

BSc (Hons) Professional Police Practice

LEVEL 6 - 40 Credits

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

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

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FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMME

Module title: Professional Police Practice 3 (PCDA) BMPP6000D

Workbook Guidance

Please read these notes carefully; they provide essential information.

What is the workbook for?

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

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

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

How should the workbook be presented?

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

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

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

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

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

How is the workbook assessed?

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

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

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

Once submitted your workbook will be assessed and marked independently.

Confidentiality

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

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

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

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

NOTE

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

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

Dyslexia and other special circumstances

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

Guidance:

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

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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:

This assignment critically evaluates the strategic role of the College of Police in professionalising policing in the U.K. In doing so key strategic documents including Policing Vision 2025, the Workforce Transformation 2018, Strategic Policing Requirement (2023) and the College of Policing's 5 Year Strategy will be considered. I will evidence how I am working to fulfil the role of a modern professional police officer in my final year of probation and critically reflect upon how my role as a police officer at this stage of training has changed.

Lumsden (2017) describes the concept of professionalisation as the process that is pursued to achieve the status of a profession. The definition of a profession is, however, contested and as such it appears that there is no universally agreed definition (Tapper and Millett, 2015). Nevertheless, it is suggested in the literature that there is a consensus in relation to a number of traits or characteristics that represent

some of the hallmarks of a profession (Evetts 2011). These are described by Holdaway (2017) as the presence a professional body and regulation; a code of ethics; evidence-based practice, a unique body of specialised knowledge, agreed standards of practice and accredited employment. Historically, despite the police service not initially having all those elements in place, Neyroud (2011) suggests there are those who would argue that the Police Service has been a profession in the UK since the formation of Robert Peel's Metropolitan Police Service in 1829 and draws attention to the description of police work as an "artisan craft", rather than a profession. Rowe et al. (2016) add that this detracts from the professionalisation agenda, they recognise that there are practical 'craft' aspects of the role that must be applied in the 'real world' of policing and as such cannot be found in degree programmes. It can be suggested, therefore that both are necessary.

The history of police training demonstrates a long and varied journey, with Parker-McLeod (2019) observing that significant changes have often occurred following high-profile incidents. He cites the examples of the Brixton Riots in 1981 and the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, stating that such events created a reduction in public confidence in the police that led to demands for more reform. Neyroud (2011) was commissioned by the Home Secretary in 2010 to undertake a comprehensive review of the police service. His review identified that despite the inevitable changes that had occurred in the previous sixty years, the fundamental model and approach to policing had undergone very little change and as such could no longer meet the demands of the twenty-first century. He recommended radical transformation for a new approach to the professionalisation of policing resulting in the creation of a new professional body. As a result of the Review, the College of Policing was established in 2012 as the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Notably, in relation to the professionalisation agenda, the policing education qualifications framework (PEQF) was subsequently developed (College of Policing 2020). Its purpose was to raise the level of education and training for new police officers to level six, equivalent to an undergraduate degree. Multiple entry routes were made available (College of Policing 2024), which currently includes the following: for those applicants that do not already have a degree there is the Police Constable

Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA). This is a three-year programme that when successfully completed results in a BSc (Hons) Professional Police Practice. The requirement for those applicants who already have a degree (Degree holder entry programme – DHEP) is a two-year programme that leads to a graduate diploma in professional policing practice. From April 2024 police forces have been able to offer the Police constable entry programme (PCEP), this is delivered ‘in house’ and does not result in an individual qualification. There is a two-year probation period and following completion of the designated police curriculum competencies, police officers will be deemed to have completed their initial training. Many universities currently offer a degree in professional policing (PPD), however, although the programme is based on the national police curriculum, it is knowledge based only, with no operational experience offered. Successful completion of the programme does not automatically result in admission to the police service and candidates will still need to successfully complete the same assessment centre, fitness testing and security vetting as other applicants. It can be seen, therefore, that the College of Policing has introduced considerable strategic change to the requirements for entry and successful completion of the police curriculum.

In attempting to critically evaluate the strategic role of the College of Policing in professionalising policing in the U.K, it is important to consider if it has achieved the original vision outlined in its Five-Year Plan (2014). Certainly, it can be seen that it has established many of the elements associated with professionalisation. As previously described, there are now well-developed multiple entry routes and a national curriculum available at undergraduate degree level. It has developed a code of ethics (College of Policing 2024) and the statutory Code of Practice for Ethical Policing (College of Policing 2023) . There is a growing body of relevant research by which to measure best practice and evidenced based policing (College of Policing 2025). It is recognised, however, that research is only effective when put into practice and the College of Policing acknowledges that it can be challenging to get the latest research out to the frontline in a way that encourages its everyday use. The same can be said of the work the College of Policing has achieved in relation to leadership development. The educational offer is available based on the latest information on leadership theory and evidence-based practice, but Tompkins (2020) highlights the importance of

recognising the ‘theory – practice gap’, that is, what is taught in theory may not always translate into practice. Fleming and Rhodes (2018) draw attention to appreciating that effective police work is also a ‘craft’ and that however robust the evidence for a particular action might be, there is always an element of discernment required, rather than a ‘one size fits all approach’. Effective police work requires sound judgement and often the ability to balance competing and unpredictable elements in an unfamiliar or untested scenario (Halford, 2024). Arguably, the critical thinking skills developed as part of degree level study are helpful in this respect, although research by Andrews (2024) found that Two-thirds of the 520 participants in the research stated that they don’t believe police officers need a degree, however, in the same study the majority of participants also said they would feel more confident in a police officer investigating a crime if they did hold a policing related degree. This contradiction in the views expressed could be seen to present a dilemma for the police service as to whether the public wish police officers to have degree level education or not.

The College of Policing have also established the concept of ‘Authorised Professional Practice’ (APP) by setting clear and comprehensive standards (College of Policing 2024). Despite these achievements which are in keeping with the professionalisation of the police, by its own admission a fundamental review of the College of Policing (2022) states that whilst good work has been achieved it has failed as yet to meet its full potential as outlined in its original five-year strategy (College of Policing 2014). The College of Policing’s response to the Review sees renewed commitment to boosting professionalism, with new assurances that, among others, all police staff will have access to the best continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities and leadership development.

“Our renewed mission is to drive consistency where both the public and the service expect it, to boost professionalism across the service through standards and sharing knowledge, and to improve leadership at each level.”

College of Policing (2022, p.6)

This aspiration is further supported by Vision 2025 (National Chiefs' Police Council and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners 2016), that also emphasises the importance of transformative change to keep pace with the ever-developing complexities of effective policing. This strategic document recognises the necessity of collaborative working with key partners such as the College of Policing to achieve its aim. It is clear that the work of the College of Policing has done much to contribute to the journey of the professionalisation of the police service.

The changing context in which the police work and the ongoing challenges such as the pressure on resources and recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce may mean, however, this is a journey which as yet has no clear endpoint. Changes in society happen at pace and the ability of the College of Policing to keep up with what is required is challenging to the point that they may always be playing 'catch up'.

In reviewing objective evidence that I am working to fulfil the role of a modern professional police officer in the final year of probation, this evidence has been demonstrated by the successful completion of the competencies required in the nine designated areas in the Professional Education Qualification Framework as outlined in table 1 below:

Portfolio Content
2. Management of Information
3. Providing an initial response to police incidents
4. Managing conflict
5. Provide support to victims/witnesses/vulnerable persons
6. Using police powers
7. Conduct police searches (Vehicles, premises & outside spaces)
8. Conduct police searches (Prior & Post arrest)
9. Conduct a priority volume investigation
10. Interview a victim, witness & suspect

Table 1 – PEQF: PCDA Year 3 Evidence Matrix

The evidence that has been submitted against the competencies are reviewed by an experienced police officer working in the field of Learning and Development, who asks questions if required, to further check the level of theoretical understanding underpinning the practical actions, decisions or tasks that have been undertaken to fulfil the competence. In addition to the objective evidence provided by the successful 'sign off' of the competencies required, I have been able to reflect on my own experience to answer the third question in the assignment as to how my role has changed in the final year of probation. Personal insight has been gained from feedback sought from more experienced colleagues, together with personal reflection using a range of structured models such as Borton and Gibbs as described by Copley (2011). Borton (1970) uses three key questions: "What?", "So what" and "What Now?".

In answering the first question: "What?", the most obvious change has been being deemed competent to undertake independent patrol rather than having to have another officer accompany me.

This takes me to the second question of "so what?". This change has proved both challenging and rewarding. It has given me more opportunity for decision making and autonomous practice, which in turn has increased my confidence and experience. A key change has been the steady realisation of how much of a police officer's time is spent, not as I had originally thought – dealing with crime, but being called to deal with a high proportion of vulnerable people, who appear to have fallen through the gaps of other support mechanisms such as health and social care services. I have found the College of Policing Guidelines (2021) on 'Recognising and responding to vulnerability-related risks' very helpful, together with the police code of ethics and wider study on the importance of morality and ethics (Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues 2021). It has not been difficult to see examples of colleagues who although acting within the law, appear to be suffering from 'compassion fatigue', making it difficult for them to express empathy. This is a phenomenon described by Davies et al. (2022) which may reflect issues with the individual police officer's own wellbeing as a result of work-related stress factors. In my last year of probation where there has been a significant increase in responsibility, it has reinforced the importance of proactively managing my own wellbeing and being aware of the support available such as the Oscar Kilo Police

Wellbeing Service should I need it. Another change now that I am managing my own workload is that I am better able to recognise the importance of effective time management and prioritisation, although still a novice in this respect, it is something I expect to improve on as I get more experience. As a mature student, I appreciate the life experience that I bring to my role and the confidence that I have to ask for help if I need it. I don't see this very often from others as there doesn't appear to be a culture of asking for help, which is something that I would like to see change.

This naturally takes me to the third reflective question: "What now?". If I believe that developing a culture of learning is an essential element of the police service continuing its journey of professionalisation, then I must be prepared to be an effective role model in this regard. I believe I can contribute to this by continuing to 'normalise' asking for feedback and when required, advice and help. Filstad (2024) illustrates the significance of role models and the impact they can have. I intend to continue to meet with my Mentor for ongoing guidance and to seek out positive role models whose qualities and skills I would like to emulate. Overall, it is right that my last year of probation has seen an increase in responsibility and greater autonomy in my decision making. I have enjoyed this career development and look forward to the next stage of my career.

2186 words.

**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:

This assignment will critically evaluate my experience of the use of social media as a means of informing and engaging with the community and promoting policy initiatives. In doing so, the force policy on using social media for professional and information purposes will be explored, together with the media platforms used and the benefits and risks of using social media. A model of reflection described by Borton (1970) will be used to reflect on a police incident that I played a significant part in that utilised social media.

In less than a generation it can be argued that the internet and use of social media platforms has transformed the way that we communicate. With that transformation has undoubtedly come a series of both benefits and threats. From a police perspective, Cullen (2022) suggests that the police service was initially slow to utilise social media, with uptake starting by the majority of police forces around 2008, moving to most police forces having at least some accounts on the more established social media platforms by 2011. Research by Crump (2011) identifies that the reluctance of police forces to

initially engage with social media was partly due to concerns that the reputation of the police would be damaged by its misuse.

Certainly, Goldsmith (2013) identifies there has been evidence to support this, with a number of high-profile police misconduct cases being publicised in the national media (BBC News 2014 and 2021). Evidence from the IOPC (2022) has highlighted numerous misconduct cases that have been brought before them such as police officers using social media to make discriminating comments, sharing inappropriate photographs of crime and contacting victims of crime via social media for sexual activity. Nevertheless, the use of social media is now considered to be an essential part of an overall police communication strategy (Kershaw 2023) with each force having its own social media policy document and frequent use made of a range of popular social media platforms. For the purpose of this assignment the social media policy for Gwent Police will be considered, with particular reference to public engagement and the dissemination of professional information. It is noted that the policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies such as GDPR Guidance and Information Security policies. The Social Media policy also sits within the legal framework of a raft of legislation such as the Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018 and the Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020. The policy identifies its three main uses as:

- to achieve a tactical or operational objective.
- to change or influence the behaviour of our communities for the better.
- to build capacity and trust with communities.

Gwent Police Social Media Policy (2022)

In keeping with the majority of police forces in England and Wales, the social media policy for Gwent police covers use by Neighbourhood Policing Teams in order that they provide timely, engaging and relevant content for the specific community in that area. Many specialist teams such as the Dog Section also have their own account in order that they can raise awareness and understanding of their role as well as share specific advice where relevant. The Corporate Communications Department is able to

provide the public with force wide content, together with access by senior police leaders who may need to share leadership information and support.

The instruction for all police employees is that they must apply the same high standards of professional communication online, as they would if it were offline such as in face-to-face communication. Strong emphasis is placed in the policy on ensuring the police code of ethics and Standards of Professional Behaviour are followed (College of Policing 2024). In addition, all police staff are reminded that anything published in either a personal social media account or a professional police account must not compromise any operational processes relating to investigations or other criminal justice processes. It is imperative that all communication complies with legal data protection requirements and the Human Rights Act 1998. Nothing potentially libellous or defamatory can be published and police staff are warned of the dangers to both their personal reputation and that of the police if they 'share' or 'like' inappropriate behaviour from other individuals or groups, which could amount to a breach of professional standards.

The use of social media by the police is now well established and widespread with use of such platforms as, for example: Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram. The National Policing Digital Strategy 2020-2030 recognises the growing pressures on the police service and the essential need to keep pace with current and future technological advances: "Policing does not operate in a vacuum and cannot stand still in the increasingly digital world we work and live in." (Police Digital Service 2020). This was further supported by 'Vision 2025' (NPCC 2016), which has now been superseded by 'Vision 2030' (Strategic Policing Partnership Board (2025)). The new vision builds on the original and continues to recognise the importance of meaningful public engagement as an integral and essential element of effective policing for the diverse communities served. Despite potential drawbacks, there is no doubt that the use of social media can be a powerful tool for public engagement. In support of this, one of the strategy's aspirations is to develop leaders who are more digitally competent. This has long since been reflected in the approach taken by the College of Policing (2020) who provide a broad range of information and guidelines to support the effective use of social media. In particular the Code of Ethics, makes explicit reference to social

media being used responsibly and safely. Notably, that nothing should be published that could undermine public confidence in the police and damage the reputation of the police service (College of Policing 2024). This approach is supported by research from Turner et al. (2024) who used scenarios to identify the awareness of aspiring police officers undertaking a professional policing degree (PPD) of what might constitute a breach of social media policy. The results of the research indicated that whilst the participants were able in most cases to identify when misconduct had occurred, they were less likely to agree on the level of its severity and what the penalty for a range of breaches should be. The research emphasised the importance of the police curriculum continuing to stress the police code of ethics and professional standards, together with advice and guidance on the appropriate and effective use of social media both personally and professionally.

The benefits and risks of the police service using social media are well documented (Police Foundation 2014). Firstly, considering the benefits in relation to community engagement, despite the obvious advantages of being able to engage with large numbers of people at once, Bullock et al. (2020) suggests the positive aspects of police community engagement using social media are yet to be fully realised due to organisational, individual and technological factors. A large following on social media platforms can facilitate interaction with the community on a large scale in comparison to what might be achievable through other interventions such as face-to-face community meetings. The quality of an online interaction, however, is debatable with Ralph and Robinson (2023) suggesting that rather than helping to create greater mutual understanding and respect between the police and the community, it may only serve to create a larger gap. Their research identifies that police forces often struggle with the amount of information created by social media accounts, and that information sharing tends to be 'one way' with the police not having the capacity to engage in any meaningful dialogue with the community via social media. Nevertheless Fielding (2021) although recognising the obvious benefits of social media of being able to disseminate information in a timely fashion to large numbers, also raises the issue of trade-offs between trustworthiness and reach, interest and usefulness when comparing social media with conventional communication models. Certainly, there is a risk that those who may be digitally excluded due to, for example, reasons of

affordability; accessibility or disability are further isolated and may be left behind (Communications and Digital Committee 2023).

Social media platforms can also be used for Intelligence gathering such as inviting the public to identify photographs or CCTV footage of individuals committing crimes or assisting the police with sightings of missing persons. Although research by Howlings and Solymos (2023) draws attention to the damage that social media appeals can have for missing children, potentially making them more vulnerable and by the information published compromising their human right to a private life in the future, due to details that are published as part of the appeal.

Notable risks in the use of social media have been identified by Gater & Critchley (2018) across five areas, including; potential breaches of trust or confidence through the unauthorised disclosing of information, breaches of the Data Protection legislation through the unauthorised disclosure of personal data, communication content that brings discredit on the police service or its partners, the revealing of personal information resulting in increased vulnerability to harassment, corruption or blackmail and the revealing of operational material or tactics that could compromise police activity. It is also worth taking account of the risk to the wellbeing of police officers who will be subject to seeing the negative comments made by some members of the public on social media regarding both individual police officers and the police service as a whole. Research by Watson (2022) identified that women police officers in particular were singled out for online abuse that questions their ability or makes derogatory and misogynistic comments about their appearance.

Reflecting on an example of my own experience of a policing incident where I played a significant part, that involved the use of social media. Borton's (1970) model of reflection will be used to answer the three questions used in this model; 'what?', 'so what?', and 'what now?' Firstly, in answer to the question 'what?', I attended a road traffic collision (RTC) that resulted in several injured persons and would require the attendance of emergency vehicles. The second reflective questions ask, 'so what?' In this case, the impact of the RTC was that the road was blocked by the cars involved in the collision and would need to be closed to prevent congestion building up and

access for the emergency vehicles. It was clear that social media would be helpful in informing the wider public that the road was closed and that alternative routes were available. The Control Room were informed, and the relevant details given. Very quickly they were able to compose a clear and concise message utilising their Facebook social media account to advise the public of the situation and to provide regular updates. Reviewing the post retrospectively, although impossible to identify the actual number of people who had seen the post, it was evident that it had generated considerable interest as indicated by the number of comments and 'likes'. This assignment has prompted me to reflect further on the potential 'reach' of social media and whilst there can never be exact precision, as some people may 'see' the post but not interact with it, it is possible to count the number of people who do interact with a social media post. The Gwent police Facebook page currently has 181,000 followers out of a population in Gwent of 591,396 people (Stats Wales 2023), so arguably there is some way to go before coverage is deemed significant. Use of social media generally is, however, increasing with research from Public Health Wales and Bangor University (2020) on the use of social media in Wales finding that 76.9% of the Welsh population aged 16+ used one or more social media platforms and 99.6% of 16–29-year-olds with access to the internet were on social media. Although their research found that engagement with social media does decline in the older generation, the research still found that 75% of 60-69 year olds used social media and 59% of 70 + year olds also used one or more social media platforms. Based on the literature it seems reasonable to suggest that the numbers of people using social media is likely to continue increasing and as such has the potential to continue being a powerful engagement and communication tool for the police to use. This is further supported by research from Ofcom (2019) who state that young adults spend much more time online than they do watching television.

The final reflective questions ask, 'What now?' Whilst the evidence previously cited indicates there are both risks and benefits to the use of social media by the police, It can be suggested that the greater experience the police have gained has led to the development of policies and practices that will help mitigate against the risks of its use. This will continue to increase the opportunity to maximise its potential for positive outcomes. On both a personal and professional level it is essential that I remain

mindful of the risks and benefits of social media, exercising caution with its use and always within police policy.

2174 words.

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:

This assignment will critically evaluate and evidence flexibility of my leadership style and how I am able to apply a change in leadership style to reflect changing circumstance. I will do this by reflecting on operational examples using Borton's (1970) model of reflection. I will also consider the importance of leadership within the police service and critically analyse a range of leadership models used in policing.

Good leadership is imperative to the effective delivery of policing. This is acknowledged by the College of Policing (2022) who have established the National Centre for Police Leadership and following wide consultation have published a raft of leadership standards commensurate with each rank within the police service (College of Policing 2023). The Standards are underpinned by the National Talent Development Strategy (College of Policing 2024) that aims to ensure a consistent approach to the development of talent that is inclusive of all. Failures in leadership have been cited for the examples of toxic culture identified by Operation Hotton (2022) and the findings of the Baroness Casey review into the Metropolitan Police Service (2023). The work of

Owen-Evans and Low (2024) in examining the issues that have undermined trust and confidence in the police concurs with this. They note that trust and confidence in the police has been declining over recent years. This is of significant concern given the prevailing model of UK policing remains 'policing by consent' (Home Office 2012), in which the powers of the police to undertake their duties is deemed to be by the common consent of the public it serves.

Whilst the responsibilities of a constable are made clear throughout the initial training and probation period, it is also made explicit via the availability of the role profile of a police constable (College of Policing 2025). There is specific reference in the profile, to role modelling leadership skills. It is clear therefore that even in the earliest stage of a police officers' career, leadership skills are an integral part of their role. This expectation of leadership skills is further reinforced at a strategic level by the College of Policing (2023) in the overarching approach outlined in their publication 'A commitment to change: The future of police leadership' that states:

"Everyone in policing is a leader. Officers and staff must show leadership from the first day of their career to the last, in situations far beyond those faced by most other professions."

College of Policing (2023)

In considering a range of leadership models, a review of the literature shows an abundance of leadership models (Benmira and Agboola 2021). It has, however, been recognised that there is no one ideal leadership model or style that suits all contexts and situations in policing (HMIC 2016). It can be suggested, therefore that the complexity of policing is such that it requires in its leader's flexibility of approach and an ability to adapt their leadership strategy and skills to the demands of any particular situation or challenge presented.

In critically evaluating and evidencing my own flexibility in leadership style, including the leadership strategies I have developed to manage a range of different operational situations, I will use Borton's Model (1970) to reflect on my personal experience.

Prior to joining the police my view of leadership styles deemed to be authoritarian and autocratic was wholly negative. I realise now, that this was because I had experienced this leadership style when it was being used inappropriately with subsequent negative impacts in terms of staff morale and decision making. Pizzolitto et al. (2023) found evidence that an authoritarian style had a negative effect on follower's self-worth, proactivity and innovation. My experience in the police has changed my view of this, as I have now been in situations where an authoritarian directive style has been both useful and the most appropriate in a particular circumstance, where an immediate response and action is required. My experience of being first on the scene is a simple example of this. Despite my lack of experience within the police service, arriving first on the scene requires me to 'take charge'. I recognise that it is the nature of the particular circumstance itself that dictates the style of how I might do this most effectively. Using stage one of Borton's (1970) reflective model and answering the question "What" I will describe an example of what happened in my recent operational experience when a member of the public had rung in via a 999 call to report that a building that contained a number of flats was on fire. I was deployed, among others, (including the fire service) to attend the incident. As I was closest, I arrived first at the scene and from details quickly obtained from bystanders I was able to build on the initial risk assessment I had made from the information given by the call handler, while I was on my way there. I ascertained that it was possible that not everyone had evacuated the building. As three colleagues had now arrived, I was able to quickly brief them and having risk assessed the situation further I made the decision, as is permissible under section 17 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) to enter the building to undertake a search in the interests of preserving life and limb. It is a building of multiple occupancy that I had visited before, and I was familiar with the lay out. I was able to use this knowledge to enter the building as the first officer and direct my colleagues so that the search could be completed in a methodical and efficient way. Together, we were able to confirm that the building had been evacuated. I was able to close the road as the Fire Service had arrived, and they were now the designated 'lead' for the incident. At this point my leadership style was still authoritative, in as much as I needed to ensure that members of the public remained clear of the immediate area to assure their safety, which required giving direct instruction in an assertive and authoritative tone. Once this was achieved my leadership approach changed in two ways. Firstly, a police sergeant had now arrived

at the scene and in keeping with the hierarchy of a rank-based organisation, it was appropriate for me to step back in order for them to take the lead. Secondly, what was now required from me was a very different style to ascertain more information from witnesses and to demonstrate compassion for those requiring reassurance and information.

The second stage of Borton's model (1970) asks "So What" and prompts me to reflect on why my leadership style needed to change and what did I hope to achieve by the two different approaches that I took. My understanding of compassionate leadership in this context was to take account of people's feelings, recognising that they may be fearful, upset and distressed and that my appropriate response was now to provide reassurance, empathy and signposting to sources of help and support. There is criticism of the model of compassionate leadership as being 'soft' and not taking account of difficult decisions that may need to be made. Ramachandran et al (2023) challenge this view, stating that compassionate leadership can take 'tough action' when required, but equally retains a focus on caring for people's feelings and their wellbeing in any conversations or actions that may need to be taken. I recognise that just within this one situation of dealing with a burning building, the aspiration of Gwent Police (2025) which is to "protect and reassure" required two very different leadership approaches. In the first instance a direct authoritarian approach in order to 'protect' by evacuating a building and clearing the area for the public's safety, then secondly a compassionate leadership response to 'reassure' the public involved. I believe this is evidence that demonstrates my flexibility in leadership approaches. From an objective standpoint, this was also recognised through the award of a 'Superintendent commendation' that I received for my actions. When critically analysing what the compassionate leadership model may have to offer the police service, it could be argued that it may have particular relevance in the current policing context. Notably, objective evidence from police wellbeing surveys shows low morale and negative impacts of the job on individual police officers wellbeing (Oscar Kilo 2023). Indeed, Papazoglou et al (2019) highlight the prevalence of compassion fatigue among police officers and recognises that due to the nature of their work that they may be particularly vulnerable to this. HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (2016) describe that the police are often seen as the "service of last resort" especially

in relation to people suffering from mental health issues. Compassionate leadership as a strategy within the police service may go some way to mitigate against what appears to be the inevitability of compassion fatigue for some officers and arguably could be employed more. My own experience of the police as the “service of last resort” also raises the issue of the importance of utilising a collaborative leadership strategy. Collaborative leadership is described by Ibarra and Hansen (2011) as:

“The ability to engage with people and groups outside of one’s formal control and inspire them to work towards common goals – despite differences in convictions, cultural values and operating norms.”

Zaghloul and Partridge (2022) describe the potential that collaborative leadership has to deliver improved outcomes, reduce spending, reduce bureaucracy and maximise resources. However, they also identify the barriers to effective collaboration such as different cultural practices and professional identities of those involved. The Kings Fund (2023) identify the critical leadership behaviours required for successful collaborative working as; working together to jointly develop shared decision-making processes; actively managing conflict and power dynamics; shared purpose and shared group identity; adopting a more relational way of working together, to create healthy relationships and creating an environment that is inclusive and trusting.

At a strategic level I recognise that a collaborative leadership approach is essential when it comes to planning multi agency responses, such as when working, for example, with Social Care, Health, Housing, Voluntary Sector and Education. Some may describe this as a ‘public health’ approach to policing (Christmas and Srivastava 2019). At this point in my career, however, with my limited experience I can reflect on this from an operational perspective, utilising a second example to illustrate my flexibility of leadership approaches. I was tasked to visit a woman who wished to make a domestic abuse complaint. In this case my communication skills were part of a compassionate leadership approach to ensure that through my demonstrating effective listening skills and empathy, the victim felt reassured and comfortable to share all the necessary information. A collaborative leadership approach was also required in order to ensure she had an effective safety plan in place. This was achieved

through advice from myself from a policing perspective, but also my liaison with Social Services and the Housing provider. I received unsolicited positive feedback from the victim thanking me for my help, which I believe is evidence of my flexibility of approach. From an objective standpoint the leadership approaches integral to the competencies required for completion of my year 3 PDCA matrix have all been signed off. On further reflection it is my view that I have successfully achieved this in large part, due to the coaching style of leadership that I have benefitted from colleagues throughout my career to date.

Finally, moving to stage three of Borton's model (1970) and answering the question "what now", based on the research and reflection for this assignment I have identified three objectives to support my personal and professional development. Firstly, a coaching style of leadership is a style that I will seek to emulate as I continue to develop a wider breadth of leadership skills to draw on as my career progresses. In order to support this, I will undertake the "Work Based Learning with Coaching and Mentoring" module (Open University 2023) and am putting into practice my coaching skills with less experienced colleagues. Secondly, the insight gained from this assignment into the concept of compassionate leadership has encouraged me to discuss this with my mentor to further explore how 'compassion fatigue' can be avoided if I am to achieve my aspiration of being a good police officer and leader. The third objective in my action plan is to ensure I am taking sufficient care of my own wellbeing. The evidence base for poor wellbeing within the police service is compelling (Oscar Kilo National Police Wellbeing Service 2023). I have updated my wellbeing action plan that was completed for a previous assignment to include an increase in my physical activity and a new focus on healthy eating, particularly while on shift. Being a good role model is an integral part of being a good leader (Filstad 2024).

Overall, I recognise that my leadership skills are in an early stage of development. I take encouragement that even though I currently lack operational experience, I am mindful that Kolb (2014) describes learning as a cyclical process and as such, my learning is grounded in experience, which will continue to grow in time.

2189 words

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:

This assignment critically reflects on my probationary period as a student police officer to date. It will firstly explore relevant coaching and mentoring definitions along with current coaching and mentoring theories used in policing. Gibbs (1988) model of reflection will be used to explore how I have benefited from mentoring and coaching and how these have helped in meeting personal, professional and organisational goals, together with my learning, development and performance in the workplace. The importance of feedback will be discussed in the context of my own experience of both giving and receiving feedback.

Coaching and mentoring are integral elements in the development of police officers. This is supported by the College of Policing (2022) who recognise the value of these, particularly in the supervision of new and inexperienced officers. Despite the terms coaching and mentoring often being used interchangeably, Taylor (cited in Pepper & McGrath 2020) suggests that there are specific differences between the two and the part that each play in the development of others. Rogers et al (2014) suggest that some of the main differences between coaching and mentoring include that mentoring relies more on advice giving and the benefit of the Mentors experience and

connections in the workplace to support future career progression. In contrast, coaching is much less about advice giving and is focused on the more immediate and future need for specific skill development. Both coaching and mentorship relationships take place on a one-to-one basis, with Quinones (2023) suggesting that there are some similar skills required by the Coach and Mentor, such as effective listening and questioning skills. Considering the definition firstly of mentorship; Clutterbuck (2015) states that it is impossible to find a universally agreed definition of mentorship but concedes that a mentor is generally understood to be someone who is more experienced than the mentee and is seen as a wise and trusted advisor. Research by Garvey (2014) highlights that there are benefits to mentoring not only for the mentee but also for the mentor, and the organisation. From the perspective of the mentee, these may include improved productivity, performance, confidence, wellbeing and greater career opportunities. For the mentor, evidence suggests that they may improve their knowledge, skills and self-awareness, together with engendering greater loyalty and development of their leadership skills (Gill et al 2018). Overall, the organisation potentially benefits through evidence of improved morale and motivation which has a positive impact on relationships and improvement in staff retention. Coaching is defined by Cox (2013) as a “dialogic, reflective learning process”. Research by Passmore & Tee (2020) supports this and identifies that most definitions of coaching acknowledge its facilitative nature. They suggest that coaching is often used as more ‘on the job-related support’ that focusses on improving specific skills to improve performance. Research by Leck & Orser (2013) and Schiemann (2019) identified that the success of both coaching and mentorship relationships requires a level of trust and commitment between both parties.

From a police perspective the practical application of coaching and mentorship theories are seen as an integral part of effective supervision. It is cited as one of the responsibilities of a Chief Constable to ensure that all supervisors have access to learning and development services such as mentoring, coaching and other one-to-one support interventions (College of Policing 2022).

In critically reflecting on my own experience of mentorship and coaching, particular reference will be made to how it has aided my learning, development and performance

in the workplace. A model of reflection developed by Gibbs (1988) will be used as this is described by Copley (2010) as a useful model for the police service. The rationale for choosing this model over others is that the seven-stage reflective process requires a level of detail that will assist in the critical reflection required.

Utilising stage 1 of Gibb's model firstly enables an overall description of personal experience in relation to coaching and mentoring. In the very early stages of training there was little or no evidence of coaching or mentoring. The emphasis was on learning the law and understandably was very classroom orientated. There was a heavy reliance on the use of PowerPoint slides and written material available online to support the classroom learning. There were some sessions to support the practical application of the theory that was taught, however, at this stage of training understandably these sessions used role play and scenario training rather than being in 'real life' situations. This changed following my 'passing out' and allocation to a busy station covering a diverse community. A Tutor Constable was assigned, and a matrix of competencies were given for completion. The Tutor Constable used a coaching approach. Once the competencies had been successfully achieved, I was able to work independently and to progress to working on completion of a second matrix of competencies. These would demonstrate how my knowledge, skills and experience were developing to achieve the level of competence required at this further stage of training. At this point the I was now no longer required to work with a Tutor; however, it was fortuitous that I was approached by a Senior Officer from another area who asked to provide mentorship, which I was very happy to accept and appreciative of.

Moving to stage 2 of Gibbs model enables a reflection on the feelings I have experienced throughout training to date. Without doubt the overall feeling at the beginning of the course was fear of failing academically. As a much older student officer, it had been a long time since I had undertaken any formal study. My feelings changed with each assignment and test that were successfully passed, and fortunately my confidence grew. There was always a feeling of relief when undertaking practical assessments and even more so when finally working operationally which gave me the opportunity to put the theoretical learning into practice, as this felt more suited to my natural active learning style (Honey & Mumford 1986). It felt reassuring to firstly be

working alongside an experienced officer, particularly as their style was a coaching approach, which meant I was always given the opportunity to reflect and comment on personal performance and the rationale for my actions and any decisions taken. I felt confident about identifying where I could have done better or if a mistake had been made, as well as reflecting on any strengths, knowledge or skills demonstrated. By the time I was deemed competent to work independently I felt ready to do so. Once no longer working with the Tutor, and having been given the opportunity for mentorship from a senior officer meant that I felt valued and that my ongoing learning and development was being invested in.

Stage 3 of Gibbs model requires the evaluation of the experience as a whole in order to form a general impression from the perspectives of what was positive and negative. On reflection, when considering the amount of time initially spent feeling anxious about studying and retaining the information required to pass the tests and assignments, this was a negative aspect of my training. However, it also enabled a demonstration of other positive strengths in order to address the situation. These included being very disciplined in the amount of studying undertaken and the methods developed in order to do this successfully. Such as taking the lead on the formation of a 'study group' with other colleagues. It was challenging and enjoyable to have the opportunity to put the theory into practice and to have developed a positive and constructive relationship with the Tutor. The coaching style of the Tutor suited my learning needs and meant confidence developed in receiving feedback and confidence to ask questions to enhance continual learning and development. Overall, this was a sound foundation for continuing professional development.

Moving to Stage 4 of Gibbs Model requires analysis of the experience. Reflecting on experience retrospectively I was aware that some of the theory that had been taught did not always match up to what was seen in practice from others. Although this never amounted to witnessing unlawful practice it did at times present a dilemma and demonstrated a gap between 'adequate' and 'best practice'. An example of this is the time spent reassuring victims of domestic abuse and providing the information they may need about other agencies that can offer help and support. I deemed that this was a good investment of time and represented good practice. This was not always

appreciated by other colleagues. I do recognise, however, that when other officers expressed their view that the time could be better spent dealing with other calls, that they have much more experience to draw on in order to come to that conclusion. It's a judgement call that the I am sure I will feel more confident about as more experience is gained. It was certainly helpful to learn from working with more experienced officers and being able to aspire to emulate best practice when it was seen from positive role models, rather than immediately following examples of when standards fell below that.

Stage 5 of Gibbs model requires the formation of a general conclusion in relation to overall learning and development, and stage 6 requires coming to some specific conclusions which will help shape on-going development. Reflecting on how coaching and mentorship has helped me to achieve personal, professional and organisational goals, they have enabled me the opportunity to do so in all three areas. From a personal perspective it has enabled me to overcome the challenges of a lack of self-belief and confidence leading me to conclude that the decision to change career relatively late in life has been the right one. Professionally, the support received, particularly in relation to coaching while 'on the job' has been invaluable in enabling the achievement of the professional goal of 'passing out' and being deemed competent and confident to work independently. Finally, from an organisational perspective my performance in the workplace to date has achieved the organisational goals expected of working independently as a police officer whilst upholding the values of Gwent Police and making a positive contribution to the Organisations objectives overall. My ongoing relationship with my Mentor continues to provide further opportunities for self-reflection and to receive advice and wise counsel from someone in a senior role. In the context of continuing learning and development, this reflection has prompted me to better understand my preferred learning style in order to maximise development. I recognise now that I haven't always maximised my learning as the tendency has been to concentrate on the practical aspects of completing a task, without integrating the theory to better support the rationale for the decisions I make.

The 7th and final stage of Gibbs model is the identification of concrete actions as to how my personal practice may change in the future or how similar actions would be repeated. In the context of continuing learning and development, I recognise the need

to continue to develop the skills of reflective practice and to maintain the relationship with my Mentor. The mentoring relationship provides a 'safe space' for me to experience a balance of both challenge and support. I have set a personal objective to continue to proactively seek feedback on my performance from more experienced colleagues and those in specialist roles where appropriate. Feedback is an essential element of professional development and an integral part of effective supervision (College of Policing 2022). A review of the literature by Dahl et al (2023) identified that police officers' performance, motivation, and satisfaction with their role can be increased as a result of verbal feedback. Carless & Boud (2018) concur and state that one of strongest influences on learning is feedback. My personal experience of giving feedback largely comes from previous job experience as a manager in retail. As such, I was required to demonstrate to ensure that the feedback I gave was timely, specific, balanced and realistic, in as much as it must relate to something that is able to be acted on and not outside of the person's remit. This approach is supported by the Centre for Teaching & Learning, Oxford University (2024). The opportunity to give feedback to others at this early stage in my police career has been limited to date as I have no supervisory responsibilities at present, however, I had considerable experience of giving feedback in my previous managerial capacity and anticipate that despite the different context, the principles utilised then, will be transferable skills (Clawson 1991). In contrast, opportunities to receive feedback occur on a daily basis and is something that I proactively seek after each operational experience. Sometimes this has been given freely or as an integral part of getting specific competencies signed off, but more often this has needed to be directly requested by myself.

Underpinning the benefits of seeking regular feedback, together with the use of coaching and mentoring models is Kolb's theory of learning (1984) that recognises that learning is a continuous cycle. As such they are all aspects that I will continue to seek throughout my career span.

2174 words.

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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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