

The importance of effective communication skills as a police officer.

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Introduction

Within this report you will find the key points as to the importance of effective communication within policing. Further within this report you will read why it is imperative that our future generations as well as our current Police Officers should improve their ability to both liaise and receive information from the general public. This report will cover how different perspectives of the police will affect how effective different styles of communication are. As well as the ramifications of ineffective communication and the effect this has on the reputation of police inhibiting future communication methods. The future of Police public approval and doctrine relies on effective conveyance from and to the police. We will also report the necessity of inter-organisational communication and how vital these relationships and ability to divulge information between organisations are.

The importance of effective communication

To begin this segment The importance of police communication is a highly discussed topic however the relevance and significance of this is not to be understated. As stated by College of Policing (2024), which informs us that Police Officers as well as police staff should expand their understanding and comfortability with using comprehensive communication skills to reduce likelihood of escalation and to ensure the public can approach both Police staff and Officers in any situation, and be understood. Furthermore reported by The University of Law (2024), they suggest that communication strategies are of crucial importance to any potential Police officer or any future Police staff stating "You will interact with people everyday from all walks of life." This extract tells us that Police will have to correspond with many different types of individuals both on the street and in domestic situations. Ross and Rowe (2024) affirms this, explaining how individuals who spend unusual amounts of time on the street experiencing street culture, may have unhealthy relationships with Police officers. This may be due to Police Officers being the most common form of government authority that an individual who spends an inordinate amount of time on the street. It is essential how Police Officers communicate with individuals such as those who live on the street. This is one of many examples of how many different types of people a police officer has to liaise with.

These few examples of how vital these skills are to police officers and improving this ability to communicate with the public has been a key goal for the police. College of Policing (2013) confirms this with community engagement and neighbourhood profile initiatives. The police intend to change the general public's perspective of the Police, requesting the public's assistance in understanding the complicated nature of many neighbourhoods. The Police understand that there are more methods of communication than simply Police Officers talking to the public. To conclude this section of the report I stand by my initial evaluation that communication skills and the ability to render useful these sometimes complex methods of liaison is of paramount importance to both the Police Officers who use it and the general public who communicate with Police.

The need to adapt communication styles and why

Adaptation of communication skills is one of the most important skills a police officer can have in regards with communication. The ability to Liaison between two parties or talk to a vulnerable individual Bottomley et al (2020) tells us this but they also go into further detail about different styles of communication and their importance in regards to different situations. Within this report they display many styles of liaison skills ranging from posture to the way individual Police Officers are attired. To place this into an example we can see how Police may approach a domestic violence situation and how different methods of communication may or may not be effective. In this situation. Within that report it informs us that Police Officers must be very observant for the slightest social cues especially in "Emotionally charged" environments such as domestic violence. Police Officers will approach a young child with a different style of communication then a violent offender. The report also concurs that everything a Police Officer does can make Victims and Perpetrators view them as either escalating or de-escalating a situation. Being able to adapt your method of communication in an instant is imperative. Another example is at a heated football match. The Police Officers arriving at this situation must be vigilant on how they portray themselves. One of the more important Adaptations of these communication skills are "Paralanguage" As referenced from Bottomley et al (2020). This method of communication is the act where Police Officers alter the way they say certain things to appease or to make people feel safe and in some circumstances to intimate violent offenders. Police Officers must have fine control over their use of these communication styles as well as an ability to turn them off and on at a moment's notice. See later in the report what happens when Police officers do not have sufficient control over this. College of Policing (2020) concur stating different communication styles such as active listening and verbal or non-verbal negotiation styles. The Police after doing research on these communications styles agree with this. That is why conflict management and communication skills training are now mandatory and drilled into the minds of all working Police Officers and Police Staff

Consequences of ineffective communication

Within the Police there are many instances of miscommunication between Police Officers and the general public. This is due to poor standard of communication skills by independent officers as stated previously within this report. Although there are also other instances of Police Officers failure and lack of ability to communicate on a multi-organisational level This is supported by Giacomantonio (2015). Within this article of writing Giacomantonio explains how poor communication between multi-Organisational investigations has led to many instances where prominent offenders have taken longer than expected to be prosecuted. The author found this to be a systematic failure of inter-organisational communication. Further Zaghloul and Partridge (2022), portray how many public services have problems communications with each other as agreed by HMICFRS (2020) “nationally, forces are spending over a quarter of a billion pounds on collaboration every year but too many collaborations are failing” Filipović (2019) also concurs. By looking at all of these combined studies on how poor communication between organisations leads to worse quality of public service we can perceive the detriment of poor communication and ineffective use of communication skills. These poor communication skills aren't only affecting the quality of the public service provided but they are also expensive. A quarter of a billion pounds every year on cross-organisational collaborations and many fail this is a testament to how poor communication can lead to collapse within the Police as well as any organisation. Within recent memory there has been a catastrophic failure of communication within the Police. Shown by Kerslake (2018), The Kerslake report is an infamous report that was published describing the failures of the Public Services lack of communication before and following the Manchester bombings in 2017. One of the key highlights of this report is the lack of communication between Police and crucial fire and rescue services. The lack of communication ability from Police Officers on site meant that the fire and rescue teams did not arrive on site for 2 hours following the attack. “There is not one single reason nor one individual that caused this failure. Rather, it was a combination of poor communication and poor procedures.”. Said in the report. Following the attacks ineffective communication between Police and Casualty Bureau lead to some cases. As we can see from this one instance ineffective communication can be life threatening for those who are needing emergency services. The breakdown of communication is a consequence of years of neglect for the ability of Police Officers and other Public Services to both liaise with the public and communicate with other organisations

Conclusion

In conclusion I agree with the statements made by all those who I have credited in this report. Communication is a vital aspect and the ability to utilise this toolset of communication skills is of utmost importance to all members of the public sector, foremost police as they carry the most responsibility at least in regards to information

collection which is supported by the abilities of an individual Police Officer to communicate both with peers and with members of the general public. I believe communication doctrine reform will become a recurring issue within the next few years as the most effective strategies change. We can see how strategy has changed by looking at different authors and different studies done on this subject.

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