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

(SOUTH WALES POLICE, GWENT POLICE AND
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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:

The College of Police (CoP) was established in 2012 as the professional body responsible for policing in England and Wales. The College of police's core purpose is to professionalise the police by maintaining and driving standards in performance and ethics whilst developing those employed in policing to keep communities safe and reduce crime (College of policing, 2023). Within this essay I will critically evaluate the College of Police's role in professionalising policing within the UK, and I will evidence how I have worked to fulfil the role of a modern police officer by demonstrating how my actions have aligned with national strategies and frameworks. I will utilise the Gibbs reflective model (Gibbs, 1988) to reflect upon how my role as a police officer has changed in my final year of probation.

The College of Police was established to address several deficiencies within policing. Unlike other professional institutions such as medicine and education, prior to the founding of the College of Policing, there was no professional body responsible for setting standards in policing. However, the CoP is now considered to be the main professional body for policing, reducing the amount of direct involvement by the government (Holdaway, 2017).

In the wake of increasing concerns from the public about ethics within policing, the College of Police was founded and tasked with ensuring that standards of

professionalism and ethics were maintained. According to the CoP's Corporate strategy 2022-26, the CoP has five strategic ambitions which are to "build trust and a fair culture, transform police leadership, Support career long professional development and wellbeing, boosting core skills and to strengthen innovation and implement what works" (College of Police, 2024).

The CoP also produces the Authorised Policing Practice (APP) which are standard operating procedures that enable officers to provide a high quality, consistent service to the public (College of Police, 2025). The CoP has also implemented changes to APP's as a result of public enquiries such as the Manchester arena bombing enquiry which led to changes to first aid training for officers (College of Policing, 2023). This ensures that the CoP are able to fulfil its role in transforming lessons into standards.

The CoP also established the "What Works Centre for Crime Reduction" which promotes evidence-based practice which is fully accessible to all UK police forces (Hunter et al., 2018). Although the standardisation of policing practices is a valuable resource, it faces scepticism from officers who feel that it can limit individual professional development (Williams et al., 2019).

As well as driving standards, the founding of the College of Police was a response to broader calls for police reform. In 2011 the Winsor report called for better training, nationally recognised policing qualifications and performance-based pay to be introduced (UK Government, 2013). As a result of these recommendations one of the foundational tasks for the College of Policing was to establish a standardised policing education, thus resulting in the implementation of the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF).

The PEQF was established in 2016 and aligned police training with higher education standards (Li & Thomas, 2021). This represented a significant change to training and professional development in policing, placing education at the centre of all aspects of learning within policing (Wood, 2020). Proponents of professionalisation argue that it leads to higher standards and improvements in ethical culture and evidence-based policing (Lumsden, 2017; Green & Gates 2014). However, research indicates that some police officers view the professionalisation of policing as a form of 'top down' government control which threatens to conflict with police officers established view of the profession (Lumsden, 2017). Research by McCanney & Taylor (2025) also found that those who entered policing through a degree programme rather than through more traditional entry routes, displayed less affinity with the role of police as crime fighters in comparison to non-degree entry officers.

After two years of frontline policing, I have come to understand that policing is a multifaceted profession in which it is imperative to have a broad understanding of a wide range of legislation, powers and national policing strategies. There are several national policing frameworks currently in place to guide officers towards meeting the demands of the public and it is imperative that officers are familiar with them to enable them to better understand what is required of a modern-day police officer.

One of the frameworks; the Policing Vision 2025 is a decade long plan which was introduced in 2016 by The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and the

Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC). The vision aims to utilise technology in the prevention of crime and to encourage forces to be far more integrated with social services, health and education to help resolve issues that contribute to crime and Anti-social behaviour and to assist the vulnerable (NPCC, 2016). During my probationary period I have attended many incidents where I have had to utilise partner agencies in order to deliver support for vulnerable people and work towards a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour in alignment with the Policing Vision 2025.

During my second year of probation, I was dispatched to a call for a youth who had been persistently engaging in anti-social behaviour (ASB). This was causing the local businesses and the public to become increasingly frustrated, and they were keen to see positive action taken by the police in dealing with the issues. I felt a sense of pressure to deal with the issue robustly as I was conscious that the public and local businesses wanted to see decisive and swift action.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is defined as actions that violate social norms and show a disregard for the rights and wellbeing of others (Pezzoli et al., 2024; Hantoosh et al., 2021). ASB can have a very negative impact on society (Deery & Jago, 2010) and can lead to negative outcomes for youth perpetrators such as school failure, violence, increased delinquency and significantly higher public service costs over the individual's lifetime (Sprague & Walker, 2000; Scott et al, 2001).

Following the subject's arrest, I compiled a report for the CPS with a comprehensive history of the subject. To complete this document to a high standard, I engaged with the subject's social worker and their parents to gain an understanding of the subject's mental health background, additional learning needs as well as an understanding of their home life to ascertain if this was a contributing factor to their offending.

My research in this area has found that there is a myriad of potential reasons that a youth may engage in anti-social behaviour such as poor parenting, exposure to domestic violence, and socio-economic factors such as economic instability and peer pressure (Li, 2023; Anyanwu, 2007, Jevtic, 2011). I also engaged with the subject's education settings to ascertain if their educational environment was playing a role in their offending. I was informed that the subject was removed from education settings due to poor behaviour. This was particularly revealing as schooling can play a significant role in preventing and contributing to anti-social behaviour (Mayer, 1995).

Liaising with partner agencies worked well as it gave me a view of the subject's history which allowed me to provide a detailed report to the CPS. In future instances of this nature, I would look to implement the process of working with partner agencies sooner in order to maximise the effectiveness of preventive and diversionary methods.

By dealing with a prolific perpetrator of ASB and engaging with outside services, I was able to increase public confidence in the police and compile a comprehensive and thorough background report for the CPS which enabled the subject to be dealt with fairly, with consideration for their vulnerabilities, whilst simultaneously meeting

the public's expectation of positive action from the police, in alignment with the priorities of the Policing Vision 2025.

The Workplace Transformation Strategy is a strategic approach to modernising the working environment in policing (College of Police 2020). I have evidenced this throughout my early policing career by utilising technology to work remotely and efficiently. I have used force issued laptops to take statements from victims and uploaded them remotely without having to return to the police station as well as completing force forms and admin such as PNC checks using a mobile device.

This has allowed me to spend more time in the community as a visible resource rather than having to complete time consuming paperwork in a siloed work environment. My research in this area indicates that an increased visible presence positively contributes towards public confidence and trust in the police (Bradford et al., 2009). Being present in the community has also enabled me to gather more information and intelligence from the public to tackle serious organised crime which is a national threat set out in the Strategic Policing Requirement (UK Government, 2023).

In my final year as a probationary police officer, I have seen my role evolve both as an operational officer and as a member of a team in a working environment. As I have progressed through the early years of my career, I have developed my knowledge and confidence and have become a trusted member of my team. One of the national frameworks that I have worked towards aligning my actions with is the College of Policing's 5-year strategy, which is a national framework that outlines strategic ambitions in order to enhance the effectiveness, professionalism and public trust in policing in England and Wales (College of Policing, 2024).

Towards the beginning of my final year, I was approached by my sergeant and asked to mentor a transferee officer. I was informed by my supervisor that the officer had struggled to integrate with his previous team and had struggled with adapting to the role of a police officer. I recall feeling a sense of pressure as I felt that my capacity to take on more work was already limited. However, I also felt a sense of pride to have been considered for the task as there were officers on the team with more experience than me.

I accepted the challenge and took on a mentoring role with the officer. My research in this area has found that mentoring can positively benefit the mentor by providing a sense of achievement as well as developing their skills for their professional and personal lives (Beltman and Schaeben, 2012.). One of the core aims of the College of Policing's 5-year strategy is to contribute to a learning culture. This challenge gave me the opportunity to develop my own knowledge and experience whilst aiding the development of a colleague.

After meeting the officer, they informed me that they were struggling to accept criticism as they saw any mistake they made as a failure. I supported the officer through this concern and made sure to instil a habit of reflective practice with them. Reflective practice is defined as a process of examining one's experiences in order to learn and implement that learning in the future (Armulya, 2004).

Whilst returning from calls, I would ask the officer to critically reflect on the call and to find a positive aspect and a negative one, and we would discuss his reflection. By encouraging a habit of examining what went well and what could have gone better, the officer was able to contextualise his self-criticism more positively. This benefited the officer greatly both professionally and personally. However, an issue with this approach was that the officer felt as though he was being tutored by myself which somewhat diminished his sense of professional independence and competency.

In my final year I have seen my role as a police officer shift from being tutored and mentored on shift, to now passing on my experience to newer officers. I recognise that I will need to develop my leadership capabilities in order to ensure that I am fulfilling my evolving role as a more senior officer and potential mentor to younger in-service officers on shift.

In conclusion, the strategic role of the CoP in professionalising policing in the UK is transformational. The CoP has founded a centralised structure of standards, academic pathways and supported professional development. These initiatives have facilitated policing transition towards a formalised profession. Within this essay, I have evidenced how I have worked to fulfil the role of a modern police officer by aligning my actions, and development with national policing strategies. I have worked with partner agencies to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in line with the Policing vision 2025. I continue to utilise technology and implement modern agile working practices reflecting the Workplace transformation Strategy emphasis on digital capability and I have contributed to a culture of continuous learning and development by taking on a mentoring role and using reflective practice consistent with the College of Policing's 5-year strategy. On reflection, my final year as a probationer constable has seen my role evolve from an officer who is tutored and mentored to someone who is now offering this support and guidance myself. As my experience and capabilities has developed, so too has my level of responsibility and competency as an officer.

Word Count: 2171

**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:

The advent of social media has profoundly transformed the landscape of communication, and has revolutionised how individuals, communities and even government organisations interact with one another (Singh, 2022). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube and TikTok originated as a means of personal expression, however they have now become effective tools for governments and public institutions to convey important information and policies to an audience which would have previously been less accessible via traditional media (Manzoor, 2015). Social media has enabled police forces to create a direct line of communication with the public, allowing them to provide updates on ongoing incidents, request the support and co-operation of citizens and strengthening the relationship between the police and the public through increased transparency. However, its use has raised ethical and operational issues (O'Connor and Zaidi, 2021; Waddington, 2019).

In this essay I will critically evaluate my experience of using of social media as a means of engaging with the community and promoting policy initiatives using the Gibbs model of reflection (Gibbs, 1988). I will critically evaluate the benefits and risks of using social media and will consider force policies in relation to the use of social media as a form of engaging with the community.

The use of social media in the context of policing has evolved over time as social media has become more and more integrated with society (Ralph et al., 2024) with initial enthusiasm and early adoption, giving way to increased scepticism and reputational risk (Goldsmith, 2015). The use of social media platforms has far extended past the sharing of news, and now plays a crucial role in investigations,

transparency, public engagement and recruitment campaigns (Fortin et al., 2020; Fortin et al., 2023). During my two years of frontline policing, I have effectively utilised social media in aid of crime detection as well as a tool when investigating cases of missing persons.

Over the past two decades, social media has evolved from a recreational space for individual expression into a vital communication tool for governments, Police and other public sector agencies (Ayanso and Moyers, 2015). As time has progressed and the advantages and disadvantages of social media has become clearer, it has become necessary for more structured strategies regarding its use to be implemented.

The College of Policing (COP) understand that there is an increasing need to utilise social media as a method of engaging with members of the public; with traditional methods of communication between the police and the public having less impact and reaching fewer people in the modern age. The COP's principles of online engagement emphasise that the use of social media should be ethical, inclusive, credible, consistent and responsive with the underlying responsibility that officers act as ambassadors for their respective police forces and policing as a whole and should exercise sound judgement when utilising these tools (College of Policing 2020).

The National Police Chiefs Council has also provided guidance on the use of social media when investigating incidents such as missing persons, which aims to enable officers to use the digital tools effectively and ethically whilst being aware of the risks involved with its use (NPCC, 2024). Police forces in England and Wales also have corporate communications departments (CCD) who offer specialist professional advice and support to officers looking to utilise social media as an engagement or investigative tool (College of policing, 2022). Guidance and force policies are also available to officers who engage with social media from a policing perspective. The policy adopted by Gwent Police states that officers posting on behalf of the force should consider the code of ethics, have a policing purpose to use social media on behalf of the force and to maintain professionalism and a communication style consistent with the force's established aims and values.

During my probationary period as a frontline police officer, I have utilised the benefits of social media in order to progress investigations into public protection incidents such as missing persons, volume crime such as shoplifting, and to inform the public about ongoing incidents of public concern. I have found social media to be an effective tool at reaching a large audience quickly and effectively. Research suggest that feeling informed about policing activities can have a positive impact on public confidence in policing (Bradford et al., 2009a; Bradford et al., 2009b) and I have seen firsthand how promotion of force initiatives such as drink drive operations and promotion of successfully executed drugs warrants can result in significant positive engagement from the public.

The incident that I am going to discuss is an investigation I conducted into a shoplifting offence whereby the use of a social media appeal resulted in the identification of the offender and a subsequent positive outcome.

I was investigating an offence whereby a female had entered a large department store and had stolen goods to the value of approximately £60. The store in question was a large commercial branded store, and although the stolen amount may have seemed trivial to such a large business, the store in question had been subjected to daily thefts and attempt thefts which had resulted in a loss of thousands of pounds for the store on a monthly basis. Retail theft has a significant impact on businesses with shoplifting estimated to result in a loss of approximately 2-3% in sales which translates to a 25% decrease in net profit (Nelson & Perrone, 2000).

I attended the store and viewed the CCTV footage which had captured a very clear image of the offender's face and the act of them stealing items from within the store before leaving without making payment. However, despite the clear image of the offender, I was not able to positively identify them.

I was determined to use all investigative opportunities available to me to identify the offender as the store had been repeatedly targeted for shoplifting in weeks prior, therefore I felt that it was important to provide the staff at the store with reassurance, and to build confidence with them that their reports were being taken seriously and the offences were being investigated fully. My initial action after taking a witness statement and retrieving CCTV was to run the image of the offender through retrospective facial recognition (RFR) and to circulate the image to other shifts within my station who work in the area, in the hope that they had been involved in previous dealings with the offender and were able to identify them. I decided to use RFR in the first instance as it enabled me to cross reference the CCTV image with images of previous offenders on police systems. When the image was run through the database, it returned with no matches, and no other officers were able to identify the offender.

My last option to identify the offender was to issue a social media appeal. Although I was aware that the use of social media can be an extremely effective tool to identify offenders, I was also very conscious of the negative aspects of utilising social media as a tool in this situation, and the impact it could have on the offender. Being aware of the impact that social media can have on individuals is also a key consideration for use of social media within my force's own social media guidelines.

I was aware that utilising social media could lead to breaches of GDPR and Data protection, which are pieces of legislation that police must strictly adhere to in order to protect individuals' data and privacy (College of policing, 2014). There was also the possibility that the use of social media could provoke members of the public into engaging in the investigation negatively. Research in this area suggests that social media use by police forces can unnecessarily increase fear of crime and inadvertently support vigilantism (Kersten et al., 2019).

As well as the aforementioned risks involved in utilising social media, I was also very weary that by using the offender's photo on social media, I was accepting that there was a risk of misidentification. Kleider-Offutt et al., (2021) found that viewing of suspect photos on social media can result in misidentification, which could have unintended consequences for innocent parties. Social media use as evidence can be problematic in legal proceedings. In the case of *R V Phillips* (2020), witnesses had viewed an image of the defendant on social media prior to the formal

identification process which led to concerns regarding the reliability of the identification of the defendant (JMW solicitors, 2021).

I engaged with my force CCD to ensure that I was able to mitigate these risks as much as possible and to ensure that the use of the appeal was ethical and proportionate. After the CCD completed their review of the proposed social media appeal, it was authorised and published on Facebook and X. Within a couple of hours of the appeal going live, I received a message from a force control room call handler who told me that the offender had called in of their own accord having seen the appeal; and requested that the post be taken down in exchange for their details being provided and their co-operation in dealing with the offence.

The offender stated that they were embarrassed that their photograph had been used on social media and wanted to hand themselves in. I was pleased to have received such a quick response, and from the offender themselves. This further negated the risk of misidentification and allowed me to quickly and effectively deal with the offender. I issued a community resolution to the offender, which required them to pay back the value of the items taken and to refrain from returning to the store in future.

I instructed the force CCD to remove the post, as the appeal had achieved its desired outcome, and I did not want to cause any further embarrassment to the offender. Although on this occasion the unintended consequence of the offender feeling embarrassed that their face had been posted on social media in relation to a criminal incident, had resulted in their apprehension and the detection of the crime for the store; I was aware of the potential negative long-term impact of shame on the offender and any future chance of further criminality. Research on social media shaming and its impact on criminality is mixed. While some studies suggest that online naming and shaming may increase community awareness (Dunsby & Howes, 2018), other research indicates that shaming can potentially increase a subject's criminality (Tittle et al., 2003).

The use of social media in this incident was effective, however it both highlighted the benefits, and the risks associated with the use of social media in a policing context. I found that social media was an incredibly efficient and effective way of identifying the offender as I was able to reach a considerably large audience quickly and I was able to engage with the public in a way that promoted confidence and good relations with the public, resulting in the detection of a crime. However, there were many potential risks and unintended consequences that had to be managed and considered prior to its use. Misidentification and adherence to data protection legislation were challenges and risks that I had to be aware of throughout the investigation.

Although the use of social media was successful, there was another unintended consequence that two local newspapers had picked up and published the story online. This caused more distress and embarrassment for the offender who was not previously well known to police and was not a prolific offender. If I was to investigate a similar incident in the future, I would ensure that all possible methods of identification were explored and exhausted prior to utilising social media in this way.

In conclusion, police forces in England and Wales utilise a wide variety of social media platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, X, YouTube and Instagram in order to reach a wide variety of people from a large variety of diverse demographics. In my experience I have found that if used proportionately, ethically and with consideration for the risks involved with the use of social media, it can be an invaluable tool for public engagement, promotion of force initiatives and policies, and can be used effectively in the identification of offenders and the detection of crime. National and local guidance is readily available to officers to ensure that the use of social media is done ethically and proportionately.

My experience of using social media as a means of community engagement and promoting policy initiatives has been overwhelmingly positive. Utilisation of technology such as social media has become a necessity in the modern age of policing and failure to utilise this tool would be a missed opportunity to engage and inform the public and would leave forces disadvantaged. However, the use of social media is not without its own drawbacks and risks, such as misidentification, potential GDPR breaches and the unintended provocation and consequence of vigilantism. Therefore, it is imperative that users understand and consider the risks.

Word Count: 2170

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:

Leadership in policing is a multifaceted and complex skill which requires officers to adopt different styles and strategies in order to adapt to an ever-changing landscape of unique challenges and diverse individuals. Modern policing leadership requires officers to demonstrate an understanding of emotional intelligence and strong strategic competence in high pressure situations involving victims, offenders and even colleagues. Police leadership has traditionally been focused on autocratic and heroic approaches however there is growing evidence to suggest that alternative styles of leadership which are more humble and agile are more effective in the modern age (Smith, 2021). In this essay, I will critically evaluate and evidence my flexibility in leadership styles by reflecting on an incident using the Gibbs (1989) model of reflection. I will also critically analyse leadership strategies and consider leadership models commonly used in policing.

As a probationary officer in the early developmental stage of my policing career, I have quickly come to understand that leadership in policing is not limited to those of high rank and supervisory roles, but rather a skill and a competence that must be adopted and developed by all who work within policing, and can be evidenced within the role of a police officer on a daily basis through effective decision making, initiative and ethically sound judgement. The college of policing's guidance on leadership emphasises that all who work in policing have a leadership role to fulfil and they are expected to demonstrate this skill from the first day of their career (College of Policing, 2023).

This essay will critically evaluate my own leadership style and my ability to be flexible during an operational incident. I will evidence my ability to adapt my leadership style in dynamic and challenging circumstances. I will analyse my leadership style using theoretical leadership models such as the Transformational leadership model (Quiros, 2020), and the Situational Leadership Theory (Johansen, 1990) and describe how these models helped to inform my decision making. I will also explore evidence from relevant policing literature to support my reflection.

The incident that I am going to reflect upon was a high-risk domestic abuse incident that I attended in the second year of my probation. I was dispatched to an incident whereby a female had reported that she and her partner had been arguing and he had assaulted her by kicking her in the stomach and smashing a glass panel in her front door. The victim also stated that she was pregnant. Initial PNC and system checks showed that the couple were in a very volatile relationship, and they had been subject to many police calls in the past and the parties were both receiving extensive partner agency intervention.

I was not initially asked to attend the call as the call handler had already dispatched a double crewed unit, both of which had more frontline experience than myself. However, I was very concerned by the serious nature of the disclosures from the victim and I felt that further units would be necessary to effectively manage the risk. On my attendance at the address, I encountered what was instantly a volatile situation as I saw a female shouting at my colleagues in the street before frantically storming away from them. The victim was visibly in pain, emotional and clearly under the influence of drink or drugs. As I approached the victim's front door, she informed me that a large XL bully breed dog was also present in the flat. The victim also disclosed that she believed that she was miscarrying due to the assault. This information exponentially heightened the risk involved to all who were present at the scene.

Due to the seriousness of the victims' injuries, her clear vulnerability due to her medical condition and intoxication, and the unpredictable risk associated with the presence of a large dog in the property, I knew that immediate safeguarding measures were required. However, the victim was resistant to police and was not willing to receive medical treatment.

Although as a probationary constable, I was not the senior officer on scene, I found myself taking control of the scene and using my initiative to manage the situation and the subsequent actions, as taking ownership is one of the core competencies expected of modern police officers (College of Policing, 2023). The volatility and escalating nature of the incident made it necessary to adopt a situational leadership approach. Situational leadership is a leadership theory that advocates for individuals to adapt their leadership approach based on the preparedness of the team and the circumstances of the situation (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969). Effective leadership requires officers to have the ability to adapt to complex and evolving situations, a concept known as leadership ambidexterity (Herrington and Colvin, 2016).

After I confirmed that the offender had left the scene, I informed the covering area sergeant of the development in order for them to gather more units to assist with an area search to apprehend the offender. I decided to delegate tasks to each of my

colleagues at the scene based on their relevant strengths and competencies. I tasked one of the officers with managing the risk of the dog by ensuring that it was locked away and that the door was guarded, preventing its escape, whilst the other officer assisted me with engaging with the victim.

Despite being a probationary officer, I felt confident enough to use a directing style of leadership which involves providing clear instruction and decision-making control (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969). Although I was confident and comfortable using directed leadership, I was also open to having the support of my colleagues in the decision-making process due to my relative lack of experience, a behaviour which is closely associated with the coaching leadership style.

Transformational leadership theory focuses on encouraging and influencing others towards a shared goal (Burns, 2012). During this incident, the shared goal was to safeguard a vulnerable, pregnant victim of domestic abuse. The victim was understandably emotionally overwhelmed and in considerable pain. I took the time to build rapport and understanding with her in an effort to gain her trust and allow her to feel safe and able to accept that I had her best interests in mind. Through caring and empathetic communication, I was also able to support my colleagues in this endeavour and gain their assistance and trust in achieving the overarching goal by encouraging them and remaining positive in a very emotionally charged situation.

Although the safeguarding of the victim was a necessity, it also satisfied an overarching transformational goal of ensuring that our service was victim focused, supportive and empathetic. The transformational leadership style fosters co-operation and trust by focussing on inspiring and motivating other team members to achieve their best performance (Korejan and Shahbazi, 2016). By focusing the immediate goal on safeguarding the victim I was able to display transformational leadership traits despite being a probationary officer.

Shortly after my initial attendance and actions at the scene, paramedics arrived to assess the victim. Once assessed, the paramedic informed me that the victim would need to go to hospital as she had lost a significant amount of blood through the suspected miscarriage, and that her readings were of significant concern. However, the victim was refusing to go to hospital until the offender had been arrested. At this stage, the risk and the seriousness of the situation had evolved further which required me to be flexible and innovative in my handling of the incident. These traits are closely associated with an adaptive leadership style. Adaptive leadership is a leadership theory that directs individuals to effectively deal with challenges and navigate volatile, uncertain and complex situations (Georgiadou & Hoidn, 2023).

Whilst I initially deemed that the victim had the capacity to decide not to receive medical treatment, it was becoming clear to me that her vulnerable condition coupled with her emotional distress and the impact of being under the influence of substances was significantly affecting her ability to make a rationale and informed decision. This development required me to shift away from simply managing the risk in the situation towards finding a lawful and ethical way to override the victim's resistance to accepting hospital treatment for her own welfare.

I considered my powers and policies in line with the National Decision Model (College of Policing, 2024) and decided that based on the information I had, invoking powers under the Mental Capacity Act (2005) would be necessary to safeguard the victim. I asked one of my colleagues to remain with the victim whilst I called the paramedics and another officer into the corridor away from the victims to rationalise my decision to them. I made sure that my body worn video was activated during the brief as I was aware that the legislation I was planning to invoke can be challenging and controversial, and that an ethically and morally sound rationale is required to implement it lawfully. I ensured that I captured the paramedics diagnosis on my body worn video and informed them of my subsequent intention to invoke the legislation.

Despite the decision being difficult, I felt reassured that my decision was correct based on my initial training, legislative knowledge and a strong sense of moral justification. The decision I made stemmed from my desire to take initiative and control of the situation to meet the evolving demands and risks associated with the incident. This further demonstrated traits of adaptive leadership which values proactive problem solving during complex situations (Nelson and Squires, 2017; Seibel et al., 2023). The victim was eventually removed using minimal force and placed into the back of an ambulance and escorted to the hospital where her medical condition was treated.

Authentic leadership is defined as a relatively modern leadership theory which centres on leaders displaying ethical and honest behaviour (Dimovski et al., 2012; Covelli & Mason, 2017). Throughout this incident I displayed traits of authentic leadership by placing the victim and their wellbeing at the centre of my decision-making process. My decision to invoke the capacity act to remove the victim to hospital despite her resistance displayed moral courage and accountability which are key traits of authentic leadership (Terry, 1998).

Once the incident had concluded, I had an opportunity to reflect on my performance. I felt pride that I had managed to deal with a high-risk incident effectively and thoroughly despite being a probationary constable. However, I also felt a sense of uncertainty as despite being confident in my decision making, I was aware of the seriousness of assuming control of a person's welfare against their will. However, the outcome of the incident further justified and reinforced my decision making. In future I would be more confident utilising complex legislation and I would feel more confident in adopting a leadership role during serious incidents.

In conclusion, this incident enhanced my frontline policing confidence by providing me with an opportunity to lead during a high-risk domestic incident. The incident was a significant moment early in my career and helped to teach me that leadership is not about rank and authority but about initiative, responsibility and accountability. Through a combination of situational, transformative, adaptive and authentic leadership, I was able to successfully safeguard the victim; utilising empathy and brave decision making, whilst evidencing my ability to adopt different leadership styles to adapt to complex and evolving situations. As my probationary period draws to a close, I will continue to develop my leadership skills and continue to build on my use of multiple different leadership styles.

Word Count: 1909

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 initial three-year probationary period is one of the most foundational and formative stages of a police officer's career. My experience of this phase of my career has been marked by rapid and steep learning curves, personal and professional growth and a constant evolution in my operational experience and effectiveness.

One of the central themes of this period has been the role that coaching and mentoring has played in my development. In my initial probationary period, I have both benefitted from receiving coaching and mentoring as well as providing it to others. In this essay I will critically reflect on my three-year probation and how coaching and mentoring has contributed to both my personal and professional development using the Gibbs (1989) reflective model, and I will reflect on how mentoring and coaching has enabled me to learn, develop and perform in the workplace. I will refer to theories and frameworks that are relevant to policing as well as the concept of coaching and mentoring.

Coaching and mentoring are often referred to interchangeably, and whilst they are parallel concepts that complement one another, they are distinctly different (Klofsten & Öberg, 2008). Mentoring is defined as a long-term developmental relationship between two people, one with more experience than the other (Taylor & Stephenson, 2002) which involves the sharing of experience, knowledge and skills to promote growth and foster leadership potential in the mentee (Long, 2002). Mentoring can create momentum and often results in positive gains and strong emotional ties (Pawson, 2004). However, the benefits of mentoring can be limited

by availability, time constraints and difficulties in co-ordination (Landry & Lewiss, 2020).

Coaching is defined as a learning strategy which aims to promote personal and professional development through the setting of goals, overcoming mental barriers and enhancing one's competency through reflection and feedback (Alzina, 2014; Katsikis et al., 2016). However, the overall effectiveness of coaching can be negatively impacted by the coach, the coaching relationship, communication bandwidth and memory capacity (Riley & Veloso, 2003; Carter et al., 2017).

In the context of policing, the Police Superintendents Association (2025) define mentoring as a relationship where a more experienced or knowledgeable officer helps a less experienced person progress through support, advice and guidance; whilst coaching is a process which enables someone to develop their career, improve self-confidence and become a better leader.

Coaching and mentoring play crucial roles in the development and retention of police officers. Research in this field indicates that mentoring has a positive impact on the retention of women police officers in the UK by helping to address challenges such as work life balance and the exposure to traumatic events (Carson, 2009), whilst the implementation of coaching programmes in policing can lead to significant changes in culture, staff relationships and alignment with organisational aims (Evans, 2011).

Once my initial six months of classroom-based learning was complete, I was assigned a tutor constable who acted as a mentor for the following twelve weeks of practical learning. This phase of probation was a nerve-wracking time for a myriad of reasons. I was very eager to present myself confidently and prove myself as a competent officer as soon as possible, however, I was acutely aware that I was stepping out of my comfort zone, and dealing with a level of risk that I had never encountered previously.

On reflection, the tutorship process that I experienced aligned closely with Clutterbuck's (2014) model of developmental mentoring. This model suggests that mentoring relationships transition through five stages: rapport building, direction setting, progress making, winding down and moving on.

On my first day, I was introduced to the wider team by my tutor and I got to know them by engaging in conversation about our personal interests and life outside of work. This was the initial 'Rapport Building' phase. I was informed by my tutor which tasks and competencies would need to be fulfilled and evidenced in order to become an independent officer. As I progressed through my competency portfolio, I was provided feedback and learning in order to further support my progression. These phases of my tutorship were indicative of the 'Direction Setting' and 'Progress Making' stages of the model. Once I was able to consistently display that I was confident and competent in fulfilling my duties at calls, my tutor began to take a step back and allow me to take the lead during incidents and demonstrate my learning. This further built my confidence in line with the 'Winding Down' phase of the process. Once I had completed my competency portfolio and I was able to demonstrate that I was comfortable and confident in my abilities, my tutor was able to sign me off as

an independent officer which represented the 'Moving On' phase which is the final stage of the model.

Towards the middle of my tutorship period, I recall an incident whereby I was tasked with arresting a suspect for making threats to commit arson. After attending the home address of the suspect, I was met by near instant hostility. Whilst the suspect was not violent, she was angry that police had attended for what she believed to be a trivial comment made in the heat of the moment. After my initial dialogue with the suspect, I arrested her verbally however I failed to take control of her physically. This led to the suspect becoming irate and running back into her house whilst screaming and shouting. I was eventually able to take hold of the suspect, and she was placed in handcuffs and conveyed to custody.

After the incident I sat with my tutor as we critically dissected the body worn video footage of the incident. The reflective model used was in line with Kolb's (2014) Experimental Learning Theory (ELT). The ELT is a reflective model consisting of four stages: Concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualism and active experimentation, and has been a leading influence on reflective learning practices (Dennison, 2009).

The initial phase was complete when in attendance at the incident and the need for reflective learning was identified. My tutor sat with me, and we analysed the body worn video. We discussed what went well during the incident and what had not gone well which satisfied the 'Reflective Observation' phase of the model. During the 'Abstract Conceptualisation' phase, we discussed the mistake I made in not taking physical control of the suspect on arrest and reflected on the need to improve on this during future incidents. During my next arrest I was able to put the learning into practice, by ensuring that prior to saying the caution and affecting the arrest, I had control of the suspect, thus completing the 'Active Experimentation' phase and the model in whole.

The mentoring I received in my initial tutorship phase benefitted my personal and professional development greatly as it provided me with the knowledge and the confidence required to achieve independent patrol status and perform my duty effectively. However, whilst I gained a lot from the mentorship period, there were occasions where feedback felt overly critical and did not feel like it had been delivered constructively. Towards the end of the mentoring relationship, I started to identify ways of working that I would not carry on once the mentorship period would conclude, and I discovered my own preferences and way of working.

My experience with coaching within my probation period has mainly come from my first line manager and other more experienced officers whose competencies and strengths were the antithesis of my early operational weaknesses. During performance reviews and one-to-one meetings, my sergeant has applied the GROW framework which is a structured approach to coaching and professional development which consists of four key steps; Goals, Reality, Options, Way forward (Rahman, 2023; Leach, 2020; Whitmore et al., 2016).

This form of coaching has helped me to set firm achievable goals and development plans, enabling me to become a more effective asset to the organisation and further

improve my operational confidence. Coaching was particularly effective when I struggled to assemble case files during my early probationary period. I often found the process of building case files to be overwhelming, complicated and impenetrable which caused me significant work-related stress when I found myself in a position whereby, I was expected to complete a file for prosecution. My lack of confidence and experience in this area was frequently leading to me feeling anxious, stressed and overwhelmed.

Due to my anxiety regarding case files, I asked for an attachment to the file management unit to seek coaching from a more experienced officer. Using the GROW model (Whitmore, 2016) the officer helped me identify my goal which was to become confident and competent building case files independently. They then fulfilled the reality phase of the model by identifying specific elements of case file building that I was struggling with such as redacting occurrences and completing defence case statement responses. We then explored options to resolve the issue such as referring to past case files, attending additional case file building courses and assisting a more experienced officer in completing one of their files. The way forward phase of the model was fulfilled by making a plan to volunteer myself for jobs where a case file build would be likely.

After several sessions with the case file team, receiving structured support, I was able to dramatically improve my confidence and my competency completing case files. This approach to coaching enabled me to take ownership of my weaknesses and learning requirements and by the end of the coaching phase I was able to independently produce case files that passed supervisor and CPS scrutiny.

This form of coaching had such a positive impact on me that I have adopted this style when I am in a coaching relationship with newer officers. Now that I am considered to be a competent and relatively experienced front-line officer, I often find myself taking on a coaching role with newer officers. I now use the GROW model to assist newer officers when helping them with prisoner handovers and management of investigations. Instead of simply telling newer officers what they needed to do, I now encourage them to think critically by asking them questions such as "What do you think this interview plan is missing?". This style of coaching through asking questions allows the coached person to take control of their learning through reflection (Wing, 1992). Both giving feedback and receiving feedback are crucial in various professional settings and are skills that develop with practice (Jug et al., 2019; Hardavella et al., 2017).

Being able to receive feedback is a critical element of professional development. During my early months as a student police officer, I was unreceptive to negative feedback as I would tend to take it personally, especially when I had felt that I had put a lot of effort into a task. However, having been exposed to consistent and constructive feedback, I have been able to change my perspective and welcome feedback as a tool to enable me to improve professionally. Research in this area suggests that professional feedback has several benefits such as improved performance, self-awareness and goal pursuit (Ulichney et al., 2021).

In conclusion, coaching and mentoring has been essential for developing my professional and personal capabilities during my probationary period. Through

coaching and mentoring, I have been able to identify my operational weaknesses and areas for learning development. I have been able to build confidence and competence which has had a direct beneficial impact of the organisation by placing me in a position whereby I can pass on my learning experiences and coach newer officers. My appetite to improve my competence in areas that I considered to be weaknesses of mine has enabled me to begin a transition from being a learner towards being a leader. As my policing career progresses, I will aim to continue to build on this foundation by furthering my learning and development, coaching and mentoring others and contributing to an organisational culture of constructive and positive feedback.

Word count: 1998

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