complex and resource intensive, police forces maximise reach and effectiveness by posting consistent messages across

multiple platforms. Posting consistent messages is essential for building a strong, recognisable, and trustworthy presence. If messaging differs significantly between platforms, it can create confusion and weaken the overall impact of communication and then can damage the message being portrayed. Being able to keep a clear identity with the same structure helps the target audience to recognise and remember the forces posts. Doing this well will build trust and give the clear identity, reliability, and credibility for forces. (Dixon, 2024).

The advantages of using social media for public engagement includes the ability to communicate directly and in real time. Police can provide updates on incidents, share safety advice, promote community events and issue urgent alerts such as road closures. Social media also enables two-way communication allowing community members to comment, ask questions and share local knowledge that can assist investigators (Williams et al., 2018).

This fosters a sense of community ownership, increase awareness and encourages participation in crime preventions campaigns, including home security and road safety initiative. These online groups, forums, and comment sections which all platforms have will help with the encouragement of participation as they are all interactive and provide space for people to interact and spark discussion. This helps the community to form relationships and with police forces guiding the subjects, it gives people who are dealing with similar challenges a support network. Having this network in place, allows people to be included who must isolate for medical reasons or feel isolated due to physical or mental health concerns. (Jungblut. Kumpel and Steer, 2022).

This open communication enhances transparency and accountability. The public can see how issues are being addressed, and the outcomes of police operation or community initiatives can be shared widely. This visibility builds trust and strengthens the relationship between the police and communities they serve (Levinson-Waldman, 2024).

Social media is also an effective tool for gathering intelligence. Criminals and organised groups frequently use these platforms to communicate or share information about their

activities. By monitoring open-source data, police can analyse patterns and develop a broader understanding of criminal networks, which supports proactive crime prevention. Public appeals for information, particularly in cases of missing persons or wanted suspects, have also proven highly effective. Using social media has led to successful resolutions and strengthening community cooperation (Drury et al., 2022).

However, the use of social media also introduces significant risks, particularly concerning privacy and data protection. It is essential that any personal information shared publicly complies with legal and ethical standards. When gathering intelligence, all information must be collected in accordance with policy, procedure, and legislation to ensure it can be lawfully used in court. Forces must also protect sensitive data from cyberattacks or leaks that could breach data protection laws (Latham, 2020).

Within Gwent Police, a dedicated social media team and a Press Office manage all official posts. This ensures that communications are managed by trained professionals who understand legal boundaries, maintain professional standards, and adhere to internal policies and procedures. This structure reduces the risk of inappropriate or controversial content that could damage the forces reputation or harm community relations. Officers have faced disciplinary action in the past for sharing confidential information or expressing biased views online, highlighting the importance of control and oversight (Team, 2024).

Despite the benefits of real-time communication, social media can also amplify misinformation. False claims or misleading posts can spread rapidly, reaching audiences far and beyond the local community and potentially escalating public anxiety or hostility. This demonstrates the need for clear messaging, fact-checking and careful management of public engagement (Chadwich, 2019).

While social media can support intelligence gathering, it must be used responsibly. All information collected must comply with relevant laws and internal guidance. Automated systems that monitor online content could inadvertently stereotype or profile individuals, leading to unfair targeting. Moreover, not all social media information is reliable, so verification is crucial before action on intelligence (Bullock, 2017).

Strict regulations govern how police may use social media for intelligence and surveillance. Access should be restricted to trained persons who understand the associated legal and ethical frameworks. It would be impractical for every officer to remain fully updated on these policies and procedures so specialist training and controlled access to protect both the force and the intracity of investigation is vital (Egawhary, 2019).

Social media engagement has also helped humanise the police service. By sharing “days in the life” posts, officers can demonstrate the realities of police work, such as the time and effort involved in investigations and the importance of community cooperation throughout it, CCTV evidence or witness statements. It is clear from speaking with the public that there is a stigma about the role of a police officer and almost every time there is a negative view that officers are not doing any work as they are not visible in the public. Using social media, forces can give the public an insight to where more of the work happens and what is involved in one incident. (Richards, 2025).

It can also service as a positive and inclusive way to introduce members of the public to policing, Gwent Police for instance recently participated in a BBC documentary following new recruits throughout their training. Social media post featuring new police dogs and mounted units attract considerable attention from the public, particularly those unable to attend in person events due to mobility issues or other commitments. Social media brings these experiences into people’s homes promoting engagement and interest (Doy_Admin, 2024).

However social media engagement can also attract negative feedback. Some members of the public criticise police use of platforms like TikTok questioning whether such activities is an appropriate use of resources. Others may sympathise with offenders featured in posts sparking debates about privacy and fairness (Mullen 2014). Managing such disclosure requires sensitivity and professionalism to maintain community trust. Public perceptions of police forces are historically negative, and the use of social media gives people a platform to share their feelings and as the positive feedback encourages more positive feedback there are always twice as many negative comments. As with good stories such as sharing

of police interactions of stolen items being found or missing persons returned there are always an undercurrent of people who even in good outcomes have a story which contradicts these stories and show a negative aspect to policing. There is a gap within the police force where false narratives and half-truths take days to address and share the correct information. However, the time delay is highly damaging as the public have already created the narrative and regardless of the truth being shared, the first story told will always hold more weight and it always seems a desperate attempt to defend the force instead of simply sharing the correct information. The public will share a police officer using what seems to be unjustified force without any context to why the officer needs to use this force or what has happened prior to this. Manchester Airport was a clear understanding of how this misinformation is damaging to the public perception and to police across the country. (CPS, 2024)

Another negative use of social media is police officers also have access to the comments being made about them personally, although the public might not know it was that individual if you have dealt with that incident, it is clear all comments are being aimed at you regardless of if the public know you. This can have a massive effect on how we police. A major failure of the forces and media was to release the name of a firearms officer who in the line of duty completed their role and training well and his personal information was shared which caused him and his family personal hardship where his children were unable to go to school and his wife was fired from her role. Only to find him innocent and commended for his decision making in keeping the public safe, the damage was already done, and the lasting effect was felt by his whole family.

In conclusion, the use of social media by police forces across the United Kingdom offers significant benefits including enhanced communication, increased transparency, and improved community engagement. It enables forces to share information quickly, request assistance and demonstrate accountability. However, these benefits must balance against the risk of misinformation, privacy breaches and misuse. To ensure public confidence forces must implement robust policies and procedures, maintain strict oversight, and ensure that only trained personnel manage official accounts. By doing so police can continue to use

social media as a valuable tool for modern policing which safeguarding public trust and integrity.

Word count 1997

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 section, I will explore a range of leadership styles and strategies that can be applied in any working environment. By examining the key traits of different leadership approaches, I aim to gain a deeper understanding of my own leadership style and identify instances where I have demonstrated leadership within a team or supporting an individual while performing my duties as a police officer.

Autocratic leadership is a style in which leaders make decisions independently, exercising full control with minimal input from their teams. In this model, the leader makes all critical decisions and expects strict compliance from the team. This approach is often associated within police organisations, which are typically hierarchical and highly structured. Within policing autocratic leadership commonly manifests in centralised decision-making where a senior officer such as a sergeant or inspector makes major operation choices, drawing upon their rank and experience (Chukwusa, 2018)

While these clear lines of command can enhance discipline and ensure quick decision-making during crisis, it can also limit creativity and discourage innovation. In environments that would benefit from open dialogue and diverse perspective, strict adherence to protocol may stifle initiative. Due to the risks to life and property within policing sticking to policies and procedures is sometimes the only way to make decisions, and this can be one benefit of autocratic leadership to minimise risk. (Van Vugt et al., 2004)

Although autocratic leadership ensures consistency and efficiency in high-stake situations, leaders must be mindful that this approach can reduce morale and collaboration. Team members may feel undervalued if their experience or insight are overlooked and this can lead to dissatisfaction and can cause teams to become dependent on the leader. In a dynamic profession such as policing where adaptability and teamwork are essential, this style of leadership can pose challenges (Cherry, 2023).

Democratic leadership, also known as participation leadership, involves collaboration and sharing decision-making. Leaders adopting this approach actively seek input from their team members before making key decisions. This style of leadership fosters transparency encourages open communication and empowers the team but ensuring everyone feels heard and their thoughts and opinions are valued. As a result, team members are more likely to feel motivated, engaged and invested in the outcomes of decisions and actions made. (Bonner, 2019)

This style of leadership promotes creativity and innovation through the exchange of everyone's thoughts, opinions and ideas which has the byproduct of strengthening interpersonal relationships within the team. While the interpersonal relationships are being built, team members morale can be heightened and each member of the team can feel respected and valued. Working together can also lead to creative solutions which may have better outcomes than the old tried and tested solutions. (Zhang, 2024)

However, democratic leadership can also present challenges. Consulting all team members takes time, and in fast-paced environments such as policing, delaying decision-making can

have profound consequences. Additionally differing opinions can lead to conflict if not managed effectively (Shinde, 2024).

Transformational leadership focuses on inspiring and motivating team members to achieve exceptional outcomes by fostering a shared vision. Rather than relying on traditional authority, transformational leaders act as a role model to promote long-term development and meaningful change, rather than falling into the trap of following what has been done before. They communicate a compelling vision that encourages innovation, creativity, and self-improvement among their teams (Marker, 2021).

These leaders provide individualised consideration and recognise each team members unique strengths. Promoting trust and empowering the team as a whole and as an individual. This creates a supportive environment that encourages each other to succeed and becoming creative thinkers and strategic risk-takers (P. Decker, 2018)

However, like any leadership style transformational leadership has some challenges and one main factor of this style is it requires elevated levels of emotional intelligence and communication skills to ensure that enthusiasm and vision remain grounded. Without this balance, teams may experience unrealistic expectations or burn out due to the overcommitment or pressure to achieve (Baker, 2023).

Transactional leadership focuses on structure, supervision and performance-based rewards and consequences. It operates on a “give and take” relationship between leaders and their teams, where expectations are clearly defined, and motivation is achieved through incentives or corrective actions based on the team’s and individual’s performance (Biscontini, 2024).

This leadership style prioritises efficiency and consistency, this ensures team members are expected to meet set objectives, and rewards such as commendations or career progression are often used to recognise success. Within policing, transactional leadership is more commonly observed at higher organisational levels, where performance and compliance are closely monitored (Torres, 2021).

While transformational leadership encourages long-term vision, transactional leadership focuses on short-term goals and immediate results. Due to the unpredictable and reactive nature of policing, purely transactional leadership is often insufficient. However, when combined with other leadership styles, it can help maintain accountability and operational discipline (Juneja, 2019).

Laissez-faire leadership is a hands-off approach where leaders provide minimal direct supervision and allow their team to make decisions independently. This style is adopted by leaders who believe their team members are competent and capable of managing their responsibilities without constant oversight. It can be particularly effective in environments with experienced, self-motivated team members who require little guidance (Chaudhry and Javed, 2021). This can create enhanced job satisfaction as team members are empowered to apply their professional judgment and share best practice.

However, it can also lead to reduced productivity or disengagement if its team members lack sufficient structure or motivation. In policing, this can have a negative impact on victims and the community outcomes if cases are not managed effectively. To succeed, laissez-faire leaders must ensure that their teams possess the necessary skills and commitment to perform autonomously. (Myers, 2024).

Servant leadership prioritises the need of others, particularly victims, communities, and colleagues over the leader's personal ambitions. It contrasts with traditional hierarchical models that focus on authority and control. Servant leaders are characterised by empathy, active listening, foresight, and a strong commitment to developing others. They foster a culture of trust and collaboration, creating an environment where individuals feel valued and supported. This approach can improve morale, enhance engagement, and strengthen relationships within teams (Asana, 2022).

Bureaucratic leadership is defined by strict adherence to rules, procedures, and organisational structure. Leaders following this model ensure that all actions align with established policies and procedures, thereby reducing risk and promoting consistency. In policing, this is particularly important, as compliance and procedure safeguards integrity, accountability, and public confidence (Akther Habib, 2022).

Charismatic leadership relies on leader's personal charm, confidence, and ability to inspire others. Charismatic leaders use persuasive communication and emotional intelligence to create trust and enthusiasm, motivating their teams to achieve shared goals. They articulate a compelling vision that resonate emotionally, installing pride and purpose among followers (Hanslik et al., 2018).

However, over-reliance on a charismatic leader can create dependency, making teams vulnerable if the leader leaves or falters. Maintaining a balance between inspiration and accountability is therefore essential (Shonk, 2022).

Situational leadership is a flexible approach that adapts to the needs of the team and the specific situation. Effective situational leaders assess the competence levels of their team members, adjusting their leadership style accordingly and having strong emotional intelligence to make the adjustments. This adaptability allows them to leverage individual team members strengths and provides the appropriate level of guidance or autonomy (Schermerhorn, 1997).

It is also suggested that not one leadership style can work all the time and this instead suggests an effective leader will use all styles to fit the situation at hand. These leaders will tailor their leadership style to support the team from different tasks and individuals making sure they are paying attention to if that style is working or if they need to change styles to achieve a better outcome. The model identifies four main styles: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. I have left this leadership till last as this is my personal style of leadership, and I will explore the four styles (Murphy, 2024).

Directing: Leaders provide clear instruction and close supervision, this style is suitable for individuals who lack experience but are enthusiastic and willing to learn (Evelyn, 2024).

Coaching: Leaders offer direction while encouraging input, ideal for those with developing skills but limited confidence (Lee, 2021).

Supporting: Supportive leaders share decision-making and offer encouragement to skilled but less motivated team members who have the confidence and knowledge however, may allow the task to stagnate if not prompted (Llorens Montes, Ruiz Moreno and Garcia Morales, 2005).

Delegating: Leaders trust competent, motivated individuals to take instruction and tasks and work independently, requiring minimal supervision and only requesting support when they need. (Baker, 2022).

Through exploring these leadership models, I have situational leadership as the style that best aligns with my approach as a police officer. In my role, I frequently adapt my communication and decision-making to the needs of the situation and the people involved.

For example, during one incident, I attended a scene where a male was threatening to self-harm. Upon arrival, I noticed he was unarmed and appeared distressed rather than aggressive. Assessing the situation, I decided to reduce the physical and emotional distance between us to build rapport and demonstrate empathy. This approach encouraged my colleagues to follow my lead and enter the property safely. Once inside, the individual revealed that his distress was linked to concerns about how his neighbours perceived him. By remaining calm, approachable and with my empathy I was able to de-escalate the situation, gain trust and secure mental health support.

This experience reinforces my belief that situational leadership as the best style for me as it allowed balancing authority, compassion and adaptability which is vital in policing. It enables officers to make sound judgments, support vulnerable individuals and work effectively with colleagues even under pressure.

It suits my style as I am able to watch and learn what the people around me need and being able to use their strengths where I might have weaknesses can make the job easier and we can complete the tasks faster. With the nature of the job being able to complete tasks completely and be ready to move forward with the next job can improve our victim care.

It also allows me to change my approach, for instance what a colleague can deal with well in a slow pace environment might cause them to falter if the pace changes, so being attuned to their changes and struggle and having the ability to adapt and support them by taking some pressure away from them or tasking them a different role even though they normally excel in that task can only strengthen trust and create a safe space for them to reach out for more leadership and support as I've demonstrated I understand when they struggle and we can work together to overcome this.

I find people are more likely to step out of their comfort zone with me as they have seen I can adapt and support them, which also allows me to understand my own abilities and to be able to lean on their support when I take on their roles, which I might shy away from if it is one of my weaknesses. The trust that is built works both ways and only supports and creates a safe relationship for me as a leader and then for them to grow as a leader themselves. This can give my colleagues a sense of pride and achievement that they have grown to a point that they are able to give support and guidance to the person who started off being their leader and they will actively teach me new things they have learnt which might not be known to me, hence building both of our skills and confidence.

In conclusion, while critically examining a range of leadership styles relevant to policing, highlighting both each style strength and limitations within the organisation. This has demonstrated that styles such as autocratic, transactional, and bureaucratic leaderships maintain structure, accountability, and risk management. Where democratic, transformational and servant leadership approaches are more engagement, motivation, and personal development.

Throughout my reflection it has become clear situational leadership best suits my personal leadership style as it allows me to adapt to individuals needs which I can do. This style supports my decision making, collaboration and victim focused outcomes.

Word Count 2048

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:

The three-year probation period has been a critical stage in my development. It has provided me with a structure of learning, assessments, and professional development. I have been given support formally and informally which I will explore how they differ and how receiving feedback has supported me in this development.

This reflective account critically examines my experience throughout my probation and will explore how mentoring and coaching have contributed to my personal, professional, and operational growth. To be able to answer correctly if I have benefited from any coaching and mentoring, I first need to explore what both mean and understand what they may have looked like within my workplace.

Regardless of the two styles having the same aim they are also different in the methods and timeframes. Coaching and mentoring are two widely used approaches for personal and professional development. While the terms are often used interchangeably, they represent distinct practices with different purpose, structure, and outcomes. Both coaching and mentoring have the same aim to encourage and support someone in improving and achieving growth. (Morris, 2025)

Regardless of the similarities and their aims they have different terms in how they focus on a subject, the duration, and methods.

Coaching is a structured, task-oriented process in the hope to improve specific skills, behaviours or to improve performance. It typically focuses on helping an individual achieve clear objectives within a set timeframe. It is important to identify goals, plan how to overcome foreseen obstacles, and build achievable strategies to meet the task. The primary purpose of coaching is performance improvement which can cover performance, communications within the team or towards the public productivity, however this is not an exhausted list, and coaching can support anything that has been identified needing support.

Mentoring on the other hand is a broader relationship-based approach to development. It has long-term personal and professional outcomes and growth rather than immediate performance improvement and outcomes. (Gijeslaers, 2019) A mentor is usually more experienced in the subject and can give guidance, advice and support based on experiences which can make the whole experience feel more relatable and builds trust and respect faster between colleagues. The purpose of mentoring is to support the development of a person or progression. (Clutterbuck, 2019)

One of the most significant differences between coaching and mentoring is in the nature of the relationship between the person coaching or mentoring and the person being mentored. Coaching relationships are normally formal and professional. They may be initiated by a leader, or an individual can ask for specific development. The relationship is often bound by an agreement outlining goals, timelines, confidentiality, and expectations. (Gavin, 2019)

Mentoring relationships tend to be more informal and personal. While some organisations establish formal mentoring programs, many mentoring relationships develop naturally based on mutual respect and shared interests. The bond between mentor and mentee often goes beyond professional objectives and may include discussions about values, life choices, and long-term aspirations. (Zachary, 2019)

Coaching engagements are usually short-term and has a time limit. They may last for a few weeks or several months, depending on the goals being addressed. Once the objectives are achieved or the agreed period ends the coaching relationship typically concludes.

Mentoring relationships are generally long term and may last for years. They often evolve over time as the mentee's needs change and their career progresses. Unlike coaching, mentoring does not always have a defined endpoint and may continue informally even after initial goals have been met. (Vance, 2025)

Coaching is highly focused and specific. It concentrates on skills, challenges, or performance areas. For example, a coach might help a manager improve leadership skills, enhance team communication, or prepare for a promotion. The scope of coaching is narrowing and targeted, with success measured by progress towards clearly defined goals.

Mentoring has a broader scope. It addresses overall developmental rather than isolated skills. A mentor may help a mentee navigate career decision, understand the culture, build confidence, or develop a professional goal. The focus is holistic, considering both personal growths. (Crawford, 2019)

The role of a coach is primarily to facilitate learning through questioning, reflection, and feedback. Coaches do not usually provide direct advice or solutions. Instead, they encourage their team to discover answers for themselves, fostering self-awareness and accountability. The coach acts as a neutral partner who challenges assumptions and supports growth without imposing their own experiences or opinions.

In contrast, mentors actively sharing knowledge, experiences, and insights, often offer advice, suggestions, and examples from their own careers. The mentor's role is to guide, inspire and support, using their experiences as a valuable learning experience for the team. While mentors may also ask reflective questions, they are more likely than coaches to provide direct guidance. (MacIenna, 2019)

Coaches are trained professionals who possess specific coaching skills, such as active listening, powerful questioning, goal setting, and feedback techniques. While they may have experience in a particular field, their effectiveness comes primarily from their coaching competence rather than a subject-matter expertise. A coach does not need to work in the same department as the team to be effective.

Mentors, by contrast, rely heavily on their subject-matter expertise and professional experience. They are usually senior or more experienced individuals within or have been in the same department. Their credibility and value stem from having walked in their shoes and made mistakes that they can share and offer practical insights based on real-world experience. (Connor and Pokora, 2019)

Coaching follows a structured process, often using established models such as GROW (Goal, Reality, Options, Will). Sessions are planned, progress is tracked, and outcomes are evaluated. This structured approach ensures accountability and measurable results.

Mentoring is less structured and more flexible. Conversations may be informal and agenda free, allowing topics to emerge naturally based on the trainees needs. While some mentoring relationships might include goals or development plans. The process is generally more fluid than coaching. (Rosylin, 2025).

Police forces often use coaching to address performance gaps, develop leadership capabilities, or support employment through transitions such as promotions or organisational changes. Coaching is commonly used as a targeted intervention with a clear return on the upskilling needed.

Mentoring is frequently used to support talent development, knowledge transfer, and succession planning. It is particularly valuable for onboarding new team members, supporting diversity and inclusion initiatives and helping individuals navigate complex environments which the police as a general tend to create due to the nature of the work and demand placed upon officers. (Trom and Burke, 2021)

In conclusion while coaching and mentoring share the common goal of supporting team and individual development, they differ significantly in purpose, structure, and approach. Coaching is a short-term, goal-focused, and performance-driven process that emphasise self-discovery and accountability. Mentoring is a holistic approach to developing the team or individual. Both are valuable tools and their effectiveness depends on selecting the right approach and being ready to change to accommodate the individual needs and context. Understanding these differences enables individuals and the force to make informal decisions to maximise the benefits that ongoing development can be to the wider teams.

Now I have explored both coaching and mentoring I can understand how I have experienced either coaching or mentoring.

Unlike every police officer's tutorship within their first ten weeks of policing after their six-month training, coaching does not really happen within the force unless there has been a pattern of events or discovered behaviours that need addressing. I have been fortunate within my policing career not to have needed additional coaching on every day-to-day tasks.

One example of coaching I received is when I complete my yearly refresher of Public and Personal Safety Training (PPST) where I am guided by instructors to be able to demonstrate my particular skills to pass the training. (College of Policing, 2024b)

I have asked to be placed onto work-based training which would support myself and my team in the long term, however due to policing numbers on shift I have not been granted these courses as the normal operational levels do not allow my time off shift.

The other form of training which could be seen as coaching provided by the force is College Learn formally known as National Centre for Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT) which are online packages giving continuous personal learning content (College of policing, 2021). In all honesty the lack of coaching opportunity to the number of learning gaps I have within my role, due to lack of officers or unacceptable time frames for officers is staggering. My personal development is either stunted by not being released from the shift, or the logistics

that the coaches only work a regular Monday to Friday office hours, which often clash with shift work meaning over working to keep within my shift plan.

Mentoring however happens regularly as the failing of the force is not felt by one person but by all within it, it is the old age saying “we found the same” for our more experienced officers who had to overcome the same problem previously. I have been able to use someone else’s wisdom in that area, as they faced the same challenges as I am facing which gives a softer more approachable response from the mentor, as they know how difficult it is to fight through the confusion or lack of training provided. They can explain their mistakes and explain how to avoid the same mistake while then explaining how they overcame them.

By being supported and guided away from mistakes and pitfalls allows me to progress faster and ask questions about why the process is this way, and if I were to make mistakes, how my mentor overcame them so I could seek the same support. I was able to understand their insight and how this particular force works and its organisational culture, which helps me apply the same logic to another task. This means I get a secondary benefit from my mentoring as it helps me navigate other tasks and problems without them intending to teach me this. (Pepper, 2019)

Having mentors within my working team has built and generated relationships that have reached further than just the one occasion I needed support, they have reached out to me when they have noticed I am tasked with something they once struggled with and have offered their help before I needed to reach out for support. Having worked closely with mentors they have also been able to see how I work, what my work ethic is like and where my weaknesses and strengths lie. I have also been recommended to people needing mentoring which in turn, takes pressure and responsibility from just one person on the shift and sharing knowledge is contagious and I in return, gain knowledge from being a mentor to others. (Smith, 2023)

I have benefited further once more from showing a mentor my eagerness to learn and to understand as my mentor has spoken about me to others and opportunities have arisen

from these interactions which help me grow and become more competent in my own abilities. This has helped me network with other departments and has opened doors I would not have expected or even felt were achievable on my own as my mentor saw learning gaps as well as my strengths that could be used elsewhere and being able to introduce me to the people within these departments has helped me.

In conclusion, while opportunities for formal coaching within my role have been limited and task focused, I have benefited from mentoring practice, experience based within my team which has supported me in a way I have grown and retained the lessons much more than expected. This ongoing support has enabled me to develop and has played a much more meaningful role in my learning, highlighting its value within the demanding environment of policing where access to structured coaching is often restricted or simply not available.

Word Count 1980

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The bibliography should only include sources referenced within the workbook using the Harvard referencing system. Information about referencing in written assignments and how to avoid plagiarism can be found on Moodle. It is important that you are aware of the importance of ensuring that the work submitted is your original work.

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